

Towards the Choice of Better Social Media Platform for Knowledge Delivery: Exploratory Study in University of Ilorin

Ismaeel Abiodun Sikiru^{1*}, Jegede Ayomide Faith²

^{1,2}Department of Information Technology, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria

¹Institute of Mathematics and Physical Sciences, Université d'Abomey Calavi, Bénin
ismaeel.as@unilorin.edu.ng^{1*}, faithjegede130@gmail.com²

*Corresponding Author

Abstract

Rising from the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, all schools in Nigeria were put under lock and key, like other countries. This was to curtail the rapid spread of the virus, while the medical practitioners were in the laboratories. But due to longer period of shutdown to formal education, most higher institutions instantaneously keyed-in to any available social media platform (SMP) without understudying its efficiency and effectiveness for knowledge transfer. The consequences of this include non-satisfactory knowledge transfer, most especially, by the learners; hence, aim of knowledge impact is jeopardized. This study therefore is aimed to fill the gap to correct the existing damage, and prevent the likelihood of not-afore-put-to-test syndrome in the subsequent choice of SMP. To achieve this, University of Ilorin is chosen as the territory survey for being the most sought-after University for admission in Nigeria. Quantitative research methods were adopted, being the most appropriate for this study in the literature. A total of 200 respondents participated voluntarily with the adoption of Slovin's formula for the sampling techniques; 156 students and 44 lecturers. The data collection process was performed through a survey comprising demographic, dichotomous, multiple choice, and open-ended questionnaire to capture detail information for the research work. Simple descriptive statistics was employed for the analysis. Our findings reveal that out of the seventeen SMPs put to test, zoom platform ranks the most effective and efficient for the knowledge delivery and acquisition by the lecturers and students of the University respectively, based on the designed principles. Therefore, making Zoom platform the most preferred for e-learning. This study recommends that choice of satisfactory SMP for knowledge delivery should be utmost concern of all institutions before embarking on virtual learning system.

Keywords: Knowledge delivery, Social media platform, University of Ilorin, Zoom platform, Virtual learning, Covid-19

1. Introduction

The shining new normal in the lifestyle of digizens has been observed to be the dynamic SMPs (Tony, 2016). These platforms hold the features of dynamism as it changes the previous ways of activities (Gollins, 2018). By this, Kaplan and Haenlein (2016) defined social media as a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web, and that allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content. The SMPs are of diverse, and they, in most cases, serve different purposes based on the intent of its operability. Some SMPs are very effective only for social interactivity, while some are for educational purposes (Moreno, 2015). Although, at the present time, many occurrences have made more social media to be created and/or tilted for educational purposes, while the available ones are technically upgraded for better discharge of educational functionalities. The like of COVID-19 is a big factor in this regard. During the peak period of COVID-19 pandemic, the educational institutions across the globe were put under lock and key, as one of the means to curtail the rapid spread of the virus (UNESCO, 2020). Most universities therefore found no other alternative than to take the advantage of e-learning platforms (Kumar, 2019). By this evolution, many higher institutions devised how best to deliver course content online, engage learners, and conduct assessments. This need craved ways for revolutionizing knowledge delivery and, by consequence, put information technologists on race to deliver standardized relative media platforms for conventional knowledge acquisition, most especially, at the tertiary level. New normal in knowledge acquisition set in as a result of "congregational damages" caused by COVID-19

pandemic. Therefore, COVID-19 pandemic could not be described as hazard harbinger to the humanity; rather, it brought new better normal for the citadels of learning to invest in virtual learning.

Noteworthy, virtual learning system has earlier been perceived as the internet-based software for distributing, tracking, and managing courses over the Internet in a real-time dual-way communication between the learners and the tutors (Guerrero, Rodriguez & Pacheco, 2023; Keis, 2017; Thanji, 2016). This offers numerous common online platforms for knowledge delivery such as Microsoft Teams, Google meet, Skype, Google classroom, Telegram, Zoom and WhatsApp. These different technological dispositions facilitate flexibility beyond physical classroom with their simplicity to use and accessibility to all, even with naïve technical skills (Adamson, 2015). And till moment, SMP has been adopted by higher institutions management as a tool for supporting professional development in education to get the newest knowledge at any time or place. Moreover, SMPs have been implemented as emerging technologies for continuous and seamless communication between instructor and students as well as intra-students' tutorials (Bista, 2014). As a result of its recorded effectiveness and ease, almost all the higher institutions have adopted both virtual and physical learning medium for teaching-learning system.

As beneficial as the SMPs are for educational enhancement in 21st century, there is a preferential difference between the learners and tutors in the choice of the platform. This is as a result of the diversity and geometric rise in their availability (Jibrin, Musa and Shittu, 2017). As some observe, the platforms are hindrance to optimal academic performance (Oberiri, 2016), others see it as invaluable facilitators (Bety & Susan, 2016; Boer et al., 2020; Caratiquit & Caratiquit, 2023; Magda & Hana, 2016). Thus, reasons for preferential differences have been noted in the literature as being diverse, such as technical complexity, permissible space, license of use, data consumption, relativity, information reach, affordability, among others (Bao, 2020; Celik, Uzonboylu, Demibras-Celik, 2023) It has also been observed that to have a well impactful teaching-learning communication, the two parties involved must be, to a certain level, contented with the choice of knowledge delivery platform(s) that is/are adopted. Else, no impactful knowledge would be delivered, and other party, mostly students, would be disadvantaged (Bao, 2020). To curtail such an imbalance knowledge delivery, we take it as an obligation to conduct exploratory study of the choice of better SMP for knowledge delivery, making a case study of University of Ilorin, Nigeria. It is of the intents of the authors that the findings of this study would pave a way for the institutions of higher learning and educational policy makers to consider the relative factors in the choice of the social media technologies for knowledge delivery in order to achieve the mandates engrossed in learning. The remaining part of the study is structured as thus: related works are discussed in section 2; methodology adopted for the study is documented in section 3; findings and discussions are put together in section 4; then conclusion is made in section 5.

2. Related Works

Though, the term social media is common, but little the users of this term are aware of its various platforms. It has been noted by the research community that social networks, media sharing networks, social blogging networks, discussion networks, and review networks are various platforms for social media functionalities, each with its unique features (Dabbagh & Reo, 2011). In general, SMP is ideal for connecting professionals. It's a fantastic tool for networking, sharing information, finding new opportunities, and hiring new individuals (Abdullah, 2022; Acarsoy, 2019). The world of today records geometric increase in the social media users. This was better buttressed by the report of Statista (2023), that social media users are more than the half of the world population. As of January 2023, according to the report, there were 5.16 billion internet users worldwide, which is 6.4 percent of the global population. Of this total, social media users were 4.76 billion, i.e. 59.4% of the world population. This is an interestingly increase of 137 million new users in a year-round, an annualized growth of 3% at an average rate of 4 new users every single second. Also reported is the projection of almost 6 billion social media users in 2027, forecasting that in each month, 9 in 10 internet users would use social media. In the same vein, social media users in Nigeria are projected to reach 91 million by 2027; though, a very low penetration rate of 15.4% (Ruby, 2023). In this regard, many works have been recorded on the varieties of social media. While for the purpose of this study, the authors are concerned on which of them is aligned to knowledge sharing and consequently the title of the research work.

The availability and ease of access to social media has made students addicted to it for various reasons, many researchers have related the fall of educational impacts and academic failure of students to the deployment of this technology (Khan, 2018; Kolhar, Kazi & Alameen, 2021; Kubey, Lavin & Barrows, 2016). Contrarily, most seasoned researchers have shown clear studies of no correlation between social media and fall in students' academic performances (Ahmed & Qazi, 2016; Bety & Susan, 2016; Kolan & Dzandza, 2018; Kumar, 2019; Magda & Hana, 2016; Boer et al., 2020).

Recently, Noori, Orfan, Akramy and Hashemi (2022) investigated the use of social media in teaching and learning English as a foreign language in tertiary institution of Afghanistan. The authors discovered that social media influenced the academic performance of students. It was recorded that Facebook and WhatsApp are the frequently used SMPs for knowledge delivery in Afghanistan. The researchers therefore advised institutions' management and policy makers to encourage SMPs deployment and enhance it in the educational sector. It is therefore inferred that social media plays a crucial role in the life of students, particularly upskilling reading and writing skills of students. In addition, social media informs students about educational opportunities available to them including research opportunities, scholarships, fellowship, webinar trainings, e-quiz and competition, and sponsorships (Kolan & Dzandza, 2018).

Before then, Dabbagh and Kitsantas (2012) have revealed how personal learning environment (PLE) could only be driven by the integration of social media to support self-regulated learning in higher institutions of learning. The authors decisively provided a three-level pedagogical framework for the actualization of social media-aided learning. An emphasis was made in the study that the integration of SMP for teaching and learning would make the students acquire basic and complex reinforced knowledge because it affords the students comfortability which is an essential part in knowledge acquisition. The researchers however advised the lecturers to keep on watch of the students against any distractions that could be a bait to their learning spirit. Besides, Dogoriti, Pange and Anderson (2014) examined the students' perceptions of e-instruction using Moodle as an learning management system (LMS) with and without Facebook (FB) platform. This study was executed on the tertiary students learning English language as a foreign language in Greece. The authors revealed that the integration of LMS and FB platform clearly brought reality to the students of the development embedded in internet technology for learning. It was also reported that 76% of the students observed that the FB platform enhances sense of community and communication skills within a learning environment, while 69% stated that it reinforces learning process, participation and collaborative learning. For the study, 51 students were considered. The authors suggested that FB should be compared with other SMPs as adjunctive learning tools in the future work.

Moreover, the availability of social media tools in the hands of digizens is the contributing factor of its invaluable adoption to the educational sector. The consequence of this availability necessitated another study that was carried out in University of Ghana to contextualize the rate at which SMPs have effect on the academic performance of the institution's students. Kolan and Dzandza (2018) carried out the research on a total sample size of randomly selected 200 students with the adoption of descriptive statistics. The findings of the authors show that the social media networks can never be taken out of knowledge delivery in the 21st century. It was gathered that the respondents do use SMPs to disseminate knowledge to their colleagues, and formulate academic group discussion to exchange ideas, research breakthrough, and other academic innovations. The authors' findings corroborated the works of Salvation and Adzhruddin (2014) and O'keeffe and Clake-pearson (2011). As a matter of fact, social media has been well identified by the research community as a Siamese twin to the students in their academic life. Based on this view, many researchers in social sciences, Linguistics, Education, and Information technology do examine its impact on students' academic life (Boateng & Amankwaa, 2016). The authors' target population was ten volunteered international master students in Beijing Normal University, China from five different programmes. The students revealed that SMPs have greatly enhanced their educational skills as it offers them easy access to class schedules information, discussion and assignments, connections and exploration, and other academic engagements. However, the target population is relatively small, which therefore necessitated higher sample size.

In advancement, social media's effectiveness has become one of the criteria of the digizens in the choice of higher institution of learning. This is well revealed in the report of Šola and Zia (2021) on the influence of social media particularly FB in the choice of students' study programme and tertiary institute of learning. The result showed that SM

has identical impact on students' choice of institutions and course selection. And this is premised on the integration of several SMs to most tertiary institutions webpages. The authors therefore recommended more research and considerations in this direction. In addition, connectivist MOOCs (cMOOCs) was proposed by Kaplan and Haenlein (2016) as the revolutionizing of massive open online course (MOOC) with SMP to facilitating creation and exchange of user-generated content. The authors emphasized that cMOOCs is the only way to go in the 21st century for its effectiveness, efficiency, and impactful technological direction in knowledge delivery.

Sasere and Makhasane (2020) carried out a research study on the global perception of faculties on virtual programme delivery and assessment in higher education institutions during COVID-19 pandemic. The researchers were able to evaluate the success stories of virtual teaching and learning with only ten participants drawn from selected continents. Summarily, the study concluded that the deficiencies in the virtual program is as a result of less or no technical know-how of this technology by some academics especially in developing countries. Also, recorded technophobia among students is an additional factor for unachievable success in its deployment. Therefore, there is a need for training and re-training of the lecturers and students in this regard.

In brief, the literature has clearly shown how impactful the adoption of SMPs is, in teaching and learning in the 21st century. The importance, virtues, observation, proposal and recommendation have been made by the research community. But to our surprise, none has made a study to research on the preference of SMP out of the available SMPs. While only Dogoriti, Pange and Anderson (2014) and Šola and Zia (2021) were found to consider a single platform, FB. Therefore, this research study, a case of University of Ilorin, Nigeria is essential and could be replicated, being the first in this study to the best of our understanding, in other higher institutions of learning.

3. Methodology

This research work comprises an online survey of both the students and academic faculty of University of Ilorin, Nigeria. A survey tool was prepared for data collection. The chosen survey tool is identified as appropriate fit for our research questions. In the designed tool, we provided multimedia content, such as YouTube & Pinterest, Vimeo & Slack, and YouTube LinkedIn & Pinterest to widen SMPs for the teaching-learning environment, arising from the further studies aimed by Dogoriti, Pange and Anderson (2014), Boateng and Amankwaa, 2016, among other earlier researchers' suggestion. Moreover, the aim of this study is to focus on the most preferential SMPs for teaching and learning, even if they are not popular to those outside academic environment. So, Edmodo, Discord, and Medium are included. A survey question such as "What specific SMP do you find satisfactory for teaching/learning?" was put across to evaluate the most preferential SMP of our respondents. The distributed questionnaire also offers open fields through which the respondents could express their thoughts. Two referees validated the questionnaire to ensure that the constructs are well placed and self-understandable to the respondents. The question types used in this study are the demographic questions; dichotomous questions; multiple choice questions; and open-ended questions, as summarily explained in Table 1. Ethical considerations were observed thereby making the respondents to be free in their choice, and respond without being under any duress.

Descriptive statistics was employed for this study to summarize the features of the sample, while SPSS 18.0 was used for data analysis, being the tools appropriate for this study (Noori et al, 2022). Information about target population's attitudes, opinions, habits or any form of variety in education or social issues were collected using descriptive survey design of Google Forms. The designed questionnaire is of two sections, demographic data of the respondents and the survey subject. While in the choice of sampling technique, Simple Random Sampling Techniques was adopted, for its relativity and simplicity. Slovin's formula, i.e., Taro Yamane sampling formula, of $n = N \div (1 + N(e^2))$ was applied, where "n" is the sample size; "N" is the population size, and "e" is the error margin. As a result, the sample size "n" of the study becomes approximately 200. The respondents are 78.9% and 21.1% for students and lecturers respectively.

Table 1: Brief Description of the Adopted Survey Question

Survey Question Type	Description
Demographic	Demographic questions are an integral part of any questionnaire. They are used to identify features such as age, gender, race, geographic place of residence, among others. Its data helps to establish a more accurate picture of the target group in the survey.
Dichotomous	It is mostly a binary question “Yes/No”.
Multiple Choice	It is of more than two exhaustive, mutually exclusive categories. It affords respondents liberty to select as much as s/he could from the available responses. This type of question, sometimes, include an “other” option.
Likert Rating Scale	It requires respondents to rate a particular attribute along a well-defined continuum.
Open-Ended	Open-ended question is administered to explore the qualitative, in-depth aspect of a particular question. It affords the respondent liberal opportunity to be detailed in his/her evaluation of the concept.

Source: QuestionPro (<http://www.questionpro.com>)

4. Results and Discussion

In this section, our findings are presented in subsections and discussed as follows

4.1 Demographic Information of Respondents

During the pre-processing of the respondents’ responses, careful attention was paid to the ratio of both the lecturers and students. It was learnt that our study should never be skewed towards a party against the other. So, demographic information was given priority. However, students’ population is almost quadruple of lecturers. This is based on two reasons – ratio of students’ population to lecturers in University of Ilorin, and the obtained result of Slovin’s formula. The findings of this are well depicted in Table 2 and Figure 1 respectively.

Table 2: Demographic outlook of the respondents

RESPONDENT	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Student	156	78.9%
Lecturer	44	21.1%

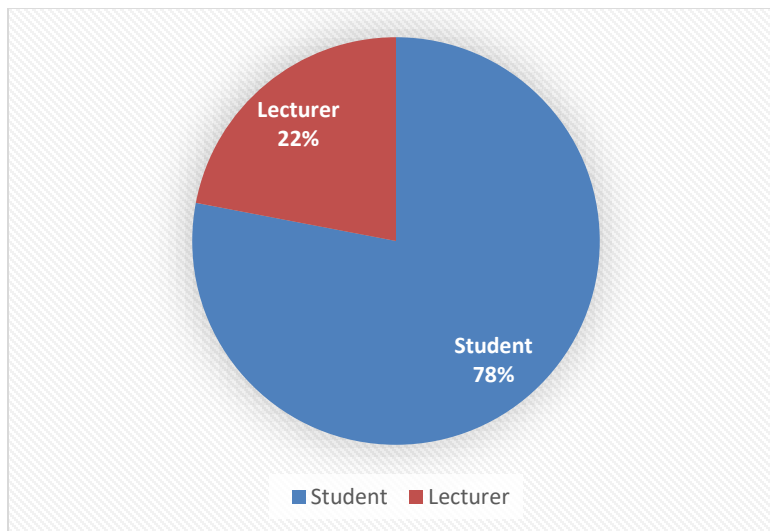


Figure 1: Percentage representation of the respondents’ demographic information

The students of University of Ilorin considered in this study cuts across the entire undergraduate levels, from 100Level to 600Level including postgraduate students. The distribution is as shown in Figure 2. This is essential because the choice of social medium platform for knowledge discovery is not only undergraduate-centric (Boateng & Amankwaa, 2016). Besides, we are not unaware that most of the postgraduate students in our study territory are academic staff either in University of Ilorin or other institutions of learning. It was also found that there is a steady increase in the respondents' population from 100Level to 400Level, but decline from 500Level to 600Level, as illustrated in Figure 2. This is so, because the number of departments running four-year courses in the University significantly outnumber those of five- and six-years courses.

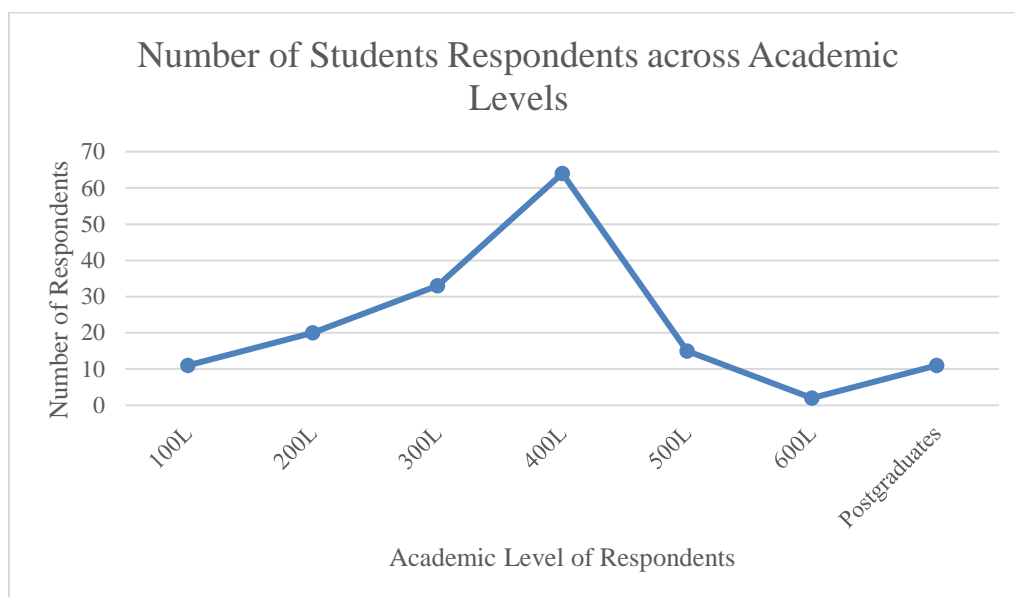


Figure 2: Demographic information of respondents (Student)

Following the report shown in Figure 2 about the student respondents, lecturer respondents' demographic information is also reported in Figure 3. Eleven departments were randomly selected in the University as a result of their earlier contributions towards the technology advancement trends. Our finding, as shown in Figure 3, shows the highest respondents of 90% from computer science department, followed by Education department of 80%, and Information Technology department of 70%. This is not unexpected because these departments are front-runners in the know of educational advancement piloted on the use of technological platforms. The departments of Agricultural Science, Microbiology, Political Science, and Telecommunication Science all have 50% each of the respondents. This could be as a result of the level of awareness at their disposal at the moment of responding to this research questionnaire. English department has 20% of the respondents. The reason could be the lecturers' thought of the students being swayed by the social media for the fact that larger information is composed in English language. Surprisingly enough, this disposition is in contrary to the findings of Dogoriti, Pange and Anderson (2014). More research works could be channelled towards the perspectives of the academic staff of English department on the use of SMPs. At the bottom of the ladder, departments of Animal Science, Mass communication, and Mathematics are found, each with 10% value of responses. The disparity in the distribution of the academic respondents is as a result of their perception on the use of social media for teaching or scientific discipline inclination. Our finding here is in furtherance to the view of Manca and Ranieri (2016).

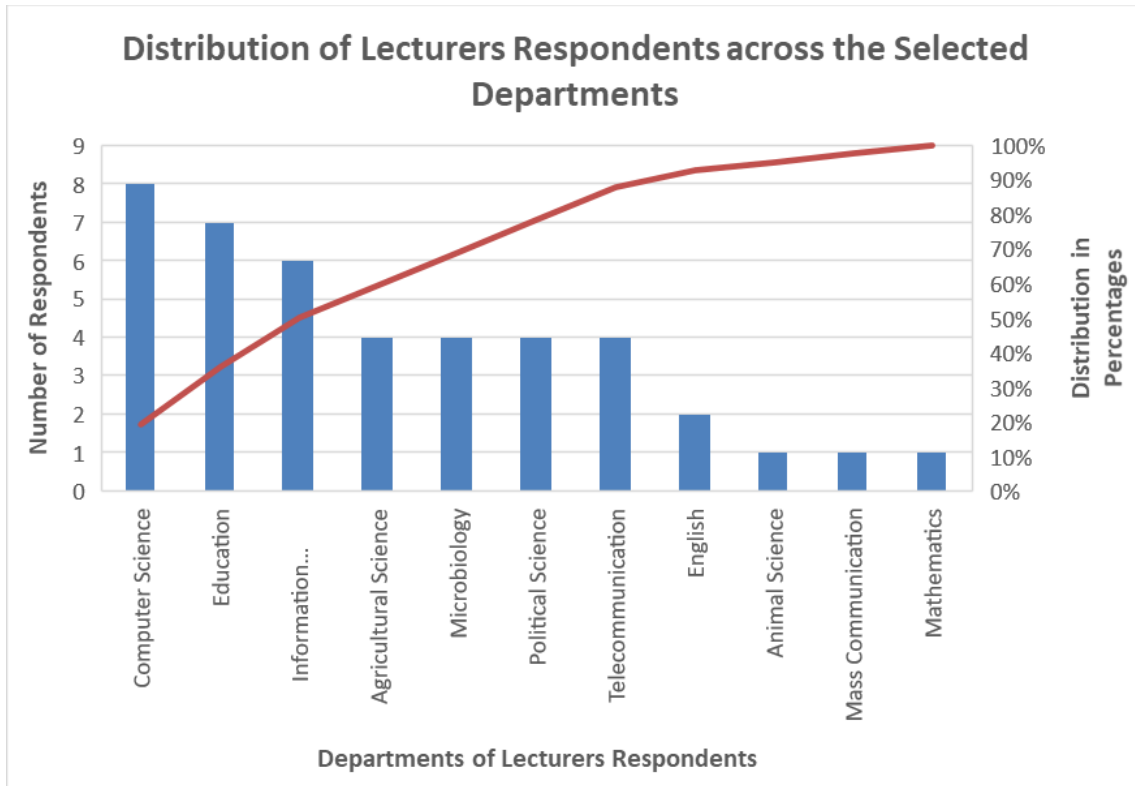


Figure 3: Demographic information of respondents (Lecturer)

4.2 Preferential Choice of Satisfactory SMP

The authors ensured that all the respondents - both the students and lecturers of the University – are not unaware neither uninformed of the SMP. This is to ensure honest responses from the respondents. And it is well revealed in our findings, as only 0.5% of the respondents have never used SMP to either teach or learn from. As a result, the remaining 99.5% of the respondents are questioned further to make a choice of their preferred platform based on their previous experience in terms of efficiency and effectiveness in knowledge delivery and acquisition. The finding is presented in Figure 4

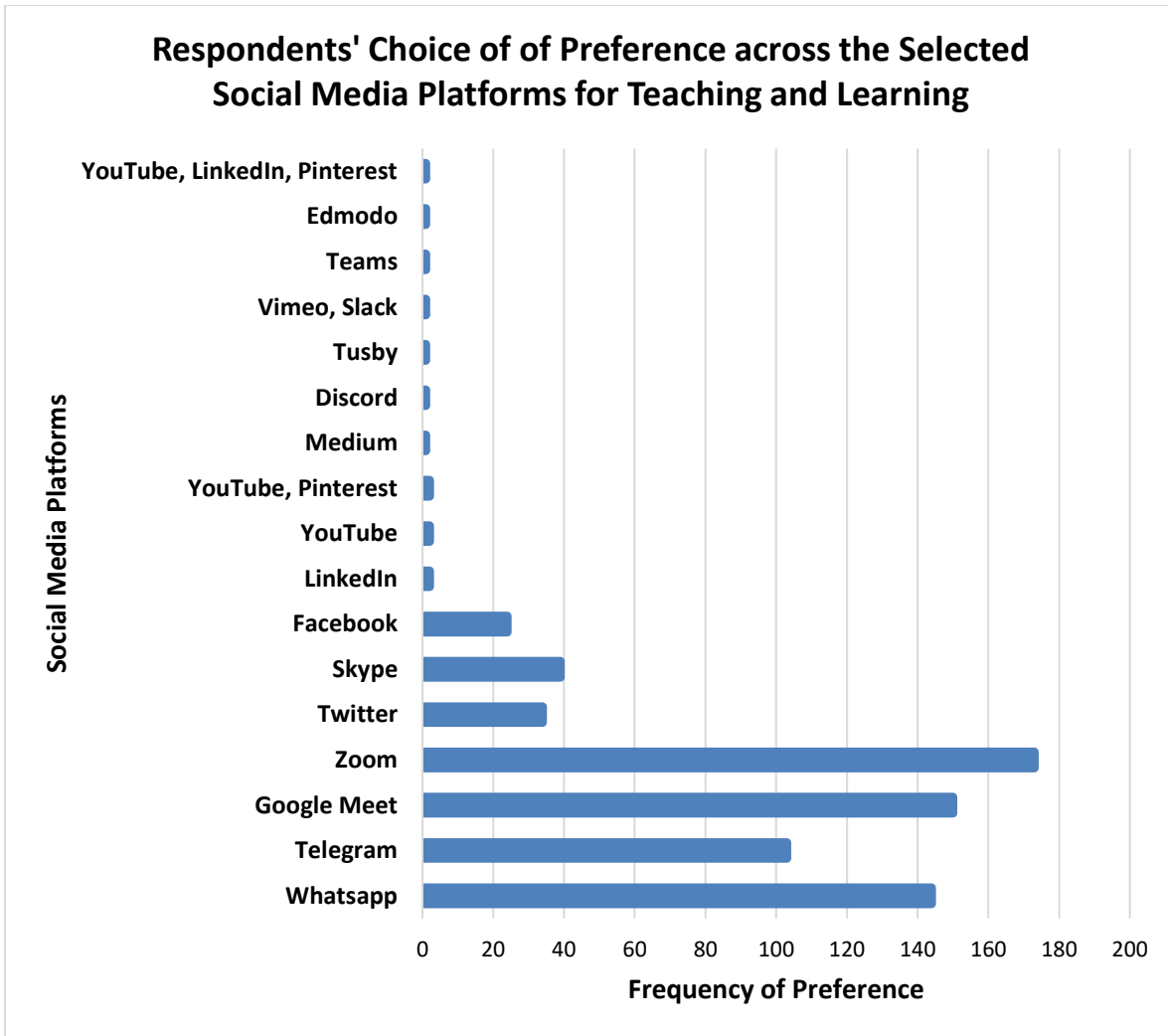


Figure 4: Respondents' Preference of SMPs for Teaching and/or Learning

5. Conclusion

Blending mode of knowledge delivery and acquisition has become a daylight reality (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2016). Regardless of what could be its main genesis, the new normal is to have a virtual mode for teaching and learning (Guerrero, Rodriguez & Pacheco, 2023). The world is evolving, being driven in technology direction, and education is the main driver. Education is no more a property of some set of people, race, tribe but abound the entire space. To be educated, tutor and learner need to avail the opportunities in the space. Learners therefore need a tip of finger platform to afford this, likewise the tutor. Research community has therefore found SMPs as the easiest accessible point for this acquisition (Sasere & Makhasane, 2020; Šola & Zia, 2021). However, the diversity of the SMPs with their unique qualities need to be researched into, to better know which of them is of high relevant, accessible, effective, and efficient to the particular end users (Bista, 2014; Jibril, Musa & Shittu, 2017; Kolan & Dzandza, 2018). This important need is what becomes the concerns of the authors, where University of Ilorin – the most sought-after University for admission in Nigeria – is chosen as the territory survey. We sought for the perceptions of our respondents based on their past experiences in the use of seventeen SMPs within their disposal. This reason of ours is premised on the identified gap in the research community (Boateng & Amankwaa, 2016; Dogoriti, Pange & Anderson, 2014; Noori, Orfan, Akramy & Hashemi, 2022). And unfortunately, choice of SMPs for knowledge delivery and acquisition is always arbitrarily ratified by the institutional administrator without any test on its efficiency and effectiveness for knowledge transfer. Hence, learners are disadvantaged mostly. Primary data for the study was collected using Google Forms questionnaire and analysed for

statistical significance using SPSS; both tools are commonly used, and effectively facilitated the study. Our findings reveal that Zoom platform is the most preferred by the lecturers and students of the University for knowledge delivery and acquisition respectively, followed by Google meet, WhatsApp, and Telegram, as shown in Figure 4. University of Ilorin and other higher institutions of learning could by this report enhance the Zoom platform as the tenable SMP for teaching and learning, so that the aim of knowledge impact would not be jeopardized. Interestingly, to the best understanding of these authors, the like of this research study has never been carried out in the past, in spite of the important effect of the satisfactory medium for teaching and learning in the choice of SMPs. As the research cycle portends, the niche is still open for further improvement and works. We also suggest that more research works could be channelled towards the perspectives of the academic staff of English department on the use of SMPs for teaching and learning.

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