AWARENESSS AND UTILIZATION OF INTERNET INTERACTIVE SOCIAL MEDIA
IN THE DELIVERY OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

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Abstract:
The purpose of the study was to determine the extent to which distance education learners are aware of the existence and actually utilize internet interactive social media in the delivery of distance Education programmes. The study was carried out in the south East Nigeria. A survey Research Design was adopted for the study. Two research questions and four hypotheses guided the study. Students of the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) and National Teachers Institute (NTI) Distance Education programmes in Anambra and Imo States study centres constituted the population for the study. With a stratified random sampling technique, a sample size of 364 distance learners from the NOUN and NTI centres were sampled and studied. A researcher designed questionnaire was used for data collection. The Instrument was validated by three experts; one in curriculum and instruction, one in distance education and one in measurement and Evaluation. The reliability co-efficient of the instrument was 0.70 obtained through Cronbach Alpha Method. The research questions were tested using means with standard deviations while the hypotheses were tested using t-test statistics. The data analysis revealed poor- awareness and under-utilization of the studied internet interactive media. There was no significant difference between the mean ratings of the Anambra and Imo states study centre students responses, but there was a significant difference between the mean ratings of the Noun and NTI students responses. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others, that awareness, knowledge and skills acquisition training programmes on the knowledge and utilization of internet interactive social media in instructional delivery should be severally organized to enable distance learning facilitators and other stakeholders exploit the immense benefits and opportunities being offered by the current advancement in information and communication Technology.

Keywords: Awarenesss and utilization of internet interactive social media In the delivery of distance education

Introduction:
The roles of education as an instrument per excellence in the sustainable development of individual beings, nations and world as a whole had long been identified and severally underscored. The Universal declaration of human Rights adopted by the United Nations General Assembly provided for education as a fundamental right of everyone, (Ocho 2005).

The Nigeria constitution under its fundamental objectives and directive principles also provided for equal and adequate educational opportunities, eradication of illiteracy and free adult literacy programmes, (FRN 2011). Nigeria in her National Policy on Education (FRN 2013) recognized; that Education is an instrument for national development and social change; that it maximizes the creative potentials and skills of the individual for self-fulfillment and general development of the society; and that education is compulsory and a right of every Nigerian irrespective of gender, sex, status, religion, ethnic background and any peculiar individual challenges;(P13). Nigerian philosophy of education is thus "based on the development of the individual into a sound and effective citizen and the provision of equal educational opportunities for all citizens of the nation at the basic, secondary and tertiary levels both inside and outside the formal school system." (P14)

The formal four walls education system cannot sufficiently provide equal and adequate educational opportunities for all, particularly in the face of varied circumstances of life. Hence the need for some forms of non-formal education system. One of such non-formal system is Distance Education.

Distance Education, according to National Policy on Education(2013), is the mode of education delivery;
   a. *Where learners and teachers need not be in physical contact;*
   b. *Which possesses high range of flexible learning environment;*
   c. *That enhances access to tertiary education;*
   d. *That has the capacity to deliver Variety of skills; and*
   e. *Which uses a variety of media and technologies to provide quality education for large number of learners. (P63)*

Although there are quite a number of other authoritative definitions, an analysis of definitions of distance education reveal that the characteristic features of the distance education in sum are as follow;
1. *There is a quasi-permanent separation of the teacher and the learner in space and or ,time through the length and breadth of the teaching learning process. This is a feature that distinguished it from the conventional face-to-face education.*

2. *There is the influence of an educational organization or institution both in the planning and preparation of learning materials and in the provision of the students support services. Thus, it is distinguished from private study and teach-yourself programmes.*

3. *There is the use of technological instructional media viz; print, tele-video, computer, electronic, internet, radio, and other devices. This feature replaces the interpersonal communication feature of the conventional oral group-based four wall education, and industrializes the educational process.*

4. *Currently, there is a maximized use of ICT opportunities and which facilitates instructional communication. It now uses two-way interactive communication systems.*

5. *Distance Education allows the learner independence and freedom of choice in terms of time, space, pace, medium, access and curriculum.*

Distance education has the potential of accommodating students much more than all the existing Universities can accommodate. Through distance education, students who could not gain admission into the formal education, although they have the necessary qualification to pursue higher education, would be able to do so. Its flexible nature makes it appropriate for some other categories of students. Hence it provides tertiary education to workers, housewives, indigent members of the society and students who had to drop out of their education because of poor aptitude and motivation but who may later on become motivated. It is useful for young students in geographically remote areas and individuals who look upon education as a life-long activity. Indeed it provides learning opportunities at various levels to people who do not have access to traditional modes for various reasons, such as, economic and time restrictions. Factors related to job and family responsibilities and distance from educational centres also counts.

Nwoge (2013) listed the advantages of Distance Education to include the facts that;

- *It is flexible and gives the learner ample choice to determine when, how and where to take his studies;*

- *It provides viable alternatives to the conventional mode in our crisis-torn educational system. Distance learning provides stable environment and learning culture that is devoid of interruption arising from prolonged strikes;*

- *Since it is ICT driven, it provides spillover effects on the economy as more people are able to acquire Information Technology skills for the production of goods and services which enable them to contribute to national economic growth; etc.*

Nakpodia (2010) also noted that the structure of distance learning gives adults the greatest possible control over time, place and pace of learning and that the usual traditional face-to-face teaching could hardly meet the educational needs of all Nigerians. Ayo, Odukoya and Azeta (2014) equally observed that the system offers collaborative e-Learning which helps to improve the quality of education beyond the capabilities of the individual institutions. It depicts vividly, quality education without borders, as there is enhanced interaction and collaboration between students, faculties within and outside the country based on the areas of competences of individual faculties and institutions. It offers a viable model for delivery of quality education based on ICT facilities (Internet, PCs, PDAs, iPods, mobile phones etc P64) They further noted that Distance Education is a formal education system that deploys ICT facilities to communicate, teach, coach and facilitate productive learning amongst students who are domiciled in distant locations. Such education system is said to be open because students are not limited by such conditions/factors like age, sex, pregnancy, work, race, religion and so on. It is an education that is open to all.(P63)

The national policy on education FRN (2013) acknowledged this essence of distance education. Hence, under its Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education programme, it provides for "the provision of equivalent basic education for adults, children and youths of formal school age, outside the formal school system" and the provision of;

a. *Functional basic education for adults and youths who have never had the advantage of formal education or who left school too early. The target groups include migrant*

folks. Almajiri pupils, illiterate and semi-literate adults, youths and adolescents; persons who left the formal school system early and are willing to come back and continue schooling; and other categories-of disadvantaged groups; who are unable to have access to the conventional educational system and therefore require other forms of educational programmes to cater for their particular/peculiar needs and circumstances;

b. *Remedial and life-long education for youths and adults who did not complete secondary education; and*

c. *In-service, vocational and professional training for different categories of workers and professional in order to improve their skills. (FRN 2013:43).*

Distance education is a major means of achieving the above provisions of the National policy on Education.

Like in other parts of the world, distance education is not new in Nigeria. According to Ayo, Odukoya and Azeta (2014) the history of Distance Education in Nigeria dates back to 1887 with the practice of correspondence education as a means of preparing candidates for the General Certificate in Education, a pre-requisite for London Marticulation Examination. In spite of the esterblishement of a university college in Ibadan in 1948, many of its academic staff passed through the higher degree programmes of the university of London as '*distance learners*'. To Okoye (2010) however, it began in the 1940s as correspondence studies. Many Nigerians got enrolled into the correspondence colleges in Great Britain and studied for various examinations including the General Certificate Examinations, Ordinary level and Advance levels, (GCE, O'Level and GCE, A'Level). In addition, there were those who studied for various technical, commercial and business examinations. The main mode of instructional delivery was the print media. This continued for a long time until some Nigerian Universities, through their institutes of Education, started distance learning programmes. Thus, it is obvious that Distance Education has for long existed in Nigeria, but in various forms. What is of interest however, is that the form of education is evolutional, that its structure and *modus operandi* changes along with the developmental stages; and that the advancement in communication and information dissemination technologies influence its development, structure and method of operation.

There are quite a number of such programmes. Indeed almost every higher institution in Nigeria currently runs one form of Distance Learning Programme or the other. However, the major Distance Education programmes in Nigeria are currently provided by the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) (Obioha and Udidi 2011) and the National Teachers Institute (NTI). In the South East geo-political zone, both the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) and the National Teachers Institute (NTI) have study centres where their respective distance education activities are coordinated. The NOUN has study centres; in Abia, Anambra, Enugu and   Imo States of the South East zone of Nigeria. The NTI also has a regional headquarter at Enugu and a state coordinating office and study centres in all the five states of the zone. Such academic activities as student guidance counseling, distribution or provision of accesses to instructional media, and occasional contact meetings for tutorial and socialization purposes are carried out at the study centres of the programmes.

A reference to Item No 3 of the summary of the features of distance Education and item "e" of the definition of Distance Education in the National policy of Education as presented above

indicate that the uses of technological instructional media or information communication technology (ICT) and with particular reference to two-way interactive communication systems is a sine-qua-non in the distance education programme, if the distance education would compare with the oral group based, face to face, four wall, conventional education system in standard and effectiveness. Interactive internet media consist of those communication technologies that provide for a two-way interaction between and among individual persons. Such media can provide opportunity for interaction between the teacher and the learner, and among or between the learners irrespective of their varied locations. According to kumar (2008), these technologies are not single technologies, but a combination of hardware and software media and delivery systems. They include various forms of E-Learning, internet learning, and others. The interactive media can employ the use of multimedia, interactive electronic systems and software tools to provide 'Teacher-student interaction' 'Student-student interaction', and 'student-instructional media interaction' to make learning active and participatory. It can create a kind of virtual classroom which bridges the gap in the inter-personal relationship caused by the physical separation between the teacher and the learners. It thus, would naturally bring the distance education to be at par or close to what is obtainable in the regular four-wall, face-to-face educational system.

Distance Education is a formal education system that deploys ICT facilities to communicate, teach, coach and facilitate productive learning amongst students. (Ayo et al 2014) Interactivity is a key determinant of students success rate. Majority of the students are workers in the urban areas who combine "work and learn" which is the motto of NOUN. The students depended on their facilitors as key resource persons and on their peers or study groups both for required and voluntary interactivity to reinforce their learning. This reduces loneliness, boredom and loss of community experience in distance education (Terhemba 2018). NOUN is aware of this hence it made provision that all NOUN centres are expected to have Local Area Networks (LAN) with a minimum of 20 computers and which should be connected to the Repository, Production, Distribution, and Administration Headquater (REPRODAhq) and further connected to the National Wide Area Network (WAN) using VSAT solutions for delivery of distance learning to all study centres. This arrangement obviously is meant to enhance access to ICT usage including internet Interactive Media. However the extent to which the NOUN has equipped the study centres with up-to-date technology facilities, is not certain. If the facilities are not there awareness of the available internet interactive media and their utilization in instructional delivery may be frustrated.

The application of these interactive media in the delivery of distance education is a sine qua non. Indeed, distance education should currently be sustained by the use of available two-way interactive information communication technologies. It however seem to be facing a number of challenges. Students access to interactive technology is still limited (Mangal and Mnagal, 2010:795); and because NOUN has not completed its Repository, Production, Distribution, and Administration Headquarters (REPODAhq) and equipped the study centers with up-to-date technology facilities, accessibility that is dialectically linked to interactivity, is frustrated (Terhemba 2018). Nigeria suffers the challenge of access to quality education occasioned by poor funding and inadequate manpower and infrastructure. Equally, despite the proliferation and observed benefits of Distance Education in Nigeria, the provision of adequate infrastructure and quality of delivery of instruction has been a major concern to stakeholders. To this effect, the National Universities Commission (NUC), in an attempt to ensure that standards are maintained in the operation of distance education had to enact some regulations. One of such is the stipulation that the ODE study centres should offer both academic and

social support services; Students should have easy access to ICT facilities for learning purposes. (NUC, 2013).Thus the need for standard is apparent. Observations tend to indicate deficiency in the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) facilities and with particular reference to interactive media.

The extent of awareness of the existence of internet interactive media is however subject to variation in relation to place, time and circumstances. In other words, the availability or awareness of the existence of such media, at different locations, times and prevailing circumstances are not universally the same. There is still evidence of under utilization of information communication technologies (ICT) due to epileptic power supply, lack of skills in methods and principles of usage and other utilization problems particularly in the rural locations. Thus, the use of interactive media with particular reference to ensuring quality distance education needs to be adequately evaluated. This study thus tried to ascertain distance learners' awareness of existence and utilization of available internet interactive media in the delivery of distance education.

Purpose of the Study
Generally, the purpose of the study was to determine learners perceptions of awareness and utilization of available internet interactive media in the implementation of distance education programmes in Nigeria with particular reference to NOUN and NTI programmes in South-East Nigeria. Specifically, the study was designed to determine;
1. The learners perceptions of the awareness and utilization of internet interactive media in the delivery of distance Education in South-East, Nigeria.
2. The learners perceptions of the utilization of internet interactive media in the delivery of distance education in the South-East, Nigeria.

Research Questions;
The following research questions guided the study
  i. What are the learners' perceptions of the awareness of internet interactive media in the delivery of distance education in the South-East Nigeria?
  ii. What are the learners perceptions of the utilization of internet interactive media in the delivery of distance education in the South-East Nigeria.

Hypotheses
The following hypotheses also guided the study.

H_{O1}: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of NOUN and NTI learners on the awareness of internet interactive media in the delivery of distance education in the South-East Nigeria.

H_{O2}: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of NOUN and NTI learners on the utilization of internet Interactive media in the delivery of distance education in the South-East Nigeria.

H_{O3}: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of Anambra and Imo States learners on the awareness of internet Interactive media in the delivery of distance education in the South-East Nigeria.

H_{O4}:   There is no significant difference between the mean responses of Anambra and Imo States learners on the utilization of internet Interactive media in the delivery of distance education in the South-East Nigeria.

Method

The study was carried out in the South-East geopolitical Zone of Nigeria. A survey research design was adopted for the study, i.e a design in which a group of people or items is studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few people or items considered to be a representative of the entire group (Nworgu, 2015) The students of the National Open University of Nigeria(NOUN) and National Teachers Institute (NTI) in the South East Zone of Nigeria constituted the population for the study. A sample size of 364 students, made up of 161 and 203 students of NOUN and NTI programmes respectively was actually studied. Stratified (proportionate) random sampling was used in selecting the sample size. The sample was determined by the use Taro Yamane's sample size selection formula. A researcher designed Questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts, one in curriculum and instruction one in distance education and one in measurement and Evaluation. The reliability co-efficient of the instrument was 0.70 obtained using Cronback Alpha method. The research questions were then answered using mean with standard deviations while the hypotheses were tested using t-test calculated at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

The results of the study are as follows:

Research Question 1

What are the learners' perceptions of the awareness of internet interactive media the delivery of distance education programmes in the South-East Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean ratings of students perceptions of awareness of internet interactive media in the delivery of distance education in the South East, Nigeria.

n   =   364

S/N	Indicate your opinion on the awareness of the following internet interactive media systems in your study centre;	$\overline{X}$	SD	Decision
1	Instagram	1.69	1.04	Disagree(D)
2	Line	2.05	0.97	D
3	Myspace	1.34	0.88	D
4	Skype	1.29	0.86	D
5	Face book	2.54	1.01	Agree(A)
6	WhatsApp	2.56	1.03	A
7	Twitter	2.68	0.94	A
8	Snapchat	1.24	0.83	D
9	YY	1.30	0.91	D
10	StumbleUpon	1.22	0.85	D
11	Skyrock	1.28	0.90	D
12	Cellufun	1.41	1.02	D
13	You Tube	1.72	0.92	D
14	Wa-Chat	2.05	1.00	D

15	QQ	1.84	1.05	D
16	Classmates	2.12	1.11	D
17	Viber	1.13	0.81	D
18	Telegram	1.18	0.9	D
	Total	**1.70**	**0.60**	**Disagree**

Table 1 shows that out of a total of 18 internet interactive media systems, high mean ratings were recorded for only three of them. Specifically, high mean ratings of 2.54, 2.56 and 2.68 were obtained for items 5, 6, and 7 respectively while low mean ratings (below 2.50) were obtained for the remaining 15 items. A grand mean of 1.70 with standard deviation of 0.60, was obtained for all the items, indicating that generally, the listed internet interactive media systems were not known in the delivery of distance education study centres under study. The learners (students) generally perceived the internet interactive media systems as being relatively unknown.

Research Question 2
What are the learners' perceptions of utilization of internet interactive media in the delivery of distance education programme in the South-East, Nigeria?
Table 2: Mean ratings of student's perceptions of utilization of internet interactive media in distance education in the south-East, Nigeria.

n = 364

S/N	The following internet interactive media are utilized in delivering lectures to students:	$\overline{X}$	SD	Decision
1	Instagram	1.49	1.01	Disagree(D)
2	Line	1.98	0.99	D
3	Myspace	1.16	0.96	D
4	Skype	1.80	0.92	D
5	Face book	2.50	0.97	Agree(A)
6	WhatsApp	2.51	0.98	A
7	Twitter	2.56	0.87	A
8	Snapchat	1.18	0.94	Disagree(D)
9	YY	1.19	0.90	D
10	StumbleUpon	1.12	0.95	D
11	Skyrock	1.12	0.88	D
12	Cellufun	1.23	1.02	D
13	You Tube	1.58	0.89	D
14	Wa-Chat	2.00	0.91	D
15	QQ	1.64	1.07	D
16	Classmates	2.01	1.10	D
17	Viber	1.07	0.80	D
18	Telegram	1.09	0.86	D
	Total	**1.62**	**0.51**	**Disagree**

Table 2 shows that high mean ratings of 2.50, 2.51 and 2.56 were obtained for items, 5, 6 and 7 respectively, indicating that the respondents (students) agreed that internet interactive media (E-mail, whatsApp, Face book) were utilized in lecture delivery. On the other hand, low mean ratings (1.07-2.10) were recorded for the remaining 15 items (items 1-4 and 8-18), indicating

that the respondents disagreed that the internet interactive media represented by those items are being utilized by their facilitators in instructional delivery. A grand mean of 1.62, with standard deviation of 0.51, was obtained for all the 18 items (1-18), indicating that the students generally disagreed with the view that interactive instructional media were utilized in lecture delivery at the study centres. The relatively low standard deviation (0.51) suggests that the respondents did not reasonably differ in their opinions regarding the individual items relating to utilization of the listed internet interactive media systems.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of NOUN and NTI learners on the awareness of internet interactive media in the delivery of distance education in the South-East, Nigeria.

Table 3: t-test analysis of mean perception ratings of NOUN and NTI learners on the awareness of internet interactive media in the delivery of distance education in the South-East, Nigeria.

Distance Edu. Prog.	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
NOUN	154	1.96	1.03	362	4.73	1.96	Reject H_O
NTI	210	1.44	1.07				

Table 3 shows that the calculated t-value, at 0.05 level of significance and 362 degree of freedom, is 4.73 while the critical t-value is 1.96. Since the calculated t-value is greater than the critical t-value, the null hypothesis is therefore, rejected. This invariably means that there is significant difference between the mean perception scores of learners in NOUN and their counterparts in NTI regarding the awareness of internet interactive media in the delivery of distance education programmes in the South East, Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of NOUN and NTI learners on the utilization of internet interactive media in the delivery of distance education programmes in the South-East, Nigeria.

Table 4: t-test analysis of mean ratings of learners in NOUN and their counterparts in NTI on the utilization of internet interactive media in the delivery of distance education programmes in the South-East, Nigeria.

Distance Edu. Prog.	N	X	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
NOUN	154	1.73	0.97	362	2.10	1.96	Reject H_o
NTI	210	1.51	0.91				

Table 4 shows that the calculated t-value, at 0.05 level of significance and 362 degree of freedom, is 2.10 while the critical t-value, under the same conditions, is 1.96. since the calculated t-value is greater than the critical t-value, the null hypothesis is therefore, rejected. This invariably means that there is significant different between the mean ratings of learners

in NOUN and those in NTI regarding the utilization of available internet interactive media in the delivery of distance education programmes in the South-East, Nigeria.

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of Anambra and Imo States learners on the awareness of internet interactive media in the delivery of distance education programmes in the South-East, Nigeria.

Table 5: t-test analysis of the mean ratings of learners in Anambra State and their counterparts in Imo State on the awareness of internet interactive media in the delivery of distance education in the South East, Nigeria.

State	N	x	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	decision
Anambra	208	1.76	0.92	362	1.18	1.96	Do not reject
Imo	156	1.64	1.00				H_O

Table 5 shows that the calculated t-value, at 0.05 level of significance and 362 degree of freedom, is 1.18 as against the critical t-value of 1.96. The null hypothesis is therefore not rejected since the calculated t-value is less than the critical t-value. This means that there is actually no significant difference between the mean ratings of learners in Anambra State and their counterparts in Imo State regarding the awareness of internet interactive media in distance education delivery.

Hypothesis 4

There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of Anambra and Imo States learners on the utilization of internet interactive media in the delivery of distance education programmes in the South-East, Nigeria.

Table 6: t-test analysis of the mean ratings of learners in Anambra State and those in Imo State on the utilization of internet interactive media in the delivery of distance education programmes in the South East, Nigeria.

State	N	$\overline{x}$	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	decision
Anambra	208	1.58	0.85	362	0.83	1.96	Do not reject
Imo	156	1.66	0.94				H_O

Table 6 shows that the calculated t-value is 0.83 while the critical t-value is 1.96, all measured at 0.05 level of significance and 362 degree of freedom. Since the calculated t-value is less than the critical value, the null hypothesis is therefore, not rejected. This invariably means that no significant difference exists between the mean ratings of distance education learners in Anambra State and their counterparts in Imo State regarding the utilization of available internet interactive media in the distance education programmes in the states.

Discussion of Findings

1. **Internet Interactive Social Media are know as Instructional Media for Delivery of Distance Education.**

One of the findings of the study is that learners in the distance education programmes in the South East Nigeria are generally of the opinion that internet interactive media are not significantly known as instructional media for the implementation of the distance education programmes in the zone. The result of the data analysis of the 18 items meant to answer the research question one indicated a grand mean of 1.70 and thus, the conclusion. This funding actually contracts the position of Mangal and Mangal(2016) Broadman (2012). Broadman had identified Interactive Video Disc (IVD), Compact Disk Interactive (CDI), Digital Video Interactive (DVI), Compact Disc-Read Only Memory (CD-ROM), World Wide Web (WWW) and Electronic Mail (E-mail) as available interactive media which can be conveniently used for instructional purposes. Mangal and Mangal also observed that the advancement in the development of information communication technologies (ICT) and facilities has made quite a large number of interactive media systems available and accessible for instructional purpose. These may be true to some extent but obviously not generally practically applicable in all locations and circumstances. These authorities however noted that the availability of the interactive media are relative to the availability of their application facilities, service providers, cost implications and other locational circumstances. In other words, the awareness or non-awareness depends on the knowledge of the existence or non-existence of the software, hardware, application tools and even personnel and technical skills required for the use of the interactive systems. The finding is also in line with the discovery of Ayo et al (2014), that the mode of teaching was still predominantly face-to-face, with little or no use of ICT facilities. Consequently, students living in remote locations and those undergoing peculiar conditions, like the pregnant women, nursing mothers, workers, husbandry farmers [etc] could hardly participate.

Falade (2008) too, in a study on Assessment of the Available and Utilized Media in NTI distance education programmes in Oyo State had discovered that modern or sophisticated instructional media such as E-mail, internet, radio, television, satellite broadcast and conferencing were not known in the NTI distance education. According to the Falade (2008), "Findings on the type of instructional media available in the distance education revealed that modern or sophisticated instructional media such as e-mail, internet, radio, television, satellite broadcast, and conferencing were not available in NTI distance education. Those available were the conventional media such as prints media, chalkboard, graphic and poster materials. This cuts across study centres in all the zones and can as well be used to generalize for all other NTI study centres in the State" (p. 79).

There is a significant difference between the mean ratings of the NOUN and NTI learners on the awareness of internet interactive social media in the distance education programmes in Nigeria. The t-test analysis of the difference between the mean ratings of NOUN and NTI learners regarding distance education programmes showed a calculated t-value of 4.73 as against the critical t-value of 1.96. The null hypothesis of no significant difference was thus rejected. NOUN was established to operate purely, from a distance without much contact sessions, unlike the NTI which operate predominantly at contact centres scattered at different parts of states or zones. The contact nature of the NTI means the use of non-internet, and non-interactive media, in the nature of memographs, handouts, course modules etc. Thus, NTI students are majorly ignorant of internet interactive social media. Their opinion on the interactive media are thus bound to differ from those of NOUN, which was founded on a different motile. The nature of the learners equally counts.

There is, however, no significant difference between the perceptions of Anambra state learners and their counterparts in Imo State on the awareness of internet interactive media. The t-test analysis indicated that the calculated t-value of 1.18 is less than the critical t-value. The null hypothesis of no significant difference was therefore not rejected. This finding agrees with the earlier finding of Falade (2008), that the position of interactive media cuts across all NTI centres and states. The NOUN and NTI distance education environments, facilities and practice systems are more or less homogeneous. Hence the finding is not a surprise. Facilities and lecture guidelines are provided from a source and equally distributed to the different zones, states and centres.

2. Internet Interactive Social Media are under-utilized as instructional Media in delivery of Distance Education

Internet interactive media that can be used in the delivery of distance education programmes in South East Nigeria are generally perceived by the learners to be under-utilized. This conclusion is derived from the results of the analysis of data on the utilization of internet interactive social media. The analysis of the data showed that only 3 out of the 18 items studied i.e. item numbers 5, 6 and 7, (Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter) have high mean ratings of 2.50, 2.51 and 2.56 respectively, whereas all the rest of the 15 items recorded low mean ratings of 1.07-2.01. There is equally a grand mean of 1.62, with a relatively low standard deviation of 0.51 obtained for all the 18 items. Thus internet interactive social media are generally either not used or under-utilized in distance education instructional delivery. The findings agrees with Yaya (2006), and Falade (2008). They both found out that the interactive media significantly available and reasonably accessible were never used or were sparingly used. Computer based resources such as computer discs, internet services as well as electronic/projected materials were rarely used.

Findings on the factors militating against the effective use of internet media in distance education according to Ekpeyong (2011), include apathy of the teachers, indifference of students, ineffectiveness of the media, financial hurdles, absence of electricity, absence of required facility, absence of training programmes, and improper selection of the media.

Thus, quite a number of research works had noted that internet instructional media were under-utilized even in the regular educational system and advanced a lot of reasons for the situation. However, the countries communication system has greatly improved. in this ICT age, internet interactive social media are available. It is unfortunate that teachers and learners are predominantly unaware of their existence and most unfortunately do not possess the skills necessarily required for their utilization. There is no doubt that people are aware of the existence of these social media chat systems and use them for socialization purpose but they not used for instructional purposes.

There is a significant difference between the perceptions of learners in NOUN and those of the NTI with regards to the utilization of internet interactive social media. The t-test analysis shows that the calculated t-value of 2.10 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.96. The null hypothesis of no significant difference is therefore rejected. The type of programmes, whether of NTI or NOUN may not be the reasons for this difference. Rather, the nature of learners, locational circumstances, as well as the access and utilization support facilities are probable sources. The location of NTI study centres in very local or rural areas, and the initial emphasis on contact session as well as distribution of course modules and other non-internet interactive

media may naturally make a difference when compared with the NOUN centres mostly located in the major urban cities.

There is no significant difference between the mean perception of the Anambra State learners and those of their counterparts in Imo State on the utilization of the internet interactive media. The analysis of the mean ratings of the calculated t-value is 0.83 while the critical value is 1.96. the calculated value is thus, less than the critical t-value. Hence the null hypothesis of no significant difference is not rejected. The environment, structure, access and other utilization circumstances of the state and with reference to the programmes are similar. The situation as earlier observed by Falade (2008) may be generalized as being applicable in all other States.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn;
1. Internet interactive social media that can be used for the current modern form of the distance education programmes to the extent of learners' knowledge are unknown. This is so qualified because it is of common knowledge that advancement in information and communication Technologies have provided much of these electronic interactive opportunities that could be exploited for instructional purposes. Thus the existence of internet interactive social smedia are not known only in the sense that the learners and even the teachers or facilitators were either not aware of their existence or did not possess the application abilities or both. They may not have addressed their mind towards converting the uses of the chat systems to educational purposes.

2. The available internet interactive social media are either underutilized or not used probably due to; (i) Ignorance of the existence of such facilities (ii) absence or inadequate knowledge and skills required for access and utilization of the media. (iii) Paucity of application enabling or enhancing facilities and environment. Etc.

3. There is a beat of significant difference in the instructional delivery systems of the NOUN and NTI distance education programmes. While the NOUN can boast of little extent of some form of awareness, and utilization of internet interactive media, the NTI is still predominantly practicing the contact centre tutorial and module form of the Distance Learning System.

Educational Implications of the Study

The findings of this study have far reaching implications for the education system in general and with particular reference to the distance education;
1. Distance education is currently in vogue. It is playing both complementary and alternative roles in providing educational opportunities for various categories of learners. It is particularly helpful in providing solutions to the problems of insufficient carrying capacities and admission policies of the formal four wall educational system. Of course, the essence of the distance education in the Nigerian education had been severally underscored. In fact, it is even feared that it may be displacing the formal system in no distant time. Such a system that mounts so much displacement or alternate pressure on the current formal educational system or that plays so much complementary roles, implies some serious educational concern. It implies great demands on the effective planning and development of the modus operandi and the over-all quality of the distance education system. If it has to be compared in juxtaposition with the traditional system, then serious educational efforts should be geared towards a quality assurance of the distance system. Every available opportunity, like the use of social Media chats should be expiated.

2.   Instruction is the primary business of every educational system. The means and methods of attaining effective instruction and instructional communication is therefore of serious educational concern. For effective distance educational instruction, interactivity as normally provided by two-way interactive instructional media has been established as a basic element. Thus, where the interactive media are neither known, nor utilized, instruction will naturally not be effective. The quality of such an educational system will in effect be anything else but of standard. Hence, there is an immense need to improve on the provision of facilities for two-way interactive media systems(social media material) for appropriate distance education.

3.   That interactivity is a basic element in attaining effective distance education, implies that interactive media including social media needs to and should be made known, and usable by creating necessary information and awareness opportunities for exploiting the interactive facilities made available by development and advancements in the Information Communication Technology (ICT) world for instructional purposes.

4.   The findings of the study also imply a need for the provision of knowledge and skill acquisition training opportunities as may be organized through seminars, workshops and conferences for the benefit of both the distance education learners and their resource persons. Such training programmes may be offered to the learners before exposure to the main course content. It may also be incorporated into the curriculum content of the distance system.

Recommendations
Based on the findings of this study, the researcher recommends as follows:

1.   Providers of distance education should do everything possible to enshrine the use of internet interactive social media in distance education instructional delivery.

2.   Awareness, knowledge and skill acquisition training programmes for interactive social media should be enshrined into the curriculum and implemented at all levels of the Nigerian educational system. This will equip teachers and learners with the knowledge and skill that enables one to identify and use interactive and other contemporary two-way information communication technologies. This is informed by the fact that much of these internet interactive media are available but unknown to the learners and resource persons of distance education programmes.

3.   The government should provide necessary accessible infrastructural facilities, as well as man and materials capable of supporting the use of internet interactive media in both rural and urban areas of the country. This will enable distance education learners to have access to interactive and other modern instructional media for quality distance education.

4.   Distance education providers and indeed all educational institutions, interested in the provision of distance education, should develop training programmes on the modern modes of delivering distance education instructions and the utilization of those modes. This will enable institutions to adopt and actually apply appropriate distance educational instructional modes.

5.   Seminars, workshops or conferences with themes that border on distance educational delivery systems should be organized by stakeholders in distance education regularly to identify available internet and other electronic interactive instructional media and learn their access and usage systems in instructional delivery.

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