Perception of Social Media Use by Distance Learners in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Perceived ease of use (PEOU) and perceived usefulness (PU) of social media by distance learners may affect its acceptance for learning. These constructs were investigated among 341 distance learners in two universities, the University of Ibadan- UI and the National Open University- NOUN in Nigeria using a questionnaire and was analyzed using frequency and percentages. The main purpose and use of social media in UI and NOUN was to share information (100% and 100%) and for group discussion (96.3% and 100%) respectively. WhatsApp was used daily in NOUN (100%) and UI (91.3%). The PEOU by the respondents in NOUN and UI were both high: requiring a lot of mental effort (100%) and promoting distance interactions between learners and lecturers outside the lecture room (96.9%), while PU in NOUN and UI was also high: it decreased travel expenses (100%) and improved academic performance (100%). Therefore, the high perception of social media use (PEOU and PU) by distance learners should be sustained by facilitators through the adoption of social media for all their courses.

KEYWORDS

Distance Learners, Nigeria, Perceived Ease of Use, Perceived Usefulness, Social Media Use

INTRODUCTION

A distance learning program broadens access to education, which gives opportunity for continuous and life-long learning for individuals. Jimoh (2013) averred that distance learning affords learners the privilege of being free from the time constraints, limited place and offers flexible opportunities of learning for anybody who has the inclination for higher education. Through a distance learning program, students have access to higher education which otherwise would have been hindered due to their employment status, marital status, family responsibilities, distance, and expenses incurred with traditional education (Hannay & Newvine, 2006).

The physical distance between the learners and instructors makes it necessary to use information and communication technologies (ICT) for delivery of learning resources such as the Internet. Universities have been able to cater for the educational needs of distance learners through social media platforms which may ensure learners learn and become equipped at their own pace. Selwyn (2012) suggested that in recent years, the wide-scale uptake of these ICT tools has transformed the ways in which the Internet is experienced and used by most students due to the presence of social media tools. Social media is becoming a major form of communication, interaction and provides information access and generation for people globally. The use of social media by undergraduates

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is now a global trend (Wickramanayake & Jika, 2018; Leyrer-Jackson & Wilson, 2018; Al-rahmi, Zeki, Alias, & Saged (2017).

Social media is described as an "application that allows users to converse and interact with each other; create, edit and share new forms of textual, visual and audio content, and categorise, label and recommend existing forms of content" (Boateng & Amankwaa, 2016, p. 3). Social media enables individuals to meet new people and friends, have discussions with one another through the use of text and exchange information carrying content they both understand. Social media is characterized by active participation on the part of distance learners as it provides a forum for learners to share knowledge, provide clarification to questions, disseminate information, and engage in group discussion. These social media environments can be very useful for e-learning purposes, being a potential communication channel where distance learners can collaborate with lecturers for educational purposes.

Some social media sites include Facebook, Wikipedia, Twitter, Blogs, LinkedIn, YouTube, MySpace, Yahoo, Answers, Google+, Pinterest. Social media site allows distance learners to engage in wall posting, video sharing, tagging, photo uploading, making comments, podcasting, blogging for the purpose of learning. The use of social media sites allows "students and faculty members interact, express their views, and share resources by constantly maintaining their profiles and creating groups on social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, Google docs, YouTube and others" (Beltran-Cruz & Cruz, 2013, p. 69).

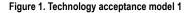
Beltran-Cruz and Cruz (2013) affirmed that "social media sites are now being used by universities as alternative spaces wherein students can adapt to the university lifestyle through interacting online with peers and faculty" (p. 69). Presently universities around the world are harnessing the advantages that social media offers to improve the delivery of teaching and learning practices to distance learners. Gulbahar (2014) reported that students in Turkey were using social media for collaboration and knowledge sharing. According to Adamson (2012), social media enable students to collaborate and share information with their lecturers and the entire world at large at any time convenient to them and from any place in the world. This also encourages peer sharing, which offers students the opportunity to learn from each other in the content they produce. Al-rahmi, Othman, and Musa (2014) reported that "one of the most commonly cited benefits of social media by scholars is its ability to facilitate collaborative learning and communication among peers and with people outside academia" (p. 179).

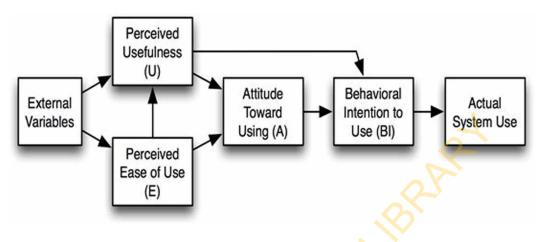
Social media could be used by distance learners for personal and educational purposes as it contributes significantly to the development of their learning related activities and also provides a flexible opportunity for teaching and learning. The frequency of social media use by distance learners could vary as a result of their different commitments to other day to day activities. Distance learning students may use social media daily, weekly, monthly or as often as they have the opportunity to (Olowu & Seri, 2012). Social media like Facebook, WhatApps, Line and others have been frequently used to communicate, upload articles and update profile.

Social media has been recognized as an important facilitator for teaching and learning among distance learners, however some factors may hinder its maximum use for learning based on a learner's intention in either to accept or reject such use in their higher educational pursuits. These factors may include: perceived ease of use (PEOU) and perceived usefulness (PU). There are two key components that have made the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Figure 1) one of the most influential research models related to understanding information technology usage and acceptance (Perceived Ease of Use and Perceived Usefulness).

Perceived Ease of Use

Davies (1989) as cited in Sago (2013) stated that perceived ease of use (PEOU) and perceived usefulness (PU) determine attitude towards a technology, which in turn impacts the adoption and use of a new information technology (p. 3). Perceived ease of use and usefulness may affect attitude towards the use of social media and shapes learners' intentions to use it for learning activities.





Perceived ease of use (PEOU) is the degree to which distance learners believe or think that using a particular system would be free from difficulty or great effort. Social media acceptance by distance learners may be based on its ease of use, clarity and ability to speed up the rate of learning activities.

Distance learners may desire a learning platform (social media) provided by universities to be less tedious and difficult to use to carry out their learning activities using technology. PEOU has an influence on attitudes and behavior on how frequently they will use social media for learning purposes. It contributes to a better performance, as effort saved due to ease of use may enable the individual to accomplish more tasks (Al-rahmi et al., 2014).

Distance learners' perceived ease of use of social media may have an influence on attitude towards usage for learning activities. The less difficulty distance learners encounter when using social media gives them the opportunity to adequately explore the different tools to enhance qualitative learning experiences. The use of social media by distance learners for academic purposes may depend on the ease with which these learners find the social media.

Perceived Usefulness

Perceived usefulness (PU) is defined as to what degree the new technology or system would contribute to increase of an individual's job (or learning) performance (Saritas, Yildiz, & Senel, 2015). Social media is perceived useful in a learning environment when it is capable of being used advantageously to increase the learning participation of distance learners. Based on the characteristics of distance learners (physical absence from the university campus, use of ICT to access learning resources), distance learners will use social media for learning when they perceive that using it for classroom activities will help them to achieve the desired academic excellence. A system high in perceived usefulness, in turn, is one for which a user believes in the existence of a positive use-performance relationship (Abeka, 2012).

Perceived usefulness may affect the use of social media since distance learners want to achieve their desired result with a technology that is reliable and caters for all learning related activities. The use of social media is assumed to provide learners the opportunity of taking control at any time for their learning task within a shorter time which may lead to effectiveness in their learning performance. As learners perceive social media to be useful and easy to use, they develop a positive attitude toward this technology and accept it for their learning tasks. Perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness

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explains that users' behavioural intention shapes their actual use of the technology. If distance learners have an intention to use a specific technology, then such technology (social media) will be used.

Statement of the Problem

Social media has been used by universities to increase the efficiency of providing quality education to distance learning students. It provides an avenue for them to get higher education with no barrier in geographical area and also expands the university market. However, it has been observed by some researchers (Beltran-Cruz & Cruz, 2013) that students which include distance learners use social media mostly for social and entertainment purposes, but not as much for academic purpose, where the frequency of use is lower. This may be due to their perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness of social media for learning which have an impact on the behavioural intention in accepting or rejecting social media to facilitate their learning activities. This study investigated the perception of social media use for learning among distance learning students in University of Ibadan, Ibadan and National Open University, Ibadan campus, both in Oyo state, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following are the research questions used for the study:

- 1. What is the purpose of use of social media by distance learning students?
- 2. What is the frequency of use of social media by distance learning students?
- 3. What is the level of perceived ease of use of social media for learning among distance learners?
- 4. What is the level of perceived usefulness of social media for learning among distance learners?

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey was the research design employed for the study. The target population was 20,335 undergraduate distance learning students of two universities in Oyo State: University of Ibadan (16, 683 students) and National Open University, Ibadan (3,652 students) in the 2017/2018 academic year. Purposive sampling technique was used to select only faculties that were common to both universities and three major faculties were selected (Arts, Education and Social Sciences). A sampling fraction of 2% was used to select the sample size for each of the faculties giving a total of 341 (Table 1). The justification of a sampling fraction of 2% is confirmed by Sudman (1976) who averred that "a sampling fraction of 2% or less has the same degree of confidence as that of a higher fraction" (p. 15).

Data was collected using a questionnaire having four sections: Demographic information of the respondents; Social media use which had subsections for purpose of use and frequency of use were self-designed. The Perceived Ease of Use and Perceived Usefulness of Social media sections had questions that were adapted from previous study on perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness by Davis (1989) and Cowen (2009). The reliability of the questionnaire was carried out by pre testing on thirty distance learning students from the Faculty of Science, University of Ibadan, using Cronbach Alpha method and the results of the psychometric test for the sections are as follows: Social media use ($\alpha = 0.81$), Perceived Ease of Use ($\alpha = 0.87$)and Perceived Usefulness ($\alpha = 0.88$), all exceeding the threshold of 0.70, which indicates a good level in terms of reliability (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010).

A four point Likert scale was adopted for measuring purpose of social media use, perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness with the following parameters SA- Strongly Agree, A-Agree, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree with four (4) representing the positive end of the scale and one (1), the negative. The copies of the questionnaire were administered randomly to the students during the face to face interactive sessions with their facilitators and a total of 303 copies were found useful

Table 1. Population and	d sample size o	f the study
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UNIVERSIT	TY OF IBADAN (UI)	NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA (NOUN								
Faculties	Population	Sample	Faculties	Population	Sample						
Arts	1,860	37	Arts and Social Science	886	18						
Education	4,568	91	Education	393	8						
Social Sciences	9,341	187									
TOTAL	15,769	315	TOTAL	1279	26						

and used for analysis giving a response rate of 88.9%. Data was analysed using frequency count and test of norm.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

There were more females (57.2%) than males (42.8%) in University of Ibadan, while the reverse was the case in NOUN, although with variation (Males: 52.0%, Female: 48.0%). Majority of the distance learners in both universities were in the age range 21-25 years (UI: 46.4%; and NOUN: 60.0%).

Research Question One: What is the Purpose of Use of Social Media by the Distance Learning Students?

The major purposes for using social media by the distance learners varied. The four-point Likert scale were merged to become agree and disagree for ease of presentation in Table 2. In both universities, respondents used the social media mostly for sharing information and connecting, interacting, chatting with friends (Table 2). In UI, respondents revealed sharing information (97.8%); using it as a communication network (97.1%); surfing for useful information (96.0%) and connecting, interacting and chatting with friends (96.0%) as the major purpose for social media use (Table 2). The major purposes for using social media by all the respondents in NOUN were: sharing information; connecting, interacting, chatting with friends; reading news update and business empowerment (Table 2).

The findings of this study confirmed that the distance learners in both universities used social media for different purposes such as sharing information; connecting, interacting, chatting with friends; as a communication network (with family) and reading news update. This could be because social media enhances communication between people irrespective of their geographical location. This finding is corroborated by Owusu-Acheaw and Larson (2015) who stated that "social media provide tools by which students can communicate, share information, and create new relationships" in a study carried out on Koforidua Polytechnic students in Ghana (p. 97). Thus, distance learning students used social media for both academic purposes and building relationships.

Research Question Two: What is the Frequency of Use of Social Media by the Distance Learners?

Table 3 presents the response rate on the frequency of social media use by the distance learners. The scales used for frequency of social media use by distance learning students in the university were; daily (D), twice a week (TW), weekly (W), monthly (M), occasionally (O), and never (N). Findings from Table 3 revealed that the daily use of WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram were common to respondents in both universities, although with a higher percentage for respondents in NOUN for the three social media platforms. MySpace, Pinterest and Line were the social media platforms never used by most of the respondents in both universities. In the University of Ibadan, respondents that

Table 2. Purpose of social media use by distance learners

	U	niversit	y of Iba	dan	NOUN							
Purpose of Social Media Use	Ag	gree	Dis	agree	A	gree	Di	sagree				
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%				
Chat with new and existing friends	262	94.2	16	5.8	24	96.0	1	4.0				
Sharing files (music, videos, pictures, software)	254	91.4	24	8.6	22	88.0	3	12.0				
Group discussions	263	94.6	15	5.4	22	88.0	3	12.0				
Ask questions related to course topic	263	94.6	15	5.4	24	96.0	1	4.0				
Surfing for useful information	267	96.0	11	4.0	23	92.0	2	8.0				
Submission of assignment	240	86.3	38	13.7	22	88.0	3	12.0				
Blogging	185	66.5	93	33.5	16	64.0	9	36.0				
Download course materials	256	92.1	22	7.9	24	96.0	1	4.0				
As a communication network (with family)	270	97.1	8	2.9	23	92.0	2	8.0				
Reading news update	248	89.2	30	10.8	25	100.0	-	-				
Political participation	180	64.7	98	35.3	20	80.0	5	20.0				
Post inspirational link	227	81.7	51	18.3	24	96.0	1	4.0				
Search for updates about events	257	92.4	21	7.6	23	92.0	2	8.0				
Publicise events	242	87.1	36	12.9	23	92.0	2	8.0				
Religious propagation	222	79.9	56	20.1	21	84.0	4	16.0				
Share information	272	97.8	6	2.2	25	100.0	-	-				
Connect, interact, chat with friends	267	96.0	11	4.0	25	100.0	-	-				
Business empowerment	245	88.1	33	11.9	17	100.0	-	-				

never used these social media platforms were: Pinterest (60.1%), Line (58.6%) and MySpace (50.4%), while those in NOUN were: MySpace (52.0%), Line (48.0%) and Pinterest (40.0%).

There were similarities in the frequency of use of social media for learning by the respondents in both universities as majority of the undergraduates posited that they make daily use of WhatsApp. With WhatsApp messenger, communication through mobile phones has become easier, faster and cheaper as it an application that supports instant messenger. This finding agrees with those of Hrastinski and Agahee (2006) who in their investigation of how students are using the social media discovered that all but one of the students interviewed are frequent social media users and use such media roughly every day. The findings confirmed Sheldon (2008) study that more than 50% of college students go on a social networking sites several times a day.

On the contrary, over 40% of distance learning students never used LINE. This could be as a result of low awareness of its use for learning activities among respondents. However, the result is in variance with those of van De Bogart and Wichadee (2015) who examined how undergraduates at the University of Thailand accepted LINE using it for classroom-

related activities (e.g., submit homework, follow up course information queries, download materials) and explored the factors that might affect their intention to use it. They discovered that when students were asked to identify the kinds of social networks they were using, the findings revealed that LINE was chosen by a majority (95.8%) of the Thai students. In addition, the results indicated that LINE was the most effective tool for communicating with teachers that students perceived (76.4%).

Research Question Three: What is the Level of Perceived Ease of Use of social Media for Learning by the Distance Learners?

The perceived ease of use (PEOU) of social media by the distance learners is presented in Table 4 with the response format as agree and disagree. To determine the level of perceived ease of use of social media by the distance learners, a test norm was used with the following categorisation: Low (0 - 33%), Average (34 - 66%) and High (67 - 100%).

Out of the seventeen statements in Table 4, fourteen showed that respondents in UI have high PEOU scores for the use of social media, while three statements indicated average PEOU scores for the use of social media by the respondents (55.0-63.7%). The statements for average PEOU are: I rarely make errors when using it for learning (63.7%); I need assistance to effectively use (62.2%) and I find it easy to use it for learning (55.0%). In NOUN, respondents' scores for PEOU of social media were found to be relatively high (72.0-100%) with only two items falling in the average level: I need assistance to effectively use (64.0%) and I find it easy to use it for learning (56.0%). This implies that in both universities, the distance learners perceived the use of social media as easy.

The findings agree with those of Shen, Laffey, Lin, and Huang (2006) who reported that online learning through social media has become a common educational tool used by universities and their students globally, due to its flexibility of time and place. Based on this perception, social media is accepted as a means of learning among the respondents.

Research Question Four: What is the Level of Perceived Usefulness of Social Media for Learning by the Distance Learners?

The result on the perceived usefulness (PU) of social media by distance learners is presented in Table 5.A test norm was used to determine the level of perceived usefulness of social media as follows: Low (0 - 33%), Average (34 - 66%) and High (67 - 100%). The distance learners' perceived usefulness of social media in both universities was high (above 84%) with those from UI having a range of 85.6 - 94.4% and those from NOUN with a range of 84- 100% (Table 5).

The findings revealed that the most rated PU indicated by the respondents in University of Ibadan was: it enhances efficiency in learning activities (94.2%) and enhances effectiveness on communicating with group members (94.2%). All the respondents in NOUN indicated it increases their satisfaction;

Social Media Types			NOUN Frequency of Use																	
		D W		W	M C		o	N		D		W		M		О		N		
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
MySpace	72	25.9	18	6.5	8	2.9	40	14.4	140	50.4	2	8.0	8	32.0	1	4.0	1	4.0	13	52.0
Facebook	160	57.6	57	20.5	13	4.7	42	15.1	6	2.2	20	80.0	3	12.0	1	4.0	1	4.0	-	-
Imo	57	20.5	59	21.2	13	4.7	43	15.5	106	38.1	7	28.0	4	16.0	1	4.0	3	12.0	7	28.0
Academia.edu	154	55.4	35	12.6	6	2.2	22	7.9	61	21.9	18	72.0	4	16.0	1	4.0	-	-	2	8.0
Twitter	71	25.5	46	16.5	15	5.4	49	17.6	97	34.9	8	32.0	7	28.0	2	8.0	3	12.0	5	20.0
WhatsApp	253	91.0	7	2.5	3	1.1	11	4.0	4	1.4	25	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Instagram	126	45.3	58	20.9	10	3.6	28	10.1	56	20.1	18	72.0	5	20.0	-	-	1	4.0	1	4.0
YouTube	75	27.0	72	25.9	18	6.5	56	20.1	57	20.5	9	36.0	8	32.0	1	4.0	3	12.0	4	16.0
Blogs (Tumbir, Blogger)	48	17.3	48	17.3	24	8.6	55	19.8	103	37.1	7	28.0	5	20.0	1	4.0	3	12.0	9	36.0
Skype	26	9.4	48	17.3	14	5.0	65	23.4	125	45.0	2	8.0	9	36.0	2	8.0	7	28.0	5	20.0
BBM	112	40.3	36	12.9	7	2.5	58	20.9	65	23.4	14	56.0	5	20.0	1	4.0	2	8.0	3	12.0
Google+	132	47.5	50	18.0	7	2.5	59	21.2	30	10.8	16	64.0	5	20.0	-	-	2	8.0	2	8.0
Pinterest	14	5.0	38	13.7	21	7.6	38	13.7	167	60.1	3	12.0	5	20.0	3	12.0	4	16.0	10	40.0
LINE	46	16.5	26	9.4	10	3.6	33	11.9	163	58.6	5	20.0	3	12.0	2	8.0	3	12.0	12	48.0

Table 3. Frequency of social media use by distance learners

Table 4. Perceived ease of use of social media by distance learners

	Statements on PEOU		U	I		NOUN				
		Ag	ree	Disa	gree	Ag	ree	Disa	igree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
1	I find it easy to use it for learning	153	55.0	125	45.0	14	56.0	11	44.0	
2	It provides helpful and easy guidance in performing learning centered activities	244	88.8	34	12.2	22	88.0	3	12.0	
3	Enhance creativity in learning	255	91.7	23	8.3	25	100.0	7-	-	
4	It is easy to become skillful when using it	248	89.2	30	10.8	24	96.0	1	4.0	
5	I need assistance to effectively use it	173	62.2	105	37.8	16	64.0	9	36.0	
6	It gives control over learning	221	79.5	57	20.5	22	88.0	3	12.0	
7	Provides academic support	259	93.2	19	6.8	24	96.0	1	4.0	
8	Promote distance interactions	264	95.0	14	5.0	24	96.0	1	4.0	
9	It has a user-friendly interface for learning	258	92.8	20	7.2	25	100.0	-	-	
10	It has catchy options	233	83.8	45	16.2	24	96.0	1	4.0	
11	It promotes interaction between learners and lecturers outside the lecture room	256	92.1	22	7.9	24	96.0	1	4.0	
12	It is easy to obtain learning resources for studies	259	93.2	19	6.8	25	100.0	-	-	
13	Its use does not require a lot of mental effort	225	80.9	53	19.1	23	92.0	2	8.0	
14	It is flexible to use for learning activities	262	94.2	16	5.8	24	96.0	1	4.0	
15	I rarely become confused when using it for learning	195	70.1	83	29.9	21	84.0	4	16.0	
16	I rarely become frustrated when using it for learning	210	75.5	68	24.5	19	76.0	6	14.0	
17	I rarely make errors when using it for learning	177	63.7	101	36.3	18	72.0	7	28.0	

Key: A - Agree, D- Disagree

encourages active participation in learning and speeds up acquisition of knowledge (Table 5) as the highest rated perceived usefulness of social media. This supports the findings of Caraher and Braselman (2010) who surveyed more than 1,000 college students in the United States and reported that 64% used social media to connect with classmates and study or work on class assignments at least several times per month. Twenty-seven percent used it to connect with faculty to study or work on class assignments, at least several times in a month.

Limitations

The study was only carried out on distance learners in faculties that were common to both universities (Arts, Education and Social Science) using purposive sampling and samples not selected from all the faculties found in each of the universities. This result is therefore limited in generalization, as only distance learning students from the three faculties were used in both universities.

Table 5. Perceived usefulness of social media by distance learners

	Statements on PU	UI				NOUN					
		Ag	ree	Dis	agree	A	gree	Disa	gree		
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
1	It saves time	238	85.6	40	14.8	23	92.0	2	8.0		
2	It improves my academic performance as I get	249	89.6	29	10.3	24	96.0	1	4.0		
3	It supports quick accomplishment of academic tasks	253	91.0	25	9.0	24	96.0	1	4.0		
4	Learning activities are not difficult when using it	253	91.0	25	9.0	24	96.0	1	4.0		
5	It enhances effectiveness on communicating with group members	262	94.2	16	5.8	24	96.0	1	4.0		
6	Reading the lecture materials through it clarifies some points and improves understanding of the lectures	246	88.5	32	11.5	23	92.0	2	8.0		
7	It decreases travel expenses	253	91.0	25	9.0	22	88.0	3	12.0		
8	It provides equal opportunity as learning in lecture rooms	240	86.3	38	13.7	21	84.0	4	16.0		
9	It increases my satisfaction	243	87.1	35	12.6	25	100.0	-	-		
10	It encourages active participation in learning	245	88.1	33	11.9	25	100.0	-	-		
11	It speeds up acquisition of knowledge	254	91.4	24	8.6	25	100.0	-	-		
12	It provides immediate feedback for learning interaction	256	92.1	22	7.9	24	96.0	1	4.0		
13	It enhances effectiveness in learning activities	254	91.4	24	8.6	24	96.0	1	4.0		
14	It enhances efficiency in learning activities	262	94.2	16	5.8	24	96.0	1	4.0		
15	It is useful for my study	256	92.1	22	7.9	22	88.0	3	12.0		
16	It increases my productivity in studying	254	91.4	24	8.6	23	92.0	2	8.0		
17	It enhances working together as a group on social media sites	250	89.9	28	10.1	23	92.0	2	8.0		
18	It would make it easier to study for tests and assignments	239	86.0	39	14.0	21	84.0	4	16.0		

CONCLUSION

Distance learners in University of Ibadan and National Open University, both in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria use social media frequently for academic purposes and this has a lot of advantages for distance learners for academic achievement in universities. Perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness have been identified as factors that affect the use of social media for learning among distance learners globally, including Nigeria. However, the perception about social media ease of use and usefulness determines distance learning students' acceptance and effective use of social media for learning. The distance learners had a high level of perception of use of social media for academic activities. To sustain and invariably increase this high perception of social media use, lecturers should deploy social media for all their courses as this will optimise its use by the distance learners.

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