



Use of Social Media by Library and Information Science Students

Lucky O. Akpojotor¹ and Ifeyinwa N. Okonkwo²

¹Collection Development Librarian, Federal University of Petroleum Resources, Effurun, Delta State, Nigeria, akpojotor.lucky@fupre.edu.ng

²Department of Library and Information Science, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. in.okonkwo@unizik.edu.ng

Citation

Akpojotor, L. O. & Okonkwo, I. N. (2024). Use of Social Media by Library and Information Science Students. *International Journal of Knowledge Dissemination*, 5(1), 77-89 <https://doi.org/10.70118/ijkd.02040501.8>

Abstract

This study examined the use of social media by final year Library and Information Science students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Three research questions guided the study. The study employed descriptive survey design using questionnaire to gather information. The sample size is one hundred and sixty-five (165) undergraduate LIS final year students in the Department of Library and Information Science, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka and Delta State University, Abraka. The data collected was analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. The study findings revealed that the most used social media by final year LIS students are Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, YouTube and telegram while zoom, twitter, skype, myspace, blog and LinkedIn are least used. The final year LIS students used social media for different purposes such as; to obtain information for project writing, assignment, to supplement lecture notes, interacting with course mates/friends, socialization/entertainment and interaction with family members. The LIS students encountered various problems with the use of social media which include time management, distraction, addiction, encroachment on academic activities, high cost of internet connectivity and poor social media skills. The study recommended that the challenges of using social media should be tackle, so that students can properly use social media for information access.

Keywords: Social Media, Library and Information Science Students

Introduction

With the advent of ICT (Information communication and technology), social media is gaining momentum day by day and is very popular among the people nowadays. Social media are communication tools that people use on computers and smartphones to connect with one another and to share information (The World Book Encyclopedia, 2018). It is a new type of media that makes use of mobile and web-based technologies to create highly interactive platforms through which individuals and communities share, jointly create, discuss and modify user-generated content. While the rise of social media technologies has created new platforms to seek and share information for millions of users worldwide, it has also presented new challenges for libraries in meeting users where they are within social spaces (Mon, 2015).

The term 'social media' refers to the wide range of internet-based and mobile services that allow users to participate in online exchanges, contribute user-created content, or join online communities. Examples of social media platforms are Facebook, Myspace, Microblogging sites, telegram, WhatsApp, Twitter, blog, Instagram, etc. (Akorhonor & Olise, 2015). Social media technologies as the products and services that enable social interactions in the digital realm and thereby allow people to connect and interact virtually. Social media is a web-based tool that allows users to interact with one another by exchanging information, opinions, knowledge, and interests through online platforms; it influences human interactions in many ways.

Despite the importance of social media usage, most students' constant visits and abusive use of the various social media platforms have attracted public attention to the influence of social media on students' academic performance. Most students these days have engaged themselves in non-academic activities on various social media platforms, leaving their books unattended. This unpleasant development has motivated the researcher to determine whether students use social media platforms for academic purposes, research purposes and update of information as well as knowledge. Do students use the social media for academic purposes rather than other means. Torres-Diaz *et al.* (2016) agreed that using the internet helps students perform better in school. Students who use the internet for instructional purposes, they suggest, are less likely to fail. Additionally, students who engage in active learning through the use of social media resources for course works and research, tend to do better academically (Torres-Diaz *et al.*, 2016).

A study conducted by Mahammed *et al* (2017), also supported that the use of social media influence students' academic achievement. Ajani, Ajani and Akawo (2021) findings revealed that using the internet and internet-based technologies (social media) have an impact on academic performance. In addition, Boateng and Amankwaa (2016) established that social media is widely used by students of higher institution. They further stressed that at least every student make use of one social media since it contributes a significant quota to the development of their academic life. The use of social media by LIS students allows them to interact with their colleagues, friends and families as a result of this, they can socialize and also deploy the various platforms on the social media for educational purposes. To end to this end, this study sought to investigate the use of social media by final year library and information science students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka and Delta State University, Abraka.

Statement of the Problem

The ideal of using social media by students is to easy access to information both relating to their field of study and otherwise. It is also a means of solving their academic challenges that has to do with the web in terms of research, getting updates, project, assignments etc. It has been observed by the researcher that students especially those of the Department of Library and Information Science, 400 level do not make use of the social media maximally currently when writing their seminar and research project. However, some students have been seen in making use of library to look for information among others and may be as a result of students not making use of social media. Social media now makes life easy for students by seeking information. Students also use social media videos in learning classroom and do home works. Therefore, the researchers intend to carry out an empirical study to determine the actual situation and proffer solutions where is possible. This study investigated student's use of social media for effective information retrieval in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka and Delta State University, Abraka.

Research Questions

The following research questions were asked to guide the study.

1. To what extent do final year LIS students use various social media?
2. To what extent do final year LIS students use social media for different purposes?
3. To what extent do final year LIS students encounter various problems in the use of social media?

Literature Review

Concept of Social Media

The proliferation of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has brought about a historic change in the realm of information communication and it forms an increasing significant component in the exchange of ideas, experience and new knowledge among colleagues in the global world. Chiou and Lee (2013) observed that in the present information era, the use of communication networks around the internet has brought about changes in human communication. Howard *et al.* (2017) posited that social media is a key component of how people communicate with one another; and that libraries are places of connection, where people connect with information, technologies, ideas and each other. Gupta and Brooks (2013) defined social media as the devices and platforms that allow users worldwide to practically create and share information with each other. It is also referred to as platforms that provide the virtual spaces which allow users to come together, create and share information.

According to Wikipedia (2016), social media are computer-mediated tools that allow people, companies and other organizations to create, share, or exchange information, career interests, ideas, and pictures / videos in virtual communities and networks. Young Adult Library Services Association (2011) opined that social media refer to a variety of web-based tools used to connect, collaborate, and create web content and experiences. Websites that allow visitors to send email, post comments, build web content or take part in live audio or video chats are all considered to be social media sites". Social media is a new type of media that is shared and participatory in nature, involving others in the information of creation, organization, sharing, finding, discussion, interacting, and use. Since the first

appearance of social media, it has grown rapidly and become part of an important application for people today because it consists of thousands of social media platforms that exist today (Shawarudin & Baba, 2018).

Islam and Habiba (2015) averred that social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Blog and Instagram among others are used to establish relationships, connections and knowledge sharing among user groups in order to provide information services. However, the use of social media tools by Library and Information students is a function of the extent to which they are aware of the relevance of these tools and skills to their professional activities and growth. Koukaras, Tjortjis and Rousidis (2020) identified the following social media types; social networking, blogging, micro-blogging, Wikis, social news, social book-marking, media sharing and answers platforms. Social Networking are web-based services that allow individuals and communities to connect with real world friends and acquaintances online.

Users interact with each other through status updates, comments, media sharing and messages. Examples are Facebook, Myspace, LinkedIn. Blogging are journal-like websites for users to contribute textual and multimedia content, arranged in a reverse chronological order. Blogs are generally maintained by an individual or by a community. Examples Huffington Post, Business Insider, Engadget, WordPress.com, Medium.

Students Use of Social Media

Through social media, students are able to network, share thoughts about their assignments and many other things. It is a platform that is not boundary bound, that is, it is not limited by space. One can connect with a friend who is a long distance away and engage in a real time conversation. Social media has been found to be very useful in exchanging or disseminating information particularly among students. Students can also use social media for writing of project among others. Other uses of social media are: social media can be used for survey purpose for feedback from other users, social media can be used orientation programme of the database, E-Books, Journals etc., users can create book discussions group using social media, social can be used for search of new arrival of Books, E-resources and other materials and instructional videos for new database and its use through social media.

The important advantages of the social media usage by student cannot be overstated. According to Kemp (2015), the following are the advantage of social media usage; It facilitates online interactions and also has the potential to expand such discourses; most of the social media are freely available on internet, library can easily share, connect with other libraries and its members free of cost; social media is easy to find the information and sharing purpose; it is accessible 24X7 on internet because there is no time limit to aces the information; social media are very user friendly and simple to use and it needs no extra training; it facilitates the user to connect with other people worldwide over the internet; create the network globally and built professional link; accessing news in real time; promotion of library services using social media is very easy; it increase the uses of library services & resources and interaction with library patrons; it facilitates to collect feedback suggestion from user and t increased the communication between library and other section

Relevance of Social Media to Undergraduate Education

Social media have changed the people's way of living in various aspects such as communication, knowledge exchange, commerce, and education. With the increasing popularity of various social media sites and other related platforms, scholars and researchers from different fields keep finding them to be an area of study that needs to be explored further. Social media is basically a media which is used through various electronic devices and rechargeable devices like mobile phone, computer, tablets, and so many other ways to facilitate the people while sharing their ideas with others in an easy and systematic way. It is used mostly for communication and awareness around the world (Kaplan, Andreas & Michael, 2010). Social media provides students a new mechanism for a familiar exercise. It provides students a direct medium by which to publicly evaluate and comment on their campus environments, institutional policies, classes, professors, and administration and fellow students in real-time.

Benefits of Social Media Usage

The benefits of social networking in academic settings are compelling. It facilitates peer-to-peer contact and knowledge exchange, which promotes collaborative learning (Adelakun *et al.*, 2022). Platforms like Twitter and discussion forums allow students to engage in asynchronous dialogues, clarifying doubts and collectively improving their comprehension. This active engagement corresponds to constructivist learning theories, which promote deeper knowledge (Al-Rahmi *et al.*, 2021). Furthermore, social media allows students to communicate with educators outside of the classroom. Students can seek quick explanations and engage in significant academic exchanges by participating in interactive sessions, Q&A sessions, and live discussions using platforms such as Instagram Live or Facebook Live. Such connections make learning easier and foster a sense of community (Chugh *et al.*, 2020).

Social media usage offers several significant benefits. Firstly, it promotes engagement and collaboration through online discussion boards, group chats, and collaborative projects, which enable students to communicate outside the classroom, encouraging active participation and information sharing. Secondly, it facilitates resource sharing, making it easier to distribute educational materials, research findings, and timely publications. Platforms like Twitter and LinkedIn allow students to follow industry experts, enhancing access to current information and diverse perspectives (Al-Adwan *et al.*, 2020). Thirdly, social media supports personalized learning by adapting learning experiences to individual interests. Algorithms and user data analysis help distribute information that aligns with students' interests and learning styles, fostering personalized learning pathways. Finally, it enables global connections, allowing students to connect across geographic boundaries and access information quickly.

Frequent Use of Social Media Platform

Students' frequent visits to the various social media platforms can be associated with their degree of addiction to a particular social media site for specific activities. Frequencies of engagement in these platforms may change their behaviour and academic performance, even though some are aware of these harms. However, they find it challenging to stay away because of the addiction. Moses and Aydin (2019) highlighted that most Turkish undergraduate students have a Facebook account, and this network is used for social and

daily activities instead of related educational purposes. Zubairu (2021) revealed that students visit social networking sites daily. He further established that students spend approximately 30 minutes on Facebook throughout the day as part of their daily routine. Singh and Gill (2015) showed that 70.1% of the students spent about one hour daily on social media platforms to access their accounts. The frequent use of social media platforms by university students may be influenced by the degree of availability and accessibility of learning resources that will facilitate their learning activities. These days, students create platforms as avenues for educational exercises and mediums for group discussions, and not only for posting and receiving videos from peers. However, some students spend too much time frequenting these sites at the expense of their studies. Similarly, Alam and Aktar (2021) added that 60% of the students visit social media sites frequently to access their accounts. Hong *et al.* (2014) established that students spent four and a half (4.5) hours daily on Facebook. Fasaie and Adegbilero-Iwari (2016) stated that over two-thirds of the respondents, thus 70.3% used social media daily, 18.1% indicated occasionally, and 0.7 % showed never. Stain-bank and Gurr (2016) concluded that most students, 52.3%, used social media 1 to 4 times daily, whereas 40 % accessed social media five times a day. However, 7% did not answer the question.

Empirical Studies on the Use of Social Media by Students

Scholars all over the world are interested in ascertaining the use of social media by undergraduates. Some researches were carried out on purpose of use of social media by undergraduates. Ezeah, Asogwa and Obiorah (2013) examined the use of social media among the students of three Nigerian Universities. The findings revealed that 131% of the respondents used social media for entertainment, 88% of the respondents used social media for seeking information and 105% of the respondents used social media for academic purposes. Omekwu, Eke and Odoh (2014) explored the use of social media among the students of University of Nigeria. Results showed that (mean=4.56) of the respondents used social media for interaction, (mean = 3.56%) of the respondents used social media for entertainment and (mean= 3.02) of the respondents used social media for academic purposes.

Tayo, Adebola and Yahya (2019) examined social media usage among undergraduates in Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife, Nigeria. The study affirms that most of the undergraduates 706(83%) used social media platforms for socialization purpose, 629(74%) used the social media for information purpose, and 621(73%) of the respondents used social media for academic purpose. Saha and Guha (2019) also conducted a study on social media use of undergraduates in Bangladesh. Findings showed that 227(45.2%) most of the respondents used social media for chatting with others, 165(32.9%) of the respondent used social media for downloading music or video, in addition, 81(16.1%) used social media for educational purposes. Okoh and Akpojotor (2014) conducted a study on use of social media for information sharing among students of Federal University of Petroleum Resources Effurun Delta State, Nigeria. Findings showed that most of the respondents (mean = 3.6) used social media for connecting with loved one's photo sharing (mean = 3.3) and for social interaction (mean =2.9). Lee and Horsley (2017) found in study conducted in United States with a sample of 282(61.4%) undergraduates, that while students are frequent users of social media, they have a limited understanding of the news media and the importance of fact-checking information. Additionally, the study found that 177(38.5%) undergraduates who were more media literate had a better understanding of the accuracy of information on social media.

Banning and Sweetser (2018) examined the media literacy skills of undergraduate students in the United States and their use of social media. The study found that while 112 (56%) undergraduates were proficient in using social media, they lacked critical analysis skills and were more likely to believe and share misinformation. The study recommended that media literacy education be integrated into the curriculum to improve students' critical analysis skills and their ability to evaluate the credibility of information shared on social media.

Methods

A descriptive survey research design was employed for this study. The justification behind this is because it is a research design that helps to describe and collect data from the respondents without the researcher manipulating the data to suit his/her own opinion. The population of this study is two hundred and two (202) comprising of 82 and 90 undergraduate students of the Department of Library and Information Science, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka and Delta State University, Abraka 400 level in the 2023/2024 academic session respectively.

Out of the population of the study students, the researchers made use of one hundred and sixty-five (165) undergraduate students as sample size for the study in Library and Information Science Department, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka and Delta State University, Abraka. Simple random sampling was employed to ensure equal inclusion opportunities for all population participants in the study. The research instrument use for the study was the questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into two (2) sections A and B. Section A consists of student's background information and section B elicits information regarding to the research questions. The instrument was administered to the respondents online by the researchers using Google form. The collected data was analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer research questions.

Results

The Extent Final Year LIS Students Use Various Social Media

Table 1: The extent to which students use various social media

| S/N | Social media | \bar{X} | SD | Remark |
|-----|-------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| 1 | WhatsApp | 4.33 | 2.17 | HE |
| 2 | Instagram | 3.75 | 1.67 | HE |
| 3 | YouTube | 3.68 | 1.23 | HE |
| 4 | Facebook | 3.44 | 1.18 | HE |
| 5 | Telegram | 3.17 | 1.34 | HE |
| 6 | Zoom | 2.71 | 1.34 | HE |
| 7 | Twitter | 2.69 | 1.33 | HE |
| 8 | LinkedIn | 2.41 | 1.29 | LE |
| 9 | Skype | 2.21 | 1.12 | LE |
| 10 | Blog | 1.19 | 0.58 | LE |
| 11 | Myspace | 1.1 | 0.59 | LE |
| | Grand Mean | 2.78 | 1.25 | HE |

Analysis in Table 1 shows the grand mean score of 2.78 indicating that the extent to which final year LIS students use various social media platforms is high. The item by item analysis displayed that the respondents rated item 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 9 as being used by undergraduate students to a high extent. However, the respondents rated item 6, 8, and 10 and 11 as being used by final year LIS students to a low extent.

The Extent Final Year LIS Students Use Social Media for Different Purposes

Table 2: Purpose of Social media Use by students

| S/N | Social media | \bar{X} | SD | Remark |
|-----|---|-----------|------|--------|
| 1 | To obtain information to supplement lecture notes | 4.44 | 2.17 | HE |
| 2 | Socialization/entertainment | 4.42 | 2.12 | HE |
| 3 | To obtain information for my project | 4.31 | 2.11 | HE |
| 4 | To obtain information for assignment | 4.26 | 2.01 | HE |
| 5 | Interaction with my course mates/friends | 4.17 | 2 | HE |
| 6 | Interaction with my family members | 3.48 | 1.23 | HE |
| | Grand Mean | 4.18 | 1.94 | VLE |

The grand mean score of 4.18 in Table 2 revealed that final year LIS students use social media for different purposes to a high extent. The item by item analysis indicates that final year LIS students use social media for the six listed items to a high extent with their mean ranging from 3.48 to 4.44.

The Extent Final Year LIS Students Encounter Various Problems in the Use of Social Media

Table 3: Problems students encounter in the use of social media

| S/N | Social media | \bar{X} | SD | Remark |
|-----|--|-----------|------|--------|
| 1 | Encroachment on my academic schedules/activities | 4.61 | 2.14 | HE |
| 2 | Addiction | 4.49 | 2.11 | HE |
| 3 | Poor social media skills | 4.17 | 2 | HE |
| 4 | Poor internet connectivity | 4.13 | 2.19 | HE |
| 5 | High cost of internet connectivity | 3.92 | 1.54 | HE |
| 6 | Distraction | 3.78 | 1.12 | HE |
| 7 | Time management | 3.56 | 1.08 | HE |
| 8 | Lack of /epileptic electricity supply | 3.43 | 1.14 | HE |
| | Grand Mean | 4.01 | 1.66 | HE |

The grand mean score of 4.01 in Table 3 revealed that final year LIS students to a high extent encounter various problems in the use of social media. The item by item analysis indicates that final year LIS students encounter the eight listed problems to a high extent in their use of social media with their mean rating ranging from 3.43 to 4.61.

Discussion of Findings

The analysis revealed that final year LIS students use various social media but not all. Facebook, WhatsApp, telegram, YouTube, Instagram are most various social media used by final year LIS students in Delta State University, Abraka and Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. However, zoom, twitter, Myspace, skype, blog and LinkedIn are least used. This finding aligns with Saha and Guha (2019) that most of the undergraduates used social media for chatting with others, downloading music or video, in addition for educational purposes. This finding also corroborates with Okoh and Akpojotor (2014) that most of the students used social media for connecting with loved one's photo sharing and also for social interaction. This finding strongly agrees with Omekwu, Eke and Odoh (2014) that students used social media for interaction, entertainment and also for academic purposes.

The analysis showed that LIS final year students use social media for different purposes. These LIS students used social media to obtain information for writing of project, doing assignment, to get information to supplement lecture notes, interact with course mates/friends, for socialization/entertainment and interaction with family members in Delta State University, Abraka and Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka This finding corroborate with Ezeah, Asogwa and Obiorah (2013) that students used social media for entertainment, seeking information and for academic purposes. This finding aligns with Tayo, Adebola and Yahya (2019) that most of the undergraduates used social media platforms for socialization purpose, information purpose, and also for academic purpose

The analysis revealed that final year LIS students encounter various problems in the use of social media in Delta State University, Abraka and Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Such problems final year students encountered include: time management, distraction, lack of /epileptic electricity supply, addiction, encroachment on academic schedules/activities, poor internet connectivity, high cost of internet connectivity and poor social media skills. This finding aligns with Banning and Sweetser (2018) that while undergraduates were proficient in using social media, they lacked critical analysis skills and were more likely to believe and share misinformation. The study recommended, that students' need critical analysis skills and ability to evaluate the credibility of information shared on social media. This finding also corroborates with Lee and Horsley (2017) that while students are frequent users of social media, they have a limited understanding of the news media and the importance of fact-checking information.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made;

1. Further studies should be carried out to solve the problems encountered with the use of social media.
2. Social media literacy programme should be organized for the students.
3. The challenges of using social media should be tackle, so that students can properly use social media.
4. Final year LIS students should use other social media platforms because all media serve their own purposes.

Conclusions

This study investigated the use of social media by final year Library and Information Science students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that final year LIS students used various social media like Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, YouTube and telegram the most while zoom, twitter, skype, Myspace, blog and LinkedIn are least. Also, final year LIS students used social media for different purposes such as; to obtain information for project writing, assignment, to supplement lecture notes, interacting with course mates/friends, socialization/entertainment and interaction with family members. Lastly, Final year LIS students encountered various problems with the use of social media which includes; time management, distraction, lack of epileptic electricity supply, addiction, encroachment on academic schedules/activities, poor internet connectivity, high cost of internet connectivity and poor social media skills.

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