

**Uses And Gratification Of Social Media In Entrepreneurial Development Among  
Nigerian Undergraduates**

**by**

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**ABSTRACT**

Unemployment is an impediment to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals one and eight- *no poverty and economic growth*. Social media is believed to be critical in eradication of poverty and achievement of economic growth by being deployed to showcase entrepreneurial skills. Literature is grounded in social media and entrepreneurship; there is a dearth of study on uses and gratification of social media and entrepreneurship. The study therefore, explores the role of social media in entrepreneurial development among undergraduates, focusing on its potential to address unemployment and contribute to Sustainable Development Goals related to poverty eradication and economic growth. Grounded in the uses and gratification theory, the research fills a gap in existing literature by examining how students derive value from social media for entrepreneurial purposes. The methodology—using a survey and descriptive statistics—provides a clear, quantitative insight into how platforms like Instagram are utilized to promote vocational skills and generate income. The study's findings suggest a shift in student attitudes toward self-employment, and it concludes with a relevant policy recommendation to integrate digital marketing and entrepreneurship into university curricula. Overall, the research is timely, relevant, and provides actionable insights, though it could benefit from more robust inferential analysis and broader demographic coverage for generalisation.

**Key Words:** Social media, Entrepreneurial Development, Poverty eradication, Uses and Gratification, National Development

**Introduction**

In recent time, there has been an increase in the rate of unemployment globally, particularly in developing countries such as Nigeria. Meanwhile, Nigerian youths have been identified as the most affected group (Amrit et al., 2023). Unemployment is believed to be one of the major challenges that hinder the developing nations such as Nigeria from growing compared to the developed countries such as Canada, Russia. For instance, Ekanem (2015) posited that developing country like Nigeria is faced with growth performance which manifests in the rising incidence of poverty, massive youth unemployment, inflation, worsening balance of payment disequilibrium, monumental external debt burden and growing fiscal imbalances.

Meanwhile, unemployment is one of the impediments to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) one and goal eight which are *No poverty and Decent work and economic growth* (UNDP, 2014). In Nigeria, entrepreneurship is particularly important, as the country youth faces high level of unemployment and poverty (The Nigeria Economy Summit Group, September 30, 2024). For instance, the percentage of unemployment rate among Nigerian youths was 19.61 as at 2022 (Aa'ron, 2023), and 5.3 percent in the first quarter of 2024 and 4.30 percent in the second quarter (The Nigerian Economic Summit Group, 2024). Specifically, 900,000 youths in Adamawa State are unemployed as at the first quarter of year 2022 (Aa'ron, 2023).

However, the advent of social media has broken this challenge as it provides entrepreneurs with platforms to connect with potential customers, promote products or services and access information and resources. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, among others have become increasingly popular in Nigeria with millions of users across the country (Internet World Stats, 2024). Specifically, 67.5 percent of global population use internet while 63.8 are social media users. Hence, social media can enhance entrepreneurial development. As it has been established by scholars that entrepreneurs can combat poverty and add to economic growth (Ostonokulav & Abdulayeva, 2023), entrepreneurial skill has been affirmed as critical in eradicating poverty (Nwolu et al., 2021); (Ostonokulav & Abdulayeva, 2023), thereby, promoting economic development in Nigeria. This perhaps, has prompted several scholars to investigate social media and entrepreneurial skills. For instance, Ojeleye et al. (2018) examined the impact of social media on entrepreneurship development among users in Zamfara State of Nigeria and discovered that social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram contributed significantly to the development of entrepreneur among the users in Zamfara State of Nigeria.

Similarly, Haroon and Kadiri (2018) investigated usage of social media among student entrepreneurs in Nigerian university and concluded that student entrepreneurs have incorporated Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram in promoting their entrepreneurial skills. Mahmud et al. (2021) assessed undergraduate business education student's usage of social media for entrepreneurship activities in North-

west, Nigeria and recommended that business education lecturers should create awareness among students on the role of social networking as a platform for entrepreneurship activities. In addition, Oyebade (2017) examined social media marketing and entrepreneurial performance in Nigeria and discovered that social media has increased the reach of entrepreneurs in Nigeria.

From the extant literature, studies have been conducted on social media and entrepreneurial skills among undergraduates in Nigeria but none of these studies used undergraduates of American University of Nigeria, Adamawa State. In addition, there is a dearth of study on uses and gratification of social media for entrepreneurial development and business promotion. Gaps in the current knowledge include the need for more research on the specific social media platforms and features that are most effective in promoting entrepreneurship among undergraduates in Nigeria. For example, while Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are widely used among young adults in Nigeria, there is limited research on the effectiveness of these platforms for entrepreneurial purposes. Despite extensive research on social media and entrepreneurship in Nigerian universities, no study has focused on undergraduates at the American University of Nigeria, nor applied the uses and gratification framework in this context. Therefore, this study examines the uses and gratification of social media in promoting entrepreneurial skills among undergraduates in American University of Nigeria, Adamawa State.

The study is guided by three objectives: to determine the social media platforms that undergraduates in American University of Nigeria use for promoting entrepreneurial skills, investigate the entrepreneurial skills that the undergraduates in American University of Nigeria mostly promote through social media; and establish the gratification derived from social media usage in promotion of entrepreneurial skills among undergraduates in American University of Nigeria.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study is underpinned by Uses and gratification theory. Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT) is an approach to understanding why and how people actively seek out specific media to satisfy specific needs. It was originated in the 1974 by Blumler, Katz & Gurevitch as a reaction to traditional mass communication research emphasizing the sender and the message (Khan, 2017). The theory focuses on what

people do with the media (Khazawneh et al., 2020). This implies that media users deliberately choose media that will satisfy their given needs in terms of knowledge acquisition, relaxation, social interaction, diversion or escape. Thus, uses and gratification theory is a media use paradigm that guides the assessment of users' motivation for media use and access. Media consumers, especially the undergraduates use social media to gratify their entrepreneurial skills by seeing it as a veritable tool to showcase their entrepreneurial activities as this will enable them to reach their target audience and create awareness about their activities; thereby, promoting their entrepreneurial skills

### **Social Media and Entrepreneurship**

Acquiring entrepreneurial skills is not sufficient without ensuring their visibility on a global scale. Global visibility of entrepreneurial skills can be easily done through social media. Social media are great tools that can promote entrepreneurship businesses. The Bureau of Labour Statistics found approximately 20% of all small businesses fail within the very first year (Cooper, 2021) as a result of lack of visibility. Some social media platforms that can be utilised for business visibility include Tik Tok, Skype, LinkedIn, Facebook Messenger, Telegram, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Twitter, Snapchat, Blogs among others.

Social media have always proved to be effective tools of connection between sellers (service providers, clients) and buyers (consumers). Revealing how his record label found popular singers, Ayra Starr and Rema whose songs have continued to gain recognition and trending worldwide, the founder of *Mavin* record label, Don Jazzy, said he found them on Instagram. Don Jazzy therefore, urged young artists to promote themselves on social media as music label producers do not have the time to attend physical shows like previous years (Olowolagba, 2021). This implies that social media are potential tools in creating awareness and promoting entrepreneurship skills. Through social media, numerous potential clients and customers can be speedily reached in no time. Hence, youth especially, undergraduates can leverage on social media to showcase their skills. This is based on the fact that Nigeria has approximately 36.75 million social media users as at January, 2024, equivalent to 16.2 percent of the total population of 205.4 million (Global Digital Insights, February, 2024) and this figure is projected to grow to 103 million users in 2026 (Statista Research Department,

2021). Hence, social media platform is critical in enhancing business opportunities, thereby, facilitating the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals especially, goal one that aims at eradicating poverty.

**Methodology**

Survey research method seemed to be the most appropriate method for this study since the study focused on investigation of attitude and behaviour of youth representative on social media and entrepreneurial skills. The target population for the study is the total number of undergraduates that registered for the 2023/2024 academic session in American University of Nigeria, Adamawa State. According to the information from the University, 1001 students registered for the 2023/2024 Academic session (AUN, 2024). Hence, the population of the study was 1001 undergraduates. Multi-stage sampling technique was adopted to select 211 respondents. At the first stage, simple random sampling technique was used to select three faculties out of the six faculties that the University has. The six faculties are School of Business & Entrepreneurship, school of Engineering, school of Art and sciences, school of Information Technology and Computing and school of Law (AUN, 2024) while the three selected faculties comprised School of Business & Entrepreneurship, School of Art and Sciences, and School of Information Technology and Computing.

The second stage of sampling entailed the selection of sample from the selected faculties. According to the information from the University Registrar, School of Business & Entrepreneurship has 145 undergraduates, School of Art and Sciences contains 319 undergraduates while school of Information Technology and Computing record 172 students for the 2023/2024 Academic session (AUN, 2024). Thus, proportionate random sampling technique was adopted to select representative from each selected faculty. Proportionate random sampling was used to select sample for the study because the population in each selected faculty is vastly different. Therefore, ratio 1:3 was used as illustrated below in table .1

**Table 1     Sample size**

S/N	Faculty	Population	Sample size
1	School of Business & Entrepreneurship	145; 145/3	48
2	School of Art and Sciences	319; 145/3	106
3	School of Information Technology and Computing	172; 172/3	57
	Total		<b>211</b>

**Source: AUN (2023)**

Close-ended questionnaire served as the instrument for data gathering. To ensure validity of the research instrument, copies of the research instrument together with the research objectives were given to three lecturers in the Department of Mass Communication, Business Administration and Entrepreneurship unit, Al-Hikmah University for scrutiny. Their suggestions were effected in the instrument. Also, reliability of the instrument was arrived at through test-re-test method. This was done by distributing 20 copies of the instrument to 20 selected undergraduates in Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Nigeria. The copies were retrieved and analysed and the findings revealed that the instrument was reliable. Data gathered through the questionnaire were collected, coded and analysed with the aid of Statistal Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. Tables and simple percentages were used to present the findings.

### Findings and Discussion

It was discovered during the analysis of the instrument that 11 (eleven) copies of the instrument were not properly filled. Hence, the analysis of the findings was based on the 200 copies of the questionnaire that were properly filled.

**Table . 2: Demographic variables of the Respondents**

Demographics	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	70	35%
Female	130	65%
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

**Age Range**

16 – 20 years	81	40.5%
21 – 25 years	102	51%
26 – 30 years	15	7.5
Others	2	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

**Marital Status**

Single	185	92.5%
Married	15	7.5%
Divorced	0	0%
Widow/widower	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

**Level of Education**

100 level	19	9.5%
200 level	21	10.5%
300 level	53	26.5
400 level	83	41.5%
500 level	24	12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2 presents the demographic data of the respondents. Majority of the respondents representing 130(65%) are female while 70(35%) are male which implies that more female have taken to entrepreneurship. This contradicts the belief of some people that female always end up their education in kitchens. In addition, more than half of the respondents representing 102(51%) were between the age of 21-25 while 81(40.5%) respondents were below the age of 16-20, 15(7.7%) respondents were the age of 26-30 and 2(1%) fell into other category. Majority of the respondents representing 185(92.5%) were single while only 15(7.5%) were married. None of the respondents was divorced, widow and widower. 85(41.5%) of the respondents were in 400 level, while 24(12%) were in 500 level. 53(26.5%), 21(10.5%) and 19(9.5%) respondents were 300, 200 and 100 levels respectively.

It can be deduced from table 2 that majority of the respondents were single female and fell within the age range of 21 and 25 years. This indicated that entrepreneurial skill was well embraced by youth, especially the female.

**Table 3: The social media platforms used for entrepreneurial skills**

In measuring social media platforms that AUN undergraduates used for entrepreneurial skills; preferred social media and entrepreneurial activities usage of social media are used. Therefore, table 3 and 4 present the findings.

**Table: 3 Preferred social media platforms for promoting entrepreneurial skills**

Statement	Responses	Percentage
Facebook	38	(19%)
Instagram	127	(63.5%)
Twitter	24	(12%)
YouTube	11	(5.5%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>(100%)</b>

Table 3 presents the respondents' most preferred social media platform for promoting entrepreneurial skills. Instagram was the most preferred 127 (63.5%) followed by Facebook 38(19%) and Twitter 24 (12%) while YouTube was 11(5.5%). This showed that Instagram was the most preferred platform for promoting entrepreneurial skills among undergraduates.

**Table 4. Purpose of the usage of social media for promoting Entrepreneurial skills**

Statement	Responses	Percentage
Communication with customer	67	(33.5%)
Sharing of entrepreneurial information	30	(15%)
Acquisition of entrepreneurial skills	43	(21.5%)
Advertisement of entrepreneurial knowledge and skills	60	(30%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>(100%)</b>

Table 4 presents the respondents' purposes for engaging on social media platforms. 67(33.3%) of the respondents used social media platforms for communication with customers. 30(15%) used social media platforms for sharing entrepreneurial information. 45(21.5%) employed social media platform for acquisition of entrepreneurial skills. 60(30%) used social media platform for advertisement of entrepreneurial knowledge and skills. This implies that undergraduates use social media platforms for various entrepreneurial-related activities like engaging with customer to promote business ideas and skills.

It can, therefore, be deduced from table 3 and 4 that UNN undergraduates see social media, especially, Instagram as a veritable tool to promote entrepreneurial skills. This is evident in the undergraduates' indication that social media platform is very important for entrepreneurial skills and social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, etc. are the most preferred media for assessing entrepreneurial skills. However, the finding of this study negates the finding of Ojeleye et al. (2018)' study on the impact of social media on entrepreneurship development. Although, the study was on a different population, but reported that social media platforms like YouTube does not contribute to entrepreneurship development. This present study finds out the otherwise as there was an indication that YouTube is among the preferred social media platforms for promoting entrepreneurial skills. However, this study supports the findings of Obiajula et al. (2021) that social media platforms especially the Facebook and Instagram enhanced skills acquisitions.

#### **The entrepreneurial skills that undergraduates use social media to promote**

**Table 5. Entrepreneurial skills that social media promote through social media**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Make- up	54	27%
Catering	56	28%
Event planning	10	5%
Entertainment skill	21	10.5%
Vocational skill	59	29.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>(100%)</b>

Table 5 presents the respondents responses on entrepreneurial skills promoting through use social media platforms. 54(27%) of the respondents use social media platform for promoting make-up skills. 56(28%) of the respondents use social media platform for catering services. 10(5%) of the respondents use social media for event planning skills. 21(10.5%) of the respondents use social media for entertainment skill while 59(29.5%) employed social media platform for vocational skill. This implies that many of respondents use social media platform to showcase various entrepreneurial skills.

### Effects of social media on the promotion of entrepreneurial skills

**Table 6: Perceived Effects of social media on the promotion of entrepreneurial skills**

S/N	Statements	SA	A	D	SD	Total
1.	I always generate income from social media platforms	50 (25%)	74 (37%)	65 (32.5%)	11 (5.5%)	200 100%
2.	Social media has changed my perspective about job hunting after graduation	56 (28%)	115 (57.5%)	27 (13.5%)	2 (1%)	200 100%
3.	Social media has promoted illegal means of making money for the undergraduates	42 (21%)	11 (5.5%)	65 (32.5%)	82 (41%)	200 100%
4.	Social media has made undergraduates to become employers of labour.	57 (28.5%)	103 (51.5%)	38 (19%)	2 (1%)	200 100%
5.	Social media platforms have contributed in shaping my thought on the importance of entrepreneurship	101 (50.5%)	96 (48%)	3 (1.5%)	0 (0%)	200 100%

Table 6 presents the perceived effect of social media on the promotion of entrepreneurial skills among undergraduates. Majority of the respondents representing 124(62%) generate income through promotion of their entrepreneurial skills on social

media, while 76(38%) disagreed and strongly disagreed that social media generate income. In addition, 171(85.5%) of the respondents agreed that social media has changed people especially, entrepreneurs' perspective about job hunting after graduation, while 29(14.5%)disagreed.124(62%) of the respondents agreed that they make more sales through social media by promoting their skills, while 76(38%) disagreed. Furthermore, majority of the respondents representing 160(80%) agreed that social media has made undergraduates to become employers of labour while 40(20%) disagreed. This implies that social media usage among undergraduates gratified income generation as social media usage for promoting entrepreneurial skills has positive impact on undergraduates' approach to job hunting after graduation. In addition, majority of the respondents representing 197 (98.8%) agreed that social media contribute to shaping their thought on the importance of entrepreneurship while 3(1.5%) disagreed. This implies that social media platforms are critical in entrepreneurial development among undergraduates.

It can be deduced from table 6 that social media platforms have impacted positively on the undergraduates as they have changed the perspective of undergraduates about job hunting after graduation. Therefore, some of the undergraduates have taking to social media platform for promoting entrepreneurial skills labour, thereby eradicating poverty or unemployment. The finding corroborates the submission of Haroon and Kadiri (2018) that undergraduates use social media platforms to fill the gap of unemployment. This present study finds out that social media are critical in self-employment by making undergraduates to become employers of labour. The study also supports the finding of Ojeleye et al. (2018), who submitted that social media such as Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram encouraged users on entrepreneurship development and discouraged them from fraudulent acts. Hence,social media usage for entrenerial development gratifies provision of income, self-employment, visibility, empowerment among undergraduates.

Therefore, this study has contributed to the existing knowledge by uses and gratification theory as it emphasises the gratification that entrepreneurs derive from subscribing to social media in promoting entrepreneurial skills. The study also validates the existing knowledge on the contribution of social media to the

achievement of Sustainable Development Goal one and eight as it contributes to means of eradicating unemployment among youths in Nigeria.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Social media is vital in the fight against unemployment in Nigeria. It is no doubt that social media plays a significant role in the lives of undergraduates, as it informs, educates and entertain its audiences and most importantly, it provides a platform for undergraduates to create jobs for themselves. The potency possessed by social media platforms is enabling the undergraduates to make use of social media for marketing, advertising and promotion of their goods and vocational skills.

Based on the finding of this study, the study recommends that the Nigerian Government in collaboration with National Universities commission (NUC) should include social media usage in the academic curriculum to formally equip students on the role of social media in enhancing entrepreneurial skills. Undergraduates should leverage on the social media platforms to promote their businesses and skills as this is critical in eradication of poverty and creation of employment opportunities. The Adamawa State government should provide funding and resources to support entrepreneurship initiatives of undergraduates as this can reduce the level of poverty in the State, thereby, contributing to the achievement of Goal one and eight of SDGs. The Nigerian universities together with National Orientation Agency (NOA) should embark on orientation and reorientation of the students on the importance of social media usage for promoting entrepreneurial skill by connecting students with mentors, industry experts and other resources on entrepreneurship as this is capable in curbing crimes, thereby facilitating national development.

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