

Exploring the Uses and Gratifications of Social Media among University Undergraduates: Evidence from Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examines the use of social media among undergraduates using the microstudy of the Uses and Gratification Theory. The study seeks to determine the kinds of social media sites and services undergraduates of a selected university in South West Nigeria use in order to establish the motivations that lead the students to adopt the various social networking sites, and also to find out the gratifications that the students seek using the service. The study employs Focus Group Discussion research design to probe the research questions drawn for the study. One of the key findings of this study is that the participants use not less than 2 and not more than 8 social networking sites. Most participants also admit that peer influence is a major motivation, among others, for adopting some of the social network sites. While Whatsapp, Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat top the chart on the ranking of the most frequently used social network sites, gratifications sought include information seeking, social interaction, self-expression and self profiling. Two key recommendations are offered flowing from the findings. First, it is recommended that future studies adopt a quantitative research design to find out the gratifications that undergraduates seek for using social network sites and what they obtain on a larger scale. Second, it is suggested that other research studies should probe uses and gratifications of specific social media platforms among Nigerian youths and undergraduates so that Nigerian researches could contribute to the emerging scientific discourse of Uses and Gratifications globally.

Keywords

Uses and gratifications, social networking sites, social media, motivations, Nigeria

Introduction

Globally, it is reported that the youth form the bulk of the users of the social media. Perrin (2015) asserts that 90% of young adults, within the age bracket

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of 18-29, use social media fully in the United States. These demographics, who find it difficult to think of a life without the internet, have a penchant for limitless connections that defy geographical boundary as they seek for “ways to connect virtually to everyone in the world” (NIRA, 2016). The social media has opened a gateway of opportunities for the youth for social interaction, information creation and exchange, connection and self-expression beyond geographical definition (Ogunkola, 2018). This probably explains why a global scholarly searchlight has been beamed on social media usage among youths especially of college age for an in-depth examination of what motivates and or sustains their continuous attachment to the social media.

Many of the studies (See Alhabash and Ma, 2017; Wang, 2015; Kircaburum, Alhabash, Tosuntas and Griffith, 2018; Aramide, Ladipo and Adepoju, 2015) adopt the propositions of the Uses and Gratification Theory to question what motivates the youth to get attached to the social networking sites. The attempts to make a sense of the bond that subsists between the young demographics and social media have been cross platforms (Alhabash and Ma, 2014) as well as cross countries (Karimi, Khodabandelou, Ehsani & Ahmed, 2014). These studies seek to know the youthful needs that social media gratify and what motivates the continuous use of these internet enabled social networking sites.

In Nigeria, just like the rest of the world, the trend of the social media adoption among youth, who form the core number of college students, is reportedly high. According to available statistics, the scope of Nigerian internet penetration cuts across 103.67 million (*Premium Times*, 2018) and 75% of the figure is on one social media platform or the other. This expansive coverage makes a case for establishing a trend of the needs of social media use and adoption among the young users. There are a number of studies on social media adoption and use among youths and especially university undergraduates in Nigeria (See Idubor, 2015; Adaugo, Ovute & Charles, 2015; Aramide, Ladipo & Adepoju, 2015; Olasinde, 2014; Nwagwa, Yolounfoun & Omotere, 2014), however, there seems not to be a coherent and deep attempt at examining the needs and gratifications that social media meet for the young population. This scholarly gap supports the imperative of using the U&G approach to probe the needs and motivations for the continuous use of social media by the Nigerian youths. This is the gap that this study seeks to fill by providing a basis for examining what motivates undergraduates of a privately funded university to adopt social media and the gratifications they derive from their use. Specifically, the researchers seek to investigate the kinds of social networking sites the college students of the selected university adopt and then ascertain the motivations that lead them to make use of these sites in order to determine the difference between the gratifications sought and gratifications obtained.

Statement of Problem

Social media usage among youths, most especially, undergraduates has received a lot of scholarly attention worldwide (Alhabash and Ma, 2017; Wang, 2015; Kircaburum *et al.*, 2018; Aramide *et al.*, 2015). There have been major attempts to understand what drives the adoption of these various social networking sites using the lens of uses and gratifications theory (Whiting and Williams, 2013; Alhabash, Chiang and Huang, 2014; Quan-Haase and Young, 2010). These studies range from collective consideration (e.g Whiting and Williams, 2013 focused on general social media platforms) to individual investigation (e.g Mantymaki and Islam, 2016 studied Facebook), cross-platform and cross-country comparison of the needs that social media gratify for the adopters (e.g. Alhabash and Ma, 2014 studied Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Snapchat while Karimi *et al.*, 2014 compared students' motivation for adopting SNSs across Iran, Malaysia, UK and South Africa). These attempts have yielded categories of motivations as well as gratifications sought and obtained for these social networking sites.

In the case of Nigeria, available literature also indicates that attention has been paid to the adoption of social media by adolescents and youths (Idubor, 2015; Adaugo, Ovute and Charles, 2015; Aramide, Ladipo and Adepoju, 2015; Nwagwa, Yolounfoun and Omotere, 2014). However, there seems to be little consistency and concentration on the major needs and gratifications sought by the young users of the proliferated social networking sites. It was ironically observed that many of these studies in Nigeria claim to adopt a Uses and Gratifications approach, yet, little has been done to coherently and deeply investigate the media needs and yearnings that push the adolescent users to adopt the accessible social media platforms in the country.

This study, therefore, seeks to fill this gap by providing valuable insights into what social networking sites are adopted, the gratifications sought and obtained as well as the motivations behind the social media usage of Nigerian undergraduates. The study uses the microscopic lens of the Uses and Gratifications Theory to examine what factors keep the selected undergraduates of a university in South Western Nigeria engaged and encouraged to devote a large amount of their time accessing the services of certain social networking sites ahead of available alternatives in the midst of competing available services. The research is premised on three questions of enquiry. One, what social media sites and services do the selected undergraduates adopt? Two, what motivations lead the undergraduates to adopt the social networking sites? Three, to what extent is the difference between gratification sought and gratification obtained from the social networking sites?

Literature Review

Uses and Gratifications of Social Media

Even though the Uses and Gratifications Theory was primarily meant to investigate the needs and gratifications for which audience consume certain media platforms, there have been extensive works on the Uses and Gratifications for social media. Whiting and Williams (2013) probed why people use social media examining the motivations, needs and gratifications that make people adopt social media platforms. Drawing from the review of literature on the uses and gratifications of the internet, the researchers identify ten themes of uses and gratifications to which people put the social media. These included (1) social interaction: a need that is met when people use social media to interact and connect with others; (2) information seeking: when people are enabled to seek information on social media; (3) pass time : a need that is gratified when people use social media at their leisure time to while away time; (4) entertainment : when people meet their entertainment needs through social media; (5) relaxation: this describes the need met when surfing the social media makes people feel relaxed and take away their minds off worry; (6) expression of opinions: this points at using social media to express opinions and thoughts; (7) communicatory utility refers to a need satisfied when social media give people things to talk about with others; (8) convenience utility: this is a need that is gratified because of the availability and accessibility of social media; (9) information sharing : it is a need gratified when a social media user is given the chance to share information about themselves to others; (10) surveillance/knowledge about others: when social media enable people to watch what other users are doing. The uses and gratifications typified by Whiting and Williams (2013) appear more general to social media even though many of the illustrations are drawn from Facebook. Specifically, Mantymanki and Islam (2016) studied Facebook and described the needs fulfilled by users. The researchers listed the four gratifications to include social enhancement, exhibitionism, voyeurism and interpersonal connectivity. The four categories could be equated to some of the types of needs listed by Whiting and Williams (2013). Social enhancement and interpersonal connectivity are positive sides of social interaction while exhibitionism and voyeurism are negative aspects of information sharing and surveillance needs.

Quan-Haase & Young (2010) investigated and compared needs and gratifications obtained from Facebook and IM by university undergraduates. The researchers worked on the premise that social media users do a complementary use of different platforms. This implies that users would add a new social media platform which possesses certain features that the one they use does not have. This gave rise to differentiating between gratifications

sought and gratifications obtained. Quan-Haase & Young (2010) described gratifications obtained as “those gratifications that audience members actually experience through the use of a particular medium” and gratifications sought as “those gratifications that audience members expect to obtain from a medium before they have actually come in contact with it.” This, in essence, implies that a shortfall in expectation difference between gratifications sought and obtained from a social media platform would lead to adoption of another.

Alhabash & Ma (2017) investigated motivations and uses of four social media platforms- Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat. The researchers reported cross-platform motivations to include self-documentation, social interaction, entertainment, passing time and convenience. However, it was as well observed that each of the four social media platforms has its own areas of strength in terms of motivations. Alhabash & Ma (2017: 5) rank the social media platforms and argue that “Snapchat leads in the five motivations, followed by Instagram, Facebook and Twitter respectively.” It was further revealed that for self-expression, Instagram is the slight leader, while Snapchat tops the table for medium appeal.

Karimi *et al.* (2014) extended the uses and gratifications of social media discourse to the level of a cross-country study. The researchers did a comparison of motivations which prompt students in higher institutions across Iran, Malaysia, United Kingdom and South Africa. The researchers deliberately sought to study what motivates students in different higher institutions in different cultural contexts so as to find out how cultural differences influence motivations. The study found that peer influence and pressure is the leading motivation for joining SNSs across the four countries studied. Other motivations included networking, finding classmates, finding course information and jobs as well as dates. A probe of gratifications obtained by the students studied yielded different gratifications obtained on country basis. Iranian students ranked information seeking as number one while Malaysian students pointed to interpersonal utility. On the other hand, UK students chose convenience and South African students selected pass time. With the number of studies finding a link between social media and Uses and Gratifications Theory, it is established that the theory has the capacity to provide a template to interrogate the needs, motivations and gratifications of the SNSs users. This, in a way, agrees with West & Turner’s (2010) conclusion that U&G theory is relevant and applicable to social media use and can provide a framework for probing needs and gratifications of social media users.

Theoretical Framework: Uses and Gratification

The Uses and Gratification theory provides an alternative way of investigating media effects on its consumers. It not only examines why people use and what they gain from dissipating energy to consume offerings from a particular medium but also explains the appeal and choice of a particular medium at the expense of other available media (Cummings, 2008). Propounded by Katz in

1959, the theory seeks to provide answers to core questions that bother on how people use the media for their own purposes; what needs people seek to gratify by paying attention to certain media content; the extent to which media compete for people's attention; how differently people are affected by media content and the extent to which people can accurately report their media use and motivation (Sparks, 2012).

West and Turner (2010) identify and explain five key assumptions of the Uses and Gratifications Theory. According to the researchers, UGT assumes that the audience is active and its media use is goal oriented. This means that media audience is capable of choosing which media to get exposed to and have the capacity to explain the reason why they get hooked to such media. The second assumption has to do with the ability of the audience to link need gratification to a specific medium. In other words, the audience understands its needs and the media to fulfil them. The UGT assumes that the media compete with other sources for need satisfaction. The fourth assumption of the theory points at the self-awareness of the audience of its media use, interest and motives to be able to report such while the fifth assumption simply states that the quality of the media content can only be assessed by the audience. Within the context of the assumptions of this theory, the audience seems to be in control of its media use, needs and gratifications.

Due to the nature of this study, the aspect of the theory that is critical to this work is the retinue of gratifications that the media consumers gratify through their chosen media. Specifically, Sparks (2012) cited Rubin (1981) to have typified the different needs and gratification sought from television into 8 categories. These include: passing time, companionship, escape, enjoyment, social interaction, relaxation, information and excitement. These were needs and gratifications tailored for traditional media. Do they apply to social media? In answering this question, Alhabash and Ma (2017) suggest that the Uses and Gratification theoretical discourse has been extended by the pervasiveness of Information and Communication Technology and social media. In other words, the theory has continued to maintain its relevance even as new development is recorded in the media world. Quan-Haase and Young (2010) report that new research foci are emerging as a result of the widespread adoption of social media. Ruggerio (2000) asserts that "as new technologies present people with more and more media choices, motivation and satisfaction become even more crucial components of audience analysis." The extension of the assumptions of the UGT and its application to social media use and adoption shall be interrogated in the next section of the study.

Method

To critically examine the use of social media among undergraduates of the selected university, Focus Group Discussion was employed to interrogate the

motivations and gratifications of social media adoption of undergraduate students of a modest small privately-funded university located in Osogbo, South West Nigeria. It is a faith based institution with a little above 1000 students spread across two colleges. A multilevel sampling technique was as well used in determining the participants. The students were divided into four strata consisting of 100 level- 400 level students. Systematic Random Sampling was used to select departments whose students would participate in the study. Out of the 12 departments in the two faculties of the university, six departments were selected at an interval of two. This number of departments was deemed acceptable as it was observed that the technological inclination of students was not influenced by their academic departments. Most undergraduates in the contemporary world are digital natives or Generation Z (George, 2018), and so are considered to have great inclination for social media. Convenience sampling was also adopted in the study to select students that are available and easily accessible across the selected departments.

Halloway and Wheeler (2002) opined that in Focus Group Discussions, researchers interview participants with common characteristics or experience for the purpose of eliciting ideas, thoughts and perceptions about specific topics or certain issues linked to an area of interest.

The FGD sessions comprised of 10 to 12 undergraduate participants, interviewed simultaneously in an unstructured interaction about motivations to use and satisfaction derived from adopting and using SNSs. Similar to the friendship triad employed by Grant and O'Donohoe (2007), the groups were small enough to allow each participant to offer their viewpoints while they were large enough to allow discourse to develop and flow. In all, 44 participants comprising of 23 male and 21 female students whose age range from 18 to 24 years participated in the study. A total of four focus group sessions were conducted involving male and female participants across the seven selected departments including Accounting/Finance, Biochemistry/Industrial Chemistry, Economics, Mass Communication, Political Science, Computer Science and Physics in each academic level in the faith based university in South West Nigeria. Each group in this study comprised ten to twelve participants. Each of the participants in the focus group sessions presented themselves as regular online users having social media accounts and so it was easy for them to relate with the questions and contribute effectively to the discussion.

Results

The analysis of the data obtained yielded three different themes which covered the kinds of social media sites and services the students adopt; the motivations behind the students' adoption of the social networking sites and satisfaction derived from them.

Exploring the Social Networking Sites Used by the Selected Undergraduates

The researchers began with a question on the number of social media sites participants make use of. The question prompted various responses. The number of social network sites used by participants of the focus groups ranges from 2 to 8. Even though most of the participants declared that they do not use all the applications regularly, it was gathered that they all have accounts on some or all of the social network sites mentioned, and they claim to visit them once in a while. While it was inferred that WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat are the most used social network sites by the participants, some other SNSs mentioned during the sessions are; YouTube, Twitter, IMO, Telegram, Hangout, LinkedIn and Pinterest.

During one of the sessions, a participant declared that he uses eight of the 12 Social network sites aforementioned. This participant uses the most number of Social network sites among the participants in the discussion. In his words;

I make use of Whatsapp, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, Youtube, Telegram, LinkedIn. Most of these apps came with my phone, and I decided to explore, meanwhile, they all have a variety of distinct features I derive from them. (FGD/Male Student/200 Level/ Computer Science)

Contrary to this participant's claim, another participant said he uses only two social network sites - WhatsApp and Twitter. He claimed those are the only SNSs that fascinate him.

I don't have interest in other social network sites because I'm not interested in what they do there." (FGD/Male Student/100 Level/ Computer science)

One thing that caught the attention of the researchers during the sessions was the low rate of adoption of Twitter. It was evident that the few participants who use Twitter are very keen on the social network site, while others have diverse reactions towards the site. This finding further prompted the researchers to ask participants why they do not use Twitter. This question provoked various responses such as the SNS is tedious, complicated and not user-friendly. One of the participants responded by saying:

I don't use Twitter because I don't know how to use it. I've tried severally, but I keep getting lost". (FGD/ Female Student/300 Level/Accounting)

While this set of participants has a contrary notion towards Twitter, the few ones that use the App are highly inclined to it. One of the participants who is

an ardent Twitter user stated that he uses the social network site more than every other one.

It is however surprising that a large number of the participants have a low exposure and understanding about LinkedIn. None of the First Year and Second Year participants makes use of LinkedIn. The Year Three and Year Four participants were also not too inclined to the social network site. Only a few of them use the social network site regularly. This may be due to the fact that LinkedIn has a different gratification which the participants do not seek for now. On average, most of the participants use 4 social networking sites each, and a variety of factors influences the use of these SNSs.

Table 1: Social Network Sites ranked on the basis of usage by participants

Social Network Site	Participant Users	Rank of Usage
WhatsApp	44	1 st
Instagram	40	2 nd
Facebook	38	3 rd
Snapchat	30	4 th
Twitter	04	5 th

Source: Researchers' Fieldwork, 2018

Investigating Motivations/Gratifications that lead the selected Students to adopt various Social Networking Sites

This theme investigates why the selected undergraduates have chosen to adopt specific social media applications ahead of others. This includes an analysis of the gratifications sought as well as the gratifications obtained following the adoption of a social media site or service.

When participants were taken up on reasons why they joined various social media platforms, participants advanced different reasons. Although the majority of them declared that the influence of friends led them to join, some others were motivated by family members. A participant even claimed he joined social media because of an assignment at the pre-tertiary level. What was generally noticed from the responses on why participants joined some of the SNSs was the difference between gratification sought and gratification obtained. A good example is the participant that claimed he joined social media

because of a school assignment then. This participant declared that he has other reasons that motivate his social media use now.

"I now have other things I look out for on social media, such as trends, news, catching up on events, and chatting with friends". (FGD/Male Student/100Level/ Computer Science)

This connotes that the reasons why people join various social network sites change as they start using them. This further led to the question of what activities do participants use social media for most frequently. In their discussions as to why they engaged with SNSs, the participants noted some purposes that SNS served from their points of view. However, as the discussion progressed, it was revealed that the uses of SNS, for example, to communicate with others, also led to certain gratifications obtained. To this end, the participants offered different views as to the benefits they obtained from these sites. It, therefore, was apparent that each social network site provides different gratifications.

A participant described his use of social media as thus;

"I use social media during my leisure, and I pick up my phone when I have nothing to do and chat some friends up. It is a form of whiling away time." (FGD/Male Student/ 200 Level/Mass Communication)

Asides to kill boredom, some of the participants stated that one of the reasons why they use social media is to follow trends. Social media is known to promote various trends which tend to influence the lives of the users. Users, however, depend on social media to get their hands on these trends. Most of the participants across the sessions agreed that not all social network sites are effective to understand the latest trends. One of the participants noted:

If I want to know what is trending, either in music, movies or fashion, you can never find me on Facebook. Before those things start trending on Facebook, it must have been stale(sic) on other platforms". (FGD/Female Student/ 400 Level/Industrial Chemistry)

Another participant buttressed the initial point by saying Instagram is a useful platform to keep tabs on fashion, entertainment and lifestyle trends.

I use Instagram to know what is going on regarding fashion, entertainment, and lifestyle. In fact, it serves as a means of getting dress styles. (FGD/Female Student/ 400 Level/ Mass Communication)

While some of the participants submit that Instagram seems the most effective social network site to keep tabs on trends, some others contradict this. One of the participants argued that even though Instagram can be used to catch up on trends, it only scratches the surface on those things. She, however, concluded by saying YouTube is the best platform to keep tabs on trends.

Instagram only shows you those things you want to see, YouTube, on the other hand, gives enough details about trends, be it fashion, entertainment and other stuff. YouTube not only shows you trends but also shows how you can go about adopting these trends, even Instagram redirects you to YouTube most times". (FGD/Female Student/400 level/Industrial Chemistry)

From the focused group sessions, it was apparent that 100 and 200 level participants are not ardent users of YouTube, Instagram compared to those of 300level and 400level. Only very few of them use the App. They are more inclined to Instant Messaging apps where they can meet new friends and as well maintain previous relationships. This set of participants was also of the view that some social network sites are more complicated than others.

Similarly, the importance of presenting a positive self-identity was noted by most of the participants as a core motivation. They claimed:

"You will always put up the best pictures of yourself, you have to impress your friends". (FGD/Female Student/ 200 level/Economics)

Most of the participants believe that social media serves as an avenue to announce their progress in life. A kind of refrain from them read:

"You see friends and family members posting pictures of events in their lives, you don't want to be behind, and so you imbibe that culture too". (FGD/Male Student, 300 Level, Political Science)

Another participant also said:

Facebook is good to impress family and friends. You post a picture of an event in your life, and you're sure to get lots of accolades from friends and family." (FGD/Male Student/ 300 Level/ Accounting)

The focus group sessions further showed that the gratification sought by participants on various social media tends to change as they use the different platforms. Even though it was noticed that participants were quite comfortable with gratifications sought, gratifications obtained later surpass the gratifications sought. Some of the motivations that lead the participants to adopt various social media platforms tend to change after they start getting

other gratifications. This tends to spur their interests in using other social media platforms. For instance, most participants adopted social media initially because of peer pressure, to feel among and for communication purposes, but as their use of social media deepens, they start getting more gratifications, and so this influences their motivations for joining other social media platforms.

Throughout the focus group sessions, it became apparent that there was a diverse and wide-ranging variety of reasons why participants make use of different social network sites, which duly lead to certain gratifications obtained from them.

Table 2: Gratifications sought and obtained from using SNS by the participants

Social Media Platform	Gratifications Sought	Gratifications Obtained
WhatsApp	Social Interaction	Social Interaction, relationship maintenance
Facebook	Social Interaction	Self-profiling, Self-Expression
Instagram	Keep up with trends	Self-profiling Alleviation of boredom Information sharing
Snapchat	Entertainment Self profiling	Social Interaction Self profiling
Twitter	Social Interaction	Information Sharing, Self-Expression Entertainment
YouTube	Keeping up with trends	Education, Keeping up with trends, Entertainment

Source: Researchers' Fieldwork 2018

Probing the satisfaction derived from the adoption of the various Social Network Sites by the Selected Students

In addition to investigating motives for adopting social media, the researchers also examined the types of gratifications users have obtained following their adoption of asocial media site. This led the researchers to ask the participants why they keep using their adopted social network sites. This question elicited diverse opinions.

Some of those who are ardent users of Instagram proclaimed that the SNS offered a variety of benefits such as giving them the platform to portray their ideal image, i.e. being able to impress followers with their current status and lifestyle. Additionally, many of the participants also highlighted their use of SNS for stalking purposes: "*to see what is new with everyone*". When asked how the use of social media facilitates this, a participant identified that her friends shared new information about themselves and their recent activities by updating various elements of their profile pages, such as the "about me"

section, together with the uploading of new photos, videos and further comments.

Many of them also use Instagram as a platform to scout for new friends. They declared that they follow people, stalk them for a while before deciding to message them directly. One of such examples is a participant who said:

If I stumble on a beautiful picture of a lady, I'll follow her, check more pictures and updates of her, and probably jump into her DM. You never can tell where our friendship might lead". (FGD/Male Student/400 Level/Banking & Finance)

The majority of participants also identified using Instagram as a means of escape and the alleviation of boredom, as they are able to flip through various contents posted by other users. For example, a participant said she checks for funny videos by comedians on the platform whenever she is bored.

This study has found that Twitter and Instagram are significant sources of information for users. Most of the participants agreed that they get trending news and stories from these two platforms. They also stated that the two platforms aid conversations about trending issues, as most users can use the 'comment section' to give their view and opinions about events, trends and stories.

Further probing into reasons why participants use social media showed that they are massively satisfied with their social media platforms for Information, Entertainment, Education and communication. This is shown in some of the responses of participants when asked why they like to use social media:

"I like social media because it allows me to keep in touch with my friends, classmates and family." (FDG/Male student, 100 level, Microbiology)

"I like social media because I get entertained a lot while using it." (FGD/Female Student/ 200 level/Economics)

"I like social media because I can get trending information. I don't need to listen to the radio or watch television before catching up on what's going on in the world ". (FGD/Female student, Biochemistry, 400 level)

"I like social media because I have learned a lot that I can't get in the four walls of a classroom". (FGD/Male Student/ Accounting/400 level)

Discussion of Findings

This study explored the uses and gratifications of social media among selected students of a privately funded university in South Western Nigeria. The summary of key findings of the study is presented below.

The study finds that the number of social network sites used by participants of the focused group sessions ranges from two to eight. Even though most of the participants declared that they do not use all the applications regularly, they all claimed to have accounts on some or all of the social network sites mentioned, and they visit them once in a while. The user knowledge and preference implied from the responses of the participants have some implications in literature. One, that participants claim to use more than one social media platforms reflects Quan- Haase and Young's (2010) conclusion that users do not replace one social media platform with another. Rather they explore each platform with its own unique features. Two, it also brings to the fore the argument of the activeness of the media users in the U&G propositions (West & Turner, 2010; Sparks, 2012; Alhabash *et al.*, 2014). In addition, it was also gathered that WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat are the most frequently used social networking sites by the participants even though other SNSs such as YouTube, Twitter, IMO, Telegram, Hangout, LinkedIn and Pinterest were mentioned during the sessions. This observation aligns with Statita's (2017) Social Media Penetration statistics for the Q3 of the year where the most popular social networking sites among Nigerians are ranked to be WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram respectively while Snapchat comes a distant 9th position out of 11. This, however, departs from the trend established by the four-country study by Karimi *et al.* (2014) which reports Facebook as the social media platform most frequently used by university undergraduates across Iran, Malaysia, UK and South Africa. But, whether it occupies first or second position, this revelation is an indication that Facebook is quite the most popular social networking site globally (Duggan, 2015).

On the satisfaction derived from the use of social media, the participants reported gratifications ranging from social interaction, self profiling, alleviation of boredom, self expression, information sharing, to entertainment across platforms. This finding is consistent with Alhabash's *et al.* (2014) identified gratifications obtained from Facebook by its Taiwanese users. An observation of slight differences between gratification sought and gratification obtained was noticed. Some of the participants claimed they obtained more than the gratification sought before joining the social media platforms. For instance, a participant describes how his gratification sought of Facebook led to his adoption of WhatsApp thus:

Facebook was my major means of chatting with people, but when WhatsApp came, I had to adopt it as it is easier to chat. Even though I still use Facebook, I hardly use it

to chat. Chatting led me to WhatsApp. (Male Student/400 Level/ Physics)

This speaks to the importance of examining the difference between gratification sought and gratification obtained as espoused by Quan-Haase & Young (2010). This instance clearly shows that a gratification obtained from a social network leads users to join another social network site that offers that service better. The focus group sessions further showed that the gratification sought by participants on various social media tends to change as they use the different platforms. Even though it was a noticeable trend that participants were initially quite comfortable with gratifications sought from a platform, the gratifications obtained later surpass the gratifications sought. This, in a way, implies that some of the gratifications that lead the participants to adopt various social media platforms initially change after they start getting other gratifications.

The study further finds that participants have a number of motivations that drive them to adopt social media platforms. Top on the list of motivations is peer pressure or family influence. A large number of the participants reported that they joined a social media platform because their friends or family members are on it. This finding is also consistent with outcome of studies of Karimi *et al.* (2014) and Utz, Muscanell & Khalid (2015).

Conclusion, Limitations and Future Researches

The study examined the uses and gratification of social media among undergraduates of a privately funded, faith based university in South Western Nigeria. It found, among other things, that the motives which drive the selected undergraduates in using social media included social interaction, self profiling, keeping up with trends and information seeking. It was also discovered that the selected students used social media largely because of peer pressure and family influence. The researchers also observed that participants claimed that they do not abandon one social media platform for another. Rather they look for the gratifications sought and not obtained on a new social networking site. While the claims by the participants on the motivations for use, gratifications sought and obtained on their identified social media may be true within their own context, it is difficult to generalize the result because of the limitations of studies of this nature. The methodology employed for the study has limited the capability to generalize its outcomes beyond the participants in the focus group discussion. However, the attempt is worthwhile as it has been able to, like other qualitative studies; provide rich descriptions (Daymon & Holloway, 2011) of Uses and Gratifications of social media use among selected university undergraduates in Nigeria. It is as well important to point out that even though this study is a preliminary effort on what influences or drives social media adoption among Nigerian college students from the perspectives of the participants, further researches can employ quantitative methods and engage

larger number of respondents so as to fully explore the why and what of social media use among Nigerian undergraduates. This would enable U&G of social media researches from Nigeria to also contribute to body of literature on U&G that is emerging globally. This empirical investigation treated social media as an embodiment of social networking sites. The discourse now is on gratifications sought and obtained from the use of specific social media platforms. Future researches, especially from Nigeria and other emergent social media markets could look in these directions.

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