




Role of Social Media in Reshaping the Academic Activities of Teacher Educators in Nigeria: A Review of Literature

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Abstract

This study examined how social media reshape the academic activities of teacher educators in Nigeria through the use of social media platforms for teaching and learning, dissemination of scholarly works, and research collaboration. The research work was anchored on the Connectivism

Theory, which emphasized that learning is not confined to individual cognition, but could occur through the formation of networks that link people with information, through digital tools. The study explored the nature of social media, their composition, usage patterns and perceived benefits. Also, the study interrogated the motivation for social media use in Nigeria; the social media forms that could be used in teacher education and their areas of involvement in the education process; the social media that are mostly in use by university lecturers in Nigeria and their educational purposes; and the challenges users face in using social media in teacher education. Finally, strategies for accessing a rewarding social media usage in teacher education, such as development of clear institutional social media policies, building digital professionalism, and fostering student and staff's digital literacy, were suggested, as means of integrating social media, to reshape the academic activities of teacher educators.

Keywords: Social Media, Teaching Effectiveness, Digitalised Learning, Teacher Educators, Academic Success, Computer-assisted Learning

Introduction

Teacher education involves the formulation of policies and strategies designed to equip educators with the essential knowledge, attitudes, behaviours, skills and competences, needed to effectively carry out their roles in the educational process. The process of engaging teacher's professional development encompasses both pre-service and post-service training, which are aimed at imparting the necessary attitudes, skills and knowledge teachers need to perform their duties effectively, towards meeting societal expectations (MuhammedZein & Abdullateef, 2025).

Teacher education is ideally a continuous process, though segmented into three phases: Initial pre-service teacher training; Induction (a training teachers undergo at the inception of their teaching career); and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) (an intensive training process for experienced educators). United Nations Economic and Scientific Community (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics (2024) defines teacher education as the organisation of professional education and specialised training within a specified timeframe, aimed at nurturing, preparing and developing the youths, into responsible and productive citizens. The Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) in its National Policy on Education (NPE) (2013) outlines the objectives of teacher education to include among others; the cultivation of highly motivated, conscientious, and effective teachers across all educational levels; promotion of a culture of inquiry and creativity among teachers; and the provision of educators with a strong intellectual and professional foundation, in order to adapt to changing circumstances.

The rapid emergence and widespread availability of social media, which allow convenient access to extensive information, have led to a significant transformation in global teaching and learning methodologies in the 21st century. This shift in perspective, as noted by Jebba, Sanda, & Abdulrahman (2018), has markedly affected students' learning preferences and the instructional strategies of educators, along with changes in assessment

methods and research practices. Consequently, the advent of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has broadened the scope of teaching and learning beyond traditional classroom settings, which is contrary to the conventional educational practices that require direct and physical interactions between educators and learners.

A very significant ICT tool in modern pedagogy is the incorporation of social media platforms. These platforms enable users to interact, by sharing information, creating profiles and uploading multimedia contents. Perez, Manca, Fermaandez & Pascual (2023) define social media as a digital community, where individuals could engage in discussions around topics of mutual interest. Manca (2020) equally defines social media as digital interactive platforms that inspire user-generate contents creation, sharing and networking communication. Consequently, these platforms are frequently utilised by educators and students in teaching and learning. Indeed, social media are effective means for academic discourse and knowledge sharing within educational frameworks today. This functionality of social media has garnered the interest of scholars who advocate for its implementation as a productive pedagogical instrument in the 21st century (Ekpenyong & Udo, 2024).

Incorporating social media into educational practices is progressively increasing due to its compelling and motivating features, which inspire students to converge and learn at their convenience, within flexible schedules, and from accessible locations (Lamberthus, 2024). As a result, modern education is becoming increasingly interactive, learner-oriented and collaborative. Educational experiences are evolving to accommodate learner's preferred social and robust environment, which permits interactions outside conventional school hours, informal settings, among familiar peers and online participants.

Currently, social media has now taken over every sphere of learning resulting from more access to internet connectivity. This has significantly enhanced communal learning experiences. In line with this assertion, Martínez-Domingo et al (2025) argue that, social media play a crucial role for teachers, within educational institutions, which facilitate the advancement and transformation of education for learners. The transformation encompasses the re-evaluation of curricula instruction in classroom environments, and the extensive utilisation of social media for education beyond formal school hours. Adamu & Nathaniel (2017) further add that, social media platforms present low-cost, straightforward and user-friendly frameworks for the exchange of information in varied ways. The platforms help educators to organise, communicate, share and even administer evaluations to students. They also facilitate the exchange of innovative ideas, research, and support the ongoing updating of knowledge. The use of social media, as an educational resource renders significant and impactful learning experiences to students, thereby addressing their needs, while enhancing engagement in learning.

Given the prevalence of social media in developed countries, compared to the limited availability of the facility in developing countries, like Nigeria, the use of social media could be effectively harnessed by educators within teaching and learning activities,

to influence the future trajectory of teacher education. This viewpoint is echoed by Allais (2023), who confirms that the integration of social media in teacher education presents a feasible approach, which educators could adopt for teaching competency-based curricula. The success of this approach is depended on the employment of social media's potential, to engage and motivate students, which represents an essential factor for effective learning (Chen, Jalaludin & Rasul, 2024).

In considering the various impacts and benefits associated with the utilisation of social media in educational settings, it is imperative for teachers to remain knowledgeable about emerging ICT-driven pedagogical methodologies, particularly those that involve social media. Consequently, teachers are therefore encouraged to make frantic efforts to access the utilisation of social media, by optimising their use, in order to adequately impact knowledge to the learners in the educational process. This research work is therefore aimed at promoting the integration of social media as a strategy to reconfigure and enhance the academic endeavors of teacher educators in Nigeria. To guide this study, the following research questions were raised: What is the nature of social media; the composition and usage patterns? What is the motivation for social media use in Nigeria? What are the uses of social media in teacher education? What are the challenges facing the use of social media in teacher education? Finally, what are the proposed strategies for navigating unhelpful social media use in teacher education for effective integration of the required social media that would reconfigure and reshape the academic activities of teacher educators?

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on Connectivism Theory, as proposed by Siemens in 2005, which was further advanced by Downes in 2009. It emphasises that learning in the digital age is not confined to individual cognition, but occurs through the formation of networks that link people, information, and digital tools. The theory argues that knowledge is distributed across connections, and learning consists of the ability to construct and traverse those networks. In the context of teacher educators in Nigeria, social media platforms provide interactive networks for academic discourse and collaborations. This helps in reshaping teacher educators' academic activities, by operating beyond the traditional classroom settings. This theory is therefore relevant to this endeavor, because it explains how social media support knowledge sharing, collaborative teaching, research dissemination, and professional development, among teacher educators.

Methodology

To deal with the issues involved in this research work very effectively, the Expository and Exploratory Research Methods were employed to gather relevant and

necessary data from several sources, which include; direct research reports, secondary sources on the use of social media in facilitating teaching and learning, teacher education, challenges that are inherent in the use of social media, and the ways to navigate unhelpful social media use in teacher education by the researchers. Within a period of nine weeks, the researchers visited several international academic databases and academic social networks, such as Google Scholar, Research Gate, Education Resource Information Centre, Open Archive Initiative, Microsoft Academic, Twitters, Academia.edu, and Ebscohost, to retrieve and process research reports for this study. The combination of these primary and secondary sources of data, gave this research an increased validity and reliability.

The data for this study were matched effectively, and systematically differentiated, in order to note, critically, and carefully, the various emerging trends. This was however done for the purpose of ensuring effectiveness in the coding and triangulation of the data. In the course of doing that, all the opinions and ideas expressed by different authorities were carefully arranged and organised, appropriately profiled, and synthesised, so that every observation made would be properly synchronised for the purpose of clarity and logical presentation of the final report.

The Nature and Composition of Social Media

Social media have become one of the most powerful and transformative tools in today's digital world. Through these digital spaces, people often communicate instantly, and interact freely, regardless of distance or location (Alhassan, Boateng & Gyamfi, 2023). It breaks physical and geographical barriers, allowing individuals, groups and organisations to connect, collaborate and participate in global conversations through text, images, videos, and live interactions. In 2025, over five billion people, worldwide, were active users of social media, showing how deeply, social media platforms have become embedded in modern human life (Kemp, 2025). Beyond personal communication, social media equally serve as a platform for education. They influence the way people learn, work, and form opinions about socio- political, and cultural issues.

Social media appear in various forms and formats, each designed for different purposes, content-types, and ways of interaction. Every form of social media has its own distinct features, norms, and user expectations. Some platforms even combine several forms in one system. Common forms of social media include; social networking sites, microblogging platforms, photo and video-sharing platforms, messaging and chat apps, discussion forums and online communities, blogging and publishing platforms, as well as live-streaming and short-lived (ephemeral) content platforms. The nature of social media is defined by their interactive, participatory and technology-driven characteristics. The features associated with social media are outlined below, depending on the form:

- a) ***Interactive and Participative:*** Unlike traditional media (such as newspapers, radio, or television) where information flows one-way, social media is interactive. It allows two-way communication. Users are not only receivers of information, but also active participants who create, comment, and share content.
- b) ***User-Generated Content:*** Social media contents are created by users themselves. People share photos, videos, opinions, and stories daily, which enable the space available to be accessed by everyone, consumer and producer of information (UNESCO, 2024).
- c) ***Networked Structure:*** Social media platforms are built around networks connections between people, groups, and organisations. Each person connects to friends, followers, or subscribers, forming a web of relationships (Kietzmann & Canhoto, 2023).
- d) ***Real-Time Communication:*** Social media operates in real time, by sharing information instantly, and users responding immediately, invariably eliminating time and distance barriers.
- e) ***Algorithmic and Personalized Nature:*** Social media platforms rely on algorithms to determine the content that appears on each user's timeline. These systems track users' preferences such as their likes, searches, and time spent on particular posts to recommend related material.
- f) ***Multimedia and Visual Orientation:*** Social media thrive on visual content photos, videos, emojis, and infographics, which makes information easy to understand and share (Kemp, 2025).
- g) ***Global and Borderless Reach:*** Social media have a global and borderless nature, which allows people from different parts of the world to connect and communicate instantly.
- h) ***Social and Cultural Influence:*** Social media are powerful social and cultural forces. They influence trends, language, politics, education, and even moral values. For young people, especially, social media shape identity, lifestyle, and communication style (UNESCO, 2024; Pew Research Center, 2024).

Motivation for Social Media Use in Nigeria

While global trends influence the adoption of technology worldwide, the unique socio-economic and infrastructural context in Nigeria motivate the use of social media use among Nigerian teacher educators. The following factors therefore serve as motivation for the use of social media in Nigeria.

- a) ***Compensating for Infrastructural Gaps:*** A primary motivation for the use of social media in Nigeria is to compensate for infrastructural gaps. In many Nigerian

tertiary institutions, reliable physical libraries, stable internet infrastructure, and consistent power supply are rarely available. Therefore, social media users leverage widely available mobile data, with low-cost offer, which is a readily accessible channel for accessing and transmitting information, in the event that institutional infrastructure may fail.

- b) Professional Identity and Academic Visibility:** A major significant drive for the use of social media is the enhancement and maintainance of visible professional presence. Teacher educators can build their personal academic brand, make connection with other scholar across the world, and eventually get their visibility increased within their country and the world academic community (Bello & Ahmed, 2021).
- c) Bridging of Communication Gap:** Social media platforms are highly used by teacher educators in bridging generational gap that are naturally created by age differences, culture and geographical distance especially with the younger generation. Through the social media platform, academic contents and other official and relatively unofficial updates are made accessible with ease to a large number of student body, compared to the slower pace of traditional email or institutional learning management system.
- d) Modeling of Digital Pedagogy and Useful Skills:** Teacher educators easily demonstrate effective digital literacy and fluency by their active use of social media tools in the teaching and learning process, dissemination of research findings, the sharing of resources. This modeling function is very important to the entire educative process because, the curriculum for future educators highly emphasises the integration of digital skills.
- e) Access to Current Knowledge and Trends All Over the World:** Current researches and world's problems solving findings, international curricula, and world best practices are accessed through social media platforms, which of course bypasses the burden of the process of procuring traditional print resources (Johnson, 2019).

The Use of Social Media in Teacher Education

The use of social media increases teacher educators' opportunities to improve their professional practice and academic discussion. The incorporation of digital resources into teacher educators' academic activities, including research, teaching and community services make them highly proficient (Eze, 2020). Conventional academic practices have significantly been transformed with the use of social media platforms in teacher education through internet connectivity and resource mobility. Professional Learning Networks (PLNs) which enable teacher educators to engage with colleagues all over the world are highly promoted by social media platforms (Johnson, 2019; Bello & Ahmed, 2021). Social

media platforms are used in almost every area in academics. Some of the very important areas where social media platforms are used are discussed below:

- a) **Teaching and Feedback Mechanisms:** Social media platforms like WhatsApp and Telegram are often used by teacher educators to disseminate instruction and lecture materials to students, get immediate feedback on assignments, and coordinate group projects. All these functions are by the use of social media platforms performed outside of traditional classroom settings. By this approach, the educational environment is extended beyond the classroom and flexibility is enhanced with blended learning models (Okafor & Musa, 2022).
- b) **Research Collaboration and Dissemination:** Social media platforms give opportunity for scholarly works to be disseminated with speed, increases scholars' visibility and facilitates joint research collaboration without physical meetings. By this immediacy, academic presence is aided and partnerships that are vital for grant applications and inter-institutional intellectual exchange are secured (Bello & Ahmed, 2021).
- c) **Professional Learning and Development:** Social media platforms provide teachers and pre-service teachers with spaces for continuous professional development (CPD). This enables them to access online workshops and teacher communities that share innovations in teaching pedagogy, assessment and evaluation, and effective classroom management (Carpenter & Krutka, 2022).
- d) **Collaboration and Networking:** Social media encourages collaboration among teacher educators, student-teachers, and practitioners globally. This gives room for group discussions, mentoring and resource sharing. The interconnectedness provided by social media helps to foster a sense of community and support and enables educators to share best practices, innovative teaching strategies and solutions to common challenges.
- e) **Instructional Resource Sharing:** Teachers use social media platforms to find and share instructional materials, such as lesson plans, videos and digital learning resources. These platforms provide a collaborative space where educators could exchange ideas, strategies and resources, to enhance their teaching practices.
- f) **Enhancing Teaching and Learning Processes:** Social media could be integrated directly into teacher education courses, to promote active learning. These platforms offer dynamic opportunities for collaboration and communication. Through the social media platforms, pre-service teachers could engage in discussions beyond the classroom (Trust et al, 2020).
- g) **Research Collaboration and Knowledge Dissemination:** Social media enable teachers and researchers to disseminate research findings and collaborate on educational projects. Teacher educators, researchers and pre-service teachers are provided with

interactive platforms to share ideas, publish findings, and engage in scholarly dialogue globally.

- h) *Promoting Digital Citizenship and Ethics:*** Through guided use, social media help teacher educators understand ethical online behaviour, digital responsibility and cyber safety. This prepares them for the proper modelling of their students. Pre-service teachers are able to develop a serious understanding of the complexities involved in digital interactions by their engagement with social media (Martínez-Domingo et al, 2025).
- i) *Community Building and Peer Support:*** Social media play a vital role in fostering community building, and peer support among teacher trainees, particularly in the context of digital learning environments and teaching practice. Teacher education could often be a socially and emotionally demanding experience, especially for pre-service teachers who are undergoing field placements, or adapting to the challenges of remote learning. Social media platforms provide virtual spaces, where teacher trainees could connect, share experiences, and offer emotional encouragement to one another, thereby reducing feelings of isolation and stress (Greenhow & Chapman, 2020).
- j) *Assessments and Feedbacks:*** Quick formative assessments, such as polls, short questions and reflective prompts, are increasingly administered through platforms, like WhatsApp and Google Classroom-linked Telegram groups. The immediacy of response fosters a more dialogic assessment culture, where feedback is less hierarchical and more conversational.

Challenges of Social Media Use in Teacher Education

Social media use in teacher education is challenged by the following factors:

- a) *Misinformation and Disinformation:*** Wrong or misleading information can be spread very easily by social media. So, when teachers or students rely too much on social media for educational resources, they could pick up false information very easily.
- b) *Privacy and Data Protection:*** Many social media platforms gather a lot of personal information from users. When teachers and students use these platforms for learning, their data may be saved, shared, or even sold without their knowledge or consent. This creates serious privacy and moral concerns, especially for the under-aged. Teachers often feel worried about the safety of their information and that of their online students (Marín et al, 2022).
- c) *Professional Boundaries and Reputation Risks:*** Social media could make it difficult to separate a teacher's personal life from his/her professional life. Things like posts, pictures, or comments shared privately could still be seen by students, parents, or

- employers, which may cause misunderstandings, or harm the teacher's reputation.
- d) *Distraction, Attention Loss, and Classroom Disruption:*** Social media alerts and popular posts often take students' attention away during lessons. Frequently checking their accounts, student teachers' focus and attention to study is lowered and reduced.
 - e) *Teacher and Student Mental Health / Burnout:*** Using social media too often could cause anxiety, stress, pressure on health status, and arouse unnecessary competition among peers. Teachers may also feel stressed by negative online comments, or the need to be constantly active online. This can result in emotional tiredness, and hinders job satisfaction (Chen et al, 2024).
 - f) *Equity and the Digital Divide:*** It is a fact that all students do not have equal opportunities to access the internet, digital tools or safe online platforms. When teaching relies too much on social media, students from poor or rural areas may face some challenges.
 - g) *Academic Integrity and Assessment Problems:*** Through the use of social media platforms students may easily copy and paste others' work, and even, share examination materials. These possess serious threat to originality and standards which may raise challenge for fair assessment.
 - h) *Lack Proper Training for Teacher, Clear Policies, and School Support:*** Many teacher training programme still do not have practical instruction on how to effectively use social media. Most schools also don't have clear social media policies for staff and students. This of course makes most teachers very unsure about what is acceptable or safe when using digital tools for teaching and learning (UNESCO, 2024).
 - i) *Poor Internet Connectivity and Electricity Supply:*** Poor internet connectivity and epileptic electricity power supply, which often characterise less developed countries like Nigeria, hamper the use of social media in the teaching learning process. As noted by Adeyemi and Bello (2023), unstable internet connectivity and inconsistent electricity supply are major constraints to the usage of social media in teaching learning process.
 - j) *Digital Literacy Gap:*** This remains a major barrier to the use of social media by many teacher educators, because not all educators possess the technical competence to effectively integrate these platforms into the teaching and learning pedagogy. Ojiemhenkele, Ofangbonmu, Aluede & Emosoga (2025) emphasised that, digital literacy and competence is a core professionalization mandate for teachers, as advocated by the Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN).
 - k) *Ethical Challenges:*** A major challenge confronting the use of social media in teacher education programmes is ethical behaviour, which often arises from lack of academic integrity. The issue of credibility is a common place thing, since easy access to online materials via social media increases plagiarism risks, while

academic decorum may be compromised.

Strategies for Navigating Unhelpful Social Media Use in Teacher Education

The strategies below are set to guide individual practice, institutional policy, pedagogy, and wellbeing while using the social media platforms so as to unhelpful and unethical practices.

- a) ***Development of Clear Institutional Social-Media Policies and Governance:*** Institutions should adopt concise social-media policies that define acceptable uses, ownership of content, privacy rules, procedures for responding to breaches, and roles/responsibilities for account management. Adopting a formal policy reduces ambiguity about professionalism, and provides a framework for support and sanctions (for violators).
- b) ***Building Digital Professionalism Training as Part of Staff Development:*** Teacher educators should be given structured training on digital professionalism, focusing on how to maintain professional boundaries, manage privacy settings, separate personal and professional accounts, and communicate appropriately with students online. Training should be scenario-based learning (boundary dilemmas, responding to student messages, handling offensive comments) and to be refreshed regularly.
- c) ***Using of Design Led Pedagogy First Approaches to Social Media Integration:*** Unhelpful social-media use often stems from ad-hoc, unstructured deployment. Lecturers should design social-media activities intentionally: set clear learning objectives, define expected student behaviour, limit platform features used and set explicit participation windows.
- d) ***Fostering of Student and Staff Digital Literacy Together:*** Managing unhelpful social-media use is a shared responsibility. Embed digital-citizenship and media-literacy lessons in courses, so that students would understand and appreciate privacy, respectful interaction, misinformation, and digital footprints.
- e) ***Preferring Institutional Platforms for Assessment and Sensitive Interactions:*** Where possible, require formal assessment submissions and grades to be handled through the university's LMS (or institutional email), rather than wholly, through commercial social platforms. Social media should therefore be reserved for low-stake interactions and community building. This will help to reduce record-keeping problems, privacy exposures, and confusion over official communication. Policies and practices that centralize records on institutional systems also protect lecturers in disputes. Action should include, setting a clear rule, LMS for assessment/grades, while social media for announcement/discussion only.

f) Protection of Wellbeing by setting Boundaries, Schedules, and Digital Wellbeing

Practices: Social media could erode work–life boundaries, and contribute to digital fatigue or over-availability. Practical strategies include setting office-hours for online responses; using platform features (scheduled messages, auto-replies) to indicate availability; turning off notifications outside work hours; and encouraging use of “do not disturb” modes. Interventions that target digital wellbeing (screen-time limits, mindfulness, and digital literacy) have evidence of reducing problematic use and improving teacher wellbeing.

Conclusion

Social media is not just an optional amenity, but an essential tool that is actively reshaping the academic activities of Nigerian teacher educators. It plays the role of facilitating Professional Learning Networks, based on Connectivism principles, enhancing instructional flexibility, and serves as a mechanism adopted to circumvent physical institutional infrastructural deficiencies. These functions underscore its potency and significance. This study, therefore, emphasises that the adoption and integration of social media platforms in the teaching learning process is driven by a practical need for accessible infrastructure, and a deep-seated cultural preference for communal communication, alongside the professional requirements to model digital skills and access, to global knowledge. Its borderless nature, in which location does not pose barriers to learning, increases its efficacy to making learning a global exercise.

Continued research should however be focused on developing effective institutional policies and training programmes, in order to maximise the pedagogical benefits of social media in reshaping the academic activities of teacher educators in Nigeria in view. This will enhance their ability to effectively transmit the needed skills, knowledge and competences to teacher trainees, who are the builders and models of modern society in Nigeria. Genuine, candid and sincere efforts should be made at mitigating challenges of privacy, misinformation and information overload, that often characterise the use of social media in the teaching learning process, by developing clear institutional media policies, setting necessary and reasonable boundaries, and the building of digital professionalism training into staff development.

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