

# LECTURERS' READINESS TOWARDS INTEGRATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR TEACHING: A CASE OF UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN

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## **Abstract**

*The indispensable presence of social media in higher institutions prompted educators to integrate social media in education. This study investigated university lecturers' readiness towards the integration of social media for teaching: a case study of university of Ilorin. The study was anchored on virtual learning community and adopted a descriptive type of survey. It used researchers' designed questionnaire to elicit responses from 99 randomly sampled lecturers from 3 faculties of university of Ilorin. The questionnaire consisted of 30 items with a 0.83 reliability index after a test re-test pilot was conducted at an interval of two weeks. Weighted mean score was used to answer the three raised research questions. Findings of the study revealed that majority of lecturers are ready to use social media for teaching but not all lecturers are skilled in the use of social media for its integration in teaching. In this vein, the study recommended among others that university management should organize workshops to train lecturers on the use of social media for its integration in teaching.*

**Keywords:** *Social Media, Nigerian University, Lecturers, Teaching and Learning*

## **Introduction**

In recent years, the online world has evolved remarkably, due largely to the innovation of social media, referred to as the reborn of dot.com, the second coming of world wide web (www), and creation of web2.0. Social media presents users astonishing forms to create, share and exchange contents, ideas, feelings, personal information through texts, images, audio and videos on platforms such as Facebook, twitter, Instagram, vine, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, and so on. Social media started out as a form of fun and leisure tool for youths, but its usage has metamorphosed into the realm of higher education where it offers a set of affordances for the creation of collaborative activities that occur online. Students used them for learning purpose since they are already using them for socialization and communication purposes. The free to use platform of social media offers teachers the limitless opportunities for professional development.

There is no gainsaying that majority of students are predominant users of social media who spend countless hours immersed in social media which some studies revealed causes addiction, procrastination, distraction, destroys learners' spellings and grammatical construction of sentences and poor academic grades (Schill, 2011; Ajewole & Fasola, 2012; Singh & Dwivedi, 2013; Yeboah & Ewur, 2014). In contrast, some other studies revealed that social media build positive relationship among students, facilitate collaborative learning, engage learners and network for learning activities (Echeverría, Nussbaum, Calderón, Bravo, & Infante, 2011). It should be noted that whether social media is used positively or negatively among students, the bottom-line is that it is a platform highly favoured for use among students at all levels of education. As it seems, educators are gradually waking up to the reality of social media as an indispensable part of the lives of learners.

This development has piqued the interest of educators who are interested in the integration of social media in education and placed it under scrutiny in the field of education to determine the possibility of blending pedagogy and technology (Valetsianos & Navarrete, 2012). Numerous studies (Grosbeck & Holotescu, 2009; Ebner, Lienhardt, Rohs & Meyer, 2010; Schroeder, Minocha & Schneider, 2010; Junco, Helbergert, & Loken, 2010, Menkhoff, Chay, Bengtsson, Woodard & Gan, 2014) have recommended the use of social media in education and canvassed for the integration of various social media tools such as blogs, microblogs, video-sharing and social networking sites, and so on, into the teaching and learning process. In recent times, social media is used as web-based learning at universities and higher educational institutions to enhance online interactions through discussions and to share knowledge between lecturers and learners (Echeverría, et al., 2011).

Lederer (2012) asserted that social media as an educational tool enriches the learning experience by promoting learner-lecturer exchange of ideas, foster collaboration through discussion, facilitates engagement and interactions. It was further opined that social media serves as an effective means to increase student engagement and build meaningful communication skills for self-expression. Social media can improve communication between students and instructors. It also presents instructors opportunity to answer students' questions, post assignments, lesson notes, send messages, updates, schedule, announce upcoming events, share Web sites and multimedia content.

The theoretical framework to forge sociological understanding that underpins this study is anchored on some aspects of the virtual learning community. Gannon-Leary and Fontainha (2007) referred to this theory and used it in the study of online community of learners or virtual learners while Conole and Dyke (2004) found it compatible with the affordances of modern technology. This theory is based on the notion that all teaching and learning are situated and cannot be separated from its participants or the conditions in which they are taking place. The participants in teaching and learning are teachers and students and the condition in which this process is taking place in contemporary era is collaboration. This implies that teaching and learning are based on collaboration and shared meanings which are characteristics of social media. Social media is the 'go-to arena' for learners, hence, if teachers want to actively engage learners, teachers should look towards learners' 'go-to arena'. Earlier, Vygotsky (1980) argued that individuals learn best if there are some sorts of interaction through collaborative learning and group work so that there exists convergence of information or ideas amongst students to complete a task. Within virtual community or online space, the said interaction and collaboration in teaching and learning is now implemented through social media without worrying about time and space limitations or barriers. Wheeler (2010) noted that some educational researchers have coined the term Learning 2.0 about a spectrum of all pedagogical approaches that draw heavily upon Web 2.0 tools such as Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, WhatsApp, Skype, YouTube, and so on.

In meeting with contemporary realities in pedagogical, technological developments, and integrative learning needs of students, there is a growing demand to incorporate social media in education to facilitate teaching and learning. In a bid to align with the emerging needs of the 21st century, some departments have taken the bull by the horn and risen to the clarion call. One of such is the Department of Educational Technology, Faculty of Education in University of Ilorin. University of Ilorin is an institution established in 1975 in Ilorin, Kwara State. The institution presently has 14 faculties and scores of departments offering various programmes to meet the yearnings of undergraduate and postgraduate candidates. The department

of educational technology introduced social media as a course at the 3rd and 4th year of Educational Technology programme.

According to the academic programme of University of Ilorin (2016), at the 3rd year of the educational technology programme, students offer Social Media in Education (EDT 326) as a course in the second (rain) semester. This course is of 2 credit unit and elective for the students. The outline of the course is use of social media in education, nature and purpose of social media, types of social media, social media promotion, social media disclosure guidelines, and ethics in educational use of social media. Social Media in Learning (EDT 416) is the title of the course at the 4th year of educational technology programme and it is of 2 credit unit and elective for the students. This course is also offered in the second (rain) semester and students are expected to learn collaborative and emergent pedagogies, tools and theory related to the use of social media in learning environments, hand-on experience with a variety of social media tools, create community of practice for learning, create a community-based resource and have an opportunity to develop a global professional network for educational technologists.

There are numerous examples of the introduction of social media in higher education across the globe (Davis III, Deil-Amen, Rios-Aguilar, Gonzalez Canche, 2012; Lupton, 2014), particularly, in open distance learning (Brady, Holcomb & Smith, 2010; Manan, Alias, & Pandian, 2012). These stimulated the need among educators to integrate social media in education. Most studies on social media and lecturers are either theoretical (Guy, 2012; Lederer, 2012) or centred on lecturers' awareness (Daniels, 2013). Studies have proven that the successful implementation of any educational activity depends largely with the teacher (Kankam, 2013). Thus, this study seeks to fill the gap of university lecturers' readiness towards the integration of social media for teaching, particularly, for an institution that has introduced courses on social media. Readiness can be defined as clusters of behaviours that are exhibited to show its interest to engage in a particular activity. In the context of this study, lecturers' readiness can be described as the clusters of behaviours exhibited by lecturers to show their interests to engage in integrating social media for teaching. In this vein, this study examined university lecturers' readiness towards the integration of social media for teaching in a Nigerian university. To realise the purpose of this study, the following questions were raised to guide this study:

- i. Do lecturers perceive social media to be useful for teaching?
- ii. Are lecturers ready to use social media for teaching?
- iii. Are lecturers skilled in social media use for its integration in teaching?

## Methodology

Descriptive type of survey was employed for this study. All lecturers in University of Ilorin constituted the population, 99 lecturers were randomly sampled across 3 purposively selected faculties. In addition, two departments each were purposively selected from the three (3) faculties of Communication and Information Sciences (Mass Communication and Library and Information Sciences), Education (Educational Technology and Social Sciences Education), Social Sciences (Sociology and Social Work). These departments have social media as a topic in some of the courses offered by the students. For example, social media is an emerging theme in social studies education, a programme in the Department of Social Sciences education in the Faculty of Education. The instrument used to elicit the needed data from respondents was a 30 items researchers' designed questionnaire which achieved 0.83 reliability index after a test re-test pilot was conducted. The data gathered was analysed with weighted mean score.

Research Question 1:

*Do lecturers perceive social media to be useful for teaching?*

Table 1.  
Lecturers' Perceived Usefulness of Social Media for Teaching

S/N	ITEMS	No	MEAN
1.	The use of social media would enhance my teaching effectiveness	99	3.33
2.	Social media use would make my teaching more interesting	99	3.33
3.	I would find social media useful for my teaching	99	3.30
4.	The use of social media would improve my performance as a lecturer	99	3.21
5.	I would find social media easy to use for my teaching	99	3.15
6.	I would find social media flexible to actualize my teaching objectives	99	3.15
7.	Social media would enable my teaching to be dynamic and methodical	99	3.09
8.	Using social media would enable me to accomplish my teaching task	99	3.06
9.	Social media use would make my teaching more fun	99	3.00
10.	My interaction with students via social media will make my teaching clear and understandable	99	3.00
<b>Weighted Mean Score</b>			<b>31.62</b>

Table 1 illustrates that 99 respondents participated in this study. The benchmark weighted mean score stood at 25.00 and the mean score for the responses on lecturers' perceived usefulness of social media for teaching is 31.62 which gives a positive indication. This implies that majority of lecturers perceived social media to be useful for teaching.

Research Question 2:

*Are lecturers ready to use social media for teaching?*

Table 2  
Lecturers' Readiness to Use Social Media for Teaching

S/N	ITEMS	No	MEAN
1.	I will like to learn about social media use for teaching and learning	99	3.30
2.	Social media will help my students to catch up and revise the topics we learn	99	3.24
3.	I am prepared to know more about what I can use social media for	99	3.24
4.	Use of social media will enhance my teaching	99	3.18
5.	I see myself using social media for my teaching	99	3.18
6.	I will like to use social media to teach when I have the opportunity	99	3.18
7.	I am interested in using social media for teaching	99	3.15
8.	I am eager to give assignments to my student on social media	99	3.09
9.	All my students will learn through social media	99	2.52
10.	I am not willing to use social media to support my teaching	99	2.00
<b>Weighted Mean Score</b>			<b>30.08</b>

Table 2 indicates that 99 respondents participated in this study. Responses to items that sought information on the lecturers' readiness to use social media for teaching was positive because the weighted mean score was 30.08 which is higher than the benchmark weighted mean score of 25. This implies that majority of lecturers are ready to use social media for teaching.

Research question 3:

*Are lecturers skilled in social media use for its integration in teaching?*

Table 3:

Lecturers' Skilled in Social Media Use for its Integration in Teaching

S/N	ITEMS	No	MEAN
1.	I can communicate effectively with my students via Facebook/WhatsApp/Twitter	99	2.82
2.	I can send and download students' assignments from my email	99	2.79
3.	I can interact with my students via Skype	99	2.67
4.	I can upload my lecture tutorial to YouTube	99	2.36
5.	I can have group discussion with my students using blogs/WhatsApp	99	2.11
6.	I can create a podcast for teaching my course(s)	99	1.85
7.	I can prepare my lectures with Microsoft office tools and share with my students for assignments, discussion and questions.	99	1.76
8.	I can use google apps for my courses to interact with my students	99	1.72
9.	I can create mobile apps to engage my students	99	1.64
10.	I can take my students on virtual field trips	99	1.48
<b>Weighted Mean Score</b>			<b>21.20</b>

99 participants responded to these 10 items to answer research question 3 as revealed in Table 3. The weighted mean score was 21.20 for responses on lecturers' skilled in social media use for its integration in teaching which was lower than the benchmark weighted mean score of 25.00, hence, the responses can be adjudged to be negative. This shows that substantial number of lecturers are not skilled in social media use for its integration in teaching. The implication is that majority of lecturers are not adequately skilled in social media use for its integration in teaching.

### Discussion of Findings

Finding of this study revealed that majority of lecturers perceive social media as useful for teaching. This is in consonance with Hamid, Waycott, Chang and Kurnia (2011), Manan, et al. (2012), Seaman and Tinti-Kane (2013) who found that faculty are using social media to facilitate teaching and learning, a participatory culture, engagement and interaction among students. Carrigan (2014) and Miah (2014) found benefits and possibilities of using social media as part of academic work. Lederer (2012) asserted that social media improves communication between students and lecturers while the latter can answer students' questions, post assignments and lesson plans, send messages and updates, and share multimedia contents. Velestianos and Navarrete (2012) added that social media for teaching provides opportunities for students' self-expression, self-reflection, and social interaction.

Another finding of this study indicated that majority of lecturers are ready to use social media for teaching. This aligns with the findings of Hamid, et al. (2011) Lupton (2014) that majority of academic staff of higher institutions were very positive about using social media for teaching. Seaman and Tinti-Kane (2013) found a substantial percentage of academics who use social media for teaching purposes. Basically, there is a growing interest and readiness among lecturers to use social media for teaching. According to Lupton (2014), Microsoft Office Tools, Google Apps, Mobile Apps, Twitter, Academia.edu, Personal blog, Facebook, LinkedIn, Online referencing tools, YouTube, Multi-authored blog, Google+ and SlideShare are the top social media platforms lecturers found comfortable to use for teaching.

The last finding of this study revealed that majority of lecturers are not adequately skilled in social media use for its integration in teaching. This finding is in line with Fransman (2013) who discovered in a British study that majority of academics do not use twitter for teaching because they lack its proficiency, hence, did not venture to try it. This explains the reason few lecturers have taken up the use of social media

in teaching and the slow integration of social media in teaching. As there exists a substantial number of lecturers who are not adequately skilled in social media use for teaching, it presents a setback for the integration of social media in teaching. By so doing, Grosbeck (2013) observed that there is a need for training of educational actors in the use of social media for its integration in teaching.

### Implication

The undeniable presence of social media in the lives of learners has led educators to examine its use for teaching and learning. This study has shown that lecturers find social media useful for teaching and are interested in using social media for teaching. The readiness to use social media for teaching as expressed by lecturers of University of Ilorin justifies the introduction of social media courses at the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year of educational technology programme of the Department of Educational Technology, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin. The promise social media holds for education cannot be overstated despite the never-ending debate on its positive and negative influence. In this vein, social media is now regarded as an educational medium to blend informal learning into the formal environment of learning. This study has contributed to an emerging knowledge on the integration of social media in education, and it has added empirical evidence on the demands and direction of teacher education programmes.

This study concluded that the lack of requisite skills in social media use for teaching among some lecturers underscored its fragile and lukewarm integration for teaching and learning. This probably explains the reason some undergraduate programmes such as social studies education, social work, mass communication, sociology, and so on, in various departments in University of Ilorin and other universities in Nigeria are reluctant to introduce social media as a course to be offered by the students. In this vein, this study recommends the following:

1. Adequate training of lecturers in the use of social media for teaching to facilitate collaborative and social learning.
2. The readiness of lecturers to use social media should be stimulated with the review of undergraduate programmes, particularly, teacher education programmes, for the possibility of introducing social media as a course to advance pedagogy of this technological phenomenon.
3. Universities should promote academic research on suitable social media platforms for academic practice such as submission of assignments, term papers, review sessions, tutorials and collaborative learning.
4. Researchers should see this study as an avenue to further studies on the integration of social media in education.

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