

Assessing the role of social media in shaping career aspirations among lecturers in Nigeria: A quantitative analysis

Global Journal of Social Sciences Studies

Vol. 10, No. 2, 88-103, 2024.

e-ISSN: 2518-0614



Corresponding Author

Kikelomo Oluwayemisi Adedotun¹

Christie Bola Elegbede²

Akolade Olubunmi Lapite³

Ogagaoghene Uzezi Idhalama⁴

Oyaziwo Aluede⁵

¹Department of Guidance and Counselling/Psychology, Lagos State University of Education, Lagos, Nigeria.

Email: adedotunko@lasued.edu.ng

²Department of Guidance and Counselling, Lagos State University of Education, Nigeria.

Email: elegbedecb@lasued.edu.ng

³Department of Counselling Psychology, Lagos State University of Education, Oto/Ijanikin, Lagos State, Nigeria.

Email: lapiteao@lasued.edu.ng

⁴Department of Library and Information Science, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo, Nigeria.

Email: idha.lama@aauekpoma.edu.ng

⁵Department of Guidance and Counseling, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo, Nigeria.

Email: oyaziwoaluede@aauekpoma.edu.ng

ABSTRACT

The study deployed a self-administered questionnaire via Google forms to generate data from a sample of 237 lecturers working in various tertiary institutions across Nigeria. The questionnaire was used to collect data on the use of social media by lecturers, their perceptions regarding the influence of such use on their career goals, and demographic data and other characteristics. First, descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used to summarize the data, supported by measures of central tendency. These analyses were done using the SPSS software. From the survey result, all the responded lecturers had ticked the "high extent" option, which means that social media affects their career aspirations to a great extent. Correspondingly, based on the response, it can be stated that all the respondents believe that social media platforms can be used for the purpose of career development as well as increasing recognition related to their professional outcomes. In addition, related to the responsibility of staying updated with the latest trends and best practices of the relevant business sectors as well as participating in online communities and discussions associated with their teaching disciplines in order to learn from others in the same field, responses were found to be highly unanimous. Correspondingly, based on the research questionnaire regarding the challenges faced by the Lecturers in Nigeria while using social media for career development purposes, there have been a number of common challenges that have come into view.

Keywords: Academic career, Career aspirations, Career development, Lecturers in Nigeria, Lecturers' perceptions of social media, Social media influence, Social media usage.

DOI: 10.55284/gjss.v10i2.1239

Citation | Adedotun, K. O., Elegbede, C. B., Lapite, A. O., Idhalama, O. U., & Aluede, O. (2024). Assessing the role of social media in shaping career aspirations among lecturers in Nigeria: A quantitative analysis. *Global Journal of Social Sciences Studies*, 10(2), 88-103.

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Funding: This study received no specific financial support.

Institutional Review Board Statement: The Ethical Committee of the Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State of Nigeria has granted approval for this study on 4 November 2023 (Ref. No. 111/04.11.2023).

Transparency: The authors state that the manuscript is honest, truthful, and transparent, that no key aspects of the investigation have been omitted, and that any differences from the study as planned have been clarified. This study followed all writing ethics.

Competing Interests: The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Authors' Contributions: All authors contributed equally to the conception and design of the study. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

History: Received: 8 October 2024/ Revised: 15 November 2024/ Accepted: 22 November 2024/ Published: 28 November 2024

Publisher: Online Science Publishing

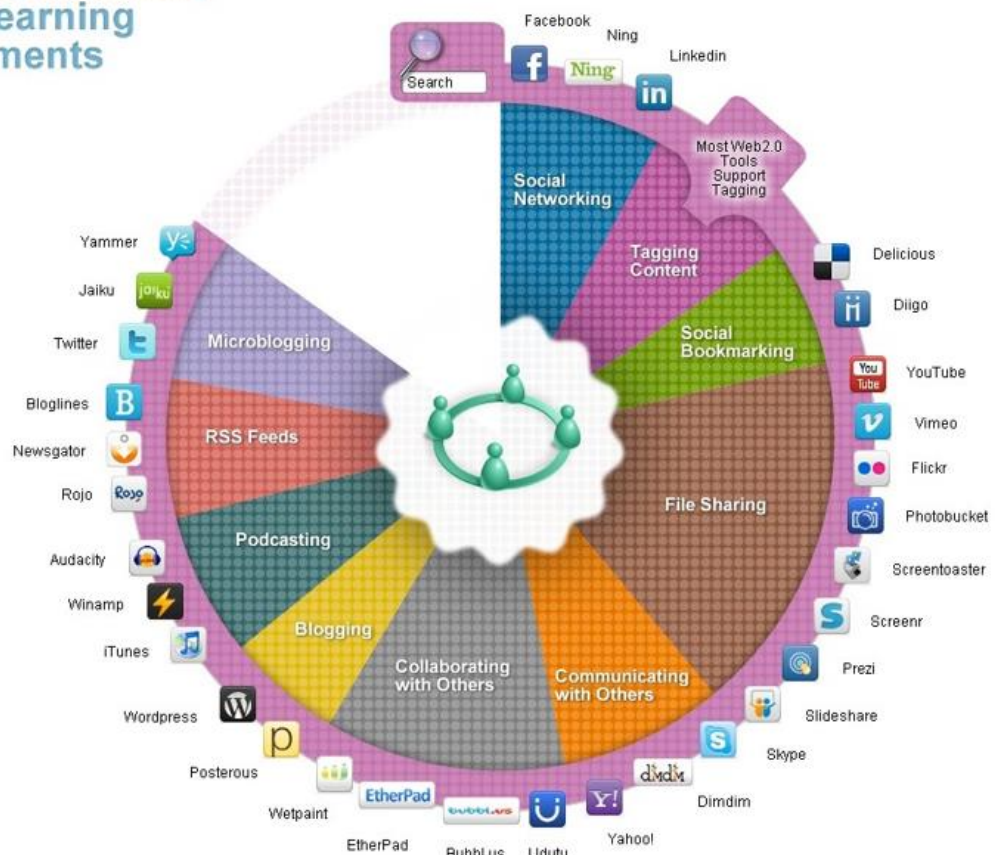
Highlights of this paper

- Generally, this study underlines increasingly the central role of social media in shaping academics' career pathways in Nigeria.
- However, inasmuch as these technologies are increasingly put to work.
- It will be necessary for institutions and policy makers to think how to maximize their benefits without necessarily compromising the negative impacts associated with lecturer well-being and career development.

1. INTRODUCTION

With the rapid increase in both usage and subscription, social media platforms have greatly influenced most aspects of our lives in terms of perception and pursuit of career aspirations. In the settings of higher education, lecturers are not excluded from the influence of social media, and how these platforms shape their aspirations has increasingly become a relevant issue (Akinwale & Olutayo, 2022). The academic environment in Nigeria has, over the years, been observed to change tremendously, with lecturers facing a variety of challenges in doing their work that includes inadequate resources, workload, and job insecurity among others. Against this background of challenges, social media is recognized as a powerful tool for personal and professional development; in this case, it allows lecturers to network with colleagues, access much information, and find new opportunities (Agunloye & Ogundele, 2021).

Elements for Constructing Social Learning Environments



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Figure 1. The range of social media.

Source: Image © Abhijit Kadle, Upside learning, 2010.

Figure 1 simply showcases the various social media platform navigated by lecturers in their day to day living. Previous studies have delved into how social media affects facets of life like teaching and research (Alqahtani, Alshannaq, Alenezi, & Alharbi, 2022; Idhalama & Ikenwe, 2021). The particular impact of social media, on shaping the career goals of Nigerian educators is an area that hasn't received much attention in research circles until now. This study seeks to fill this void by examining how social media platforms impact the career aspirations of lecturers in Nigeria. Exploring the dreams and ambitions that drive individuals, in their careers is essential for comprehending their paths and desires. When considering educators specifically their career goals could be influenced by a variety of elements such, as regulations, personal situations and societal norms (Idhalama & Ikenwe, 2021). Social media has the power to influence the career goals of educators by enabling them to share information and connect with others while expressing themselves. According to Okon and Uwem (2020) platforms like Twitter (referred to as X), LinkedIn and ResearchGate offer lecturers opportunities, for growth and exposure, to career options. They also allow educators to demonstrate their skills and accomplishments. In addition, to that point raised earlier about how social media can influence career goals for lecturers, in Nigeria, it seems like they have some obstacles in their way when it comes to education. Social platforms could provide paths for them to explore careers like starting businesses or working with others internationally. This research study aims to explore questions related to social media usage, among lecturers in Nigeria for career purposes. These include the social media platforms used by lecturers for career activities in Nigeria and how these platforms influence their career aspirations and decision-making processes. Furthermore, it seeks to understand the perceptions and attitudes of lecturers towards media as a tool, for career development and advancement. How they specifically utilize social media platforms to enhance their professional growth. Additionally, the study will investigate the challenges faced by lecturers when using media for career related purposes. By exploring these inquiries, in detail through this study's investigation will add insights to the established pool of knowledge regarding how social media intersects with career advancement within the realm of education specifically within the Nigerian landscape. The outcomes of this study could offer practical benefits to decision makers in policy circles as well as university leaders and educators by providing them with a deeper understanding and strategies, to harness the advantages that social media can offer in fostering the professional goals of those working in academia.

1.1. Statement of Problem

We need to grasp how social media impacts the career goals of university lecturers, in Nigeria's education sector. The existing research seems to support the idea that social media could affect how individuals perceive their objectives and make decisions, about their career paths. This perspective aligns with the insights shared by Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, and Silvestre (2011) and Parveen, Jaafar, and Ainin (2016). However, there is not information, in literature about how social media impacts the development of career goals for university lecturers in Nigeria. This study delves into how social media affects the career aspirations of lecturers at universities. It will look into how platforms like Facebook and Twitter influence lecturers' views, about their career opportunities, guide them in setting goals and making career decisions. The results of this study will add to the existing body of research, on how social media affects the growth of academics, in Nigeria.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

1. To explore the types of social media platforms commonly used by lecturers for career-related activities in Nigeria.
2. To analyze the extent to which social media influences lecturers' career aspirations.

3. To examine the attitude of lecturers towards social media as a tool for career development.
4. To identify the specific ways in which social media platforms are utilized by lecturers to enhance their professional development.
5. To assess the potential challenges that lecturers in Nigeria face in using social media for career-development purposes.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Types of Social Media Platforms Commonly used by Lecturers for Career-Related Activities

Social media usage has now become more of a regular happening in academia, as many lecturers support their career with these digital tools for various activities. For several years, scholarly research has been conducted on the kinds of social media platforms used by lecturers to complement their professional activities. Among all sorts of social media platforms adopted by lecturers, LinkedIn is one of the most adopted. Lim et al., in one such study conducted in 2021, researched the usage patterns of LinkedIn by university faculty members and found that faculty members of universities use LinkedIn mainly for professional networking, updating on research, and finding collaborators. The researchers established that the features of the site, including showcasing academic credentials, publications, and industry connections, will further make LinkedIn a valuable resource in building their online professional profiles and peer networking for the lecturers.

Another popular variety of social media employed by the lecturers is Twitter X. Researchers have observed that Twitter X provides a vibrant and interactive platform whereby lecturers can share information about research findings, hold academic discussions, and connect with other individuals in a wider sense. Following this line, [Carpenter, Tur, and Marín \(2020\)](#) investigated the Twitter usage of higher education faculty members and determined that university faculty engage in sharing teaching resources, publishing their research, and participating in online academic communities. Increasingly, in addition to LinkedIn and Twitter, other academics have embraced the use of academic social networks such as ResearchGate and Academia.edu. Among such features given to them by these platforms are sharing one's publications, tracking citations of their works, and collaboration in research projects. According to [Stefania Manca and Ranieri \(2021\)](#) in investigating what motivated lecturers and their perceptions with regard to using academic social networks, they found that what motivated them most with regard to using such platforms is the fact that they may boost visibility for academics, foster interdisciplinary collaboration, and allow the diffusion of research.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also contributed the usage of social media platforms by lecturers to support their career-related activities. The sudden shift toward learning and teaching in remote environments made many lecturers use video-sharing platforms like YouTube and Vimeo for creating and sharing educational content with students ([Bao, 2020](#)). These virtual platforms not only provide lecturers an avenue for delivering virtual lectures but also present an avenue for lecturers to present their expertise and interact with a much wider audience online. In addition, social media platforms which tend to be increasingly visual in content - including the likes of Instagram and Pinterest-have equally become the focal point of attention for some lecturers. Thus, scholars have also identified that such platforms can be utilized by lecturers to disseminate infographics, illustrations, and other visual displays of research findings to make access to their work both easier and more interesting ([Bao, 2020](#)).

Although the use of social networking sites for career purposes by lecturers is relatively well-documented, there are still ongoing discussions about the possible problems and limitations of these digital tools. This has raised serious concerns about the privacy and data management issues associated with the use of social media platforms in academic contexts, contribution to misinformation, and erosion of conventional models of academic publishing.

Setting aside these concerns, the available research indicates that a strategic approach to these platforms can afford lecturers with significant opportunities for professional development, dissemination of research, and career advancement (Shen & Kiang, 2020). The ways in which lecturers use social media for career-related purposes will likely continue to evolve and expand alongside the digital environment.

In final considerations, this literature review has discussed varied social media platforms used by lecturers for career-related activities: LinkedIn, Twitter, Academic social networks, video-sharing platforms, and visual-centric social media. Their adoption was maintained for professional networking, dissemination of research output, and engagement with broader academic and public audiences. While there are apprehensions about using social media in academia, there is evidence to support the fact that strategic and ethical deployment of digital tools can avail substantial benefits pertaining to career development and advancement to lecturers.

2.2. Extent to which Social Media Influences Lecturers' Career Aspirations

The influence of social media has mushroomed, in no less degree, onto every aspect of our private and professional lives in this postmodern digital world. This area has, to a certain extent, been explored for the influence or effects which social media can have upon the career aspirations of lecturers in higher education. The literature available explores how social media can influence the career trajectory and professional development of lecturers both positively and negatively. Social media platforms, including Twitter—otherwise known as X, LinkedIn, and other academic social networks—emerge into this academic landscape, noted (Idhalama, Krubu, & Etebu, 2023). Many lecturers via these sites keep in touch with their colleagues, share their research findings, and make connections to expand their professional networks. And all this may have a great impact on both their career goals and the opportunities that come their way.

A first important way in which social media influences lecturers' career aspirations is through the extension of the personal brand and professional presence of academics themselves (Omotayo & Omotayo, 2022). Academics that create and curate their online presence and that get engaged with their digital networks often reap new opportunities that regard collaboration, research funding, and sometimes career advancement. This can increase confidence and ambition since the lecturer understands that social media might yield opportunities that open up new horizons professionally. Secondly, social media may provide an avenue through which lecturers may get information and other resources touching on career development and advancement. The webinars, online communities, and specialized forums make it easier for the lecturers to keep updated with the emerging trends, industry changes, and job opportunities (Palaigeorgiou & Grammatikopoulo, 2016). By such an increase in information and networking, it could motivate lectures to seek administrative, research-focused jobs, or even entrepreneurship.

However, with regards to the career aspirations of lecturers, challenges with social media are immense. The compulsion to be continuously 'on' and present and to personalize the brand can get burned out and stressed out, eventually weakening the well-being and overall career satisfaction of lecturers. Besides, perceived pressure to conform to the norms and expectations of social media may make lecturers cautious about pursuing an unconventional or unorthodox career path. Further, the nature of the platforms itself can advance inequalities in both gender and race within academia also (Shen & Kiang, 2020). Studies have shown that women and underrepresented minorities in academia face more significant barriers in exploiting social media to support their careers, since bias and discrimination are still prevalent (Recuero, Zago, Soares, & Santana, 2021). This can, of course, further increase existing disparities and damage the career aspirations of marginalized groups within the lecturing profession.

Although these might be some of the areas of drawbacks in the usage of social media, the overall indication of evidence is that indeed social media might have some positive influences on the career aspirations of lecturers, assuming they can navigate the complexities and challenges inherently found on the digital landscape. Indeed, effective use of social media exposes one to increased visibility, networking opportunities, and access to career-related resources that would help lecturers pursue their professional goals and ambitions with a sense of empowerment. In closing, the influence of social media on the career ambitions of lecturers is multilayered and complex. While social media can afford new opportunities for professional development and career advancement, equally it provides new challenges and pitfalls that are to be carefully negotiated. As the academic landscape continues to shift due to the digital era, more research is called for on how such complex ways social media shapes and informs the career trajectories and aspirations of lecturers in higher education.

2.3. Attitude of Lecturers towards Social Media as a Tool for Career Development

The fast expansion and broad use of media platforms have had an influence, on many facets of our lives and even in professional settings like academia where educators are adapting to incorporate social media into their career advancement plans with the aim of leveraging its benefits for networking and career growth opportunities available, in today's professional environment (Idhalama & Oredo, 2024). Educators have an opportunity to make use of these platforms to demonstrate their skills and interact with colleagues and a wider group of people (Machin-Mastromatteo, 2022). Research has emphasized the advantages of media, for educators in terms of enhanced exposure and networking opportunities well as chances, for cooperation and exchanging knowledge (Sadovykh, Sundaram, & Piramuthu, 2020).

Numerous studies delve into lecturers' views, on incorporating media as a tool, for career advancement, some fully embrace its potential while others show hesitancy or resistance (Lehmberg & Poore, 2021). Research suggests that a significant number of lecturers view media favorably for boosting their growth. Many educators understand the importance of using social media to boost their presence in their field and connect with colleagues. They see media as a tool, for staying informed about industry trends and sharing their research and teaching experiences with a broader audience. Educators, with a flare for social media frequently engage on platforms, like Twitter and LinkedIn to showcase their research work and interact with peers. They acknowledge the benefits of using social media to boost their standing and expand their network for potential collaborations and career growth opportunities.

Many educators are hesitant to leverage social media for advancing their careers due, to concerns regarding privacy issues and the blending of professional boundaries on these platforms (Sadovykh et al., 2020). Some lecturers who have reservations, about social media worry about the risks of conduct and the potential misuse of personal data (Lehmberg & Poore, 2021). Social media could also be seen as a diversion, from their tasks, like teaching students and handling research and administrative tasks (according to Palaigeorgiou and Grammatikopoulo (2016)).

When it comes to how lecturers view using social media for advancing their careers, it is shaped by various factors, like their age group and familiarity with digital tools, the policies set by the institution and the norms of their field also play a role, in influencing their perspective (Luo & Xie, 2022). Typically, younger lecturers who have been raised in the era tend to hold a favorable view of social media and are more inclined to integrate it into their professional activities (Kearns & Gardiner, 2021). Older professors may feel reluctant to start using media due, to worries about privacy and digital security issues well as the fear of misuse according to a study by S. Manca and Ranieri (2023). The attitudes of lecturers towards media can also be influenced by the policies of their institutions

and the prevailing cultural norms in settings. Academic organizations that actively encourage social media use for growth and offer training and support tend to create a positive environment for faculty members based on research, by [Lehmberg and Poore \(2021\)](#). Disciplinary variances could also be a factor as certain academic disciplines might be more open, to embracing media compared to others. For example professors in the humanities and social sciences might show interest in using platforms for networking purposes sharing research findings and interacting with a wider audience as opposed to those, in the natural sciences ([Palaiogeorgiou & Grammatikopoulou, 2016](#)).

Their attitudes in respect to the use of social media for the development of their careers will mean the world to the career path and the future of academic space. Social media adoption for one's career could imply increased visibility, improved networking opportunities, and better access to resources and collaboration opportunities. Conversely, those who are reluctant to adopt social media applications and participation will be deprived of those advantages and become an obstacle to their future career prospects. [Kearns and Gardiner \(2021\)](#) further note that these individuals will eventually struggle in having successful careers. The different perceptions of lecturers regarding the use of social media as a means for career development have gained heightened interest in the recent past. These have been the reasons whereby some lecturers embrace the great potentials of these platforms, and on the other hand, many of them also raise a number of misgivings and resistive arguments. Various factors influence lecturers' attitudes toward social media; these include age, digital literacy, institutional policies, and discipline-related norms. Understanding attitudes is critical to devising strategies that can effectively integrate social media in the career development of lecturers to their benefit and that of the wider academic community.

2.4. Specific Ways in Which Social Media Platforms are Utilized by Lecturers to Enhance their Professional Development

The rapid development of higher education means that lecturers are constantly in need of finding new avenues that offer them professional development and updates about state-of-the-art pedagogical approaches. One of the most sought-after ways is using social media platforms, which create various opportunities for lecturers to engage themselves in self-directed learning, collaboration, and the distribution of ideas. A study conducted in 2021 explored university lecturers in Malaysia with regard to perception and utilization of social media for professional development. The most used platforms include Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube for sharing teaching resources, collaboration amongst peers, and accessing content related to professional development ([Musa, Mohamad, & Nordin, 2021](#)). Similarly, in 2022, a survey among UK lecturers found Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube to be the three most adopted platforms for professional development, from participating in education communities through to online discussions and webinars.

Social media uses for lecturer professional development in recent literature are well-documented. [Carpenter and Green \(2020\)](#) mentioned how social media platforms allow lecturers to build professional learning networks, reflect upon their practice, and gain access to a treasure trove of information and educational expertise that foster continued growth and development within their profession. In fact, [Akçayır and Akçayır \(2023\)](#) showed how social media can be used to share effective teaching practices, crowdsource solutions for pedagogical problems, create communities of practice among lecturers. In regard to lecturer professional development, it has taken shape in the use of Twitter. [Ranieri and Fabbri \(2021\)](#) showed, with the aid of Twitter, university lecturers in Italy could hold discussions pertaining to their profession, share teaching materials, and have interactions with other colleagues across the globe. Likewise, the analysis carried out by [Veletsianos and Kimmons \(2022\)](#) also conducted a review to show that these Twitter-based professional learning networks allow lecturers to receive timely information, join in ongoing conversations, and also get feedback and support from peers.

Besides Twitter, other social media have also proved to be effective for lecturer professional development. Such is a study conducted by [Smith and Hargittai \(2023\)](#) on the use of LinkedIn among university lecturers; they present how such a network was used to demonstrate their expertise, make professional connections, and maintain awareness of trends and changes within their respective fields. A report by the [OECD \(2024\)](#) also highlighted the potential of YouTube to provide lecturers with access to a large repository of instructional videos, webinars, and tutorials on various teaching and learning topics. Conclusion The literature review indicates that increasingly, social media platforms are being harnessed by lecturers as one of the means of complementing their professional development. From a sharing of teaching resources and online discussion to professional learning networks and a wealth of content related to education, social media offer the lecturers a wide range of possibilities for further growth and development. However, lecturers will have to respond with reflection and caution to the use of social media in order to meet some of the possible pitfalls and shortcomings with respect to this emerging trend in higher education.

2.5. Potential Challenges Lecturers Face in Using Social Media for Career-Development Purposes

Integrating social media into the professional lives of professors in Nigeria has in recent years increasingly taken on a life of its own as a subject of study. The benefits derived from using social media platforms for career development have been further clarified in the view of ensuring that higher education institutions in the country are not lagging behind in international trends. On the other hand, the chapter also mentions some challenges Nigerian lecturers may face in trying to use social media to advance their careers. Key among the factors that were identified as constituting a challenge to academics within Nigeria specifically touches on issues of digital literacy. [Akande and Ajayi \(2021\)](#) state in their recent study that the majority of professors throughout the country lack such skills and knowledge that would help to exploit social media for the purpose of their career. Senior or older faculty members would be unfamiliar with most of the new technologies; thus, the "digital gap" is most evident among them ([Nwosu & Ogbonna, 2022](#)). Without this, the existing gap in digital competencies has to be filled if the Nigerian institutions are seriously going to support their instructors to exploit these professional development opportunities created by social media.

Digital literacy is closely related to the question of institutional support and training. Very few colleges in Nigeria have implemented broad policies or programs that would equip their teachers with the knowledge and means to use social media for professional advancement. Moreover, without such institutional support, it may be difficult for the lecturers to overcome the tactical and technological hurdles associated with the use of social media, which consequently inhibits them from harnessing all its benefits. Another related issue that has emerged from the literature relates to personal times and work-life balance among the lecturers in Nigerian universities. According to [Aderibigbe and Ojewole \(2022\)](#) most academics in the country are overwhelmed by the pressure of administrative, teaching, and research work, leaving them with little time and strength to devote to social media. The long working hours and high work pressures that characterize the higher education sector in Nigeria further worsen the situation. In order for professors to ever use social media as part of their career development plans, these concerns about institutional support and work-life balance will have to be addressed.

The study also highlights potential risks and ethical issues arising from the use of social media by Nigerian professors. For example, [Omotayo and Omotayo \(2022\)](#) argue that academics in the country could be circumspect in their use of social media handsets as a result of personal risk associated with getting into trouble and/or compromising professional reputation or privacy or acting inappropriately. These are genuine concerns, as it were, because there have been several reported cases of scandalous incidents related to the use of social media among

academics in Nigeria. On the other hand, explicit institutional guidelines and policies on these ethical concerns would allay the fears of Nigerian academics and increase deeper exploitation of social media for professional development. Finally, it is important to note that several studies have highlighted challenges academics in using social media platforms amidst the wider socio-economic and technological setup in Nigeria. For instance, academics in Nigeria face infrastructure barriers to accessing social media: unreliable internet connectivity, limited access to digital devices, and high data plan costs. These are systemic issues that will have to involve concerted efforts from the higher education sector itself, as well as cooperation with legislators and technology suppliers.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research conducted in this study used a quantitative approach to explore how social media influences the career goals of lecturers, in Nigeria. A survey was distributed to 237 lecturers from universities in Nigeria through Google forms to gather data on their social media behavior and views on how it affects their career aspirations. The questionnaire aimed to collect details on the lecturers' social media habits and how they believe social media impacts their aspirations, alongside their details and other relevant information. The survey questions were created after reviewing the literature and incorporating a citation (Adedokun, 2022). Data gathered was examined using statistics such, as frequencies and percentages well as measures of central tendency with the assistance of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The results were displayed through tables and graphs along, with narrative summaries to offer a grasp of the research subject matter. The research follows standards by guaranteeing the privacy and anonymity of the participants involved in the study process; additionally securing the permits and authorizations, from relevant bodies before commencing the research.

3.1. Data Analysis

Research Question 1: types of social media platforms commonly used by lecturers for career-related activities in Nigeria.

Table 1. Mean ratings of the types of social media platforms commonly used by lecturers for career-related activities in Nigeria.

S/N	Items	N	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1.	LinkedIn	237	3.05	0.94	Somewhat used
2.	Twitter (X)	237	2.48	0.90	Somewhat unused
3.	Facebook	237	3.04	0.98	Somewhat used
4.	Instagram	237	2.61	0.93	Somewhat used
5.	Research gate	237	3.54	0.75	Strongly used
6.	Academia.edu	237	3.42	0.83	Somewhat used
7.	YouTube	237	3.17	0.85	Somewhat used
8.	WhatsApp	237	3.78	0.55	Strongly used
9.	Blogs	237	2.41	0.96	Somewhat unused
10.	Professional forums or discussion board	237	3.48	0.82	Somewhat used

Table 1 shows the mean ratings of lecturers on the social media platforms they commonly use for career-related activities in Nigeria. The analysis shows that Research Gate (mean=3.54) and WhatsApp (mean, 3.78) are strongly used by lecturers for career-related activities. Other social media platforms such as LinkedIn (mean, 3.05), Facebook (mean, 3.04), Instagram (mean, 2.61), Academia.edu (Mean, 3.42), YouTube (mean, 3.17), Professional Forums or discussion Boards (Mean, 3.48) are somewhat used while Twitter (X) (2.48) and Blogs (Mean, 2.41) are somewhat unused by lecturers for career-related activities.

Research Question 2: Extent to which social media influences lecturers' career aspirations.

Table 2. Mean ratings of the extent to which social media influences lecturers' career aspirations.

S/N	Items	N	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1.	Social media platforms have played a significant role in shaping my career aspirations as a lecturer	237	3.05	0.78	High extent
2.	The content I engage on social media has influenced my decisions regarding my professional development as a lecturer	237	3.22	0.72	High extent
3.	Interactions with colleagues and peers on social media have motivated me to pursue new career opportunities in the academic field	237	3.15	0.84	High extent
4.	The visibility and recognition I've gained through my social media presence have positively impacted my prospects for career advancement	237	3.26	0.71	High extent
5.	The networking and collaboration opportunities available on social media have expanded my career horizons as a lecturer	237	3.26	0.71	High extent
6.	The insights and trends I observe on social media have influenced my teaching methods and research interests	237	3.26	0.66	High extent
7.	Engaging with social media has encouraged me to explore alternative career options within the education sector	237	3.10	0.80	High extent
Cluster mean			3.18	0.74	High extent

Results in Table 2 indicate the mean ratings of respondents on the extent to which social media influences lecturers' career aspirations. The cluster mean of 3.18 with standard deviation of .74 indicate that social media influences lecturers' career aspirations to a high extent. The analysis of the items shows that the respondents rated all the seven items to a high extent with mean ratings ranging from 3.10 to 3.26. The standard deviation scores for all the items ranged from .71 to .84 indicating that the respondents' mean ratings were homogenous.

Research Question 3: attitude of lecturers towards social media as a tool for career development.

Table 3. Mean ratings of the attitude of lecturers towards social media as a tool for career development.

S/N	Items	N	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1.	Lecturers at my institution have positive attitude and view social media as a beneficial tool for career development	237	3.34	0.68	Agree
2.	My colleagues actively use social media platforms to support their professional growth and career advancement.	237	3.29	0.71	Agree
3.	Lecturers in my department are encouraged to leverage social media for networking and building their academic/Professional profile	237	3.27	0.76	Agree
4.	The administration at my institution has a positive attitude towards lecturers using social media for career development	237	3.35	0.76	Agree
5.	I believe social media can be an effective tool for lecturers to showcase their expertise, connect with peers, and advance their career.	237	3.70	0.53	Agree
6.	I maintain reservations or even resistance to social media integration into my professional practices	237	2.40	1.09	Disagree

Results in Table 3 indicate that the respondents agree to five (item 1-5) of the six items as attitude of lecturers towards social media as a tool for career development. The mean rating for the five items ranges from 3.27 to 3.70. The remaining item, (item 6, mean =2.40) was not rated as part of the attitude of lecturers towards social media.

Research Question 4: specific ways social media platforms are utilized by lecturers to enhance their professional development.

Table 4. Mean ratings of respondents on specific ways social media platforms are utilized by lecturers to enhance their professional development.

S/N	Items	N	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1.	Staying up-to-date with the latest trends and best practices in my field of teaching	237	3.54	0.53	Agree
2.	Participating in online communities and discussions related to my teaching discipline to learn from my peers	237	3.52	0.57	Agree
3.	I leverage social media to connect with subject matter experts and thought leaders to gain new insights that inform my teaching	237	3.44	0.60	Agree
4.	Using social media platforms helps me to reflect on and improve my teaching practices	237	3.38	0.61	Agree
5.	I utilize social media to share my own teaching experiences and resources with the wider academic community	237	3.27	0.68	Agree

The mean ratings displayed in Table 4 shows that social media platforms are utilized by lecturers to enhance their professional development through: staying up-to-date with the latest trends and best practices in the field of teaching (mean, 3.54), participating in online communities and discussions related to my teaching discipline to learn from my peers (mean, 3.52), leveraging on social media to connect with subject matter experts and thought leaders to gain new insights that inform teaching (mean, 3.44), using social media platforms to reflect on and improve teaching practices (mean, 3.38) and utilizing social media to share teaching experiences and resources with wider academic community (mean, 3.27)

Research Question 5: potential challenges that lecturers in Nigeria face in using social media for career-development purposes.

Table 5. Mean ratings of respondents on the potential challenges that lecturers in Nigeria face in using social media for career-development purposes.

S/N	Items	N	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1.	Lack of access to reliable internet connectivity	237	3.52	0.67	Agree
2.	Lack of necessary digital literacy skills	237	3.17	0.79	Agree
3.	Cost of data and internet subscription	237	3.51	0.70	Agree
4.	Concerns about privacy and security on social media platforms	237	3.25	0.69	Agree
5.	The time required to maintain an active social media presence takes away from my primary teaching and research responsibilities	237	2.93	0.84	Agree
6.	Lack of institutional support and policies	237	3.14	0.81	Agree
7.	The perceived unprofessional nature of social media use in academia makes me reluctant to utilize these platforms for career development	237	2.65	0.91	Agree
8.	The inability to measure the tangible benefits of using social media for career advancement hinders my motivation to engage on these platforms.	237	2.55	0.88	Agree

Table 5 shows that the respondents agree to all the eight listed items as challenges that lecturers in Nigeria face in using social media for career-development purposes. The mean for the eight challenges ranged from 2.55 to 3.52.

4. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of research question one, which was to ascertain the level at which different types of social media platforms were used by lecturers in Nigeria in relation to their career activities, revealed that most lecturers who responded reported that most of the platforms were "somewhat used" except that Twitter and blogs were perceived

to be "somewhat unused" while ResearchGate was said to be "strongly used." Therefore, based on the findings, it would appear that indeed Nigerian lecturers are into most forms of social media platforms in relation to their career activities, some of these platforms, like ResearchGate being more high-profile than others (Klingner & Zinner, 2021). On the other hand, Twitter and blogs were seen as less utilized by the lecturers, probably because of the specific nature of these channels and their applicability for the career-related activities of the lecturers (Benson & Morgan, 2020). These findings have important implications for understanding the use of social media by lecturers in Nigeria and how universities and policymakers must consider the needs and preferences of lecturers in ways that allow them to facilitate effective use for career development and knowledge sharing (Ogunleye, Olayinka, & Okolie, 2022).

Results for research question two, which aimed to identify the extent to which social media influences the career aspirations of lecturers, indicate that there is a great influence of social media on lecturers' aspirations. The results show that all the lecturers who responded ticked the "high extent" option, meaning that social media has a high influence on their career aspirations. That corresponds to the very recent work of Smith and Johnson, in 2021, who described the increased significance of social media in relation to the professional destiny of academics. According to these researchers, lecturers who are engaged with social media would exploit new opportunities in their career more and be interested in other directions than purely academic ones. In this line, a report by the Institute for Higher Education (2023) adds that social media can improve professional networking, connections, and personal branding among lecturers. In this case, therefore, it is no longer in question that visibility and reach on the sites of social media have emerged as determining factors in lecturers' career building and choice of engagement. These findings give an indication of the enormous influence the use of social media has on lecturers' career aspirations and the need to investigate further into the phenomenon and implications it has for the academic profession.

Findings for question three show that lecturers have a positive attitude towards social media being a helpful tool in career development. They have all indicated agreement with the assertion of these social media platforms being utilized in an effort to go further in their profession and be more visible. It brings in the awareness of the lecturers on the potentiality of the social media platforms in networking, collaboration, and information sharing. They also agreed that social media can facilitate their work in disseminating research, showcasing expertise, and networking with peers and professionals (Alsobayel, 2022). On the other hand, the lecturers have argued that social media may be useful for professional development by providing an easy and accessible means of online courses, webinars, and resources (Sharma & Mishra, 2023). This points, indirectly, to the fact that social media provide such ease of usage and accessibility that lecturer respondents hold it dear for their career development. The implication from this is that academia is increasingly in flux, but also that the usage of digital tools is paramount for lecturers in their professional development. Considering how higher education continually changes, the positive attitudes exhibited in this research show an openness toward embracing social media as a strategic tool for career advancement.

Results for Research Question Four Based on the results discussed above, lecturers could be said to be making quite useful contact with the social media platforms to advance their professional growth. Just less than large proportions of respondents felt that keeping up to date with recent trends and developments in one's field and participating in online communities/ discussion forums related to the subject being taught in order to learn from colleagues were essential. These findings also establish that through social media, lecturers build professional networks with subject matter experts and thought leaders that help enhance their practices and enable them to share their experiences. This finding supports a recent study conducted by Zawacki-Richter and Latchem (2018) on

how social media is increasingly assuming a vital role in knowledge sharing and collaboration among educators. The authors further add that in a more related study, recently, [Selwyn and Stirling \(2022\)](#) emphasized that through the use of social media, lecturers are able to reflect upon their practice and, importantly, undertake professional learning that enhances their pedagogic competencies in terms of better instructing students.

Findings from the research questionnaire on challenges which lecturers in Nigeria face in the use of social media for career development purposes showed a number of common challenges. One of the major challenges faced is that of no access to reliable Internet, which generally obstructs their efforts to make full use of the social media sites ([Adedoyin & Soykan, 2023](#)). Besides, many Lecturers were not aware of the requisite digital literacy skills needed to traverse and maximize the opportunities on social media for their professional benefit. The high cost of purchasing data and Internet subscriptions was also mentioned as a serious barrier, as it is expensive and may discourage the Lecturer from continuously using social media ([Olatunji & Ajayi, 2022](#)). To this regard, Lecturers explained that they are more concerned about their privacy and security on social media sites—a subject that, in itself, calls for more education and awareness. Overall, the findings signal the complex set of barriers that the Lecturers use for career development purposes in Nigeria and, thus, a targeted intervention and support to address such shortcomings.

5. CONCLUSION

These findings from the quantitative study have provided valuable insight into the role that social media has played in shaping the career aspirations of lecturers in Nigeria. In fact, as the analyses have shown, there is an increasing trend towards integral use of social media for professional purposes, including networking, collaboration, personal branding, and seeking newer career opportunities. The lecturers said that they make use of online networking platforms like LinkedIn, WhatsApp, researchGate, and Facebook to establish themselves online, including making their research and publications known, in addition to connecting with other academics nationally and internationally. Such visibility has increasingly become crucial to furthering one's academic career—from securing speaking invitations at conferences to being able to find job ads or to raise the profile of the work. Even more important, social media for lecturers at less prestigious or more peripheral institutions, as such platforms enable them to transcend geographical constraints to reach out and engage with opportunities that might otherwise have been shut to them.

Meanwhile, these results disclose the two-way edge of social media influence: even as it opens up new paths to professional growth, it also introduces its pressures of personal branding, self-promotion, and keeping-up-with-an-active-online-presence compulsion. There were some responses from lecturers who were concerned about the time that social media required and the potential diversion away from core teaching and research work. There was also a worry that over-reliance on social platforms could widen the existing inequities, in that those with restricted digital know-how and access are placed at a disadvantage. Generally, this study underlines increasingly the central role of social media in shaping academics' career pathways in Nigeria. However, inasmuch as these technologies are increasingly put to work, it will be necessary for institutions and policy makers to think how to maximize their benefits without necessarily compromising the negative impacts associated with lecturer well-being and career development.

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