

Awareness and Usage of Social Networking Sites by Students of Library and Information Science: The Case of Federal Polytechnic, Offa, Nigeria

Odunola Adefunke ADEBAYO

Department of Library and Information Science The Federal Polytechnic, P.M.B. 420, Offa, Kwara State, Nigeria.

Abstract

The study aimed at examining the awareness and use of social networking sites by the students of Library and Information Science in Federal Polytechnic, Offa, Nigeria. Descriptive survey design was adopted with the use of questionnaire as instrument for data collection. Out of two hundred and forty copies of the questionnaire, administered, two hundred and twenty eight were retrieved which represented 95%. Frequency counts and percentages were used to analyse data generated. The study revealed that majority of the respondents use social networking site to a large extent, especially facebook and they use it for various purposes such as connecting with friends, for academic work and so on. The study confirmed that many of the respondents spend up to an hour or more to visit their social networking sites. Many of the respondents also use the sites several times in a day. The social networking sites enable the users to maintain contact with friends and also increase academic knowledge. However, some students reported that engaging in social networking reduces the time they spend on reading and also cause distractions in classroom. The study recommends among others that, students should minimize time spend on social networking and they should make meaningful use of the sites.

Keywords: Social networking sites, social networks, internet, polytechnic students, Nigeria.

1. Introduction

The advent of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) has gradually turned the world into a global village, the use of internet has become indispensable to several people especially the young adults. Social Networking Sites (SNSs) emerged as a result of this development thereby, making communication among friends and relations easier than what it used to be. Boyd and Ellison (2007) identified social networking sites among others, to include Facebook, Twitter and Myspace used by people to create and sustain relationships with one another. There are other social networking sites which have greatly attracted millions of users such as; blog, del.icio.us, flickr, Skype, LinkedIn and so on. Pempe, Yermolajeva and Calvert (2008) found these sites to be gaining popularity among the young adults in this information age. Many of these young adults who are mostly students use the sites to communicate with family, friends and strangers as well. Having taken advantage of this technological trend, many students have integrated these social networking sites into all their daily practices. A large number of the students spend a lot of time on the sites to get information, engage in online chatting with friends, watch online movies or use them for research.

Some students have formed the habit of login to social media sites at any time to the extent that, their academic works are affected negatively. They sometimes find it difficult to concentrate and study effectively, due to much time spend on social networking sites. Egberongbe (2013) viewed that some people have become very smart because of the information they get from social media sites, while some have become academically poor, since it is easy to get almost any materials for school assignment.

2. Statement of Problem

The advancement in technology has brought a great change to the way youths; especially the students explore and use the internet. The use of social networking sites now provide the students with diverse opportunities. The students use the various sites for many reasons which include; maintaining social contact with friends and relations. Some use the social networking sites for entertainment and some for educational and professional reasons. However, as useful as the social networking sites are, there is a growing concern on the potential negative effect of the sites. Many students spend their time on social networking sites at the expense of their academic activities. Majority of the students seem to be too obsessed with social networking, rather than spending quality time on their studies. It is against this background that this study is being conducted to examine the use of social networking sites among the students of Library and Information Science in Federal Polytechnic Offa, Kwara State.

3. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to:

- i. examine the extent to which the Library and Information Science (LIS) students use social networking sites.
- ii. identify the different categories of social networking sites used by LIS students.
- iii. find out the purpose for which the LIS students use the social networking sites.
- iv. ascertain the frequency of social networking usage by the LIS students.
- v. identify the effects of social networking sites on students' academic work.

4. Research Questions

1. What is the extent of usage of social networking sites by Library and Information Science (LIS) students?
2. What are the different categories of social networking sites used by LIS students?
3. For what purposes do the LIS students use the social networking sites?
4. What is the frequency of access to social networking sites by the LIS students?
5. What are the effects of using social networking sites on the LIS students' academic work?

5. Review of Related Literatures

The increase in the use of Social Networking Sites (SNS) among the students today cannot be over emphasized. The internet has changed everything, with social networking making it more flexible (Lewis, 2008). According to Boyd, (2007), what some computer literate people found to be a hobby in the time past, has turned to a social norm and way of life for people around the globe. Several students at all levels, now use social networking sites as means to connecting their old friends and making new ones. Majority of them use social networking sites for social connections and entertainment though they also use the sites for educational and professional reasons (University of New Hampshire 2009).

Social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, Skype and so on allow people to easily create their own online profile and display an online network of friends. Through the social networking site, information, pictures of activities such as birthdays, graduation, recent and special events could be shared. Lenhart et al (2010) in Owusu Acheaw and Larson (2015) posited that about 57% of social network users are between 18-19 years old and they have personal profile on multiple social media websites. Asur and Huberman (2010) opined that social networking sites have affected peoples social interaction by changing the way people interact face-to-face, how information is received and the dynamics of people's social groups and friendships. Idumange (2012) described social networking sites as "online environment in which one can connect, share and interact with other users who are typically known to you offline". It provides opportunities for people to build personal webpages and then connect with friends to share content and communication.

Ito (2008) opined that social networking sites enable the teenagers to get connected and also provide opportunities to learn from one another. It enables them to extend friendship from various places such as schools, religious places, organizations and so on. Social networking sites enhance learning opportunities among the youths.

According to Zwart, Lindsay, Henderson and Philips the benefits of using social networking sites include; creativity among individuals; provision of greater access to information and information sources; it allows individuals to have sense of belonging among other users; reduce barriers to group interaction and communications such as distance and social/economic status; and also increase technological competency levels of frequent users of social media. Adomi and Ejirefe (2012) viewed facebook as what millions of students in different parts of the world use to connect with one another and a forum for self-expression. Rainie, (2011) posited that the use of social networking sites has been repeatedly found to be the highest among the group of young adults. Lenhart, (2009) pointed out that approximately 61% of teens within the age of 12-17 use social networking sites to send messages to friends on regular basis. Kist, (2008) in a study conducted also revealed that approximately half of all teens who have internet access are also members of social networking sites and they use the internet to make plans and socialize with friends. Oskovei (2010) also viewed internet as advantageous to both the students and teachers if used as tool with which knowledge could be created and disseminated. In line with this, the University of New Hampshire (2009) reported that a majority of students use social networking for social connections and entertainment, and also use it for educational purpose.

Meanwhile, Egedegbe (2013) opined that the effect of social networking usage will depend on the type of social networking sites that the student is using. A student using internet for leisure activity that interferes with academic, will experience negative effect of this on academic performance. Adomi and Ejirefe (2012) in their findings on students' experience with facebook reported that despite the positive academic effect of these social networking sites, some students also indicated that there are some negative effects on their academic life. These

negative effects include distraction in classroom 20 (13.2%); lower cumulative grade point average 13 (8.6%); reduction of time spent on reading 10 (6.6%). Ohio state University (2009) also reported that college students who use social networking site especially facebook spent less time studying and recorded lower grade point average than those students who have not signed up for the social networking sites.

The research according to University of Hampshire (2009) showed that 63% of heavy users of social networking sites received high grades compared to 65% of light users. Egedegbe (2013) in his study revealed that 50% of the respondents claimed that social networking sites does not affect their study while the remaining 50% claimed that social networking sites affect their study time.

6. Methodology

The descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. The population was made up of regular National Diploma(ND) and Higher National Diploma(HND) students from the Department of Library and Information Science (LIS), Federal Polytechnic Offa, Kwara State, Nigeria. The study was carried towards the close of 2013/2014 academic session. The only instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire which contained close ended item.

Availability sampling method was used because the questionnaire were given to the students who came to read in the departmental training library and those who came around the department to attend to their projects. 240 copies of questionnaire were distributed to the students. At the end of the administration of the questionnaire, 228 copies of the questionnaire were found to be usable being properly filled by the respondents. This figure represents 95% of the entire number of the instrument. Frequency count and percentages were used to analyse the data collected.

7. Findings and discussions

Table 1: Gender of respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	128	56.1
Female	100	43.9
Total	228	100

The gender of the respondents as presented in table 1 shows that the male students (128 (56.1%)) are more than the female students 100 (43.9%).

A question was asked to find out whether the students have knowledge of social networking sites and also to confirm their level of awareness. Majority of the respondents representing 100% responded affirmatively. It can be deduced that social networking is not a new thing to most students in this era.

Table2: Extent of the usage of social networking sites

Extent of usage	Frequency	Percentage (%)
High	103	45.2
Moderate	52	22.8
Low	73	32
Total	228	100

Table 2 shows that the extent of use of social networking sites by the students is high as was indicated by 103 (45.2%). This is followed by those who indicated low 73 (32%) and moderate 52 (22.8%) respondents. This implies that though all the students have knowledge of social networking sites, a significant percentage of them still claim low extent of usage.

Table 4 reveals that the students have various purposes for using social networking sites. The highest percentage of the students, 214 (93.8%) use social networking sites to connect with friends. This was followed by another significant percentage 173 (75.9%) respondents who use social networking sites for academic and research purposes. 112 (49.1%) respondents claimed to use social networking sites for leisure/entertainment.

Among all other purposes, to search for job has the lowest percentage with 13(5.7%) respondents. The findings showed that many of the students do not only use social networking sites for connecting with friends as in agreement with the findings of Eke, Omekwu and Odor (2014); but also reveals that the students use the social networking sites for academic purposes. This was also discovered through the findings of the study conducted by Adomi and Ejirefe (2012) where it was found out that students use Facebook, a social networking

site for academic reasons.

Table 3: Purposes of using social networking sites

Purposes	Frequency	Percentage (%)
To connect with friend/classmates	214	93.8
To join online study groups	22	9.2
To exchange academic information	55	24.1
To download music and video	57	25.2
To chatt with friends	80	35.1
For academic work and research purposes	173	75.9
To post message to others	50	21.9
For leisure/entertainment	112	49.1
To create/join forum for self-expression	34	14.9
To comment on peoples post and pictures	58	25.4
To search for job	13	5.7
To connect and communicate with my lecturers	21	9.2

Table 4: Categories of social networking sites used by students

Social networking sites	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Facebook	197	86.4
Twitter	92	38.3
My space	31	13.6
Google	87	38.1
You tube	15	6.6
Flickr	23	10.1
Linkerdin	28	12.3
Blog	21	9.2
Whats App	132	57.9
Instagram	39	17.1
You tube	31	13.6
Skype	02	0.9
Blog	70	30.7
2go	85	37.3
Wikipedia	19	8.3

Table 3 shows some of the most common social networking sites used by the students. Majority of the respondents (197) representing 86.4% use Facebook. The next in ranking was WhatsApp with 132 (57.9%) respondents; twitter ranks third with 92 (38.3%) respondents. Skype has the least percentage with 02 (0.9%). The result shows that many of the respondents use more than one social networking site with Facebook having the highest percentage of users.

This finding also supports a report by Arrington (2005) which showed that about 85% of college students in United States had a profile up on facebook. It also agrees with Owusu-Acheaw and Larson (2012) in their study on students of Koforidua Polytechnic Ghana, where the highest percentage 1002 (66.2%) found facebook as their favourite social media sites.

Table 5: Frequency of social networking usage

Frequency of Usage	No	Percentage (%)
Several times in a day	77	33.8
Twice in a day	20	8.8
Once in a day	63	27.6
Once in two days	12	5.3
Once in a week	17	7.4
Occasionally	39	17.1
Occasionally	228	100

Table 5 shows that 77 respondents representing 33.8% claimed to use social networking sites several times in a day. This is followed by another significant percentage, 63 (27.6%) respondents who claimed to use the sites once in a day. This indicates that majority of the students use the social networking sites on daily basis. This is

followed by 29 (17.2%) respondents who indicated that they use social networking sites occasionally. Other respondents 17 (7.4%) use the sites once in a week while 12 (7.4%) use social networking sites once in two days. The data in the table revealed that majority of the students frequently make use of social networking sites.

Table 6: Time spent on social networking sites per visit

Response	No	Percentage (%)
5-10 minutes	31	13.6
15 minutes	34	14.9
30 minutes to 1 hour	112	49.1
More than 1 hour	51	22.4
Total	228	100

Table 6 shows the data on time spent by the students on social networking sites per visit, 112 (49.1%) indicated that they spent thirty minutes to 1 hour. This is followed by 51 (22.4%) who spent more than 1hour. 31 (13.6%) and 34 (14.9%) spent five to ten minutes and fifteen minutes respectively. The findings revealed that majority of the students spent 30 minutes to one hour and above, wherever they log on to their social networking sites. This finding corroborates the study by Owusu-Acheaw and Larson 2015 where 1001 (66.3%) claimed to spend thirty –one hour per visit.

Table 7: Effects of social networking on students

Effects	No	Percentage (%)
It helps to keep in touch with friends/relations	137	60.1
It reduces my level of concentration while studying	71	31.1
Reduces time I spend on reading	84	36.8
I solve most of my school assignment through the use of social networking sites	43	18.3
It increases my academic knowledge through sharing and exchanging of academic information	98	42.9
Distracts my attention in classroom	21	9.2

Table 7 shows the effect of social networking on the respondents. Majority of the respondents, 137 (60.1%) indicated that social networking enables them to keep in touch with friends/relatives. This is followed by 98 (42.9%) who indicated that social networking increase their academic knowledge. Another significant percentage 84(36.8%) indicated that social networking reduces the time they spent on reading. 71(31.1%) indicated that social networking reduce their level of concentration while studying 43 (18.8%) respondents claimed that social networking assist with solving school assignments, and 21 (9.2%) respondents indicated that it distract their attention in the classroom. It can be deduced from the study that social networking has different effects on the students. It assists the highest percentage to maintain social contact, which is the main idea behind most of the social media sites. It also has other effects which could be seen as both positive and negative. The finding corroborates that of Adomi and Ejirefe (2012) study where the highest percentage of respondents indicated that Facebook increases social contact and enriches academic knowledge.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that the Library and Information Science students have knowledge of social networking sites and they make use of social networking sites. Also many of these students use the sites for the purpose of maintaining social contacts with friends/relatives and they also use them for academic purposes. However, it was discovered that many of the students spend lots of time visiting the social networking sites. No wonder, a significant percentage of the students claimed that using social networking sites reduces the time they spend studying, and some are distracted in the classroom.

Based on these findings, the following recommendations were made:

- The students should be disciplined enough, to minimize the time spend on social networking sites.
- Parents can also advice and monitor their young adults to limit the time they spend on social networking. They should rather use those hours to read other academic books that will help to improve their knowledge.
- Most students make use of mobile phones with internet facilities to access social networking sites. Therefore such students should be encouraged to use the same facility to support their research and learning instead of using such to chatt with friends for a long time.
- Lecturers should help the students to make meaningful use of social networking sites by incorporating

them into their lessons. This can be done by introducing the students to the social networking sites that are strictly for academic work and research.

- Both the parents and lecturers should make efforts to encourage the students to spend more time studying their books than on social networking sites.
- Students should be advised on the dangers of getting addicted to social networking.

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