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Social Learning Platforms and Academic Engagement among Office Technology and Management Students in Public Universities in South-West Nigeria

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Abstract

The integration of social learning platforms into higher education has transformed instructional delivery and enhanced students' academic participation across disciplines. This study examined the influence of social learning platforms on academic engagement among Office Technology and Management (OTM) students in public universities in South-West Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised 558 undergraduate OTM students in selected public universities in South-West Nigeria. Using a multistage sampling procedure involving purposive, stratified, and simple random sampling techniques, a sample size of 468 respondents was selected for the study. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled "Social Learning Platforms and Academic Engagement Questionnaire (SLPAEQ)." The instrument consisted of five sections with 35 items measured on a five-point Likert scale. Face and content validity of the instrument were established by experts in Business Education and Educational Technology, while Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients ranged from 0.78 to 0.91, indicating acceptable internal consistency. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson Product Moment Correlation, and regression analysis at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that social learning platforms significantly enhanced students' classroom participation, access to learning materials, collaborative learning, and communication with lecturers and peers. The study further established a significant positive relationship between frequency of social learning platform usage and students' academic engagement. The study concluded that social learning platforms have become important instructional tools capable of improving students' engagement and active participation in learning processes. The study recommended that university management should improve internet infrastructure and institutional support for digital learning, lecturers should integrate social learning platforms into classroom instruction, and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) units should organise regular digital literacy training for students and lecturers.

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Keywords: *Social learning platforms, academic engagement, Office technology and management, Digital learning, Higher education, Nigeria*

Introduction

The advancement of digital technologies has significantly transformed educational practices globally, particularly within higher education institutions where technology-supported learning environments are increasingly replacing conventional teacher-centred instructional methods. Universities across the world are integrating digital platforms into teaching and learning processes to promote flexibility, collaboration, and improved learning outcomes. Social learning platforms have therefore emerged as important educational technologies that facilitate communication, interaction, collaboration, and knowledge sharing among students and instructors.

Social learning platforms refer to digital environments that combine social networking features with educational functionalities to support collaborative learning activities. These platforms provide opportunities for synchronous and asynchronous interaction, sharing of instructional resources, online discussions, group collaboration, assignment submission, and academic communication. Platforms such as Google Classroom, Moodle, WhatsApp, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Facebook Groups, and YouTube are increasingly utilised in higher education to enhance students' participation and engagement in learning activities.

Academic engagement is an important determinant of students' learning outcomes and academic success. It refers to the degree of students' psychological investment, participation, enthusiasm, and commitment toward academic activities. Academic engagement includes behavioural engagement, emotional engagement, and cognitive engagement. Behavioural engagement involves participation in classroom and learning activities, emotional engagement relates to students' interest and motivation toward learning, while cognitive engagement involves critical thinking and deep understanding of course content. Studies have shown that social learning platforms positively influence students' engagement and participation in learning activities. Adebayo and Yusuf (2021) found that social media learning environments improved students' communication, collaboration, and participation in academic activities among Nigerian university students. Similarly, Zhu and Chen (2022) established that digital learning environments significantly enhance students' interaction, motivation, and academic involvement. Hrastinski (2019) further noted that blended and digital learning environments encourage active participation and improve students' engagement beyond the physical classroom.

Within the context of Office Technology and Management (OTM), the integration of social learning platforms has become increasingly important. OTM is a practical-oriented discipline designed to equip students with managerial, communication, administrative, and technological competencies required in modern office environments. The programme requires extensive interaction, collaborative learning, practical demonstrations, communication skills, and technological competence. Consequently, the adoption of social learning platforms can significantly support instructional delivery and students' engagement within the discipline.

Despite the increasing adoption of social learning platforms in Nigerian universities, several challenges continue to hinder their effective utilisation. These include poor internet

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connectivity, irregular power supply, inadequate digital infrastructure, insufficient institutional support, and varying levels of digital literacy among students and lecturers. Furthermore, although studies have examined digital learning technologies in general educational contexts, limited empirical attention has been given to the influence of social learning platforms on academic engagement among OTM students in public universities in South-West Nigeria.

This study therefore investigated the influence of social learning platforms on academic engagement among Office Technology and Management students in public universities in South-West Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The increasing integration of technology into higher education has created opportunities for interactive and collaborative learning. However, many Office Technology and Management students in Nigerian public universities still experience low academic engagement arising from inadequate instructional innovations, limited access to digital learning tools, and insufficient collaborative learning environments. Although social learning platforms possess the potential to enhance students' academic participation and interaction, their utilisation within OTM programmes appears inconsistent and underexplored.

Many universities continue to rely heavily on conventional teaching methods that limit students' active involvement in learning activities. Consequently, students may experience reduced classroom interaction, poor communication with lecturers, and limited access to instructional materials. The extent to which social learning platforms influence academic engagement among OTM students in South-West Nigerian public universities therefore requires empirical investigation.

Purpose of the Study

The study sought to:

1. Examine the extent to which social learning platforms enhance academic engagement among OTM students.
2. Determine the relationship between frequency of social learning platform usage and students' academic engagement.
3. Identify the most frequently used social learning platforms among OTM students.
4. Examine challenges associated with the utilisation of social learning platforms.

Research Questions

1. To what extent do social learning platforms enhance academic engagement among OTM students?
2. What relationship exists between frequency of social learning platform usage and academic engagement?
3. Which social learning platforms are mostly utilised by OTM students?
4. What challenges affect the effective use of social learning platforms?

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Hypothesis

H01: There is no significant relationship between social learning platform usage and academic engagement among OTM students.

Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on the Social Constructivist Theory propounded by Lev Vygotsky (1978). The theory emphasises social interaction and collaborative learning as important components of knowledge construction. According to the theory, learning occurs through interaction, communication, and collaboration among learners within socially mediated environments.

Social learning platforms align with the assumptions of Social Constructivist Theory because they provide opportunities for students to interact with peers and lecturers, engage in collaborative discussions, share academic resources, and construct knowledge collectively. Through digital learning platforms, students actively participate in learning activities rather than remaining passive recipients of information.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to collect data from a large number of respondents regarding their perceptions and experiences relating to social learning platforms and academic engagement.

The population of the study comprised 558 undergraduate Office Technology and Management students from selected public universities in South-West Nigeria. The study covered universities offering accredited OTM programmes within the region.

A sample size of 468 respondents was selected using a multistage sampling procedure. At the first stage, purposive sampling technique was used to select public universities offering OTM programmes. At the second stage, stratified sampling technique was used to categorise students according to levels of study, while simple random sampling technique was employed to select respondents proportionately from each stratum.

Data were collected using a researcher-developed instrument titled “Social Learning Platforms and Academic Engagement Questionnaire (SLPAEQ).” The instrument consisted of five sections. Section A elicited respondents’ demographic information, while Sections B to E measured academic engagement, frequency of social learning platform usage, perceived usefulness, and challenges affecting the use of social learning platforms. The questionnaire contained 35 items measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5).

The instrument was subjected to face and content validation by experts in Business Education, Educational Technology, and Measurement and Evaluation. Their observations and recommendations were used to improve the clarity and relevance of the items.

The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha reliability technique. Reliability coefficients obtained for the various sections ranged from 0.78 to 0.91, indicating that the instrument possessed acceptable internal consistency for data collection.

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Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, mean, and standard deviation to answer research questions, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

Results and Discussion

Research Question One: To what extent do social learning platforms enhance academic engagement among OTM students?

Table 1: Academic engagement via social learning platforms among OTM students

s/n	Academic engagement via SLP	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	$\bar{x}$	S.D.
1	SLPs help me understand course content more clearly.	35 7.5%	38 8.1%	61 13.0%	269 57.5%	65 13.9%	3.62	1.06
2	I participate more actively in class-related activities when SLPs are used.	10 2.1%	52 11.1%	79 16.9%	242 51.7%	85 18.2%	3.73	0.96
3	I feel more motivated to learn when lecturers use digital platforms.	9 1.9%	48 10.3%	46 9.8%	255 54.5%	110 23.5%	3.87	0.95
4	SLPs help me stay consistent with deadlines and academic tasks.	42 9.0%	41 8.8%	60 12.8%	263 56.2%	62 13.2%	3.56	1.11
5	Online discussions keep me engaged with the course, even outside the classroom.	39 8.3%	38 8.1%	43 9.2%	269 57.5%	79 16.9%	3.66	1.11
6	I interact more with my peers academically when using SLPs.	16 3.4%	41 8.8%	68 14.5%	245 52.4%	98 20.9%	3.79	0.98
7	SLPs make learning more interesting and interactive.	5 1.1%	23 4.9%	59 12.6%	266 56.8%	115 24.6%	3.99	0.82
8	Using SLPs increases my sense of belonging to the academic community.	12 2.6%	29 6.2%	59 12.6%	260 55.6%	108 23.1%	3.90	0.91
9	SLPs encourage me to reflect more deeply on course content.	42 9.0%	41 8.8%	79 16.9%	257 54.9%	49 10.5%	3.49	1.08

Weighted Mean = 3.74

Table 1 showed that social learning platforms (SLPs) have a strong positive effect on academic engagement among Office Technology and Management (OTM) students, as reflected

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in the high weighted mean of 3.74. Majority (71.4%) of the respondents agreed that SLPs enhanced their understanding of course content (mean = 3.62) and increase active participation in class-related activities; 69.9% (mean = 3.73), indicating improved cognitive and behavioural engagement. Motivation to learn was also notably high, with 78.0% of students agreeing or strongly agreeing that digital platforms enhance their learning motivation (mean=3.87), while 69.4% reported improved consistency with academic deadlines and tasks (mean=3.56). Furthermore, students indicated that online discussions help sustain engagement outside the classroom; 74.4% (mean = 3.66) and that SLPs improve peer interaction; 73.3% (mean = 3.79), indicating their role in fostering collaborative learning. The highest-rated item showed that SLPs make learning more interesting and interactive; 81.4% (mean = 3.99), followed closely by increased sense of academic belonging; 78.7% (mean=3.90), indicating strong affective engagement. Hence, social learning platforms significantly enhanced Office Technology and Management students' cognitive, behavioural, and emotional engagement in academic activities.
The findings revealed that social learning platforms significantly enhanced academic engagement among Office Technology and Management students, with a weighted mean of 3.74. Respondents agreed that social learning platforms improved their understanding of course content, increased classroom participation, enhanced motivation toward learning, promoted consistency in academic tasks, and encouraged collaborative interaction with peers and lecturers. Students also indicated that online discussions sustained engagement beyond the classroom and strengthened their sense of belonging within the academic community.

Discussion of Findings for Research Question One

The findings suggest that social learning platforms positively influence students' behavioural, cognitive, and emotional engagement in learning activities. The ability of students to access learning resources, participate in online discussions, and communicate with lecturers and peers contributed significantly to their active participation in academic activities. The findings corroborate the study of Zhu and Chen (2022), who found that digital learning environments enhance students' participation, interaction, and motivation toward learning. Similarly, Afolabi and Olatunji (2020) reported that collaborative digital learning platforms improve communication, interaction, and students' academic involvement in higher education institutions. The findings further support the assumptions of Social Constructivist Theory, which emphasises social interaction and collaborative engagement as essential components of effective learning.

Research Question Two: What relationship exists between frequency of social learning platform usage and academic engagement?

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) showing the relationship between the frequency of using social learning platforms and academic engagement

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev.	n	r	p-value	Remarks
Frequency of using SLP	29.4038	4.5355	468	.608*	.001	Sig.
Academic engagement	33.6175	5.0226				

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

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Table 2 showed the findings of a Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis investigating the relationship between the frequency of using social learning platforms and academic engagement among Office Technology Management students in Public Universities. The table showed that there is a statistical significant relationship between frequency of using social learning platforms and academic engagement among students (r=.608, n=468, p(.001)<.05). Hence, the frequency of using social learning platforms positively influenced/enhanced academic engagement among Office Technology Management students in the study.
The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between frequency of using social learning platforms and academic engagement among OTM students ($r = .608$, $p < .05$). This indicates that increased usage of social learning platforms enhances students' engagement in academic activities.

Discussion of Findings for Research Question Two

The positive relationship between frequency of social learning platform usage and academic engagement implies that students who regularly utilise digital learning platforms are more likely to participate actively in classroom and academic activities. Frequent interaction with learning platforms provides students with opportunities for continuous communication, collaborative learning, and access to academic resources. The finding is consistent with Hrastinski (2019), who noted that frequent participation in online learning environments improves students' engagement and learning outcomes. Similarly, Gašević, Dawson, and Siemens (2015) found that active participation in digital collaborative environments significantly enhances students' academic experiences and classroom participation.

Research Question Three: Which social learning platforms are mostly utilised by OTM students?

Table 3: Frequency and extent of social learning platforms usage among Office Technology and Management Students

s/n	Frequency and extent of SLP usage	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	$\bar{x}$	S.D.
1	I log in to learning platforms several times a week to access class materials.	8 1.7%	20 4.3%	31 6.6%	274 58.5%	135 28.8%	4.09	0.82
2	I use social learning platforms (e.g., Google Classroom, Moodle, WhatsApp, Teams) frequently for my academic activities.	6 1.3%	15 3.2%	20 4.3%	249 53.2%	178 38.0%	4.24	0.78
3	I participate regularly in online discussions or group chats for academic purposes.	63 13.5%	25 5.3%	41 8.8%	257 54.9%	82 17.5%	3.58	1.23
4	I frequently upload assignments or	45 9.6%	49 10.5%	58 12.4%	258 55.1%	58 12.4%	3.50	1.13

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	projects using social learning platforms.							
5	I use SLPs to communicate academically with classmates and lecturers.	13 2.8%	78 16.7%	70 15.0%	227 48.5%	80 17.1%	3.60	1.04
6	I rely on SLPs to obtain lecture notes and course information.	36 7.7%	100 21.4%	77 16.5%	216 46.2%	39 8.3%	3.26	1.12
7	SLPs make it easier for me to collaborate on group assignments.	39 8.3%	44 9.4%	60 12.8%	268 57.3%	57 12.2%	3.56	1.09
8	I actively follow class updates and announcements through SLPs.	41 8.8%	46 9.8%	49 10.5%	263 56.2%	69 14.7%	3.58	1.12

Weighted Mean = 3.68

Table 3 showed that the frequency and extent of social learning platform (SLP) usage among Office Technology and Management students are generally high, with a weighted mean of 3.68, indicating regular engagement that supports academic participation. Majority of the respondents reported logging into platforms such as Google Classroom, Moodle, Microsoft Teams, and WhatsApp several times a week to access learning materials, with 87.3% agreeing (mean = 4.09), indicating strong routine usage. Similarly, 91.2% of students reported frequent use of SLPs for academic activities (mean = 4.24), showing very high dependence on these platforms for learning. Engagement in online discussions and group chats was also notable, with 72.4% students agreeing (mean = 3.58), though slightly lower than general usage, indicating moderate interaction in collaborative spaces. In addition, students reported consistent use of SLPs for uploading assignments; 67.5% (mean = 3.50), communication with peers and lecturers; 65.6% (mean = 3.60), and obtaining lecture materials; 54.5% (mean=3.26), although access to academic resources appeared less dominant compared to other uses. Furthermore, most of the respondents agreed that SLPs enhanced collaboration on group tasks; 69.5% (mean=3.56) and help them stay updated with class information; 70.9% (mean = 3.58).

Hence, students frequently and actively use social learning platforms for a wide range of academic purposes, particularly for accessing materials, communication, and collaboration. The findings showed that OTM students frequently used social learning platforms such as Google Classroom, Moodle, Microsoft Teams, and WhatsApp for academic purposes. The weighted mean of 3.68 indicated high usage of social learning platforms for accessing instructional materials, participating in online discussions, uploading assignments, communicating with lecturers and peers, and obtaining academic updates.

Discussion of Findings for Research Question Three

The findings indicate that social learning platforms have become integral components of students' academic activities in higher education. Students rely on these platforms for accessing lecture materials, communicating academically, and collaborating on assignments. The popularity

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of platforms such as WhatsApp and Google Classroom may be attributed to their accessibility, ease of use, flexibility, and interactive features. The findings align with the study of Adebayo and Yusuf (2021), which established that university students frequently utilise social media and collaborative digital platforms for communication and academic engagement.

Research Question Four: What challenges affect the effective use of social learning platforms?

Table 4: Challenges affecting students' use of social learning platform

s/n	Challenges affecting students	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	$\bar{x}$	S.D.
1	Many students lack the digital competence needed to use social learning platforms effectively.	36 7.7%	180 38.5%	36 7.7%	216 46.2%	-	2.92	1.12
2	Irregular power supply negatively affects students' engagement with SLPs.	36 7.7%	36 7.7%	-	324 69.2%	72 15.4%	3.77	1.09
3	Poor internet access reduces students' participation in online learning activities.	36 7.7%	36 7.7%	36 7.7%	216 46.2%	144 30.8%	3.85	1.21
4	Some students find it difficult to navigate SLP interfaces without assistance.	-	252 53.8%	72 15.4%	108 23.1%	36 7.7%	2.85	1.07
5	Overdependence on digital tools sometimes reduces students' concentration during learning.	36 7.7%	72 15.4%	36 7.7%	288 61.5%	36 7.7%	3.46	1.13
	Weighted Mean = 3.37							

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Table 4 showed that lecturers perceived several notable challenges affecting students' use of social learning platforms (SLPs). The most prominent challenges relate to infrastructural issues, as majority agreed that irregular power supply (mean = 3.77) and poor internet access (mean = 3.85) significantly hinder students' participation in online learning activities. These revealed a systemic barrier that limit the effective use of platforms such as Google Classroom and Microsoft Teams. Additionally, overdependence on digital tools was identified as a concern (mean = 3.46), with many lecturers noting that it may reduce students' concentration during learning. However, opinions were more divided regarding students' digital competence (mean = 2.92) and their ability to navigate platform interfaces (mean = 2.85), as a considerable proportion of respondents disagreed with these being major issues, suggesting that most students may already possess basic technological skills.

The findings revealed that poor internet access, irregular power supply, and overdependence on digital tools were major challenges affecting the effective use of social learning platforms. Respondents also indicated that digital competence and difficulty in navigating platform interfaces constituted moderate challenges.

Discussion of Findings for Research Question Four

The findings suggest that infrastructural deficiencies remain significant barriers to the effective utilisation of social learning platforms in Nigerian universities. Poor internet connectivity and unstable power supply limit students' participation in online learning activities and reduce access to digital instructional resources. The findings support the study of Owolabi and Ojo (2020), which identified inadequate digital infrastructure and inconsistent institutional support as major barriers to technology-enhanced learning in Nigerian universities. The findings also indicate the need for improved institutional investment in digital infrastructure and students' technological support services.

Hypothesis One

H01: There is no significant relationship between social learning platform usage and academic engagement among OTM students.

Table 5: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) showing the relationship between the use of social learning platforms and academic engagement

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	r	p-value	Remarks
Use of social learning platforms	22.5171	3.3659				
			468	.653*	.001	Sig.
Academic engagement	33.6175	5.0226				

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 5 showed the findings of a Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis investigating the relationship between the use of social learning platforms and academic engagement among Office Technology Management students in Public Universities. The table showed that there is a statistical significant relationship between use of social learning platforms and academic engagement among students (r=.653, n=468, p(.001)<.05). Hence, use of social

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learning platforms influenced/enhanced academic engagement among Office Technology Management students in the study. The hypothesis is rejected.

Discussion of Findings for Hypothesis One

The finding indicates that social learning platform usage significantly influences students' academic engagement. Increased utilisation of digital learning platforms enhances participation, communication, collaboration, and access to learning materials among students. This finding agrees with the work of Gašević et al. (2015), who found that collaborative digital learning platforms positively affect students' learning engagement and participation. The finding also reinforces the principles of Social Constructivist Theory, which emphasises that learning is enhanced through interaction, collaboration, and shared learning experiences.

Conclusion

The study concluded that social learning platforms significantly contribute to academic engagement among Office Technology and Management students in public universities in South-West Nigeria. The platforms enhance communication, collaborative learning, and accessibility to instructional materials, classroom participation, and students' motivation toward learning. The study further established that frequent utilisation of social learning platforms positively influences students' academic engagement. However, infrastructural challenges such as poor internet access and irregular power supply continue to affect the effective utilisation of these platforms.

Recommendations

1. University management should provide adequate internet facilities, digital infrastructure, and stable technological support systems to improve students' access to social learning platforms. This will enhance students' participation, communication, and engagement in academic activities.

2. Lecturers should integrate social learning platforms such as Google Classroom, Moodle, Microsoft Teams, and WhatsApp into instructional delivery to encourage collaborative learning, improve communication, and sustain students' engagement beyond the physical classroom.

3. University ICT units and academic departments should organise regular digital literacy training programmes for students and lecturers to improve their competence in using social learning platforms effectively for teaching and learning.

4. University administrators and policy makers should formulate institutional policies that support technology-enhanced learning and encourage the integration of digital instructional strategies into higher education practices.

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