

# Internet, Youtube and Informal Learning among Undergraduate Students

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**Abstract:** Undoubtedly, the digital culture has come to stay in human conservationism. The YouTube has emerged as one of those digital platforms of transmitting visual educational and entertainment contents ranging from the simplest to the complex with over 2 billion views daily. To this end, this study sought to find out the adoption level of YouTube as a means of informal academic learning by students of Bells University of Technology, Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria. The study premised on Uses and Gratification Theory utilised the survey method and the instrument of Questionnaire in gathering the data. The study revealed that despite majority of the students to the tune of 70% having the YouTube applications on their phones, a minute 14% viewed educational content on the platform, while 59% preferred to see music videos, sports and movies. While 69.2% of the respondents believe learning via YouTube was easier to class room teachings, 62.8% desire YouTube platform be inculcated into formal class room teachings as they find the platform more explanatory. The study therefore recommends the infusion of creative and explanatory course content into the digital platform of YouTube, thereby gratifying the academic and professional needs of students to developing a better human ecology.

**Keywords:** Education, Informal learning, Internet Undergraduate, YouTube

## INTRODUCTION

The emergence of social media is changing the way students communicate, interact, and develop academic skills. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube has become an important part of students' life for entertainment, socialization, and classroom activities (1). As a result of this development, studies on social media among students in higher institutions is gathering motion and receiving attention from scholars. At the

commencement of social media popularity, scholars wrote about their negative impact and for that many school authorities banned their usage in their schools as they are seen as elements of distraction. However, recent study by Musa (1) revealed their positive impact and also about the wide usage of social media by university undergraduates.

One division of YouTube is the increasing amount of channels for educational purposes. This division generates educational content for young people and educationists. Also, Youtube creates a virtual platform that provides informal learning. Scholars such as Dearolph (2), believe that Youtube has more than a billion users, which frequently use of the internet. Several users are involved in watching videos and making relevant comments about the issues raised in the videos. Burlington, (2016) reveals that:

“YouTube is by far the most popular online video sharing site, and is home to millions of instructional and educational videos. These videos cover every subject imaginable from academic, to professional, to interpersonal, to domestic, and more. A user can watch a video teaching how to clear a printer jam, then go directly to a tutorial on cooking techniques”.

Although studies have been done on Twitter and Facebook alike as to how they serve as a medium for learning both formally and informally, from the research conducted before this study there has not been any study done on YouTube as a medium of informal learning among university undergraduates in Nigeria which this

research tends to cover.

The goal of this study therefore is to find out how undergraduates are taking advantage of YouTube as a tool for learning, since this social media network is growing at a fast pace. It is important to understand that education is now taking a new turn through social media. One can now stay at home and learn lots of things, from subjects taught in school to learning how to do different things like learning how to sew, cook and languages are also taught on YouTube. The internet plays an important role in the life of youths.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### Uses and Gratification Theory

The thrust of this theory stipulates that individuals actively use the media because they gain some specific gratifications from the media. The theory perceives the users as actively involved in the selective choices they make when picking the videos they want to watch, therefore, the question here is not its effect on the user but who uses which contents on YouTube and for what reason Kunczik (9).

Kunczik (9) describes UGT scenario as “there are some specific needs of individuals. These individuals will carefully select the appropriate media that meet their immediate needs”

Considering that the audience, which in the case of this research is university undergraduates, selectively engage and react to the media, UGT looks at what gratifications are sought after on YouTube and how the videos on YouTube are used to satisfy the need

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To discover what kind of videos University students’ watch on YouTube.
2. To show how often they watch videos with educational content that enhance informal learning.
3. To determine how videos on YouTube enhance University students’ knowledge in some certain informal areas of learning.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What kind of videos do University students watch on YouTube?

2. How often do University students watch videos with educational content that enhance informal learning?
3. How do the videos on YouTube enhance University Students’ knowledge in some certain informal areas of learning?

## METHOD AND MATERIALS

The survey method was used because it is generally appropriate for measuring the opinions of a group of respondents that is too large to observe. The population of this study was students from Bells University of Technology, located in Ota Nigeria. The age grade for the answering of the questionnaire ranged from 15-30. A rationale for this population was that most of the students possessed electronic gadgets and phones and can also afford to buy the data services needed in order to access the internet especially social media.

The sample size for the study was 162 students. This was chosen using the systematic sampling with a random start. The researcher employed simple random techniques which is a probability sampling method. The University has 6 colleges: College of Engineering with six departments, College of Environmental Sciences with six departments, College of Natural and Applied Sciences with five departments, College of Food Science and Technology with three departments, College of Information Technology with two departments and College of Management Sciences with eight departments.

Hence, using the simple random method all the names of the colleges were put in a box and out of the six colleges which consist of 30 departments only 10 departments were selected from 2 colleges. The colleges selected were the College of Engineering and the College of Management Sciences which was recently merged with the College of Natural and Applied Sciences. The copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the respondents that fall under these colleges. The colleges not selected were 535 in number. Therefore the unselected colleges were subtracted from the amount of students currently in school, therefore  $2153 - 535 = 1618$ .

## RESULTS

## RESEARCH QUESTION 1:

**What kind of videos do University students watch on YouTube?**

Different types of videos are uploaded everyday on YouTube with different contents. This research question was aimed at finding out the types of videos the respondents spent majority of their time watching.

The answers provided indicated that majority of the respondents spent the bulk of their time watching videos. Due to the fact that majority of the respondents were boys with 59% while 22.4% were female. 26% of the respondents watched music videos while 21% of the respondents watched mainly sports followed by movies with 12% then 10.9% of the respondents go on YouTube to watch tutorials.

**Table 1****Type of videos the students watch more**

	Percent %
Music	27.3%
Movies	12.7%
Sports	22.7%
Fashion	5.3%
Gossip	4.0%
Comedy	8.0%
Tutorials	11.3%
Educational	2.7%
Music and movies	.7%
Movies and sports	.7%
Sports and fashion	.7%
Fashion and gossip	.7%
Gossip and comedy	.7%
Music, movies and sports	.7%
Movies, fashion and tutorial	.7%
Fashion, gossip and tutorial	.7%
Movies, fashion, tutorial and comedy	.7%
<b>Total</b>	100% <b>n = 156</b>

In table 1 above, it is clearly illustrated the type of videos the respondents preferred to watch, the options made available ensured that it captured the wide variety of videos present on YouTube. It is obvious that the respondents watch music videos, movies, sports and tutorials. According to West Richard & Turner Lynn (2007). It is said from the Uses and Gratification theory

that the individuals can be termed as internet active users, who have specific goals they desire to achieve. Therefore, they consume media contents for specific educational needs.

**RESEARCH QUESTION 2:****How often do University students watch videos with educational content that enhance informal learning?**

This research question sought to find out how often the respondents watch videos with educational content that enhance informal learning. It sought to know if the users watch videos with educational content and how often they watch it. 42.9% of the respondents agreed that the videos they watch are somehow relevant to their academic pursuit, 34% agree that the videos they watch were completely relevant to their academic pursuit while 13.5% believe that the videos they watch were not relevant to their academic life.

Although majority of the respondents answered that they derive pleasure from watching YouTube videos, while 46.2% of the respondents get information and are educated on YouTube.

The respondents however, were asked if they watched videos that teach things that they learn in the classroom, in table 4.8 the answers were presented where 67.3% of the respondents agreed that they watched videos about things they have learnt in the classroom while 27.6% said that they do not.

**TABLE 2****How often the respondents watch these videos**

	Percent %
Very often	19.6%
Often	40.6%
Not often	24.5%
Not at all	9.8%
Undecided	5.6%
<b>Total</b>	100% <b>n = 156</b>

They were further probed how often they watched these videos about things that they have learnt from the classroom. In table 2 above, it was illustrated that majority of the respondents watched these videos often while 17.9% of the respondents watched the videos very

often. Although 22.4% stated that they watched the videos not so often and 9% said that they didn't even watch the videos at all.

A large percentage of respondents believe that they watch the videos about things that they teach in the classroom often.

Using the Uses and Gratification theory as a frame work, individuals consume media contents based on specific desires they want to achieve. These individuals select some media contents based on their education needs and aspirations.

The students of Bells University have YouTube selected to watch videos from and have picked educational videos to satisfy their need and after consuming the contents they agreed that they have learnt from these videos.

### RESEARCH QUESTION 3:

#### How do the videos on YouTube enhance University Students' knowledge in some certain informal areas of learning?

This research question is aimed at finding out how the YouTube videos enhance the knowledge of the respondents. In order to answer this research question series of questions were asked, the respondents were asked if they feel that informal learning is an important part of their education, majority of the respondents, 67.3% agreed that it is, while the minority (24.4%) stated that it is not.

The respondents were asked if learning was easier with YouTube than teachings in the classroom where 69.2% of the respondents said that the teachings on YouTube were easier to learn from than the teachings done in the classroom. This answer was also illustrated in table 4.12 The respondents were also asked if they felt that YouTube should be inculcated into the formal setting which is the classroom. 62.8% of the respondents said that it should be inculcated into the formal settings while the others disagreed that it should not be inculcated into the formal setting. This answer is illustrated in the table below:

**TABLE 3**

#### Should YouTube be inculcated into the classroom?

	Percent
Yes	67.6%
No	32.4%

<b>Total</b>	100% <b>n = 156</b>
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According to the data collected and analyzed, majority of the respondents believe that they gain more knowledge from YouTube than when they were being taught in class and majority of the respondents also believe that YouTube should be made as a tool for teaching in the classroom.

According to the research by Choi and Kang (2014), and Yunus et al. (2012), social media is establishing ground in some higher institutions of learning, particularly in the students' learning process, participants of their study believed that learning through social media is motivational, easy, and could help them in writing assignments.

### CONCLUSION

It is also necessary to point out that it has been established in this study that there is a heavy exposure on how YouTube is serving a platform for informal learning, therefore majority of the respondents have learnt a lot of things from YouTube that they did not learn from their formal setting which is the classroom. The findings also showed that majority of Bells university of Technology go on YouTube almost every day

A very brief look into how one is using this platform and what has come from it and how users are learning from it was given. YouTube has impacted heavily on the life of students especially university undergraduates according to the data gotten. However, survey data has provided useful guidance in examining the scope of the phenomenon of informal learning through YouTube video.

Bells university students have been able to adopt YouTube as a social network suitable for the gratification of their education and information need. The results from the study according to the Uses and Gratification theory, shows that the scenario of the theory as identified Kunczik (1988) cited in Folarin (1998) have been adopted.

The study therefore concludes that YouTube is a major medium for informal learning among Bells undergraduates. Also the researcher found out that a greater part of the respondents accented to YouTube being inculcated into the formal setting of teaching.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these findings the researcher was able to gather that YouTube is a strong medium of informal learning among undergraduates and the students rather watch videos on YouTube teaching them classroom curriculum and in line with that the researcher submits the following recommendation.

1. The researcher observed that the students visit the YouTube often, therefore, the researcher recommends that lecturers should take a step towards inculcating some of their subjects or topics on YouTube or they can go as far as asking the students to get the teaching of the day from a particular channel on YouTube that has covered this subject broadly and has made it more explanatory.
2. This study has shown that most Bells university undergraduates were conversant with YouTube and make use of it often, however if abused YouTube may be a source of distractions to the academics of the undergraduate students and as a result students should be conscious about how much time they spend on YouTube and what they consume from it.
3. University undergraduates are exposed to diverse information from different social media platforms some of which may not be true, before accepting an information they should first ensure the credibility of such information.
4. Also users should be cautious of what they are exposed to as the internet can affect users in different ways such as becoming addicted to surfing the net, being exposed to

cyberbullying, internet scams and harassments amongst other.

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