A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR INSTRUCTION AMONG PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS IN NIGERIA AND RWANDA

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Abstract:

This study investigated student's use of different social media tools, their perceptions and attitudes towards these tools, their preference of social media for instructional purpose, and acceptance of social media among, pre-service teachers in Nigeria and Rwanda. This study adopted a comparative survey design, and Nigeria and Rwanda were chosen as sample region through purposive sampling. The population of the study included 487 higher education students of the faculty of education; 246 of them were Nigerians and 241 were Rwandese. They comprised of 212 male and 267 females. The findings of the study revealed that pre-service teachers in both countries have adequate knowledge of different type of social media sites. The findings show that the level of preference of social media site is very high in both countries among the pre-service teachers. Pre-service teachers in both countries are willing to use social media technology to support learning. Pre-service teachers in both countries have a positive attitude towards the use of social media for instruction purposes $p < 0.05$). Also, Facebook was discovered to be the most popular social networking site among them followed by Twitter and Google+. Rwandese pre-service teachers used Skype more than their counterparts in Nigeria. Based on these findings recommendations were made that establishment of educational technology units in the faculties of education in Rwanda, also curricular underlying teacher educational programs should ensure that these knowledge and beliefs are emphasized when designing educational technology

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courses as well as modifying the content the courses so that student teachers have greater engagement in technology. Nigeria still has a lot to explore in the use of social media for instruction purpose therefore further in-depth studies should be carried out.

Keywords: social media tools, higher education, social networking, usage

1. Introduction and background to the study

Education has been, and will be a vital component for development of any given society. Innovations keep coming up daily on how the teaching and learning could be made better to bring about the desired change and get the expected result. Various tools are being used by instructors, researchers, and learners which are used to achieve the purposes of education, but the newest tool being used is technology. Technology has produced undeniable influence in virtually every aspect of human life and endeavor. It has enormous potentials to reshape and transform the way in which people organize their lives, interact with each other and participate in various spheres of the society (Osunrinde, 2002; Abimbade, Aremu and Adedoja, 2003; Aleburu, 2008). According to them, the practical combination of information, communication and technology with their relevance to attending to various issues and challenges in different spheres of life has grown into what is referred to as Information and Communication Technology. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have revolutionized education and training by changing the way we teach and train as well as how students learn (Mupinga, Comes, and Ding, 2010). To corroborate this position, Adedoja and Oyedeko (2012) remarked that teaching with ICT have been reported yielding positive results by the way of improving academic performance nearly in all subjects area. This is because ICT has turned from being a technology of communication and information to a curriculum creation and delivery system for teachers and learners. ICTs are indispensable and have been accepted as part of the contemporary world especially in the industrialized societies. As a result of the status-quo of ICT, it has become more widely available, such that teachers and policymakers are turning their attention to the difficult task of investigating how best to integrate this technology into learning environments. This rapid growth and impact of ICT use has placed ICT as a major and possibly an inexorable agent of education.

The present era is an information age with open access to all; anybody can access information anytime anywhere irrespective of age, purpose, colour or location. This has made use of technology to aid or deliver instruction penetrate all levels of education. Education is wide but for the purpose of this study the focus will be on higher

education because the rate at which technology is being used for instruction at this level is higher, more intensive, compared to the way it is being used in the lower levels of education.

Among the most commonly used technology is the social media for example. Social media is Internet based technology which promotes opportunities for social interaction among its users. It is enhanced through new communication tools and sites that are called; social networking sites. A blog post by Bradley (2010) says "Social media is a set of technologies and channels targeted at forming and enabling a potentially massive community of participants to productively collaborate. Social media has the six core characteristics of participative, collective, transparent, independent, persistent, and emergent that delivers the unique value of social-media and, in combination, set social media apart from other forms of communication and collaboration." Students in higher education particularly use social media for interaction, collaboration, sharing, entertainment, blogging and so on. Today, the adoption of social media technology now stretches across the globe, integrating into the lives of individuals of diverse social, national, racial and ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds. However, the pace of using social media sites appears to differ from country to country. Social media technologies have made the world even more interdependent; cultural awareness and collaboration among people of different ethnicities or geographic regions.

Developing countries like Nigeria and Rwanda have some characteristics that are common to both of them some of which are educational system, educational aims, goals and objectives, level of advancement in technology, formal means of communication which is English language and quest or thirst for the acquisition of western education. Their higher education policy advocates for the use of technology in the teaching learning process. They are making use of available technologies for educational purposes but much more can still be done in that area in both countries.

The educational system of both countries comprises the young minds who are considered to be the most vibrant category of people that want to explore any latest development in all spheres of human and societal development. These young minds or generations have a unique prowess for using technology to achieve virtually every activity they undertake. They are inclined towards information through technology and they have their unique mind set, therefore a comparison of practices in the use of technology especially social media in these two countries, will reveal the extent to which it is being used, the purposes for which it is being used i.e the activities for which it being used, the level of acceptance, perception of relevance preference for instruction of these social media technologies by the higher education students and many other things. It is essential that we should understand current usage and behavior and

identify potential problems so that they could be addressed. In accomplishing this mission other factors that have to be considered are the knowledge that these higher education students have of social media sites and their willingness or acceptance to use them. This will reflect in their attitude towards its being preferred for instructional purposes such as learning, assessment, and feedback. The level of acceptance of the learners to use social media for learning is also a factor that must be examined. Their level of acceptance will go a long way to determine the effectiveness of its use in the field of education in both countries. Learners' perception of a tool, which in this present study is social networking as a proposed platform for learning could be influenced by the attitude they hold about such learning resources. If student learners perceive that a tool like social media is relevant to their field of study there is a higher tendency for them to make use of it willingly for learning without being forced and this would make its use more effective.

2. Statement of the Problem

The use of technology in the world is on a geometric progression; several activities, duties, jobs, assignments, that are undertaken or done by men are now being taken over by technology; the performance and effort expectancy have been greatly influenced by technology. There is no sector in the society that has not been making use of technology to increase their job performance and effort performance. Among the technologies, being used to achieve this purpose is social media there are many Social media sites, with various technological tools, supporting a wide range of interests and practices. Numerous efforts have been made particularly to understand the use of social media in education and how it can increase the quality of learning in higher learning institutions. It is important to ensure that teachers are able to integrate technology into the curriculum. As such, the groundwork must be laid at the trainee or pre-service teacher's level. The major challenge is how to integrate technology in to the teaching-learning process in the classroom, and one of these technologies is social media. To be able to integrate social media technology into the teaching learning process there is a need to find out information on the level of familiarity of these pre-service teachers with social media sites.

3. Research questions

1. What is the level of preference of social media for instructional purpose between pre-service teachers in Nigeria and Rwanda?

2. What is the attitude of pre-service teachers towards the use of social media between Nigeria and Rwanda?

3. What is the level of acceptability of the use of social media between pre-service teachers in Nigeria and Rwanda?

4. Research design

This study adopted a comparative survey design of the ex-post facto research because existing variables were investigated in the study.

5. Findings

5.1 Level of preference of social media sites for instruction

Research Question 1: What is the level of preference of Social media for instructional purpose in Nigeria and Rwanda?

Table 1: Level of preference of social media site for instruction

S/N	ITEMS	NIGERIA		RWANDA	
		Mean	Std.D	Mean	Std.D
	I would like my lecturers to deliver instruction to me on the social media platform.	2.93		2.65	
	I would like to turn in my assignments on the social media platform.	3.11		2.61	
	I am comfortable getting my feedbacks on the social media platform.	3.09		2.91	
	I would like to interact with learner-centred contents on this platform.	3.09		2.70	
	Weighted Average	3.06		2.72	

Table 1 reveals that pre-service teachers in both countries agreed that they would like their lecturers to deliver instruction to them on the social media platform (mean(Nig/Rwand)=2.93/2.65); that they would like to turn in their assignments on the social media platform (mean(Nig/Rwand)=3.11/2.61); that they are comfortable getting their feedbacks on the social media platform(mean(Nig/Rwand)=3.09/2.91); that they would like to interact with learner-centred contents on these platform(mean(Nig/Rwand.)=3.09/2.70). The weighted average of the submission of pre-

service teachers in both countries is 3.06 and 2.72. This indicates that the students have high level of preference for social media for instructional purpose.

5.2 Difference between Nigerian and Rwandese pre-service teachers in their preference for social media sites use

Table 2: T-test analysis showing difference between Nigerian and Rwandese pre-service teachers in their preference for social media sites use

VARIABLE	N	Mean	Std.D	t	dt	Sig	Remarks
PREFERENCE							
Nigerian	243	15.34	2.58				
				4.086	482	.000	Significant
Rwandese	241	14.00	4.38				

Table 2 shows that there is a significant difference between Nigerian and Rwandese pre-service teachers in their preference for social media sites (t=4.09; df =482; p<=0.05). Therefore, Ho2 is rejected. The mean shows that Nigerian pre-service teachers have higher preference mean score (15.34) than their Rwandese counterparts (14.00)

5.3 The attitude of pre-service teachers towards the use of social media between Nigeria and Rwanda

Research Question 2: What is the attitude of pre-service teachers towards the use of social media between Nigeria and Rwanda?

Table 3: The Attitude of Pre-Service Teachers towards the Use of Social Media between Nigeria and Rwanda

S/N	ITEMS	NIGERIA		RWANDA	
		Mean	Std.D	Mean	Std.D
1.	Social media assists me to work with others	3.45		3.46	
2.	Mobile devices can improve the quality of education.	3.47		3.29	
3.	I would be comfortable if my instructors contact me through my mobile phone	3.24		2.99	
4.	Social media increase access to education and training	3.61		3.26	
5.	Social media can make me more involved in learning	3.41		3.36	
6.	Weighted Average	4.30		4.09	

Activate Windows

Table 3 reveals that pre-service teachers in Nigeria and Rwanda agreed social media assists them to work with others(mean(Nig./Rwand)=3,45/3.36); that the use of social media can improve the quality of education (mean (Nig./ Rwand) =3.47/3.29); that they would be comfortable if their instructor contacted them through their mobile phones(mean(Nig/Rwand)=3.24/2.99); that social media increases access to education and training(mean(Nig./Rwand)=3.61/3.26); that social media can make them to be more involved in learning(mean(Nig./Rwand)=3.41/3.56). The weighted average of the submission in both countries, are 4.30 and 4.09. This indicates that the students have a very positive attitude towards the use of social media platform for instructional purpose.

5.4 Difference the between Nigerian and Rwandese pre-service teachers' attitude towards the use of social media for instruction

Table 4: T-test analysis showing difference the between Nigerian and Rwandese pre- service teachers' attitude towards the use of social media for instruction

VARIABLE	N	Mean	Std.D	t	dt	Sig	Remarks
ATTITUDE							
Nigerian	243	17.11	2.44				
				3.227	482	.001	Significant
Rwandese	241	16.12	4.14				

Table 4 reveals clearly that there is a significant difference between Nigerian and Rwandese pre-service teachers' attitude towards the use of social media for instruction (t=323; df=483; p=<0.05). Therefore hypotheses 3 is rejected, the mean shows that Nigerian pre-service teachers have more positive attitude mean score (17.11) than their counterparts in Rwanda (16.12).

5.5 The level of acceptability of the use of social media between pre-service teachers in Nigeria and Rwanda

Research Question 3: What is the level of acceptability of the use of social media between pre-service teachers in Nigeria and Rwanda?

Table 5: Level of acceptability of the use of social media between
pre-service teachers in Nigeria and Rwanda

S/N	ITEMS	NIGERIA		RWANDA	
		Mean	Std.D	Mean	Std.D
	I will gladly use social media for instructional purposes	3.27		3.18	
	I would recommend social media platform as a mode of study to others.	3.19		2.86	
	I would use the social media platform for learning above other tools.	3.10		2.80	
	I would use the social media learning platform frequently when available.	3.30		2.93	
	I would want the social media platform use to be part of my curriculum.	3.18		2.51	
	Weighted Average	3.21		2.85	

Table 5 reveals that the pre-service teachers in both countries agreed that they will gladly use social media for instruction (mean(Nig./Rwand)=3.27/3.18); that they would recommend the social media platform to others as a platform of instruction(mean(Nig./Rwand)=3.19/2.86); that they would use the social media platform above other technology tools(mean(Nig,/Rwand)=3.10/2.80); that they will use the social media platform frequently when it is available (mean(Nig./Rwanda)=3.30/2.93); that they would want the use of social media platform to become part of their curriculum(mean(Nig./Rwand)=3.18/2.51). The weighted averages of their submission are 3.21 and 2.58 this shows that they have high acceptance for the use of social media for the purpose of instruction.

5.6 Difference between Nigerian and Rwandese pre-service teachers' level of acceptability of social media use

Table 6: T-test analysis showing difference between Nigerian and Rwandese
pre-service teachers' level of acceptability of social media use

VARIABLE	N	Mean	Std.D	t	Dt	Sig	Remarks
ACCEPTABLITY							
Nigerian	243	15.98	2.97				
				5.256	482	.000	Significant
Rwandese	241	14.14	4.58				

Table 6 shows that there is a significant difference between Nigerian pre-service teachers in their level of acceptability of use of social media for instruction (t=5.26; df=482; p<0.05). Therefore hypothesis 4 is rejected, the mean shows that Nigerian pre-

service teachers have higher acceptability level mean score (15.98) compared to their Rwandese counterparts with men score (14.14).

The findings show that the level of preference of social media site is very high in both countries among the pre-service teachers. Both countries are advanced in the use of technology and pre-service teachers there are willing to use social media technology to support learning.

Pre-service teachers believe that using technologies in their courses is convenient. Technologies are seen as adding value to courses, not as mechanisms for radical transformation. This is confirmed by Caruso and Kvavik (2006) who found that the most commonly cited reason given for using technology in courses was convenience (51% of students), followed by the ability to manage course activities easily (19%), and to a much lesser extent the opportunities to enhance learning.

This is supported by a comparative analysis on existing studies as part of the JISC's learners' experiences programme (JISC, 2009). Acceptance to use social media in for instruction is also high in both countries. Pre-service teachers in both countries have a positive attitude towards the use of social media for instruction purposes. This also is due to the high technological advancement and the use of ICT in education.

6. Conclusion

With the fast advancement of technology, there will be more cutting-edge technologies appearing in that market on a daily basis. As pre-service teachers (future-educators) should we ignore them or chase after them? It is always a huge challenge to keep up with new technology trend. It is much more important to understand the nature of technology in the process of education than technology integration itself. No matter how fascinating a new technology can become, it is still a tool. Technology should not and will never replace education, but assist educational practice, improve teaching efficiency, and enhance student learning experiences.

The emerging social media tools that we investigated and discussed in this study are existing resources among students; therefore, instructors should take advantage of this resource to make learning more accessible. Students feel comfortable to use the tools that they already know. Social media tools are an open resource, which also means they are open to uncensored public. It is educators' responsibility to make sure this learning environment is protected for the best interest of student learning. It is also the responsibility of educators to train students and equip them with analytical and deep thinking skills during the process of using social media resources. Intelligent adoption of social media tools can engage students in interactive learning, which is the key to a

successful education. Using social media tools in teaching sometimes can be very challenging to instructors. Students can be a very good consulting source because they are the experts and they have a better understanding of the tools.

The future technology integration in education should focus on what students use instead of what the school wants them to use to guarantee maximum efficiency. When students become the stakeholders of their own learning, education will be truly revolutionized through the effective collaboration between educators and students. Using social media for educational purposes can be beneficial for student learning in multiple ways. Social media enhances peer interactions, which can bridge diversity in the classroom and establish open lines of communication between students and educators.

Social media also facilitates discussion and knowledge transfer between students, creating a deeper sense of understanding of the course material. Thus, students who use social media are able to move beyond the memorization of material and create products that represent their own voices. Social media can aid in the achievement of both general and content specific student learning outcomes. Therefore, overall student learning can increase when educators incorporate social media into academic course content. In addition, teacher educators or lecturers can increase student teachers' level of social media acceptance by demonstrating the usefulness of social media in their daily instructional processes.

However, efforts should be made to encourage more positive attitude among student teachers, since many findings from the previous researches have indicated that attitude has significant impact on teachers' acceptance of technology.

7. Recommendations

There is still more areas in social media usage that can be explored by both countries, which are presently not being explored. Educational Technology unit should be established in Universities in Rwanda so that pre-service teachers there will have more solid foundation in training in social media use for education. Social media use should be embraced at all levels of the educational system of both countries and the government should assist in acquiring the facilities to aid its implementation. Nigeria as a country has not explored all that there is to be explored in the use of social media for instruction purpose therefore further in-depth studies should be carried out in that area.

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