



# Attitude of farm youth towards social media usage for agricultural information dissemination in Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria

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## Abstract

The study examined attitude and use of social media by farm youth in rural communities of FCT, Nigeria. Data for the study were generated from a sample of 212 respondents using structured interview schedule. The results indicate that majority (59.9%, 63.7%, 68% and 70.3%) of the farm youth were between 15 and 24 years old, were males, had secondary education and had less than 8 years farming experience respectively. Out of 10 social media in use, 6 were frequently used representing 5.2%, while 85.4% were moderately used. However, majority of the farm youth had indifferent attitude towards social media. The study concluded that there was need for awareness on the benefit of using social media for agriculture.

**Keywords:** Attitude; Farm Youth; Social Media; Agriculture; Communication

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## 1. Background of study

Social media is any media connected to the internet which enables interaction between two or more people (Adrian, 2016). Examples include Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, LinkedIn, Instagram, Google+ etc. The world over youth occupies the pivotal position of the social media users. For instance, out of 11.2 million Facebook users in South Africa, 22% are youth aged 13-18 years old (Business Tech., 2015). In the United State, young Americans (especially those ages between 18 to 24) stand out for embracing a variety of platforms and using them frequently. About 78% of 18- 24 years-old use Snapchat, and a sizeable majority of these users (71%) visit the platform multiple times per day. Similarly, 71% of Americans in this age group now use (Instagram and close to half (45%) are Twitter users (Pew, 2018). However, Nigeria comparable to Morocco, Ecuador and Belgium, is the 35th user of Facebook in the World. According to social media tracking firm, Socialbaker, Nigeria is the third country in Africa with the most users, with roughly 5.365 million. The average Nigerian user comprise of those with the age range of 18-24years, 66% are male while 34% are females. Further analysis revealed that out of the 5.365million users of social media, 36.7% aged between 18 and 24, while 35.1 aged between 25 and 34 years old (71.8%). However, approximately about 3.9% million Nigerian youth are on Facebook (<http://www.socialbakers.com/facebook.statistics/nigeria>). Hence, one can conclude that many studies have been conducted on social media and its use but these studies did not examine how these social media usages is affecting the agricultural information dissemination. Affect here is a synonym for attitude.

According to Allport (1935) attitude as "a learned predisposition of human beings". An individual would respond to an object (or an idea) or a number of things (or opinions). Generally, attitudes have three basic components, which are: affect, cognition and behavior. The affect component refers to feelings about an object, cognition is related to beliefs about an object, and the behavioral component means the intention to take any action related to the object.

## 2. Problem statement

Although, not less than 45% internet users in Nigeria are youth, awareness about its benefit, purpose of registering a platform is low; Facebook 27%, Twitter 17%, Youtube 8%, Google 5% and LinkedIn 4% (<http://www.socialbakers.com/facebook.statistics/nigeria>). These levels of awareness may hamper social media usage. According to Saravanan and Suchiradipta (2014) who opined that though social media application can be effectively used by extension advisory services, lack of awareness and skill about its use currently constrain it's widespread and use. Also, Agwu, Uche-Mba and Akinngbe (2008) concluded that there is likely to be stagnation in the dissemination, utilization and application of scientific agricultural information for purposeful development of the system if modern ICT facilities (such as social media) are not adequately built into the mainstream of Nigerian agricultural extension system. However, it appears there is a general apathy towards the use of social media and information communication technology among extension personnel. In India Singh (2017) while trying to establish the usage level of social media found that majority of agriculture extension personnel used the internet for 1-2 hour (58%) followed by 2-4 hour (18%), less than 1 hour (12%) and no any respondent use the internet more than 4 hour, an indication of low usage compared

to the benchmark of 2-4 hours per day. In Northwest, Nigeria, Yakubu, Abubakar, Atala and Muhammed (2013) found that there was low usage among extension personnel in Sokoto State. The recurrent low usage may be as a result of respondents' attitude towards the use of social media. The study however sought answers to the following research questions; (i) what are the personal characteristics of farm youth in the study area? (ii) what is the frequency of use of social media? (iii) what are the attitudes farm youth towards social media use?

### 3. Objectives of the study

The broad objective of the study was to assess factors influencing social media usage among farm youth in rural communities of FCT, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to;

- i) describe the socio-economic characteristics of farm youth in the study area;
- ii) identify the available social media and their frequency of usage
- iii) determine the farm youth attitude towards social media

#### 3.1. Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between attitude and the use of social media for information dissemination.

### 4. Methodology

The study was conducted in the rural communities of Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja Nigeria. The Federal capital Territory is located between latitudes  $8^{\circ} 25'$  and  $9^{\circ} 25'$  North of the equator and longitudes  $6^{\circ} 45'$  and  $7^{\circ} 45'$  east of Greenwich Meridian. The territory covers an area of 8,000 square kilometers and occupies about 0.87% of Nigeria. The annual total rainfall ranges from 1100mm to 1600mm; and it sets in from around the middle of March through October. According to Abuja Agricultural Development Project (AADP) the territory is divided into three crops ecological zones namely, the southern humid zone, the mid-central sub humid zone and the north-east humid zone.

#### 4.1. Sample and sampling technique

A multi-stage sampling procedure was used in selecting respondents for the study. At first stage, purposive sampling was used to select one area council from each of the three crop ecological zones because of the presence of more farming communities. At the second stage, simple random sampling technique was used to select six rural communities from each of the selected area councils, making a total of 18 rural communities. At the third stage, 13 respondents were chosen from each of the selected rural communities through snowball sampling technique to make a total of 234 respondents that were sampled for this study. But the 212 retrieved questionnaires were used for the study.

## 4.2. Data collection and measurement of variables

Quantitative data were collected using structured interview schedule. Independent variable such as age, sex, level of formal education, farming experience, membership of professional association and cosmopolitaness – the degree of external orientation were measured by direct questions. Accessibility of social media was measured by asking respondents questions relating to the accessibility of social media in their area. Ten social media were presented and respondents were asked to indicate whether they are accessible and a maximum of 1 point was awarded for a Yes answer to each question and 0 point for a No answer. Attitude was measured on a Likert scale with responses ranging from “strongly disagreed” to “strongly agreed” and scaled 1-5. The dependent variable was usage of social media. This was measured by asking respondents to indicate their frequency of usage of social media. A five-point Likert type scale with responses ranging from “never used” to “daily used” and scaled 1 to 5 respectively, was utilized. Responses of the five -point scales were later categorized according to their mean scores. In terms of attitude of farm youth towards social media, mean scores of 24 and above were regarded as favourable attitude, while in terms of frequency of usage of available SM, mean scores of 19.00 or above were classified as frequently used. Mean scores, percentages and correlation (PPMC) were used to analyze the data.

## 5. Result and discussion

### 5.1. Socioeconomic characteristics of farm youth

The result in Table 1 shows that 59.9% of the farm youth were between the ages of 15 and 24 years, the average age was 23.8 years with a standard deviation of 2.76. It also shows that 37 percent between 25 and 34 years while very few (2.8%) were above 35 years. This indicates that majority of farm youth were between 15-24 years old. This may have a significant implication for social media usage since the youth have for social media than the elderly. The study is similar is in consonance with Suchiradipta and Saravanan (2016) who reported that 53 percent of internet users are between 18 and 29 years. In terms of age, the study shows that 63.7% of the farm youth were males, while the remaining 36.3% were females. It further revealed that the average years of farming experience was 7.9 years and standard deviation was 4.99. This indicates that majority of farm youth were male. This may be as a result of the common socio-cultural belief which gives preference to the male in African traditional setting thus making female relatively passive and accept it as their fate. This result is similar to Banmeke and Oose (2012) who reported that most (61.4%) of the researchers who use social network sites (SNTs) were male while 38.6 percent were females. Concerning the education of the farm youth, 68 percent had secondary education, 28.9 percent had primary education while only 8.1 percent had tertiary level of education. This indicates that majority of farm youth had secondary education. This finding shows that a majority of those involved in farming activities were not graduates and may not fully appreciate the role of information communication technologies in the improvement of agriculture. This is similar to Agwu, Uche-Mba and Akinngbe (2008) who found that a greater proportion 33.3% of the farmers had SSCE in both Enugu and

Abia States. It also corroborated Tyabo (2015) who reported that 8.1 percent had tertiary education among male phone users in rural areas of Niger State.

In terms of years of experience in farming, the result in Table 1 shows that 70.3% had less than eight years of experience, 21.2 percent had 9-14 years of experience in farming while only 8.5 percent had 17-24 years of experience. The mean year of experience was 7.9 with standard deviation of 4.99. This indicates that majority of the farm youth had less than eight years of farming experience. The implication is that with few years of experience of farming, may negatively influence the collective day-to-day running of farm enterprise and could invariably influence the adoption of new innovations such as social media.

**Table 1.** Distribution of respondents by demographic characteristics

Variables	n = 212		Mean	S.D.
	Freq.	%		
<b>Age</b>				
15-24	127	59.9	23.8	2.76
25 – 34	79	37.3		
> 35	6	2.8		
<b>Sex</b>				
Male	135	63.7	7.9	4.99
Female	77	36.3		
<b>Years in Farming</b>				
< 8	149	70.3	7.9	4.99
9 – 14	45	21.2		
≥ 15	18	8.5		
<b>Education</b>				
Tertiary Education	17	8.1	28.9	
Secondary	134	68		
Primary	61	28.9		

**Source:** Field Survey, 2017

## 5.2. Frequency of use of social media among farm youth

Results in Table 2 indicate that 46.2%, 41.1%, 38.9% and 37.3% of the respondents used WhatsApp, Yahoo, Google and Facebook, respectively, daily, while 5.7% and 0.5% also used Twitter and LinkedIn respectively daily. This signifies that WhatsApp was the most used. This is expected because as indicated in many studies these six, apart from WhatsApp, are among the ten world most visited social media sites (Tokunbo and Felix, 2013; Hitwise, 2011). However, the non-inclusion of WhatsApp may be due to its recentness among the network sites. The study also corroborated Banmeke and Oose (2012) who reported that Facebook, and Twitter were used daily owing to their availability and accessibility. But it is contrary to Sokoya, Onifade and Alabi (2012), Boyd and Ellison (2007) who found that Facebook is the most popular SM platform used in the world.

However, 91.8%, 85.6%, 81.6% and 77.1% respondents respectively, indicated that they had never visited Bebo, Twoo, LinkedIn and 2go, respectively. The implication of this result is that availability does not confer frequency of use of social media platform. From the study, Bebo and 2go were available but in terms of frequency of usage, they were rarely used.

Further categorization of frequency of social media usage in Table 3 revealed that 85.4 percent of respondents had moderately used social media with a score range of 11.97 to 18.15 while 9.4 percent had not frequently used social media with a score of < 11.97 and 5.2 percent had frequently used social media with a score of > 18.15.

**Table 2.** Distribution of respondents according to frequency of Use of SM

Social Media Platform	Daily	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Never
Facebook	79	83	35	15	-
Twitter	12	47	85	44	23
Linkdln	1	-	4	31	160
Google	82	77	19	12	
Whatsapp	98	77	18	18	1
Bebo	-	1	5	11	191
Yahoo	87	82	31	8	2
2go	-	5	3	39	158
Twoo	-	1	1	26	179

Source: Field Survey, 2017

**Table 3.** Distribution of respondents showing categorization of frequency of use of social media

Frequency of use	n = 212			
	Freq.	%	Mean	S.D.
			15.06	3.09
Not freq used (< 11.97)	20	9.4		
Moderately used (11.97 – 18.15)	181	85.4		
Freq used (> 18.15)	11	5.2		

Source: Field Survey, 2017

### 5.3. Farm youth attitude towards social media use

Table 4 revealed that only two items were rejected-that is, items i and viii and others were accepted as farm youth's attitude towards the use of social media for agricultural communication purposes. This is because the mean of the majority of the respondents' statement was above the criterion mean of 3.00. Further analysis of farm youth's attitudinal score in Table 5 shows that most (62.7%) of the respondents were indifferent towards social media usage with a score of 24.3 to 32.75, while (20.3%) had unfavourable attitude with score < 24.03 and 17.0 % of the respondent had favourable attitude towards social media usage with a score of > 33.75.

**Table 4.** Attitude of farm youth using Social media for information dissemination

S/N	Items	Mean	S.D.
i	Communication and knowledge transfer is easy through social media	0.90	1.099
ii	Social media improves youth attitude towards agric.	3.71	1.227
iii	Getting current & up to date information is a new development through social media	4.15	1.142
iv	Social media has impacted communication system and other fields	4.02	1.033
v	Social media technology has helped manage change	3.82	1.108
vi	Social media is capable of causing communication divide	3.00	1.104
vii	Social media is gender sensitive	3.05	1.201
viii	I do not have ICT skill to use SM	2.58	1.273

Source: Field Survey, 2017

**Table 5.** Classification of Farm youth's attitudinal Score of SM usage in Farming communities

Attitudinal Score	n = 212		Mean	S.D.
	Freq.	%		
Unfavourable (< 24.03)	27	12.7	28.39	4.36
Indifferent (24.03 – 32.75)	151	71.3		
Favourable (> 32.75)	34	16		

Source: Field Survey, 2017

*Hypothesis:* there is no significant relationship between attitude and social media usage

**Table 6.** Correlation analysis of the relationship between attitude and social media usage

Variables	r	p-value	Remark
Attitude	0.195	0.007	Significant

$P < 0.05$ ; significant @ 0.05 levels

Decision:  $r = 0.195$ ;  $p\text{-value} = 0.007$ , null hypothesis is rejected

## 6. Conclusion and recommendation

The study concluded that majority of farm youth were indifferent in their attitude to social media usage, yet there was positive significant relationship between their attitude and social media usage. This implies that the use of social media among the youth depends on their attitude. It should however be noted that the study is limited to only the farm youth and not all the category of youth in the study area. Thus, future study can be carried out on the use of social media in extension service delivery. The study therefore recommended that



government should create awareness on the benefit of using social media for agricultural purposes among the farm youth. This is with a view to encourage the youth to embrace the practice of agriculture through social media. Similar example can be found in Mkulima programme in Kenya (<http://www.facebook.com/mkulima.young>), Agchat of Newzealand (<http://twitter.com/agchat>) and “Keeping it real: through the lens of a farm girl” of the United States of America ([www.facebook.com.of.a.farmgirl](http://www.facebook.com/of.a.farmgirl)) where website has been developed to engage young and experienced farmers in online farming (Valsamidis, Theodosiou, Kazanidis and Nikolaidis 2013).

As a matter of policy through constant advocacy, government should make the use of social media a compulsory tool in extension delivery with requisite provision of needed training and the infrastructure to enhance its continuous usage.

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