

## Issues Relating to Utilization of Social Media for Adult Education in Enugu State

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### Abstract

The study focused on issues relating to utilization of social media for adult education in Enugu State. Specifically, it identified the ways social media are being used in adult learning and the challenges encountered in the use of social media in adult education. The study was a descriptive survey research. The population was made up of 3,391 distance education learners in the area of the study. A sample size of 358 was purposively selected for the study. Data were collected through questionnaire. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. Major findings including 12 ways social media are being used in adult education. Among these are M-learning ( $\bar{X} = 3.27$ ), e-learning ( $\bar{X} = 3.26$ ), blended learning ( $\bar{X} = 3.58$ ), distance learning ( $\bar{X} = 3.61$ ), micro blogging ( $\bar{X} = 3.57$ ), youtube ( $\bar{X} = 3.37$ ). Others findings are 13 challenges encountered in the use of social media in adult education. These include, high cost of materials ( $\bar{X} = 3.61$ ), resistance to change by learners ( $\bar{X} = 3.58$ ), poor integration of ICT into the educational structure ( $\bar{X} = 3.37$ ), learner's lack of knowledge in the use of media ( $\bar{X} = 3.23$ ), illiteracy of facilitators in the use of ICT ( $\bar{X} = 3.27$ ), cost of internet connection ( $\bar{X} = 3.00$ ), lack of access to devices ( $\bar{X} = 3.23$ ) and others. Based on these findings, the study recommended that Government should intensify effort in the provision of social media in adult education centres since the cost of procuring them are high, facilitators should be encouraged by the government on the need for professional development training especially in terms of keeping abreast with ICT.

**Key words:** Issues, Social, Media, Adult, Education, Utilization

### Introduction

Learning is perhaps one of the most important procedures for human survival and adaptation. Learning is a lifelong process that begins at birth and continues until death, providing individuals with knowledge, skills, and the ability to modify their attitudes. The acquisition of these skills

is primarily accomplished through conventional and traditional learning methods. However, in a knowledge-based society, Information, Communication, and Technology (ICT) did not become an effective means of acquiring skills and competencies until the twenty-first century. Social media is one of the

many components of ICT. These media, according to Wiekramanayake and Jika (2018), are the mainstay of collaborative online communication and instant interaction through established accounts and pages for sharing and acquiring information based on people's interests and agendas.

Social media are online tools that allow users to share information, opinions, knowledge, and interests with one another over the internet (Ford & Ravansar, 2017). Learning becomes more participative and lifelong as a result of the use of social media. Raja (2018) stated that social media is concerned with the sharing of communication and communicating with everyone at any time and from any location as internet-based tools. Forums, microblogging, social networking, social bookmarking, wikis, and podcasts are all examples. Facebook, Twitter, blogs, YouTube, Google Docs, Instagram, and Whatsapp are among the others. Looking at these instruments, it's possible to conclude that social media networks have triggered a massive shift in society's learning (Stieglitz & Dang-Xuan, 2013). As a result, according to Akakandelwa (2016), social media include a wide range of web-based and mobile services that allow users to engage in online exchanges, contribute to user-generated content, and join online communities.

Consequently, incorporating social media into adult learning will not only provide adults with opportunities to

improve their skills, but will also expose them to the social dynamics and networks that encourage participation, conversion, and community in order to make better decisions (Dunu & Uzochukwu, 2015). They are a powerful platform, according to Islam and Habiba (2015), that can be used for collaborative learning, online social and professional connections, and online information dissemination and gathering. This is due to the fact that it allows users to create, contribute, interact, and cooperate online without requiring specialized programming knowledge. To summarize, social media is better equipped to enable an open-ended learning environment in which learners can engage in a variety of activities (European Commission, 2020). As a result, an open-ended learning environment is one that supports learners' spontaneous engagement in all learning activities. This form of learning acknowledges the importance of adult education in the learning process. Adult education, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), consists of parts of lifelong education and learning with no theoretical boundaries aimed at meeting the specific situations created by the specific needs of development, participation in community life, and individual self-fulfillment. It addresses all people, regardless of their level of achievement, and covers all aspects of life and all branches of knowledge (UNESCO as cited in Mbalisi & Ugwu,

2019). It assumes that learners' demands are limitless and has no theoretical bounds. As a result, providing or creating a learning environment capable of embedding the appropriate information in learners becomes a priority. Learners will be involved in meaningful communicative practice, content sharing, collaboration, and a full-filling learning experience as a result of the integration of social media into adult education delivery (Mills, 2011). This is also true, as Raya (2018) correctly pointed out, because one of the advantages of social media is that it allows for the dissemination of information to a large audience, as opposed to traditional outlets such as print media. Furthermore, users of social media create, share, and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities, as well as interact with others who share a common interest, aspirations, and goals (Sharma & Shukla, 2016).

Social media can be grouped into six major categories based on the services it performs: sharing sites, blogs/microblogging, social bookmarking sites, virtual/online communities, social networking sites (SNS), and virtual worlds (Ngai, Moon, Lam, Chin & Tao, 2015). LeNoue, Hall, and Eighmy (2011) identified wikis (websites that allow collaborative content creation), internet forums (online discussion areas for people who share specific interests), blogs (online journals where the most recent entry appears first), and podcasts or pods (audio and video

files that are available for download) as examples of social media used in adult learning (communities which allow people to create personal pages and connect with friends to share content). The authors came to the conclusion that social networking sites are more relevant in education than the other media. It encourages connection, communication, and teamwork. In reality, the use of social networking allows learners with very rudimentary computer skills to actively design their own learning process rather than passively consume knowledge.

Furthermore, it is thought that the variety of learning opportunities afforded by social media can aid in the improvement of various teaching approaches. As a result, according to Silvestru and Lupescu (2015), social media platforms can be utilized to enhance blended learning, distant learning, and stand-alone teaching approaches. Similarly, Adetayo (2021) found that using social media can significantly boost research output. Despite these benefits, there are some drawbacks to using social media in adult education. According to Sanusi, Adelabu, and Okanada (2014), some of the obstacles in the use of social media for learning in Nigeria include a lack of basic facilities, unpredictable power supply, a lack of access to gadgets, the expense of internet connection, and the structure of the education system. Weak ICT strategy, excessive or overdependence on foreign technologies, and deficiencies in ICT integration and implementation

initiatives and policies are among the other issues (Etim, Tengeh & Iwu, 2018).

Although some scholars have reported that social media has been used to gain knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary for effective participation in society, others have reported that its various platforms have been used to gain knowledge, skills, and competencies required for effective participation in society (Dauda, Mohamad & Muda, 2016). Despite this, there appears to be a paucity of literature on the use of social media in adult education, with few empirical evidences. The paucity of literature in various media for adult education delivery, particularly in Enugu State Nigeria, necessitates an empirical inquiry. As a result, this research provides a basis on issues relating to the use of social media in adult education in Enugu State.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study was to examine issues relating to use of social media for adult education in Enugu State. Specifically, the study determined:

1. ways social media are being used in adult education in Enugu State;
2. challenges encountered in the use of social media in adult education in Enugu State

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study

1. What are the different ways social media are being used in adult education in Enugu State?
2. What are the challenges encountered in the use of social media in adult education in Enugu State?

### **Methodology**

**Research Design:** The study adopted the descriptive survey research design.

**Area of the Study:** The study was carried out in all distance learning centres in Enugu State.

**Population:** The population comprised 3,580 from all the eight functional distance education learning centres. These learners are made up of learners who are engaged in economic activities providing for their immediate families. They now decided to enroll into the programme to update their skills and competencies while still working. They are aged between 18 -45, and above.

**Sample for the Study:** A sample of 358 distance education learners which was 10 percent of the entire population. In five centres that had large population, 46 learners were drawn using the purposive sampling technique, while the remaining three centres with less population, 44 learners were chosen using simple random sampling technique by balloting.

**Instrument for Data Collection:** A structured questionnaire designed by the researchers was the instrument used for data collection. The questionnaire consisted of two

sections; I and II. Section I provided personal information of the respondents while section II was made up of two clusters addressing to the two specific objectives. Responses to the items in the questionnaire were based on a four-point rating scale, ranging from strongly agree (SA) (4 points), agree (A) (3 points), disagree (D) (2 points), to strongly disagree (SD) (1 point). The instrument was duly validated by three experts, two from the Department of Adult Education and Extra-mural Studies, and one from the Department of Science Education, all from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The questionnaire was subjected to a reliability testing using the Cronbach Alpha which yielded a reliability coefficient value of 0.86.

**Data Collection:** Direct method was used by the researchers with the assistant of one researcher in distributing 358 copies of the questionnaire. The research assistant was briefed on the modalities for distributing and collecting the questionnaire from the respondents on the spot. Out of the 358 copies administered, 332 copies representing 93 percent were retrieved and completely filled. While seven percent

representing 26 were incorrectly filled as such discarded from the analysis. This ensured that the respondents appropriately completed the questionnaire. Thus, all questionnaire distributed were used for data analysis.

**Data Analysis Techniques:** The data analysis employed in this study were both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were used to answer the research questions. A mean of 2.50 was used as the benchmark for decision making for each item, since a four-point rating scale was used for the study. Thus, any item with a mean of 2.50 and above was considered as agree by the respondents, while any item with a mean below 2.50 was considered as disagree. Meanwhile, all computations were carried out using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 22.0.

## Results

The results are presented on the Tables according to the three research questions that guided the study.

### Ways Social Media are being used in Adult Education in Enugu State

**Table 1: Mean Responses and Standard Deviation on Different Ways Social Media are Being Used In Adult Learning in Enugu State (N=332)**

S/N	Ways social media are being used in adult education	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
1	Through M-learning (use of mobile devices in education), lessons are delivered in the centre	3.27	.48	Agree
2	Blended learning is used in adult education delivery	3.58	.57	Agree
3	e-learning is adopted in adult education delivery	3.26	.54	Agree
4	Stand-alone teaching is often used in teaching	3.61	.61	Agree

**Table 1 Contuned**

5	Life-centred learning is adopted in adult education delivery	1.83	.50	Disagree
6	Distance learning is mostly used in adult education delivery	3.61	.61	Agree
7	Twitting is used in lesson delivery	2.21	.81	Disagree
8	Facebooking is employed in adult delivery	3.17	.42	Agree
9	Chatting is usually used in lessons delivery	3.28	.53	Agree
10	Video conferencing is employed for teaching	3.01	.85	Agree
11	Whatsapping is adopted in lesson delivery	3.23	.47	Agree
12	Youtube is used for lesson delivery	3.37	.50	Agree
13	Microblogging is employed in adult education delivery	3.57	.60	Agree
14	Internet forums are used in lessons delivery	3.27	.48	Agree
15	Podcasting is employed in adult education delivery	2.12	.89	Disagree
	<b>Cluster mean</b>	<b>3.09</b>	<b>.59</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Note:  $\bar{X}$  = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

Table one show that items 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 were identified some of the ways social media are being used in adult education with mean scores above 2.50, while items 5, 7 and 15 had mean scores below 2.50, indicating that there were social media used for adult

education. The cluster mean of 3.09 and standard deviation of 0.59 reveals that different social media are used in adult education in Enugu State.

### **Challenges Encountered in the Use of Social Media in Adult Education in Enugu State**

**Table 2: Mean Responses and Standard Deviation on Challenges Encountered in the Use of Social Media in Adult Learning in Enugu State (N=332)**

S/ N	Challenges	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
1	Lack of smart phones and computers	3.27	.54	Agree
2	High cost of media materials	3.61	.61	Agree
3	Poor knowledge of facilitators in the use of media	3.16	.42	Agree
4	Unstable power supply	3.29	.53	Agree
5	Cost of internet connection	3.00	.86	Agree
6	Learner's lack of knowledge in the use of media	3.23	.46	Agree
7	Over dependence on foreign technologies	2.11	.88	Disagree
8	Lack of access to devices	3.23	.46	Agree
9	Poor integration of ICT in the educational structure	3.37	.50	Agree
10	Dearth of available media	2.11	.88	Disagree
11	Poor maintenance culture of media by administrators	3.57	.60	Agree
12	Illiteracy of facilitators in the use of ICT	3.27	.48	Agree
13	Resistance to change by learners	3.58	.56	Agree

*Table 2 Contuned*

14	Insecurity in learning environment	2.22	.81	Disagree
15	Poor leadership of organizers in administering ICT to learners in learning centres	1.83	.50	Disagree
16	Inadequate supply of media to centres	2.88	.67	Agree
17	Poor attitude of facilitators in the use of ICT	2.75	.64	Agree
18	Poor location of learning environment	2.34	.55	Disagree
	<b>Cluster mean</b>	<b>2.93</b>	<b>.61</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Note:  $\bar{X}$  = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

Table 2 shows that items 1-6, 8, 9, and 11-13, 16 and 17 with mean scores above 2.50 were challenges identified in the use of social media in adult education as against items 7, 10, 14 15 and 18 with mean scores below 2.50. The cluster mean of 2.93 and standard deviation 0.61 indicates that there were several challenges encountered in the use of social media in adult education in Enugu State.

### Discussions

The findings found that there are different ways social media are being used in adult education in Enugu State. Respondents indicated that distance learning, stand alone teaching, blended learning and micro-blogging were conceived as some of the ways. These numerous approaches are indications that social media have gained preeminence over the convectional mode of learning. This development is not unconnected with the advances in mobile phones, and every form of online learning possible, thereby spreading to a large population. This finding agrees with Raya (2018), who affirmed that the use of social media allows for the dissemination of information to a large audience, as opposed to traditional

outlets such as print media. The flexibility and diverse opportunities imbedded in social media has become a window of opportunities for instructors who wished to adopt different teaching methods to their students/learners.

Hence, corroborating with the findings of Silvestru and Lupescu (2015) who revealed that social media platforms can be used to support blended teaching methods, distance education and stand-alone teaching methods, which are important for lifelong learning of adults. This goes to show that with the proper integration of social media in adult education delivery, it is likely that participation in teaching - learning will become participatory and motivating. This invariably may serve as a channel to encourage more participation in adult education delivery.

The study also found that several challenges were encountered in the use of social media in adult education. Prominent among these challenges were high cost of materials, resistance to change, poor maintenance culture and epileptic power supply. The high cost of the materials may not be surprising considering the fact that majority of the learners may be seen

having low economic capability and, in the bid, to improving their status enrolled into distance education programme in order to improve themselves. This finding is further supported by Sanusi, Adelabu and Okunada (2014) who identified lack of basic amenities, unstable power supply, lack of access to devices, cost of internet connection and structure of education system as some of the challenges encountered in the use of social media in adult education. It is believed that for effective participation in learning activities in a technological age demands adequate provision of media aids in adult education delivery. This will help to cushion the withdrawal rate of learners and also encourage their participation in issues affecting them. The relevance of social media also necessitates the assertion by Dunu and Uzochukwu, (2015) that social media are social dynamics and networks that encourage participation, conversion, and community in order to make better decisions. Consequently, the need to ascertain the issues surrounding the use of social media in adult education in Enugu State.

### Conclusion

The study concluded by affirming varieties of ways social media could be applied in adult education delivery in Enugu State. These ways are but not limited to the use of m-learning, distance learning, micro blogging, blended learning. Despite, these avenues of information dissemination, some challenges were found to inhibit the use of the social media in

education. These challenges included high cost of materials, resistance to change by learners and epileptic power supply among others.

### Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of the study

1. Government should intensify effort in the provision of social media in adult education centres since the cost of procuring them are high.
2. Facilitators should be encouraged by the government on the need for professional development training especially in terms of keeping abreast with ICT.
3. Existing media in centres should be subjected to regular maintenance for longevity.

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