USING SOCIAL MEDIA AS A PLATFORM FOR TEACHING HIGHER EDUCATION- WHAT DO THE STUDENTS EXPECT?

BY
Ayotola AREMU (Ph.d) and Ebenezer Obideyi (M.Ed)
Department of Teacher Education, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

Technology integration in Higher Education is a necessity that no one contends. However, there is need for a systematic attempt at integration, which is based on best practices. These best practices evolve from continuous evaluation of and reflection on attempts at integration. Such reflections, amongst others should explore perceptions, expectations and challenges of all concerned stakeholders, such as students, course facilitators, curriculum developers, learning system designers and so on. This paper is a reflection on an attempt to use a social media platform to deliver a postgraduate diploma in education course. An earlier paper had presented reflections of the delivery of this course from the perspective of the facilitators. This paper presents the views of the students who participated in the semester long course. The paper states the perceptions of the students on the use of the platform for learning. Furthermore, it explains the responses of the students on the challenges, they faced as a result of using the social media platform to access parts of the course. Finally, it shows what the students would have expected to have been done, such that they would overcome the challenges. Based on all these, the authors expounds, what needs to be done for effective integration of the Facebook as a platform for learning especially at this level of education.

INTRODUCTION

The NMC Horizon Report: Higher Education Edition (2014) has expressed the growing ubiquity of Social Media. The yearly report which presents the current trends in Educational Technology in Higher Education (HE) and the projected timeline for its adoption states that Social Media is one of the technologies that would drive changes in HE in the next one to two years. This does not come as a surprise since statistics show that 2.7 billion people- (almost 40% of the world population regularly uses social media Horizon 2014). There are several social media tools, but the most popular among them, is Facebook (Sari & Tedjasaputra 2013, Horny & Fatima 2012, Cheung, Chiu, & Lee, 2010; Golder, Wilkinson, & Huberman, 2007; Roblyer, McDaniel, Webb, Herman, & Witty, 2010). Facebook, (as at September 2014) has 864 million daily active users . In Africa, Facebook claims they have a 100 million active users, while in Nigeria the figure is put at 11 million users.

These social media, especially the Facebook are increasingly finding their way into the classrooms considering the number of research reports that can be accessed about them in recent months. Some of such are Escobar-Rodrguez, Carvajal-Trujillo & Monge-Lozano (2014), Atabek & Yildirim(2014), Rambe & Ng'ambi (2014), O'Bannon, Britt & Beard (2014) Shaltry, Wu,& Zhang (2014), Gregory, Gregory & Eddy (2014), Staines & Lauchs (2013). These studies, based on experiences provide guidelines that can direct their effective use in the classroom. They also provide information on the learning environment in which they can be used and the skills that can be developed using such technology tools.

The compelling nature of emerging social networking tools and their popularity among younger generations have positioned them as necessary tools to facilitate higher education (Özkan and McKenzie, 2008). Corroborating this, McLoughlin (2011) posited that the use of Web 2.0 tools can enhance users' abilities and enable collaboration, collective knowledge building and exchange of ideas. Facebook and Twitter are the popular social networks (SNSs) (Hosny and Fatima 2012) that may likely come to mind. To further support the use of social media in higher education, Banks et al, (2007) explained that formal learning is only a small fraction of the lifelong experience of human learning. 19% in the first through twelfth grades, 8% in undergraduate years, and 5% in graduate years. This suggests that as students progress from one level of education to a higher, informal learning becomes more important. Chen and Bryer (2012) found out that social media could be used to facilitate this informal learning by integrating enriched discussions, increased engagement, and broad connections into formal learning environments. The expected outcome of proper integration of social media is social and active learning that is learner-centered and informal.

According to Mach (2013), reviewing a number of researches and interventions, which used SN tools, expressed that "Institutions of higher learning have found that the SN tools have positively impacted their student teaching candidates, in varying degrees." Mach (2013) added that this was achieved through the following means;

- building a sense of community,

- enhancing student-centered learning experiences,
- allowed candidates to access a broad array of resources, and participate in the broader educational community.

The interest in Facebook generally is predicated on the fact that it has the potential for various purposes and these include

- maintaining existing relationships. Bosch, 2009; Joinson, 2008; Lampe et al., 2008; Lewis & West, 2009; Pempek et al., 2009; Sheldon, 2008; Young & Quan-Haase, 2009),
- a task management tool (Young & Quan-Haase, 2009);
- to pass time (Joinson, 2008; Pempek et al., 2009; Sheldon, 2008; Stern & Taylor, 2007);
- meeting new people (Ellison et al., 2007; Lampe et al., 2006; Sheldon, 2008; Urista et al., 2009; Zhao et al., 2008); and
- learning purposes (Bosch, 2009; Pempek et al., 2009).

According to the Wang & Woo, 2012; Sari, 2013, its unique built in functions offer pedagogical, social and technological affordances.

There are various examples of integration of Facebook in HE with varied consequences. The attempt of Barczyk, Nareddy and Duncan (2012), yielded positive effects. They claim that students' attitude to their Facebook experience were high. However, the students' attitude (in that study) towards Facebook's ability to foster connectedness, learning, and course convenience though rated positive, was slightly lower. Gregory, Gregory, & Eddy (2014) found that, students who actively participated in the Facebook group, were more engaged with the course, more satisfied with the course, and performed at a higher level in the course than did students who did not actively engage in Facebook. Similar results were also observed in the work of Yuen and Yuen (2010). They created a social networking site for a graduate course for the purpose of building a sense of community, improving communications and interactions, and promoting student-centered collaboration. They explained that the graduate students who used the social networking site

- had positive experience of using social networks in learning.
- found the site was user-friendly and gave them a sense of belonging.
- felt comfortable using the class social networking site and
- felt that social networking was a great tool for class communications and could be used for professional development.
- used the class social networking site to pose questions to the community, share digital media, hold forums to discuss topics of interest, share educational resources, create study groups, and communicate with classmates.

The study carried out by Lim and Ismail (2010), furthermore revealed that Facebook does have the potential to be used for online academic discussions, either as an alternative to learning management systems commonly used in distance education or to complement such platforms. They proffer an insight to how learners could be engaged in sustained conversations as with other online forums. This they explained could be through using appropriate text messaging prompts or stimuli. In addition, they stated that the level of involvement of learners, the desired quantity and quality, would depend on the facilitator, the content and the timing of the prompts. The use of

the Facebook platform as an alternative LMS has also been corroborated by Meishar-Tal, Kurtz, and Pieterse, (2012).These and other similar studies seem to lend credence to the fact that the introduction of social networking into higher education has great potential, as their use has become ubiquitous.

Despite the positive findings referred to above, other studies such as that of Towner and Muñoz (2009), have shown that students were less accepting of Facebook for informal and formal teaching practices. This is why they suggested that perhaps as more instructors adopt Facebook, its educational potential will become more apparent. The latter also seems to be the conclusion of Madge, Meek, Wellens, & Hooley (2009), that, students perceive Facebook as a social tool rather than an academic tool. They therefore keep the two purposes separate. Following extensive literature review, Hew (2011) asserts that

- previous studies have found that Facebook has little educational use.
- most of the educational related Facebook use has been for administrative tasks such as posting schedules and assignments rather than for pedagogical aspects of teaching.
- Most researchers who favor the use of Facebook in education have not be able to substantiate this through empirical research

Kirschner & Karpinski, (2010), also asserted that Facebook can have a negative impact on academic performance, leading to lower GPAs and less time spent on academic work.

All these negative assertions could be a product of nature of the design of the activities on the Facebook according to O'Bannon, Beard and Britt (2013). They explained, based on their own study, that the pace of postings (which led to less participation), the frequency and number of notifications that result from a group activity and the distractions of receiving notifications (even though they could turn it off), were issues that need to be considered in the design of the courses using the social networking sites. They went on to state that "students became more enthusiastic about the convenience of using Facebook for educational purposes as well as feeling less like it is a tool for social purposes only as they continued to use the site.

THE PROBLEM

One of the implications of all these studies on Facebook in higher education is that students have to actually use Facebook in a course where it can affect their learning, for them to realize its value (O'Bannon, Beard and Britt (2013). This is because the vast pedagogical implications of this technology remain largely unexplored (Hemmi, Bayne, & Land, 2009). In addition, according to Al-Ammary, et al (2014) and Ismail, (2010), there is yet need to access students' acceptance of social networking sites as a learning tool in order to ascertain its effectiveness.

While it is not debatable that internet-based systems has been widely accepted across and within societies and institutions, its acceptance as a learning tool is of much importance to instructional designers. Keller (2007) pointed out that among teachers and students in virtual learning environments varying perceptions exist, calling for acceptability check, as prerequisite for learning. Corroborating this, Al- Adwan, Al-

Adwan, and Smedley (2013) claims that regardless of the continuous growth of internet innovations in higher education institutions, the success of their implementation requires an extensive understanding of the end user acceptance process. This therefore suggests that the effectiveness of learning also depends on students' acceptance of learning environments. In Lim, Hong, and Tan's (2008) investigation of e-learning acceptance among distance learners, they found out that introducing courses to guide students to maximise the use of e-learning for learning purposes could improve students' acceptance of e-learning. While there are some other factors that could contribute to the acceptance of learning platforms, Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is considered as the most influential and commonly applied theory for describing individual user acceptance of information systems (Davis, 1989; Lee, Kozar, & Larsen, 2003; Keller, 2007), because the model assumes that an individual's acceptance of an information system is determined by two major factors: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use (Keller, 2007). Alarcon-del-Amo, Lorenzo-Romero, and Gomez-Borja (2012) has explained perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use as factors responsible for acceptability of social networking sites. Muniasamy, Ejalani, and Anandhavalli (2014); Echeng and Abel (2014) call for research on acceptance of social networking sites for education delivery.

One of the ways to provide insight on the use of such Social network tools, is to reflect on practice and provide opportunities for students to share their experiences under non- threatening circumstances. This is the reason why in this paper, the perceptions and expectations of students enrolled in a professional teacher Education programme were researched and are presented.

This group of students had used the Facebook as a platform for their course delivery. In an earlier paper presented by Aremu, Obideyi and Morakinyo (2014), the facilitators of the course had offered their own reflections on whether the Facebook platform had helped in achieving the goals they had set for the course. They agreed that for some goals, it had, whereas the platform had not been too effective for the goals of communication and development of critical thinking skills.

In continuation of the search for the issues associated with the use of the Facebook as a platform for teaching, the facilitators

1. developed a short questionnaire to find out the student's perception of the course/ using the Facebook platform for course delivery and
2. held a focus group discussion with the students after their examinations, to further explore their expectations for using Facebook as a platform for course delivery.

The purpose of this paper therefore is to present the perceptions and expectations of the students on the use of Facebook for course delivery based on their experience with Facebook, as a means of providing better insights into the process of using Facebook for learning.

THE NATURE OF THE INTERVENTION
THE BACKGROUND

The course TED 703, is a compulsory course for all students registered for the Post Graduate Diploma in Education. Its main goal is to introduce the students to the variety of media resources available for teaching and learning. The course has been designed to be assessed on the University learning management system.
The main reasons why the facilitators embarked on the use of Social media in this session, were firstly, there was a challenge of students not being able to register on the University Learning management system due to some administrative bottlenecks. Therefore they could not have access to the course online. Secondly, class space to accommodate the number of students registered for the course was not readily available at that time, because of timetabling clashes. Thirdly, the main facilitator had another administrative responsibility in the University, which took her away from classes often. Finally, the facilitators had read a lot of positive and negative things about this particular Social networking tool and its potentials for teaching and learning. Based on all this, the facilitators agreed to re-design the course such that students could have access to the course through the social media platform.
The first challenge was to re-design the course to fit using the Facebook for course delivery. The course plan is as shown in Aremu, Obideyi and Morakinyo (2014).
A lot of considerations were made which include

- Designing activities that would make the students use all the resource materials that was posted for each topic/ week
- Managing the responses or posts, because of the large class size. Therefore they were grouped and the assigned group would response to the task given, although all other students could comment on the posts
- Encouraging everyone to comment and discuss posts by other students
- Keeping a tab on the students by meeting them every two weeks in class

THE COURSE DELIVERY

The first week of meeting was used to introduce to the students, the mode of course presentation. The mode was such that students and facilitators would meet for face-to-face interaction for the first week and the next two weeks would be on the Facebook page, after which there was a face-to-face meeting.. The whole class was grouped into eight (a module of the course per group), though the first module of the course was meant for the whole class. The first day of the two-weeks Facebook-class was used to upload relevant course materials and resources, links, and tasks. Then the following face-to-face week was used to discuss some posts, comments, questions, misconceptions from posts following the Facebook-class. The closed-group Facebook page was named TED 703 E-GROUP. The basis for opting for a closed group on Facebook was to ensure that the real audience is properly monitored. To achieve this, members of the class were added via their e-mail addresses using ‘invite’ tool on Facebook.

The facilitators tried as much as possible to give feedback to every post. It was either to approve or to correct. Early during the week for the Facebook –class, we tried as much as possible not to be too specific with comments, so that all other members of the group would be encouraged to post original comments.
When a group’s time has elapsed, there was always a post by one of the facilitators to inform the entire class about the progress of the course, providing the names of those

who have not posted. This was done to give the students a sense that the online exercise was being monitored.

METHODOLOGY

The critical concerns of the Facilitators (the researchers) during the Focus group discussion (FGD) with the students were

- the students predisposition to the use of Facebook as a learning platform
- the challenges the students encountered during the course delivery
- from the viewpoint of students, what are their expectations if such technology tools would be used for teaching and learning.

Based on the information gathered, the facilitators expect that they would be able to design a learning environment that would be more effective for the course in the future. This would also be information that would provide instruction for other facilitators who are hoping to integrate social media tools in their teaching and learning.

The number of students who took the course was 93. They were all registered on the Facebook page of the course. (https://www.facebook.com/groups/304887462972138/). They all filled the questionnaire provided. However, only a third of the class was available for the discussion.

The Research question for this study, which was addressed in the questionnaire, was

- **RQI- What is the level of the higher education students' acceptance of SNS as a learning tool?**

A questionnaire, which had sections addressing various parts of the course, was prepared and administered. However, the section that addresses the acceptance of students using Facebook as a learning platform and which contained items on perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use was analysed for the study. There were 8 items in all, which covered issues of perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness. The items were adopted from Willis (2008).

The Research questions that guided the FGD where

1. **RQ2- what experiences did the students have with Facebook for learning before they undertook the course**
2. **RQ3- What were the concerns, anxieties and challenges they experienced due to the format of delivery**
3. **RQ4- What type of support would the students have wanted for the course?**

FINDINGS

Research Question 1: What is the level of higher education students' acceptance of Facebook as a learning tool?

A) The table 1, presents the percentages of the level of agreement of students to the items that indicate their acceptance of the Facebook platform. They are categorized under the following constructs- Perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness.

Table 1: Summary of the level of higher education students' acceptance of SNS as a learning tool

		Strongly Agree - 5	Agree 4	Disagree - 3	Strongly Disagree - 2	1	Mean	Std. dev.
Perceived Ease of Use	My objective for using Facebook is clear and understandable	47 (50.5)	33 (35.5)	7 (7.5)	3 (3.2)	2 (2.2)	4.26	1.01
	Using Facebook does not require a lot of mental effort	38 (40.9)	33 (35.5)	16 (17.2)	3 (3.2)	2 (2.2)	4.06	1.04
	It is easy to get Facebook to do what I want it to do	35 (37.6)	36 (38.7)	14 (15.1)	2 (2.2)	3 (3.2)	3.96	1.20
	Facebook is not easy to use	10 (10.8)	9 (9.7)	10 (10.8)	11 (11.8)	50 (53.8)	2.02	1.47
Perceived Usefulness	Using social networking system improves my grades	21 (22.6)	41 (44.1)	17 (18.3)	6 (6.5)	5 (5.4)	3.98	3.26
	Using social networking system does not make me more productive	7 (7.5)	14 (15.1)	17 (18.3)	16 (17.2)	35 (37.6)	2.25	1.40
	Using social networking system makes me more effective at studying	28 (30.1)	38 (40.9)	21 (22.6)	1 (1.1)	2 (2.2)	3.86	1.13
	I find social networking system to be useful for coursework	43 (46.2)	28 (30.1)	17 (18.3)	2 (2.2)	2 (2.2)	4.13	1.04

B) Comments on perceptions and responses to direct questions about perception can be found in APPENDIX 1.

RQ2 - What experiences did the students have with Facebook for learning before they undertook the course?
Comments and Responses that showed the experiences of students before the course are found in APPENDIX 2

RQ3 - What were the concerns, anxieties and challenges they experienced due to the format of delivery?
Comments and Responses that showed the concerns, anxieties and challenges they experienced due to the format of delivery are presented in APPENDIX 3.

RQ 4- What type of support would they have wanted for the course?
Comments and Responses that showed the concerns, anxieties and challenges they experienced due to the format of delivery are presented in APPENDIX 4

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

A) PERCEPTIONS

Perceptions of a learning environment and tools are very vital to the effective use of the tools in the teaching and learning context. Based on the feedback on the questionnaire, It is quite obvious that the students perceived Facebook as easy to use for learning. This is clear from their agreement with the statements that tried to find out if they understood the site and if it required a lot of mental effort to use. If a technology requires a lot of reading and lengthy explanations to get it to operate, it is most likely a burden for the students. This is because, they still have to contend with the content of the course which they are learning; having to learn the use of the platform along with this could generate extra levels of anxieties for the students. This is quite undesirable. However with Facebook, it is evident that such anxieties would be eliminated.

Perceptions concerning the usefulness of any technology for learning can give an indication of student's acceptance of the technology. The students in this study have expressed such an acceptance. This is not only evident in the answers to the items from the questionnaire, but also from the comments of the students.

"Using Facebook for learning can augment, support, (and) enhance learning if properly monitored"

In response to questions on whether, they found it effective for use, they had a chorus "yes". Reasons that might be plausible for these levels of acceptance are reflected in comments such as these

"you get more information"
"*it creates room for interaction like teacher to student"*

Students usually need to search for additional content to help understand their courses and many times, they could spend hours on the Internet, browsing for useful information. Depending on their Internet browsing skills and maybe time and funds, many may leave such a browsing session frustrated. However, if the facilitators have

gathered information and the content or the links to the content are provided, it reduces searching time for the student. This was one of the things that happened with respect to this course, so there is little wonder that the students claimed that they could get more information using such a site.

Interacting with the facilitator was another reason that could have determined the high level of perceived usefulness of the Facebook, for learning. In many large classrooms, only few students have the opportunity to interact with the facilitators. Usually there are time constraints as well as pressure to complete course content. This stifles discussions. Clarifications that may be needed by students may have to be sought somewhere else. However with a social media site, every student can have the opportunity to interact with the facilitators. This was an added value for these students. There is nothing like a social media platform to create a sense of community and belonging. It reduces the usual gap that exists between students and facilitators. However it must be stated that most of the interaction the students had with the facilitators were about administrative matters and not really content related issues. It seems the former may be important to the students, since they don't have to wait till they come to class before they clarify confusing problems.

The implication is that students would accept a platform as useful if it enables them have access to information needed for their course. Furthermore, if it enables them interact with the facilitators it is also adjudged as useful.
In addition, when the site does not require too much mental effort to manipulate, it would also be very much welcomed for learning.

Why this is quite interesting is that, though many of the students claimed that prior to the course, they were either familiar with Facebook, or they used it in one form or the other, none of them had used the platform for direct educational purposes as they experienced in this course. One of the students even made this comment

"You couldn't have fathom(ed) that Facebook could be used for Educational purposes".

For those who had been familiar with the use of Facebook prior to the course, it was a new development for them to use the platform for educational purposes.
What makes this notable is that despite their low level of prior experience of Facebook for educational purposes, they were able, at the end of the course to consider it a useful platform for learning and highly rated its effectiveness. What this may show is that students may be comfortable using technology if the technology is able to help them meet their goals in learning (in this case, getting information and interacting with the facilitators). This is in spite of their levels of prior experience with the tool as a learning tool. The implication of this may be that facilitators might need to align their expectations from the course taught with the goals of the students about the learning process. When both are in sync then technology would greatly aid learning.

B) CHALLENGES

From the discussion about the anxieties, concerns and challenges that the students experienced during the delivery of the course and as a result of the delivery mode, a number of issues can be deduced. However all these border on the level of preparedness of the students in various dimensions.
Firstly, it was evident that the students were not prepared for the nature of learning that they experienced. There was no preparation as to what would be required and the type of facilities that would be needed. Some of the comments revealed this. For example-

" (We did not have) proper orientation, initially we were confused, some didn't even know how to go about it, some even asked for help"

The facilitators believed that this was a major oversight. They were under the impression that majority of the learners used Facebook and were familiar with it. However, it should be seen that using Facebook for social networking may not be the same as using it for learning and academic purposes. Whereas in the former, the students may not take learning to use it as serious issue, but in the latter, they seem to take it more seriously since it would affect their grades. If before then, they had issues on Facebook, they might not have sought for technical assistance, and it would not have aroused any anxiety. However if this happens during the delivery of this course, it would produce anxieties. Hence, the need for training on how to use the tools for learning purposes, even if it seems it is a popular one.
Another fact that the facilitators might have overlooked is that, this group of students were not the typical "net generation", tech savvy students. Though there is no data about their age range, yet this can be deduced from the fact that all of them had completed an undergraduate programme before attending this course. In fact most of them were already teaching. It may seem that these group of students may not be as savvy as lecturers assumed.

Further to this, many of the students showed that their knowledge of the technicalities of using Facebook was limited. This is even for the students who were familiar with the technology. This is reflected in some of the comments.

".....It was later I discovered I could turn off the chat…."

"when you post materials I don't get to receive notifications. I guess it was my phone, along the line I got tired and would just ask- 'has she posted any material?' and download, I will just collect and make photocopy".

These are pointers to the fact that students may use a technology but do not have all that it takes to use it effectively for learning

Another issue relating to preparedness was that the students were not ready psychologically, for the nature of learning. Comments like the following ones may be an indication of this.

"some people have phobia for computer"
"the anxiety was there, how I will cope with it"
".....the stress of opening the link on internet, and going to the cybercafé too.."

Psychological readiness has to do with getting the students to be comfortable with the process of learning. Using technology, as a platform for learning, being new to most of them could be the source of anxieties, this coupled with computer or technology phobia, may have produced more fears.

It is understandable that most of the students came from a face-to-face learning mode background and nothing prepared them for the sudden transition to the blended mode.

Discussing the advantages of such a platform might have reduced the anxieties of the students. Explaining the possible challenges also may help in relieving the fears. Some helpful tips about the technology, needs also to be added, specifically for Facebook, functions such as chat, and procedures on how to turn notifications off etc need to be well discussed prior to the class. These may help in getting rid of phobias. Getting the students ready psychologically may be a way of getting them to use technology effectively and efficiently. The financial anxieties from using technology in a resource scarce environment are a reality for many of the students. The students had to make provisions for their personal hardware (laptops and phones) and also subscribe for Internet use. According to some of them, they were not prepared for this at all and it was a major challenge, which cannot be overlooked. Two of the students commented-

"Another challenge is people buying (mobile phone recharge) cards to subscribe, having to buy laptops too or going to the café to browse".

"There are constraints such as no network, flat battery, no proper accessibility to links and so on so.."

One of the issues arising from the challenge of psychological and financial preparedness is that of a policy on ICT for learning in the University. This is still in the process of preparation. If such a document is ready and made available, it is very possible that most students would have prepared themselves for the nature of learning they encountered with technology.

There were challenges that arose because of the peculiarities of Facebook as a social networking tool. It made quite a number of the students uncomfortable with the tool as a learning platform,. They said

"I don't like Facebook because it is so distracting since materials have been posted on it, I have no choice than to check it".

"I also find Facebook distracting because my friends can see my groups; I think the department should create a special website".

"I start getting chats messages, which is so distracting and I have no choice than to reply. ……. Some friends complain I don't respond to their chat because they don't know I am there for academic purpose".

It cannot be disputed that Facebook was designed with social networking as a goal, not necessarily academic purposes. This informed the features of the platform. A place to catch up with friends and find out what is going on. Going on the platform for academic purposes even if a special page /group is created does not insulate you from friends. Also, since, people go there to socialize, it is natural that you scroll through your newsfeed and visit other groups, check messages and notifications even if you have gone to the page because you want to get some learning done. To the students this was quite distracting and a great challenge.

The nature of the responses of the facilitators to the students' posts was one major source of frustration for the students. The following comments indicate this
"when we post assignments and there is no comment from you, we feel dejected because we don't know if you like what we did or did you accept them".

"when you acknowledge 'SEEN' we are confused"

"we would have expected - you did this well, am impressed, these are the errors"

"Also, some of the content sent to us are not clear to us not until ……..(one of the facilitators) comes to class to explain to us, we can understand better".

The plan of the facilitators was that after the two weeks away from class, when the students come for the face-to-face session, they would be guided through the activities. It was however challenging for the students that the comments of the facilitators was sparse. The thought of the facilitators was that if elaborate comments were made, then, other members of the group who had not gone through the activity may just copy or modify the response of others and post. This may render the whole process ineffective and useless. The solution to this may be in the design of the activities, in such a way as to enhance collaboration and not just cooperation or individuality.

C) EXPECTATIONS

In answering the question about the nature of support the students would have expected, a lot of insight was gathered and these insights fall under the following categories

1. In-class support for technology use for learning
2. Provision of facilities

3. Flipped, Blended learning environment

By in-class support, what is meant is that, a demonstration session should be conducted during the first series of classes. These demonstrations would show students how to go about using the platform and the learning expectations of the facilitators.
This is reflected in the following statements

"...in the first class, there could be an online work in the class that will accelerate target. That is, the lecturer post a work online and the students respond online".

"There can also be an interaction that will involve everybody in the class".

"There could have been computer training for some of us who are completely strangers to the internet."

It further goes to show that even if a tool is as simple and popular as Facebook, it is still necessary to take some time to explain the features of the tools and how they should be used for the course. Facilitators may begin to consider the following issues

- With the already limited class time, how do I provide for such a training and still complete the curriculum?
- Do I refer all training to the overbooked training unit of the institution and expect students to get all the training in their spare time?
- Do I limit my technology use, based on the level of skill adequacy of my students?

Another area of support for the students is in the provision of facilities for accessing the course. One of the students made this comment-
"...but I think the faculty needs a computer room. When you were trying to introduce us to this course, some have access to a computer, some (you) might be shocked maybe its IBM they are used to but when there is a computer room. It helps".

The students' agreement with this comment and others like it shows that students still expect the management to provide all facilities for learning. While this could be the ideal, it is not yet feasible. Facilitators who use technology may begin to consider if they are not putting too much pressure on the students financially, which could lead to anxiety in learning. Questions to consider include,

- do I limit the technology use to the lowest levels of affordability.
- would it be worth the while teaching with just affordable technologies?,
- Are those affordable technologies suitable for the content that I am presenting?
- How can I provide support for student's who can't just afford the cost of technology use? Etc.

Finally most of the students expressed that, going totally online for a course like this may not be too welcome. Though they did not all use technical terms such as "Flipped learning or blended learning", their comments indicated preferences for such.

"…. but we should not eliminate the face to face interaction"
"interactive session that will make us understand better".
"We should have a kind of flip classroom, so that those activities will help the classroom"
".....a class presentation is needed"
"Also, some students could be selfish to withhold vital points online because they don't want other colleagues to share but they wouldn't do that in a class presentation as they would not want to flop"

It may seem that the students see the platform as a supplement for learning and should not be taken beyond that for now. It could be a good source for information and getting further materials for learning, but it may not replace face-to-face.

However one of the students expressed a contrary opinion
"I would have preferred more of online teaching than classroom teaching; it's boring to me sitting in the classroom for 2 hours but then, the classroom is a major platform of social interaction for brain maturation."

There might have been more of such contrary opinions, since not all of the class was present at the Focus group discussion. In fact, the student who made this comment, made it via the facebook page. The student went on further to make the following comments for the format of future course presentations;
"…… allow the students to ask related and relevant questions for a period of 12 days in which there'll be responses and provide answers and conclude in 2 days".

"since the students would be offline for 2 weeks, throw questions online for them to work on and the 3rd week when they meet in the classroom, there should be a presentation since the classroom is an avenue to learn more and also develop mentally and socially"

It also raises more issues for considerations by facilitators and one of them is "being able to cater for the different learning preferences of all the students, so that no student is disadvantaged". The shortfall of this is "how can this be done in a large class of over a hundred students?

CONCLUSION
A lot of people get excited about the prospects of using technology, especially the social networking tools. This may be, because of its popularity and ease of use. The latter was confirmed from this study. The students found Facebook easy to use and they were convinced of its usefulness as a learning tool/platform. However, from this report it can be seen that a lot still needs to be put in place for effective and efficient use of the Facebook or other social networking tools for learning especially in a resource scarce environment. This paper has shown that preparedness of learners is very vital. There are some aspects of preparedness that can be taken care of by the University management, with the availability of an ICT policy that guides the use of ICT for learning. The provision of facilities, also most times are management issues.

However the facilitators of courses have a lot also to do in planning for technology use. This paper shows that they need to give adequate orientation to students on advantages of the process as well as the tools, limitations that the students may encounter, technicalities beyond everyday use and other expectations from the facilitators. In motivating the students to use the technologies, awareness should be created on the fact that it is not only about accessing the content of the course and accessing support for the course, but that in addition, they stand to gain skills that would qualify them as 21st century professionals. Such skills include; communication, critical thinking, teamwork, creativity, problem solving and so on. The skills are what makes the 21st century graduate employable in the world of work beyond the certificates received.

Activities should be designed in such a way as to enhance collaboration and modalities must be found to respond to individual students while still providing a challenging environment for other students to be part of the discussion. This shows that facilitators need to be trained, not only for technology use and integration in learning but particularly in this case for online collaboration, using social networking tools. The latter, which borders on pedagogy and also experience gained from use should be an ongoing focus of leaders of social media integration in learning processes.

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APPENDIX 1.
COMMENTS ON PERCEPTIONS AND RESPONSES TO DIRECT QUESTIONS ABOUT PERCEPTION

COMMENTS
"Using Facebook for learning can augment, support, (and) enhance learning if properly monitored"

RESPONSES TO DIRECT QUESTIONS
The responses to the direct questions during the FGD are also stated-
Question: do we agree it was effective for learning?
Response: yes
Question: will you use Facebook for your course delivery? Whether for primary, secondary or higher education
Response:
Question: Would you use a social networking site even if it is purely educational?
Response: yes
Question: why?
Response: you get more information;
Response: it creates room for interaction like teacher to student

APPENDIX 2
COMMENTS/RESPONSES ON EXPERIENCES THE STUDENTS HAD WITH FACEBOOK FOR LEARNING BEFORE THEY UNDERTOOK THE COURSE?

COMMENTS
Responses that showed the experiences of students before the course includes-
"You couldn't have fathom(ed) that Facebook could be used for Educational purposes".

"……personally I've been on Facebook so many years, so it was a kind of new development for me".
"…..not really, it was not first time so I was eager to know how it was going to work"

RESPONSES TO DIRECT QUESTIONS
Question: Have you used Facebook for educational purposes before?
Response: No, just for social networking
Question: Have you ever experienced using Facebook for educational purpose before?
Response: NOOO

APPENDIX 3.

COMMENTS AND RESPONSES THAT SHOWED THE CONCERNS, ANXIETIES AND CHALLENGES THEY EXPERIENCED DUE TO THE FORMAT OF DELIVERY.

COMMENTS
"when we post Assignments and there is no comment from you, we feel dejected because we don't know if you like what we did or did you accept them".

"when you acknowledge 'SEEN' we are confused"
"we would have expected - you did this well, am impressed, these are the errors"
"Also, some of the contents sent to us are not clear to us not until ……..(one of the facilitators) comes to class to explain to us, we can understand better".

"…..the stress of opening the link on internet, and going to the cybercafé too".

" (We did not have) proper orientation, initially we were confused, some didn't even know how to go about it, some even asked for help"

"some people have phobia for computer"

"the anxiety was there, how I will cope with it"

"I don't like Facebook because it is so distracting since materials have been posted on it, I have no choice than to check it".

"I also find Facebook distracting because my friends can see my groups; I think the department should create a special website".

"I start getting chats messages, which is so distracting and I have no choice than to reply. It was later I discovered I could turn off the chat. that was (what) really saved me. Some friends complain I don't respond to their chat because they don't know I am there for academic purpose".

"It was difficult I needed to ask people to help me open the mail box at the cybercafé"

"Another challenge is people buying (mobile phone recharge)cards to subscribe, having to buy laptops too or going to the café to browse".

"when you post materials I don't get to receive notifications. I guess it was my phone, along the line I got tired and would just ask- 'has she posted any material?' and download, I will just collect and make photocopy".

B) The responses to the direct questions are also stated-
Question: Do you mean you need human face-to-face communication before you can understand?
Response: for some of the contents, not all
Response: professional (ones) like the concept map,

Response: I think if we had a class face-to-face discussion

Question: for those who said 4.5/ 10, (rated the course delivery) what was the challenge?
Response: it is because we don't have a prior knowledge as to how to use the technology

APPENDIX 4.
COMMENTS AND RESPONSES THAT SHOWED TYPE OF SUPPORT WOULD THEY HAVE WANTED FOR THE COURSE

Responses that showed the type of support the students would have expected includes-
"…in the first class, there could be an online work in the class that will accelerate target. That is, the lecturer post a work online and the students respond online".

"There can also be an interaction that will involve everybody in the class".

"There could have been computer training for some of us who are completely strangers to the internet."

"…but I think the faculty needs a computer room. When you were trying to introduce us to this course, some have access to a computer, some might be shocked maybe its IPM they are used to but when there is a computer room. It helps".

"….have been better, but we should not eliminate the face to face interaction"

"interactive session that will make us understand better".

"We should have a kind of flip classroom, so that those activities will help the classroom"

"….kind of informal classroom setting were we ask ourselves do you understand what …….(one of the facilitators) just taught us? We meet at photocopy room.

"I also find facebook distracting because my friends can see my groups; I think the department should create a special website".