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Social Media Utilisation and Entrepreneurial Development among Undergraduate Students in Public Universities in Osun state, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between social media utilisation and entrepreneurial development among undergraduates in government universities in Osun State. The study was guided by six objectives, five research questions, and one research hypothesis. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. Using the Research Advisor (2006) table, a sample size of 291 was determined from a total population of 1,319. Proportionate sampling was used to select 177 final-year (400L) undergraduates from Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) and 114 from Osun State University (UNIOSUN), totaling 291 respondents. Data were collected using a researcher-developed instrument titled "Social Media and Entrepreneurial Activities Questionnaire (SMEAQ)."Face and content validity were established by experts in Entrepreneurship Education. Instrument reliability was determined through a pilot test with 20 undergraduates outside the main sample, yielding Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.70 and 0.81. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (percentages, means, decision rule) and inferential statistics (Pearson Product Moment Correlation). Findings revealed that undergraduates extensively use social media for entrepreneurial activities, significantly increasing opportunity awareness, product marketing, and overall student development. A significant positive relationship was found between social media usage and entrepreneurial development. The study recommended that government and university authorities enhance campus internet infrastructure and offer subsidized data. Additionally, student entrepreneurs should be encouraged to leverage social media for product promotion, customer engagement, market research, and networking to expand their ventures.

Keywords: Social media, Entrepreneurial activities, undergraduate students, government-owned universities, unemployment.

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Introduction

The emergence of information and communication technology (ICT) has transformed the way people communicate, learn, interact, and conduct business activities across the world. Among the most significant technological innovations of the twenty-first century is social media, which has become an indispensable tool for communication, networking, information sharing, and business promotion. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, X, TikTok, and WhatsApp have revolutionized entrepreneurship by providing individuals and organizations with opportunities to reach wider audiences, advertise products and services, and build customer relationships at relatively low costs. Social media has evolved beyond its original social networking function to become a powerful instrument for business growth and entrepreneurial development.

Adebayo (2015) recognized entrepreneurship as a key driver of economic growth, employment generation, innovation, and poverty reduction. It involves the process of identifying opportunities, mobilizing resources, creating value, and establishing ventures that contribute to economic and social development. In developing countries such as Nigeria, entrepreneurship has become increasingly important due to rising unemployment rates and the need for self-reliance among graduates. Universities are therefore expected not only to produce job seekers but also job creators who can contribute meaningfully to national development.

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Social media has emerged as a strategic tool for entrepreneurial activities among university students (Olaore, et al., 2020). Through social media platforms, students can market products, provide services, establish online businesses, interact with customers, acquire entrepreneurial knowledge, and identify business opportunities. The interactive nature of social media enables young entrepreneurs to communicate directly with potential customers, receive feedback, and create brand awareness without the substantial financial resources required for traditional marketing methods. Olaore, et al. (2020), found that social media contributes significantly to entrepreneurial development by enhancing customer retention, increasing brand awareness, and strengthening customer loyalty. Olomojobi et al. (2024) and Suryanto (2022), argued that digital interaction enhances students' capability to recognize and act upon entrepreneurial opportunities. Furthermore, Wonuola and Ajijola (2025), supporting the premise that undergraduates actively utilize social media to satisfy information and business development needs.

According to Olomojobi, et al. (2024), the growing popularity of social media among undergraduates has created new opportunities for entrepreneurial development. University students spend considerable time on social networking platforms for communication, entertainment, education, and business purposes. Consequently, many students have leveraged these platforms to establish small-scale enterprises, promote products, offer freelance services, and generate income while pursuing their academic studies. Social media has provided students with access to broader markets beyond their immediate geographical locations, enabling them to compete effectively in the digital economy.

Furthermore, social media serves as a source of entrepreneurial information and learning. Through online communities, webinars, digital marketing tutorials, and business networking

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groups, students acquire knowledge and skills that support entrepreneurial development. Exposure to successful entrepreneurs, business trends, and innovative ideas through social media platforms can inspire students to develop entrepreneurial intentions and pursue business ventures(Olomojobi et al., 2024).Sanusi, and Olanihun, (2024), affirmed that social networking and digital interaction positively influence entrepreneurial orientation, innovativeness, and opportunity identification among university students.

Despite the numerous benefits associated with social media usage, several challenges may hinder its effective utilization for entrepreneurship. These challenges include poor internet connectivity, high data costs, cyber fraud, misinformation, inadequate digital skills, intense online competition, and difficulties in maintaining customer trust. While social media offers substantial opportunities for entrepreneurial growth, its effectiveness largely depends on users' ability to deploy digital marketing strategies, create engaging content, and manage online business relationships effectively (Wonuola & Ajijola, 2025).

In public universities in Osun State, undergraduate students have increasing access to digital technologies and social media platforms. The state hosts major public universities such as Obafemi Awolowo University and Osun State University, where students actively engage with social media for academic, social, and business purposes. Many students operate online businesses involving fashion, cosmetics, food services, graphic design, digital marketing, tutoring, content creation, and other entrepreneurial ventures. However, there is still limited empirical evidence regarding the specific role social media plays in promoting entrepreneurial activities among undergraduate students within these institutions.Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the social media utilisation and entrepreneurial development among undergraduate students in public universities in Osun State, Nigeria.

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Statement of the Problem

Severe graduate unemployment, pervasive poverty, and economic dependency continue to cripple Nigeria's youth demographic (Nwosu & Chukwudi, 2021). Ideally, tertiary entrepreneurship education should serve as a dynamic engine that transforms academic knowledge into viable, practical business ventures, enabling graduates to establish sustainable enterprises and drive economic growth.

In reality, however, a critical disconnect exists. Despite the integration of entrepreneurship coursework into university curricula, many undergraduates struggle to translate theoretical knowledge into functional businesses. While social media platforms—such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, TikTok, and X—offer unprecedented, low-cost opportunities for market expansion, customer engagement, and low-capital venture creation (Ainin, 2015; Olanrewaju, 2020), students in government-owned universities in Osun State predominantly restrict their usage to entertainment and social interaction. Consequently, the transformative business potential of these digital networks remains severely underutilized.

If this problem remains unattended, the mismatch between digital literacy and commercial application will worsen. Undergraduates will continue to graduate into an saturated job market unprepared for self-reliance, exacerbating youth unemployment, deepening socio-economic dependency, and rendering institutional investments in entrepreneurship education largely ineffective.

Previous studies such as Boateng & Amankwaa, (2016) and Suryanto, (2022) extensively investigated social media usage among university students, these studies have focused almost exclusively on academic performance, general communication, and social behavior. A

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critical empirical gap exists regarding how social media explicitly drives entrepreneurial awareness, startup intentions, product marketing, and income generation within public universities in Osun State. This study fills this gap by examining social media usage and in fostering undergraduate entrepreneurial activities, providing empirical evidence to assist university administrators and policymakers in optimizing digital channels for student economic empowerment.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to determine social media utilisation and entrepreneurial development among undergraduate students in public universities in Osun State. Specifically, the study examined:

1. The extent to which undergraduate students utilize social media platforms for entrepreneurial activities in public universities in Osun State.

2. The influence of social media on undergraduate students' awareness of entrepreneurial opportunities in public universities in Osun State

3. The role of social media in marketing and promoting undergraduate students' business products and services in public universities in Osun State

Research Question

The following research questions were raised to guide the conduct of this study:

1. To what extent do undergraduate students utilize social media platforms for entrepreneurial activities in public universities in Osun State?

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2. How do social media influence undergraduate students' awareness of entrepreneurial opportunities in public universities in Osun State?

3. What role do social media play in marketing and promoting undergraduate students' products and services in public universities in Osun State?

Research Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis was formulated and tested in the study.

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between social media usage and entrepreneurial development among undergraduate students in public universities in Osun State

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprises all undergraduate students in public universities in Osun State, Nigeria. The public universities in Osun State include: Osun State University (UNIOSUN) and Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU). The target population consists of all registered undergraduate students in these universities during the period of the study. The combined undergraduate students' population of the two universities is approximately 45,000 students, this constituted the study population. The target population is comprised of 7,978 400L final year undergraduate students. Purposive random sampling technique was used to select faculty of Business Administration in both universities also, simple random sampling technique was used to select 806 400L final year undergraduate students in OAU and 513 400L final year undergraduate students in UNIOSUN making total number of 1,319 400L final year undergraduate students in selected in the two universities. The research advisor 2006 was used to determine the sample size of 1, 319 = 291. Therefore, from the sample size of 291,

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the proportionate sampling technique was used to select 177 400L final year undergraduate students in OAU and 114 400L final year undergraduate students in UNIOSUN. The sample size was therefore 291 respondents. The instrument for data collection was a researcher-developed questionnaire titled: "Social Media and Entrepreneurial Activities Questionnaire (SMEAQ)". The questionnaire consisted of two sections: Section A: Demographic information of respondents such as: Gender and institution. Section B, Items on: Utilization of social media for entrepreneurship awareness of entrepreneurial opportunities, Marketing and promotion through social media and Challenges of social media usage. The questionnaire was structured on a four-point Likert scale: Response Score, Strongly Agree (SA)= 4, Agree (A)=3,Disagree (D)= 2, Strongly Disagree (SD)=1. The instrument was subjected to face and content validity by experts in Educational Research, Measurement and Evaluation, and Entrepreneurship Education. Their observations and corrections were incorporated before the final administration of the instrument. To ensure the reliability of the Instrument, A pilot study was conducted among 20 undergraduate students outside the selected sample but with similar characteristics. The responses obtained were analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha reliability method. A reliability coefficient of 0.70 and 0.81 were obtained and considered adequate for the study.

The researcher obtained permission from the relevant university authorities. 291 copies of the questionnaire were administered personally with the assistance of two trained research assistants. The respondents were given adequate time to complete the questionnaire, after which 290 completed copies were retrieved. The collected data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Research Questions 1–3 were analyzed using Frequency counts, Percentages, Mean scores. Decision Rule: Mean RangeDecision3.50 – 4.00. Strongly

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Agree2.50 – 3.49, Agree1.50 – 2.49, Disagree=1.00 – 1.49 and Strongly Disagree. The hypothesis was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Table 1: S*howing Frequency and Percentage Demographic Data of the Respondents based on University and Gender in the Faculty of Business Administration*

University	**Target Population**	**Percentage**
OAU	806	100
Gender	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Sample	177	100
Male	85	48.0
Female	92	52.0
Total	**177**	**100.0**

Table 1 revealed that out of 177 (100%) 400Lof undergraduate students in Faculty of Business Administration in OAU, 92 which accounted for (52%) were female and 85 which accounted for (48%) were male respondents

Table 2:S*howing Frequency and Percentage Demographic Data of the Respondents based on University and Gender in the Faculty of Business Administration*

University	**Target Population**	**Percentage**
UNIOSUN	513	100
Gender	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Sample	113	100
Male	51	45.0
Female	62	55.0
Total	**177**	**100.0**

Table 2 revealed that out of 113 (100%) 400Lundergraduate students in Faculty of Business Administration in UNIOSUN 62 (55%) were female and 51 (45%) were male respondents

Answering of Research Questions

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Research Question 1: To what extent do undergraduate students utilize Social Media platforms for entrepreneurial activities in public universities in Osun State?

Table 3: Mean Analysis on utilization of Social Media Entrepreneurial activities

S/No	Items	Mean	Decision
1.	I use social media to advertise products and services	3.58	Agree
2.	I communicate with customers through social media	3.46	Agree
3.	I use social media to identify business opportunities	3.40	Agree
4.	I use social media for business networking	3.52	Agree
5.	Social media helps me reach a wider audience	3.61	Agree
	Grand Mean	**3.51**	Agree

Table 3revealedthat grand mean score of 3.51 indicated that undergraduate students utilize social media to a high extent for entrepreneurial activities

Research Question 2: How do social media influence undergraduate students' awareness of entrepreneurial opportunities in public universities in Osun State?

Table 4: Mean Analysis on Awareness of Entrepreneurial Opportunities

S/No	Items	Mean	Decision
1.	Social media exposes me to new business ideals	3.62	Agree
2.	Social media provides information about market trends	3.54	Agree
3.	I learn entrepreneurial skills through social media	3.47	Agree
4.	Social media helps me discover profitable ventures	3.39	Agree
5.	Social media increases my entrepreneurial awareness	3.58	Agree
	Grand Mean	**3.52**	Agree

Table 4 revealed that with the grand mean score of 3.52, the respondents agreed that social media significantly increases their awareness of entrepreneurial opportunities

Research Question3: What role do social media play in marketing and promoting undergraduate students' products and services in public universities in Osun State.

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Table 5: Mean Analysis on Marketing and Promoting Products and Services

S/No	Items	Mean	Decision
1.	Social media enables low-cost advertising	3.66	Agree
2.	Social media increases product visibility	3.71	Agree
3.	Social media attracts new customers	3.55	Agree
4.	Social media improves customers engagement	3.50	Agree
5.	Social media increases sales opportunities	3.42	Agree
	Grand Mean	**3.57**	Agree

Table 5, the finding indicated that with the grand mean score of 3.57, Social media plays a significant role in marketing and promoting entrepreneurial products and services

Testing of Hypothesis

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between social media usage and entrepreneurial development among undergraduate students in public universities in Osun State

Table6: ***PPMC table showing the relationship between social media usage and*** **entrepreneurial development** ***among undergraduate students in public universities in Osun State***

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	r-value	p-value	Decision
Social media usage	290	24.36	6.12	288	**0.671**	0.000	**Rejected**
Entrepreneurial development	290	23.42	5.87				

P<0.05

Table 6 showed that since p value =0.000< 0.05, the null hypothesis which says there is no significant relationship between social media usage and entrepreneurial development among undergraduate students in public universities in Osun State was rejected. This implies that there exists significant positive relationship between social media usage and entrepreneurial activities among undergraduate students in public universities in Osun State.

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Discussion of findings

The findings of the study revealed that undergraduate students in public universities in Osun State utilize social media extensively for entrepreneurial activities. The high mean scores obtained indicated that students use social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, TikTok, and X (formerly Twitter) to advertise products and services, communicate with customers, identify business opportunities, and expand their market reach. This result validate the empirical work of Olomojobi et al. (2024) and Suryanto (2022), both of whom argued that digital interaction enhances students' capability to recognize and act upon entrepreneurial opportunities. Furthermore, this dynamic aligns with Wonuola and Ajijola (2025), supporting the premise that undergraduates actively utilize social media to satisfy information and business development needs. This finding supports the work of Sanusi and Olanihun (2024), who found that student entrepreneurs increasingly deploy social media platforms as marketing tools because they provide cost-effective means of reaching large audiences and promoting business ventures. Similarly, Olaoreet al (2020), asserted that social media has become an essential component of entrepreneurial development in Nigeria because it enables entrepreneurs to connect directly with customers and promote products without the high costs associated with traditional advertising methods.

The study further found that social media significantly enhances students' awareness of entrepreneurial opportunities. Respondents agreed that social media exposes them to new business ideas, market trends, entrepreneurial skills, and profitable ventures. This finding corroborates the study of Olomojobi, et al. (2024), who found that exposure to social media content significantly influences entrepreneurial intentions and vocational skill acquisition among Nigerian university students. Through social media, students gain access to

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information regarding emerging business opportunities, successful entrepreneurial models, and innovative business practices. Likewise, Amodu and Aka (2017) observed that social networking platforms facilitate the exchange of entrepreneurial information, thereby improving opportunity recognition and entrepreneurial orientation among university students.

The findings indicated that social media plays a significant role in the marketing and promotion of products and services among undergraduate student entrepreneurs. Respondents agreed that social media increases product visibility, attracts customers, enhances customer engagement, and creates sales opportunities. This is strongly supported by the conclusions of Ainin et al. (2015) and Adebayo (2015), which indicated that low entry costs and high visual impact make social media the ideal marketing medium for resource-constrained micro-enterprises. By minimizing overhead costs, student entrepreneurs in Osun State leverage high visibility to drive customer conversion and sales growth. This result is consistent with the findings of Olaore et al. (2020), who found that social media contributes significantly to business growth through customer engagement, brand awareness, and market expansion. Social media platforms provide entrepreneurs with opportunities to showcase products and services to a large audience regardless of geographical limitations. Similarly, Sanusi and Olanihun (2024) found that student entrepreneurs rely heavily on social media marketing because it offers affordable promotional opportunities and real-time interaction with customers.

The study revealed a significant relationship between social media usage and entrepreneurial development among undergraduate students. The null hypothesis was rejected because the calculated p-value was less than 0.05. Rejection of the null hypothesis indicted that social media engagement directly reinforces entrepreneurial capabilities. In line with Amodu and

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Aka (2017), these results confirm that digital networking ability is no longer optional, but serves as a foundational engine for youth enterprise creation in public universities. This finding is also consistent with Owunna et al. (2024), who established that social media usage significantly influences entrepreneurial behavior and business participation among university students. Increased engagement with social media exposes students to entrepreneurial networks, market information, and business opportunities that encourage entrepreneurial activities.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the followings conclusions were reached; Undergraduate students extensively utilize social media platforms for entrepreneurial activities. Social media significantly increases awareness of entrepreneurial opportunities. Social media plays a major role in marketing and promoting products and services. Social media positively contributes to entrepreneurial activities among undergraduate students. There is a significant positive relationship between social media usage and entrepreneurial development among undergraduate students in public universities in Osun State.

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Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. University management should organize regular training and workshops on digital entrepreneurship and social media marketing to equip undergraduate students with the skills needed to effectively utilize social media platforms for business development and entrepreneurial success.

2. Government and university authorities should improve internet accessibility and affordability on campuses by providing reliable internet facilities and subsidized data services to encourage students' participation in online entrepreneurial activities.

3. Students entrepreneurs should be encouraged to leverage various social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, TikTok, and X for product promotion, customer engagement, market research, and business networking to expand their entrepreneurial ventures.

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