Challenges and Opportunities of Utilization of Social Media by Business Education Students in Nigeria Universities

Titus Amodu Umoru

Titus Amodu Umoru, Associate Professor, is with the Department of Business Education, Kwara State University, Malete-Ilorin, Nigeria (phone: +234 803 3519 030; e-mail: umoruglo@yahoo.com).

Abstract—Global economy today is full of sophistication. All over the world, business and marketing practices are undergoing unprecedented transformation. In realization of this fact, the federal government of Nigeria has put in place a robust transformation agenda in order to put Nigeria in a better position to be a competitive player and in the process transform all sectors of its economy. New technologies, especially the Internet, are the driving force behind this transformation. However, technology has inadvertently affected the way businesses are done thus necessitating the acquisition of new skills. In developing countries like Nigeria, citizens are still battling with effective application of those technologies. Obviously, students of business education need to acquire relevant business knowledge to be able to transit into the world of work on graduation from school and compete favorably in the labor market. Therefore, effective utilization of social media by both teachers and students can help extensively in empowering students with the needed skills. Social media which is a group of Internet-based applications built on the ideological foundations of Web 2.0, that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content, and if incorporated into the classroom experience may be the needed answer to unemployment and poverty in Nigeria as beneficiaries can easily connect with existing and potential enterprises and customers, engage with them and reinforce mutual business benefits. Challenges and benefits of social media use in education in Nigeria universities were revealed in this study.

***Keywords*—**Challenges, opportunities, utilization, social media, business education.

I. INTRODUCTION

THE world has become a global village just as the global economy has become the center of every nation's marketing interest and activities. Reference [1] aims at ensuring that all countries, both developed and developing, have access to the best educational facilities necessary to prepare young people to play full roles in modern society and to contribute to a knowledge nation. As a result, nations are positioning their educational system to be part of the global economy and compete very favorably.

Global economy has become so sophisticated and as a result business and marketing practices are undergoing unprecedented transformation and no nation would want to be left behind. In realization of this fact, the federal government of Nigeria has put in place a robust transformation agenda in education intended to put Nigeria in a better position to be a competitive player and in the process transform all sectors of its economy. Universities in Nigeria recognize the fact that mastering the basic skills and concepts of new technologies as the core of education must be the major plank through which transformation agenda in education could be realized. This is because education is a catalyst for any meaningful change in the society. Education, according to [2] is the tool for integration of individual effectively into a society so that the individual can achieve self-realization, develop national consciousness, promote unity, and strive for social, economic, political, scientific, cultural, and technological process. In the opinion of [3], education is vital instrument that liberates the people from ignorance and stimulates development.

Business education is one vital program in Nigeria universities that has the capacity to bring about the required liberation and stimulation of the citizens for national development. Business education is an academic program intended to inculcate into the students understanding, values, knowledge, business skills, and technical skills required in the world of work and for teaching other business students. Specifically, the skills to be learned by business education students are technical, manipulative and thinking habits applied to social media tools and machines, tasks, procedures and operations. These skills are necessary to operate new technologies that social media platforms depend in the real world of work and are required globally by businesses, employees, and individuals. Reference [4] agreed with this position when she stated that business education inculcates in its recipients attitudes, knowledge, skills, values that are required in the world of work. Reference [5] further emphasized that business education improves personal qualities and builds the attitude of the individual that are necessary for adjustment to personal and employment situations and also provides knowledge, skills and competence for individuals to function well in office occupations and also create jobs for themselves and others. We can therefore, conclude that a well-trained business educator on graduation would be able to produce healthy, literate, skilled and selfreliant citizens as teachers or become effective and efficient producers of goods and services which businesses require as workers for businesses and employees or employers of labor as self-employed or entrepreneurs. The focus of this paper would be to determine the challenges and opportunities of utilizing social media which are important in equipping business education students in Nigeria universities with business and technical skills.

II. WHAT IS SOCIAL MEDIA?

Reference [6] defined social media as a group of Internet based application that allows the creation and exchange of user generated content. Reference [7] emphasized that social media is that means that

employs mobile and web based technology (web 2.o for instance) to create highly integrative platforms via which individuals and community share, create, discuss and modify users' generated content. Sometimes called social networking, social media is a collaboratively produced and shared media content to network communities. Reference [8] further explained that social networking sites are applications that enable users to connect by creating personal information profiles, inviting friends and colleagues to have access to those profiles, and sending e-mails and instant messages between each other. Giving examples of social media, [9] enumerated social network sites like *Facebook, Twitter, Linkedln, Google+, Internet forums, chat rooms* and *message boards* where people meet and discuss topics of interest, *Flickr* and *vimeo, blogs, wikis,* and *social book marking*. Since the year 2000, the world has been witnessing exponential presence of social networking sites which continues to drive interaction of individuals and organizations that have common interest, not only in music, movies, friendship, but in education and business relations. Among social network based sites launched in 2000 according to [10] were *Lunarstom, six degrees, cyworld, Wikipedia* and *ryze*. In 2001, *fotolog, sky blog* and *Friendster* were launched and in 2003, *Myspace, Linkedln, Lastfm, tribe.net* and *Hi5* came along. In 2004, *Facebook Harvard, Dogster* and *Mixi* evolved and in 2005, *Yahoo 360, YouTube, Cyword* and *black planet* emerged. Reference [6] categorized social media into seven types each indicating the purpose for which it could be utilized: collaborative projects (Wikipedia); Blogs and micro blogs (*Twitter)*; social news networking sites (*Digg and Leakernet*); content communities (*YouTube* and *Daily motion)*; social networking sites (*Facebook)*; virtual game worlds (world of *warcraft*); and virtual social worlds (*second Life)*. Meanwhile, it does seem that very thin line exists regarding what uses these sites could be put as many of the sites are amenable to multiple applications.

III. CHALLENGES OF SOCIAL MEDIA USE IN UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

For several years, the issue of social media utilization in the classroom has been debatable and controversial. For instance [11] reported that many parents and educators have been fearful of the repercussions of having social media in the classroom. Many reasons account for this. For instance, according to [12] there has been reports of poor effect and influence when the media is overused in such a way that do not academically improve learning or its process. In another study, [13] found that no significant relationship existed between using social networking and student academic performance. Earlier, [14] found really a factor in students' academic performance. It was believed in Nigeria, according to [15] that use of social media is detrimental to students' academic work and that *Facebook* users often time experience poor performance academically. This was supported by Englander and [16] who claimed that social media is negatively associated with academic performance of student and is a lot more momentous than its advantages. Reference [17] also condemned social media dependence as

they claimed that impairment of educational performance and Internet dependence are correlated by utilizing synchronous communication programs including Internet sites and forums.

Despite the fact that the world is latching onto the opportunities of new technologies exemplified by social media, university teachers in Nigeria continue to rely heavily on seminars, conferences, and workshops. These traditional approaches simply inform and educate but do not equip recipients with technical competencies which are required to drive implementation of social media, and in fact, new technology-laced curriculum. As proved by [18]-[21], fleeting in duration and narrow in focus, the series of workshops, meetings and institutes that were often pre-determined have generally not been very successful in enhancing teacher knowledge and improving student achievement.

In Nigeria, many business education teachers lack competence in new technology application as a result of which they face their work with fear and trepidation. Furthermore, the students of this generation are adept and superbly familiar with new technologies, especially social media platforms. This situation compounds teachers' problems as they are challenged the more to adopt and as a result they become isolated and confused. In order to alleviate, collaboration becomes inevitable. Reference [22] found out that collaboration with other teachers allows educators to escape the confines of their classroom, share ideas, and solve problems thus helping them to develop a sense of belongingness and purpose. This report was supported by [23] whose study revealed that collaboration in the 21st century permits teachers to connect with colleagues around the world. However, according to [24] "things have changed across the globe as new technologies with all their regular innovations are creating new environments for training, learning and interactive discussions" (p. 1). He emphasized that new technology, particularly m-learning, "is opening paths that are transforming our ways of living, the way we act, think, learn

and communicate" (p. 1). These innovations represented by social media being one of the new technologies has significantly diminished barriers, especially of distance and space, as a result of which valuable information like course contents can be created, modified and delivered in far-flung areas for the benefit of teachers and students across countries and continents. This is what globalization aims to achieve – to bring about increasing relationships of culture, people, and economic activity. Unfortunately, in Nigerian universities the situation remains more or less the same. The reasons for this apathy in adoption of social media in the classroom shall form the basis of our continued discussion. In developed world evidence, abound on the utilization of social media in the classroom. The utilization of social media has gone beyond social sharing to building reputation and bringing in career opportunities and monetary income to users [25]. According to [26] one-third of the world's adult population – most living in developing world – has no access to printed knowledge, new skills, and technologies that could improve the qualities of their lives. While Nigeria has appreciable printed knowledge and mobile phones

– nearly all university students own cell phones – the use of these phones for learning remains clearly undefined. Yet, according to [27] of the many different forms of information and communication technologies, mobile phones are thought, for several reasons, to be a particularly suitable tool for advancing education in developing regions. The challenges of embedding business education skills identified already in this study in business education subjects using social media as the medium lies squarely on business teachers. Business education subjects offered in Nigerian universities lack clearly stated strategy for harnessing the benefits of social media. Reference [28] reported this problem in a statement that despite the rapid growth of e-learning industry, most educational institutions lack consolidated and comprehensive curricula for training of learners and professionals. Other limitations in the use of social media which are challenges not only to universities in Nigeria but which cut across the world are varied. Critics argue that use of social media causes distraction and leads to cyber bulling. In a survey by [29] on how faculty in post-secondary institutions uses social media, it was found that two percent of faculty members used *Twitter* in class, and nearly half thought that doing so would negatively affect learning. In the same survey, it was reported that lack of faculty training was stated as a barrier to using social media as this created lack of confidence in using the technology. In Nigeria, programs aimed at consistent approach in training business teachers do not exist as professionals rely on personal development.

Furthermore, lack of institutional support from local administrators and officials at a district or university level was revealed by the survey as barrier to implementing social media. As mentioned already, no kind of institutional support exists in Nigerian universities except sponsorship to conferences and workshops which we earlier referred to as traditional methods of learning. Again, the issue of privacy concerns about the nature of shared information on social media is another challenge. Other challenges affecting social media use by business educators include incessant strikes by teachers in Nigerian universities that culminated into thirtyfour months of lockout between 1996 and 2013. This meant that time available for studies was limited and inadequate for coverage of the curriculum, let alone adapting social media. Other concerns include the menace of insurgents in the form of 'Boko Haram' targeted at students. Schools in the northern part of Nigeria have been deserted while over three million people including youth of school age are in various refugee camps in other parts of Nigeria where there is relative peace. In the southern part of the country, particularly in the east, people are being kidnapped making normal studies impossible. Critical infrastructure such as electricity needed to power technologies used for social media activities has been inadequate. When cell phone batteries cannot be charged as required due to lack of electricity, it is hard to imagine how students can possibly use their cell phones for social networking that normally take very long periods.

IV. OPPORTUNITIES OF SOCIAL MEDIA USE IN EDUCATION

What has become clear to managers of our educational system in Nigeria including teachers and students is that the world has gone digital, current and future education processes would not change course from that direction. Moreover, the traditional approaches on their own without the application of new technologies to teaching and learning, in one form or another cannot produce the desired result. With the advent of new technologies especially the Internet, business organizations and individuals have embraced the use of social media in particular for the purposes of interaction, socialization and public relations. Web 2.0 seems to be the most popular tool utilized in creating the platforms for social convergence. Since the development of Web 2.0, [30] claimed that there has been a massive increase in web based traffic which could be loosely called social networking. The growing social media presence of individuals and students and educators in particular has made social media attractive to teachers and students. For avoidance of doubt, [31] reported that for October, 2012 alone, users of *Facebook* surpassed one billion. Perhaps, this is the reason that teachers have started thinking differently about the direction learning should take and which has necessitated the pace at which teachers are incorporating social media into academic curricula. According to [32], social media can collect discussions about curriculum, content, delivery, and classroom management and also function as a place where business education teachers can share classroom happenings, reflect on their classroom

practices, go back to the classroom, and make improvements. Furthermore, the dynamic nature of social media platforms if adopted effectively would be helpful in addressing many of the challenges posed by the traditional methods. This was supported by [18], [21], [32] who found in separate studies that social media can be seen as creating informal opportunities for teachers to engage on professional development that is ongoing, collaborative, easily accessible and free. Business education teacher must not only take charge of what happens in the traditional classroom but also endeavor to collaborate with colleagues in the utilization of new technologies to enhance studies and support student learning. In particular, business education teachers need to use these social networking sites to connect to colleagues in creating an interactive environment where discussions, ideas, feedbacks, instructional strategies, opportunities, practices and new directions can be established. Research reports [31], [33] indicated positive correlation between social media and students' enduring interest in knowledge acquisition. Reference [34] agreed with [31] and [33] that social technologies support social constructivist techniques to

learning, potentially improve students' construction of understanding, and promote student interaction. Fortunately, the implementation of social media in a classroom is affordable. According to [35] an additional benefit of social technologies provided on the Internet is that they are frequently free or require marginal investment, eliminating potential barrier to adoption. Similarly, [36] found that the driving force for adoption of social media is the progressively

ubiquitous access, convenience, functionality, and flexibility of social technologies. Social networking, incorporating Web 2.0 technologies has been created with the ability to increase social contacts, hasten business operations, the betterment of customer relations, facilitation of innovation and favorable pricing, and advantageous recruitment of highly competent staff [37].

Enterprises now base their advertisements on social media rather than the traditional methods due to the changing nature of advertising. Reference [38] emphasized this when he stated that advertising is fast changing and businesses need to understand the use of Internet technologies in order to remain relevant. This is because according to [39] social media allows an enterprise to connect with both existing and potential customers, engage with them and reinforce a sense of community around the enterprises' offering(s). Having access to talented new employees who will improve the productivity and efficiency of the business is important in the adoption of

social media tools of any business [40]. Employees who understand social media are needed by businesses nowadays. They are agents of change in customer relationship management. They are positives because they drive conversations between the organization and the customers.

According to [41] all businesses need to capitalize on having employees that can tap into the potentials that Internet technologies have to offer.

V. CONCLUSION

The need to prepare business education students to fit into the world of work in the 21st century and beyond and combat unemployment menace in Nigeria is the major reason that social media skills must be acquired by them. Business education graduates need these skills to be able to compete in the global economy either for personal survival or for creation of wealth which the nation requires for development. Although challenges militating against the adoption of social

media in education are numerous, they are not insurmountable. This study revealed the opportunities social media could offer if teachers and students of business education in Nigeria universities can effectively adopt these technologies in their studies.

VI. RECOMMENDATION

1. University authorities should ensure the continuous review of business education curriculum so as facilitate the use of social media technologies.
2. The Federal Government of Nigeria should fund the universities so that they can adequately equip classrooms with the required social media technologies.
3. Nigeria Communication Commission should provide broadband width to improve network connectivity.
4. Regulation of cell phone use by students is necessary to avoid distraction.

5. Business education teachers should collaborate with colleagues across universities in order to improve social media practices in the classroom.
6. All business education classrooms and libraries should be connected to the Internet.

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