

**LEARNING ECONOMICS USING SOCIALMEDIA NETWORKS DURING
COVID-19 ERA: EXPERIENCES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN
ENUGU METROPOLIS, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic which started in late 2019 is a very big constraint to many sectors of the economy, especially the education sector and has affected every aspect of people's lives. Schools in Nigeria and other parts of the world have shut down due to this pandemic which made some schools engage in e-learning through social media sites. Some Secondary school students including Economics students are in their various home learning throughWhatsapps, Zoom, WebEx, etc using different technological devices such as smartphones, computers among others and gaining new learning experiences. Hence, this study investigated secondary school Economics students' experiences in learning Economics through social media in this Covid-19 era. This study is a survey and purposive sampling was used to sample only 83 Economics students from SS 1 and SS 11 Economics students in Enugu metropolis who are opportune to engage in e-learning. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. Mean and the standard deviation was used to analyse the data collected. The findings of this study revealed that Economics students are more comfortable with e-learning but find it difficult learning quantitative Economics topic. This according to them is due to inadequate feedback from the teachers. The findings also revealed that challenges with learning through this social mediums are insufficient mobile data due to lack of fund and epileptic power supply among others. It was recommended that the government should improve the state of power supply in Nigeria to enable students to learn effectively since Covid-19 has increased the rate at which people use technological devices for a better living also that feedback should be provided at all stage of learning through social mediums to allow for more understanding of not only the theoretical economics contents but also the qualitative contents.

Keywords: Economics, Social Media, Learning, Covid-19, Secondary school

Introduction

Economics is one of the social sciences that deals with human relationships and how individual utilize the available scarce resources to maximize his/her unlimited wants. It is a study that concerns everyone both government, society, household and individual. Eneogu, EjimonyeUgwuanyi and Nji (2019) defined Economics as a discipline that directs people on how to utilize limited scarce resources to satisfy unlimited wants. This implies that Economics knowledge and skills are needed to manage the available scarce resources. According to Sharma (2012), Economics is a subject that deals with laws and principles that regulate the whole economy. This means that secondary school students should be equipped with the Economics principles and laws which guide and direct them on how to deal with Economics activities. Moreover, Economics is one of the senior secondary school subjects which educate the students on how to face Economics problems and also how government manage and execute her income and expenditures for better governance. Economics is taught with different instructional techniques such as Field trip technique, Concept mapping, Simulation, Cooperative learning, Powerpoint technique among others. The teaching and learning of Economics and the entire Education system was interrupted due to the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic.

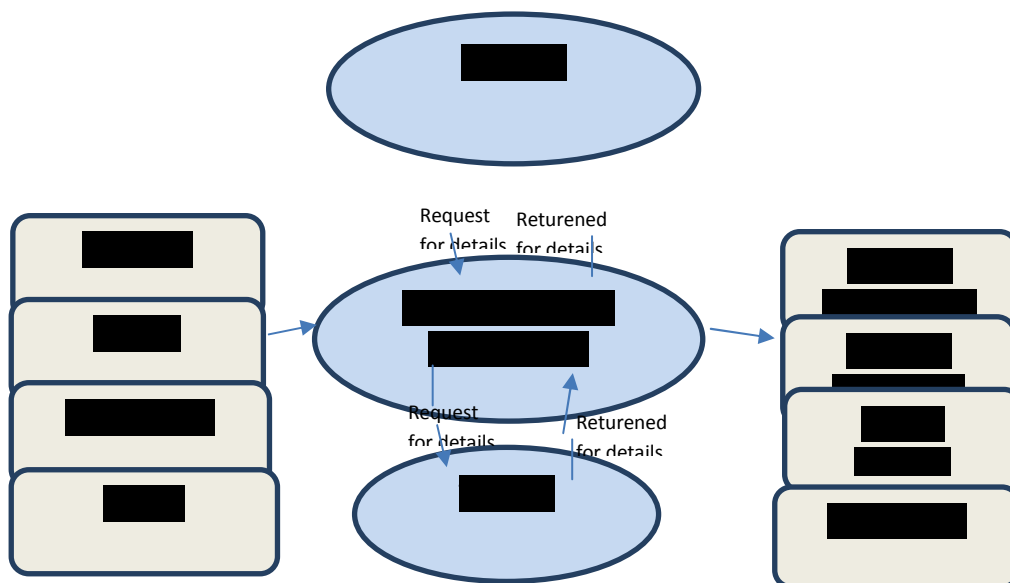
Covid-19 pandemic started in Nigeria on February 27, 2020, from an Italian that came for a business trip in Nigeria. This caused an alarm to everybody especially the Nigerian Centre for Disease Control (NCDC). The Italian visited other states in Nigeria before he was proved to be positive for Covis-19 (Amzat, Aminu, Kolo,Akinyele, Ogundeiro and Danjibo, 2020). Since then, he spread of the disease started increasing drastically which led to the closure of schools both primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. Coronavirus was declared as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) and it has spread almost many countries. It is transmitted through direct contact with a respiratory droplet of an infected person. Consequently, starting from February 27th to 31st March 2020, the number of confirmed cases was 139 and presently, the total number of infected persons in Nigeria mounted 53, 477, recovered 41,017 and death 1,011 (NCDC, 2020, www.ncdc.gov.ng). Students are at home during the period of locked down without any formal teaching protecting themselves from contracting the deadly disease of coronavirus because they are the future hope of the society. Moreover, the school environment needs to be protected also and secure to maintain the necessary hygiene. Students in their various home are busy doing house chores, playing, watching Television, sleeping among others. This could make them lazy and also forget what they have already learnt. The unfortunate group are the exit classes because of the external examinations. UNESCO reported that some students engaged themselves in playing board games, video games and watching movies during this Covid-19 locked down (UNESCO, 2020). The effect of Covid-19

affected the education system in Nigeria because everything is now stagnant. Some teachers have changed their occupation to become traders looking for what they will do and earn their living. The worst part of it is that no organization is paying salary and this has made the rate of unemployment to escalate everyday. There is need to revitalize teaching technique, especially during this period most of the schools are close and engage students in learning through technological sites such as Whatsapp, Zoom, You-tube and other means of on-line teaching to load students with information of what is happening within their environment and engage them in continuous learning.

Despite the challenges of lockdown because of the Covid-19 pandemic, some schools in Nigeria, especially in Enugu metropolis, were courageously together with the parents initiated the use of social media network in teaching and learning. Although, Nigeria has been facing some challenges like the inadequate supply of electricity and incompetency in using technological devices the Covid-19 pandemic has escalated the use of technological devices globally in such a way that many people have welcomed on-line for businesses and activities including education industry. Social media network has come to stay and it is a modern culture which many people found effective especially during this Covid-19 pandemic. Presently, students use social media for games and conversations but now they have experienced it in teaching and learning.

Operationally, social media network is a site that enables students to share, create and transmit information to the users that are near and far for easy facilitation of learning. Lau (2016) defined social media as software that enables an individual to create and share content. Lau, Luis and Chu (2016) observed that social media increases students capacity to create and raises their interest in their academic subjects. This shows that students can interact with professionals such as teachers and scholars through social media. Social media network include Whatsapp, Zoom, Twitter, Blogs among others which are very useful for educational purposes and can engage students in learning effectively. Social media network could have lots of benefits in teaching especially in terms of references and also could engage students by improving their understanding of seeking more information in their field of study. Lagaree (2015) enumerated the benefits of social media which include, fast sharing of resources, heighten communication between students and teachers, improve collaborations among students, it exposes students to technologies among others. In contrast with this Lau (2016) indicated that social media can lead to unfitting interactions between teacher and students during teaching and learning. Abdelraheem and Ahmed (2015) revealed that social media assists students to understand the lesson through their discussions.





Source: Modified Lan et al. (2011) and Sobaih and Moustafa (2016)

The above diagram shows the interrelationship between students, social media network and the teacher. It also depicts how students react when using social media network for teaching and learning. This shows that some students will be passive while some will be active during learning.

Gender is a significant variable in this study. Gender is defined as the behavior of male and female in the education system. Lips (2017) defines gender as behaviours males and females exhibit in their thinking, actions and feelings. This implies that male has different characteristics with females. Moreover, the behaviour of male and female during teaching and learning differ likewise their feelings. Scholars have shown that there are significant gender differences in cognitive functioning and achievement. Boys outscore in some tests while girls outscore in the other. (Degol, Wang, Zhang & Allerton, 2018; Chiu & Chow, 2015). Some scholars also believe that boys are more inclined to operate technological devices than female. This study is sought to find out the experiences of male and female Economics students during Covid-19 era when learning Economics using social media networking.

Few studies have investigated the use of social media in teaching and learning with benefits and barriers. In a study of Neieh and Zayer (2015) on students' perceptions and experiences of social media in higher institutions. 276 participants were used. Questionnaire and in-depth interviews were also used for data collections. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze that data. The findings reviewed that students viewed social media as a tool for conversations and expressions of ideas. Again, social media was found as a potential educational tool in learning outside the classroom. Sobaih, Moustafa and Ghandforoush (2016) assessed on To use or not to use? Social media in higher education in developing countries. The sample size for the study was 190 participants. Questionnaire and In-depth interviews were used for data collection. The findings revealed that social media have value for teaching and learning which means that it is an effective tool. Although, one of the challenges is poor internet

facilities which may affect learning. Ejimonye and Eneogu (2019) in a study on Educational use and misuse of smartphones among Economics students in Tertiary institutions in Enugu State indicated 764 Economics students as a total population while the sample size was 300 Economics students both Federal and State University. A questionnaire called Educational use and misuse of smartphones was constructed. Mean and percentages were used to analyze the data. The findings revealed that Economics students use their smartphones for educational purposes.

Based on the literature above, social media network are mostly used by an undergraduate in higher institutions than secondary school students developing countries including Nigeria before Covid-19 era. Covid-19 has given secondary school students to experience the use of social media in teaching and learning. None to the knowledge of the researchers has investigated the use of social media network in teaching and learning of Economics in secondary schools. Thus, the current study assessed learning Economics using social media networks during Covid-19 era in secondary schools in Enugu Metropolis.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the social media networks in use in learning Economics in this Covid-19 era by secondary school students in Enugu Metropolis
2. What are the experiences of secondary school students with learning Economics through social media networks in Covid-19 era?
3. What are the challenges faced by students in learning Economics through social media networks in Covid-19 era?
4. What is the students' perception of strategies of learning Economics through social media networks?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the mean experiences of male and female secondary school students with learning Economics through social media networks in Covid-19 era.
2. The challenges faced by male and female students in learning Economics through social media networks in Covid-19 era will not differ significantly.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean perception of male and female students on strategies of Learning Economics through social media networks.

Method

The study adopted a descriptive research design. The population of the study comprised all the 4,256 SS 1 and SS2 secondary school Economics students in Enugu Metropolis, Enugu State Nigeria. Purposive sampling was used to draw 83 Economics students since not all of them had the opportunity to participate in the social media network learning due to Covid-19 pandemic challenges. Also, purposive sampling

technique was chosen because gender is an intervening variable. The choice of the classes was that these students are not preparing for external examination and they will have the opportunity to participate in the research. The questionnaire named Learning Economics using social media network during Covid-19 era was designed by the researchers with a four (4)- point rating scale of strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), strongly disagree (1) which was adopted and use for data collection. Section A of the instrument was for personal data while section B has three clusters with 4- point Likert scale. The questionnaire was validated by two experts from the Department of Social Science Education and one expert in measurement and evaluation from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha and the reliability coefficient of 0.79 was obtained which indicated that the instrument was reliable. The questionnaire was administered online to the participants who are at their various home. The questionnaire was collected from the respondents through their WhatsApp. The researchers followed-up and make such that the participants respond until they got up to 83respondents. The data were analysed using SPSS-21. The mean above 2.50 indicated that the respondents agreed for the positive side and below 2.50 disagreed. For the negative side, 2.50 above indicated that the respondents disagreed with the item and below 2.50 indicated that the respondents agreed.

Results

The results of this study were obtained based on the research questions answered and the hypotheses. The research questions and the hypotheses are presented on the below tables:

Research Question One

What are the social media networks in use in learning Economics in this Covid-19 era by secondary school students in Enugu Metropolis?

Table 1: Frequency and percentage on social media networks used in learning Economics in this COVID-19 era

S/N	Items	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cum percentage	N	Perce nt	Valid perce nt	Cum Perce nt	Total
1	Facebook	7	8.4	8.4	8.4	76	91.6	91.6	100.0	100.0
2	Whatsapp	73	88.0	88.0	88.0	10	12.0	12.0	100.0	100.0
3	Zoom	5	6.0	6.0	6.0	78	94.0	94.0	100.0	100.0
4	Linkin	7	8.4	8.4	8.4	76	91.6	91.6	100.0	100.0

5	Blogs	2	2.4	2.4	2.4	81	97.6	97.6	100.0	0
6	Google	8	9.6	9.6	9.6	75	90.4	90.4	100.0	0
7	Twitter	0	0	0	0	83	100.0	100.0	100.0	0
8	Youtube	0	0	0	0	83	100.0	100.0	100.0	0

Total no of frequency = 83

Table 1 shows that item 2 had a high percentage of 88%, this indicates that a good number of students used Whatsapp in learning Economics during Covid-19 era. On the other hand, items 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 indicate that a low percentage of students used them during Covid-19 era. None of the students uses twitter and Youtube in learning Economics during Covid-19 era.

Research question Two

What are the experiences of secondary school students with learning Economics through social media networks in Covid-19 era?

Table 2: Mean rating and the standard deviation of the responses on the experiences of secondary school students with learning Economics through social media network in COVID-19

S/N	Items	Mean	Sd	Decision
1	Learning with social media makes me lazy	2.83	0.85	Disagreed
2	It is more interesting learning Economics through this media due to its convenience	2.87	0.88	Agreed
3	Learning through Social media makes me learn at my own pace	2.98	0.91	Agreed
4	My inability to ask questions for clarifications in Quantitative Economics makes me prefer classroom learning	3.20	0.92	Disagreed
5	Difficult to understand some topics due to limited feedback	3.28	0.80	Disagreed
6	Learning Economics with social media is more resourceful due to its flexibility	2.66	0.86	Agreed
7	I can understand all the topics very well in learning with social media	2.13	0.94	Disagreed
8	There is no distraction in learning Economics with social media	2.12	0.77	Disagreed

9	I enjoy doing my assignment with social media at my own time	3.11	0.75	Agreed
10	I can always go back to learnt material at my convenience to understand concepts	3.33	0.3	Agreed
Grand Mean		2.85	0.37	

The grand of 2.85 indicates that students had both positive and negative experiences in learning Economics during Covid-19 era. Items 2,3,6,9 and 10 reveal that students found social media interesting and convenience and it helps them to learn at their own pace since it is resourceful and flexible. Moreover, social media allows students to do their assignment at their own pace and they go back and view materials at a convenient time. Contrary, Items 1,4, 5,7 and 8 reveal that students had negative experiences in learning Economics through social media during COVID-19 era

Hypotheses 1

There is no significant difference in the mean experiences of male and female secondary school students with learning Economics through social media networks in Covid-19 era

Table 3: Summary of t-test analysis of the difference between the mean ratings of male and female Economics students learning experiences through social media.

S/N	Status	N	Mean	SD	Levels of Sig	t	Df	De
1	Male	7	2.86	0.44	0.05	0.06	81	Accepted
2	Female	76	2.85	0.37				

The results in table 3 show that there is no significant difference in male and female experiences in learning Economics through social media during Covid-19 era. Therefore, the null hypotheses were not rejected. This is because the t-value 0.06 is greater than 0.05 level of significance. Thus, learning experiences of male and female Economics students with social media during Covid-19 era did not differ significantly.

Research Question Three

What are the challenges faced by students in learning Economics through social media networks in Covid-19 era?

Table 4: Mean rating and the standard deviation of the responses on the challenges faced by students in learning Economics through social media networks

S/N	Items	Mean	Sd	Decision
1	Use of Social media in learning Economics is boring.	2.81	0.85	Agreed
2	Inadequate supply of electricity	3.08	0.93	Agreed
3	No room for further explanation	3.17	0.75	Agreed
4	I cannot interact with my classmate during learning	3.16	0.80	Agreed
5	I cannot understand mathematics Economics concepts with social media like graph, tables and calculations	3.47	0.80	Agreed
6	The high cost of data	3.18	0.78	Agreed
7	Difficulty in uploading an assignment	3.04	0.92	Agreed
8	My questions are not answered well	2.98	0.81	Agreed
9	My parents cannot afford enough data bundle for me	2.57	0.97	Agreed
10	I do not have good electronic devices like a phone or computer to join the class	2.20	0.96	Disagreed
Grand Mean		2.97	0.48	

The grand mean of 2.97 shows that students faced challenges in item 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 in learning Economics during COVID-19 era.

Hypotheses Two

The challenges faced by male and female students in learning Economics through social media networks in Covid-19 era will not differ significantly.

Table 5: Summary of t-test analysis of the difference between the mean ratings of male and female students challenges faced in learning Economics through social media networks in Covid-19 era.

S/N	Status	N	Mean	SD	Levels of Sig	t	Df	De
1	Male	7	3.04	0.24	0.05	0.45	81	Accepted
2	Female	76	2.96	0.50				

The results in table 5 show that the challenges faced by male and female students in learning Economics through social media networks in Covid-19 era did not

differ significantly. The t-value 0.45 is greater than 0.05 level of significance. So, the null hypotheses were accepted

Research Question Four

What are the students' perception of strategies of learning Economics through social media networks

Table 6: Mean rating and the standard deviation of the responses on the students' perception of strategies of learning Economics through social media networks

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	Sd	Decision
1	Social media enhances the dissemination of information about the courses and time table	3.28	0.89	Agreed
2	Social media promotes immediate feedback from the lecturer for clarification on topics	3.06	0.65	Agreed
3	Social media allow students to approach the teacher/staff more easily and ask questions	2.67	0.77	Agreed
4	The use of Social media motivates me to work harder in the subject	2.65	0.93	Agreed
5	The use of Social media increases my interest in Economics topics	2.31	0.90	Disagreed
6	Topics are understandable when learning with social media.	2.39	0.88	Disagreed
7	The use of Social media allows me to express my opinions and views	2.18	0.78	Disagreed
8	Social media facilitates learning of the theoretical aspect of economics	2.51	0.97	Agreed
9	Learning Economics with social media is easy to use	2.81	0.74	Agreed
10	It is good to use social media for learning	2.70	0.96	Agreed
Grand Mean		2.66	0.49	

The result in the table 6 reveals that the students agreed to items 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9 and 10 and disagreed to item 5, 6 and 7. This shows that Economics students perceive social media as having a positive impact in dissemination of information, immediate feedback, approacher teacher more easilt, motivates to work harder and easy to use. Contrary, students perceive that topics are not understandable in learning Economics with social media.

Hypothese 3:

There is no significant difference in the mean perception of male and female students on strategies of Learning Economics through social media networks.

Table 7: Summary of t-test analysis of the difference between the mean ratings of male and female Economics students perception on the strategies of learning Economics through social media.

S/N	Status	N	Mean	SD	Levels of Sig	t	Df	De
1	Male	7	2.83	0.27	0.05	0.78	81	Accepted
2	Female	76	2.64	0.50				

The results in Table 7 show that there is a significant difference between mean perception of male and female Economics students on the strategies of learning Economics through social media. The t-value 0.78 is greater than 0.05 level of significance. Thus, the null hypotheses was accepted. Therefore, male and female Economics students perception on the strategies of learning Economics through social media did not differ.

Discussion of Results

The findings of this study show that most of the secondary school Economics students used Whatsapp in learning Economics during Covid-19 era. The number of those that use other social media network are insignificant. Using only Whatsapp in learning may not explain in detail the concept especially the concept that involve mathematical skills. Moreover, Whatsapp has a limited space which may not contain enough space for note. On the contrary, Neier and Zayer (2015) observed that students perceive Youtube valuable in enhancing learning. Covid-19 has increased the use of technological device in such a way that many people has found that you can stay wherever you are and learn. This is a good opportunity in Education industry to improve and encourage the use of the technological device by providing quality of device need for effective delivery of instruction.

The findings also showed that students identify both positive and negative experiences in learning Economics with social media during Covid-19 era which includes: increase interest in learning Economics, learn at their own pace, more resourceful due to its flexibility, allow them to do their assignment at their convenient time, view their materials at any time. In another way, students indicated that social media makes them difficult to ask questions for classifications in quantitative Economics and it is difficult to understand some topics due to its limited feedback. To teach quantitative Economics with Whatsapp will not give the teacher forum to clarify mathematical skills.

The findings of this study identified some challenges faced by students in learning Economics using social media to include: boring, inadequate supply of

electricity, no room for explanation, lack of interaction with a classmate during learning, incomprehensive mathematics Economics concepts, high cost of data, difficulty in uploading assignment, questions not answered well, lack of provision of enough data. These findings agreed with Lau(2016) who observed that social media causes inappropriate interaction between teachers and students, cyberbullying, affect students sense of belonging. Students need to be monitored and guided on how to use social media in learning in order to improve effective learning with technological devices.

The findings on students' perception on the strategies of learning Economics using social media identified: dissemination of information about the courses and time table, immediate feedback from the lecturer for clarification on topics, allow students to approach the teacher easily and ask questions, motivate students to workhard, facilitates learning of theoretical aspect of Economics, easy to use. The findings were in line with Lambic (2016) who identified that social media has a positive effect on students learning and it gives them a sense of familiarity, gets answers to their questions from students and teachers, spent less time gathering information. Social media has come to stay in the educational system thereby students should be guided properly on how to use it for effective learning.

Conclusion

Covid-19 pandemic has disorganised every sector of the economy including the education sector. Schools were shut down to protect the life of the people in society but for continuous learning, technological pedagogy has paved the way to engage both students and teachers in learning. Some schools embraced social media network and students and teachers interact with it and made effective teaching and learning. Therefore, social media has come to stay. School administrators and teachers should encourage student by educating them to know the skills involve in using social media for a better outcome.

Recommendations

1. Principals should organise seminar or workshops to train secondary school students on how to use social media for effective delivery of instructions.
2. Ministry of Education should assist secondary schools by providing the necessary technological devices and software needed for effective online teaching since the use of technological devices escalating in all sectors of the economy as a result of the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic.
3. There is a need to use social media networks in teaching and learning even after the Covid-19 pandemic era.

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