



Utilisation of Social Media for Research Communication by Lecturers in Tertiary Institutions: A Study of Polytechnics in Kwara State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Social media is fast becoming an important tool in the research process. This, thus, justifies why this study investigates the utilisation of social media for research communication by lecturers in polytechnics tertiary institutions in Kwara State, Nigeria. This study adopted the survey design. 291 lecturers of public polytechnics in Kwara State participated in the study. However, only 208, representing 70.72% response rates were found usable. Findings showed that the lecturers communicated their research findings through mainly academic social networks (ResearchGate, Academia and others) (\bar{X} = 2.87) and WhatsApp (\bar{X} = 2.85) to share journal articles (\bar{X} = 3.98) and book chapters (\bar{X} = 3.91) by using PowerPoint presentations (\bar{X} = 2.81) and brief articles (\bar{X} = 2.73). Findings further indicated that the research findings communicated by the Lecturers clarified any uncertainties, stating any limitations/weakness relating to the results and their interpretations (\bar{X} = 2.64) and ensured that the research findings being communicated are relevant, containing the information the recipients needed for understanding the research results (\bar{X} = 2.59). This study concludes that lecturers in public polytechnics tertiary institutions in Kwara State utilised social media for research communication. The study recommends that managements of public polytechnics in Kwara State, Nigeria, should be supporting their lecturers by posting their research outputs on the polytechnics' social media platforms.

Keywords: Social media, research, research communication, lecturers, Tertiary Institutions, Polytechnics, Kwara State, Nigeria.

Introduction

Across the globe, the relevance of tertiary institutions will be shortchanged if there are no lecturers. The lecturers are the engine rooms of every tertiary institution because of their sacred roles of teaching the students and impacting knowledge that will serve as the compass, guiding the students to become productive and responsible as individuals and thorough-bred professionals. The lecturers constitute an integral part of the knowledge discovery and dissemination system. These indispensable demands make research mandatory for lecturers.

Research, be it basic, applied, action or conceptual is a systematic process of investigating identified problems, with the aim of making a sound conclusion informed by relevant and reliable data. Having in mind that research findings must be understood by relevant stakeholders gave birth to research communication. Research communication, according to Carter and Paulus (2022), is the process of interpreting or translating complex research findings into a language, format and context that non-experts can understand. One of the underlying reasons for research communication is that academic research needs to be communicated and applied outside academia (Wolf, Sims & Yang, 2018).

The modern world offers diverse resources that can be leveraged for research communication. This was rightly captured by Tmanova (2024) who opined that in the current digital age, a significant shift has occurred that requires reshaping of scholarly communication. One of the digital tools used for research communication is social media. Social media has manifested itself as a potent force for research communication, reshaping the contours of scholarly publications (Rao, Kumar, Lim & Rao, 2024).

Some researchers have taken the lead in identifying the possibilities of changing the paradigms of research communication by using social media. In the United States and the United Kingdom, for instance, Gholampour et al. (2024) found that posting research findings on X widens the readership of the research. In the context of Nigeria, Ajegbomogun and Oduwole (2018) found that researchers had a strong preference for social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Flickr and ResearchGate for research communication.

The utilisation of social media and networking tools is crucial for researchers and very helpful in the course of conducting scholarly research. Social media is invariably a key tool to accomplishing set scholarly targets (Ajegbomogun & Oduwole, 2018). In finding the utilisation of social media for research communication, literature searches revealed a dearth of studies in this area. Moreso, it was found that the existing studies highly focused on types of social media, advantages and challenges. None of the reviewed studies considered to explore the principles and approaches adopted by researchers for research communication on social media. The points identified served as the basis for this study to investigate the utilisation of social media for research communication by lecturers in polytechnics in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Research has been found to be one of the major pathways to knowledge discovery, problem solving and decision making. These researchers' observations revealed that research have immensely contributed to significant breakthroughs recorded in every facet of humanity. Researchers whose works are contributing to the advancement of humanity recorded such based on their abilities to bring their works to the awareness of stakeholders such as academics, policy and decision makers and other stakeholders.

Notably, the evolution of technologies such as social media and websites has made research communication seamless, thus allowing researchers to report their findings in brief, simplest and easily understandable terms. The world's renowned researchers are fond of communicating their findings through social media. They do this by creating summaries of their findings, infographics, podcasts and PowerPoint slides which are usually shared on their social media handles including Facebook, X, LinkedIn, YouTube and Instagram.

The evolving practices of leveraging social media for research communication prompted these researchers to conduct preliminary findings on Nigerian researchers' engagement in research communication through the social media. These researchers discovered that most Nigerian researchers, notably academics and research officers in various research institutes rarely communicate their research on social media.

Among the reasons found for these discouraging attitudes towards research communication are that research communication is a relatively new discipline (Carter & Paulus, 2022), lack of knowledge of the approaches of research communication, poor awareness of research communication and its principles (Hose, 2023; Svenska, 2024) and low level of ICT skills (Ajegbomogun & Oduwole, 2018). The need to ascertain research communication on social media causes this study to be investigating the utilisation of social media for research communication by lecturers in polytechnics in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study is to examine the utilisation of social media for research communication by lecturers in polytechnics in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Specific objectives are to:

1. Ascertain the social media used for research communication by lecturers in polytechnics in Kwara State, Nigeria,
2. Determine the research outputs communicated on social media by lecturers in polytechnics in Kwara State, Nigeria,
3. Explore the patterns used for research communication on social media by lecturers in polytechnics in Kwara State, Nigeria,

4. Identify the approaches used for research communication on social media by lecturers in polytechnics in Kwara State, Nigeria,
5. Investigate the principles followed in using social media for research communication by lecturers in polytechnics in Kwara State, Nigeria,
6. Examine the advantages of using social media for research communication by lecturers in polytechnics in Kwara State, Nigeria, and;
7. Examine the problems encountered in using social media for research communication by lecturers in polytechnics in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the social media used for research communication by lecturers in polytechnics in Kwara State, Nigeria?
2. What are the research outputs communicated on social media by lecturers in polytechnics in Kwara State, Nigeria?
3. What are the patterns used for research communication on social media by lecturers in polytechnics in Kwara State, Nigeria?
4. What are the approaches used for research communication on social media by lecturers in polytechnics in Kwara State, Nigeria?
5. What are the principles followed in using social media for research communication by lecturers in polytechnics in Kwara State, Nigeria?
6. What are the advantages of using social media for research communication by lecturers in polytechnics in Kwara State, Nigeria?
7. What are the problems encountered in using social media for research communication by lecturers in polytechnics in Kwara State, Nigeria?

Literature Review

Social media, in the context of research communication, refers to the use of social platforms that facilitate turning research findings into simple and clear contents created, shared and disseminated by researchers to their target audiences. Social media encompasses web-based and mobile applications that allow users to create, engage with and share content (e.g., personal photos, videos, writing) and existing media (e.g., news, radio, television) in a multi-way communication environment. Social media has become a vital tool for researchers, providing platforms where researchers can connect with their audience and the broader research community (Rajendrasing, Vinu & Jarad, 2023).

It is important that for research to strengthen policies and practices, a range of audiences need to engage with its findings at local, national and global levels. Social media is valuable to the research communication process by serving as links connecting interdependent networks of researchers, journalists, editors and media on the efficient and effective dissemination of research findings. Promoting such engagement requires effective research communication (Carter & Paulus, 2022).

Recently, researchers have focused on some social media platforms such as Twitter (now known as X), Facebook and blogs (Grossman, Sgarbura, Hallet & Søreide, 2021; Wolf, Sims & Yang, 2018) used for the dissemination of seminar papers, conference proceedings, journal articles, PowerPoint presentations, visual abstracts, books, monographs and book chapters. Focusing on a particular social media, Grossman et al. (2021) appraised Twitter as a reliable social media platform for research communication. Grossman et al. (2021) argued that Twitter is presented with details of opportunities, specific fora for communicating and presenting tips for effective use. Orubebe et al. (2024) found WhatsApp, TikTok and YouTube and LinkedIn as the most frequently utilised platforms for research communication.

The varied and dynamic patterns of sharing contents make social media a robust tool for research communication. According to Tmanova (2024), implementation of the emerging research communication approaches is characterized by the competitive forces between the old systems and the complexities of the evolving digital tools; social media filled this gap better than most other digital tools. Hose (2023) contended that since social media handles could be owned by either individuals or institutions, it becomes very easy for researchers to adopt either authorial, departmental, institutional and hiring external agencies approaches for research communication.

The aforementioned approaches are needed to be briefly explained for the sake of clarity. Authorial approach occurs when the researchers use their personal social media handles for research communication. The departmental approach occurs in a situation where research findings are communicated on social media by the department or section the researcher belongs to within an institution. Furthermore, institution approach happens when an institution, agency or organisation disseminates research findings conducted by their personnel. Consequently, hiring an external agency approach is when either the researcher or other parties interested in the research engaged an agency for the research communication.

Regardless of the approaches adopted on social media for research communication, it is important that research communication principles are duly followed. These principles include correctness, relevance, clarifying uncertainties, clarifying scientific status, making a researcher's perspectives known and transparency (Svenska, 2024). It is by doing this that social media platforms will make researchers create, share and exchange research information, enabling their audience to share their thoughts and opinions (Bakare, 2018) and helping the researchers to enhance their research presence and visibility (Rajendrasing, Vinu & Jarad, 2023).

Utilisation of social media for research communication holds the potential of helping researchers in many ways. The use of social media for research communication by academics can foster collaborative research information sharing, knowledge creation and management (Fasola & Abimbola, 2023). Through social media, researchers can significantly amplify the visibility and citation impact of their work (Gholampour et al., 2024; Lim & Kumar, 2024), potentially bolstering the international recognition of research units (Wiechetek & Pastuszak, 2022). Social media enables researchers to quickly disseminate their most important findings and links to their published work throughout their personal networks (Hose, 2023).

After finding that librarians produced a high level of research outputs but with a low research visibility, Adetayo (2023) suggested the use of social media for enhancing visibility by noting that the use of social media can significantly positively influenced the research output and visibility of librarians. Publicising research outputs on social media can improve researchers' research outputs and visibility. Librarians were also enjoined on the use of ResearchGate, Zotero, ORCID and LinkedIn, as well as greater awareness of social bookmarking tools such as Bibsonomy (Adetayo, 2023). Ezeh et al. (2024) also noted that sharing research findings on social media by listing publications on websites and other platforms such as e-mails, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to communicate their research findings can potentially enhance research visibility.

Social media has had a huge impact on scientific dissemination, journal article discussions, and presentation of conference news. Immediate and real-time presentation of studies, articles, or presentations has flattened hierarchy for participation, debate, and engagement (Grossman et al., 2021). Social media enables researchers to strengthen their positionality, which is their identity in relation to the social and political context of their study (Lopez, Kian, Renee & Sylvia, 2021).

It is also noteworthy that social media allows for wider inclusion in research communication. Social media now makes it easier for young or underrepresented researchers to create a voice for themselves and make their expertise and contributions known. This helps to make them more accessible for opportunities such as invitations for speaking engagements about their domain of research (Grossman et al., 2021). Social media emerges as a powerful conduit for the exchange of information, experiences, and scientific triumphs, reinforcing scientific communication and enabling the global dissemination of research endeavours (Gholampour et al., 2024; Lim & Rasul, 2022; Rao et al., 2024).

Despite the abundant opportunities associated with using social media for research communication, it has been reported in studies that most researchers have not been leveraging social media for research communication because of high cost of Internet access, poor Internet connectivity and lack of media literacy (Orubebe et al., 2024), low level of ICT skills (Ajegbomogun & Oduwole, 2018). Wolf, Sims and Yang (2018) posited that one of the barriers to research communication on social media is the variation of the languages and definitions used in academia and in practice.

Methods

This study adopts survey design which allowed the researchers to gather quantitative data which will be used to report the utilisation of social media for research communication by lecturers in tertiary institutions in Kwara State, Nigeria. The population of this study are 1,165 lecturers of public polytechnics in Kwara State, which are the Federal Polytechnic, Offa and Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin, Nigeria. The Krejcie and Morgan Table was used to arrive at 291 sample size who were randomly selected.

The questionnaire designed with Google Form and titled “*Utilisation of social media for research communication by lecturers in polytechnics in Kwara State, Nigeria*” was used to gather data from the respondents. The questionnaire was arranged into 8 major sections with section 1 focusing on the respondents’ demographic information, while sections 2 – 8 addressed each of the objective accordingly. From the 291 responses expected, only 208, representing 70.72 percent responses were found usable. The data gathered were analysed and presented in frequencies, simple percentages and mean (\bar{X}).

Results

Table 1: Demographic information of respondents

| Options | | F | % |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Institution | Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin | 162 | 77.9 |
| | Federal Polytechnic, Offa | 46 | 22.1 |
| | Total | 208 | 100 |
| Gender | Male | 133 | 63.9 |
| | Female | 75 | 36.1 |
| | Total | 208 | 100 |
| Academic qualification | HND | 23 | 11.4 |
| | BSc/BA/BLIS | 51 | 24.5 |
| | MSc/MA/MLIS | 98 | 47.4 |
| | PhD | 36 | 17.3 |
| | Total | 208 | 100 |
| Work experience | 0-4 years | 60 | 28.8 |
| | 5-9 years | 48 | 23.1 |
| | 10-14 years | 40 | 19.2 |
| | 15-19 years | 42 | 20.2 |
| | 20-24 years | 12 | 5.8 |
| | 25 years and above | 6 | 2.9 |
| Discipline | ICT | 96 | 46.2 |
| | Business, Finance and Management | 54 | 26.0 |
| | Engineering | 6 | 2.9 |
| | Natural/Pure/Applied science | 52 | 25.0 |
| | Total | 208 | 100 |

Table 1 reveals that majority (162 77.9%) of the respondents are from Kwara State Polytechnic, while only 46 (22.1%) are from the Federal Polytechnic, Offa. Moreso, 133

(63.9%) are male, while only 75 (36.1%) are females. With regards to the academic qualification, 78 (47.4%) of respondents are MSc/MA/MLIS holders, followed by BSc/BA/BLIS with 51 (24.5%), PhD has 36 (17.3%), while only 23 (11.4%) are HND holders. Moreso, 60 (28.8%) have 0 – 4 years’ work experience, followed by 5 – 9 years (48 23.1%), 15 – 19 years (42 20.2%), 14 – 19 years (40 19.2%), 20 – 24 years (12 5.8%) and 25 years and above (6 2.9%). Finally, respondents from ICT are higher than other with 96 (46.2%), followed by Business, Finance and Management (54 26.0%), Natural/Pure/Applied sciences (52 25.0%), while only 6 (2.9%) are from Engineering.

Table 2: Social media used for research communication by lecturers in tertiary institutions in Kwara State, Nigeria

| Option | \bar{X} | DR |
|--|-----------|----|
| Academic social networks (ResearchGate, Academia, etc) | 2.87 | A |
| WhatsApp | 2.85 | A |
| Instagram | 2.84 | A |
| LinkedIn | 2.73 | A |
| Facebook | 2.69 | A |
| YouTube | 2.63 | A |
| TikTok | 2.62 | A |
| Twitter (X) | 2.53 | A |
| Flickr | 2.51 | A |
| Pinterest | 2.43 | D |
| Grand mean = 2.67 | | |

Decision Rule: If mean is 1.0 to 1.74 = Strongly Disagree (SD); 1.75 to 2.49 = Disagree (D); 2.50 to 3.24 = Agree (A); 3.25 to 4.0 = Strongly Agree (SA).

Table 2 reveals that the respondents generally agreed to be using social media for research communication with (grand mean = 2.67). Specifically, the respondents agreed to be using academic social networks (ResearchGate, Academia and others) (\bar{X} = 2.87), followed by WhatsApp (\bar{X} = 2.85), Instagram (\bar{X} = 2.84), LinkedIn (\bar{X} = 2.73), and Facebook (\bar{X} = 2.69). However, the respondents disagreed to the use of Pinterest (\bar{X} = 2.43) for research communication.

Table 3: Research outputs communicated on social media by lecturers in tertiary institutions in Kwara State, Nigeria

| Option | \bar{X} | DR |
|--------------------------|-----------|----|
| Journal articles | 3.98 | SA |
| Book chapters | 3.91 | SA |
| Conference proceedings | 3.72 | SA |
| Reviews | 3.62 | SA |
| Monographs | 3.61 | SA |
| Seminar papers | 3.44 | SA |
| Books | 3.34 | SA |
| Theses and dissertations | 3.20 | A |
| Patents | 3.18 | A |
| Policy documents | 3.03 | A |
| Grand mean = 3.53 | | |

Table 3 points out that the respondents generally strongly agreed to be communicating research outputs on social media with (grand mean = 3.53). Specifically, the respondents strongly agreed to communicating journal articles ($\bar{X} = 3.98$), followed by book chapters ($\bar{X} = 3.91$), conference proceedings ($\bar{X} = 3.72$), reviews ($\bar{X} = 3.62$), monographs ($\bar{X} = 3.61$), seminar papers ($\bar{X} = 3.44$) and books ($\bar{X} = 3.34$).

Table 4: Patterns used for research communication on social media by lecturers in tertiary institutions in Kwara State, Nigeria

| Options | \bar{X} | DR |
|--|-----------|----|
| I share PowerPoint presentations on social media | 2.81 | A |
| I share brief articles on social media | 2.73 | A |
| I share research pictures on social media | 2.70 | A |
| I share short research videos on social media | 2.67 | A |
| I share research podcasts on social media | 2.63 | A |
| I share research infographics on social media | 2.63 | A |
| I share visual summaries of key findings of articles on social media | 2.38 | D |
| Grand mean = 2.65 | | |

Researchers' Field Survey, 2024.

Decision Rule: If mean is 1.0 to 1.74 = Strongly Disagree (SD); 1.75 to 2.49 = Disagree (D); 2.50 to 3.24 = Agree (A); 3.25 to 4.0 = Strongly Agree (SA).

Table 4 reveals that the respondents generally agreed to using certain patterns for research communication on social media with (grand mean = 2.65). Specifically, the respondents agreed to be sharing PowerPoint presentations on social media ($\bar{X} = 2.81$), followed by brief articles ($\bar{X} = 2.73$), research pictures ($\bar{X} = 2.70$), short research videos ($\bar{X} = 2.67$), while research podcasts and infographics have ($\bar{X} = 2.63$) respectively. On the other hand, the respondents disagreed ($\bar{X} = 2.38$) to sharing visual summaries of key findings of articles on social media.

Table 5: Approaches used for research communication on social media by lecturers in tertiary institutions in Kwara State, Nigeria

| Statements | \bar{X} | DR |
|--|-----------|----|
| I communicate my research findings on social media myself | 2.58 | A |
| I hire external agencies to communicate my research findings on social media | 2.43 | D |
| My institution communicates my findings on social media | 2.34 | D |
| My department communicates my research findings on social media on my behalf | 2.31 | D |
| Grand mean = 2.42 | | |

Researchers' Field Survey, 2024.

Table 5 shows that the respondents generally disagreed on the approaches used for research communication on social media with (grand mean = 2.42). Specifically, the

respondents agreed on communicating research findings on social media themselves ($\bar{X} = 2.58$). However, the respondents disagreed to hiring external agencies to communicate their research findings on social media ($\bar{X} = 2.43$), communication of research findings by their institutions ($\bar{X} = 2.34$) communication of research findings by their respective departments ($\bar{X} = 2.31$).

Table 6: Principles followed in using social media for research communication by lecturers in tertiary institutions in Kwara State, Nigeria

| Options | \bar{X} | DR |
|---|-----------|----|
| I always ensure that the research findings am communicating clarifies any uncertainties, stating any limitations/weakness relating to the results and their interpretations | 2.64 | A |
| I always ensure that the research findings am communicating is relevant, containing the information the recipients needed for understanding the research results | 2.59 | A |
| I always state my perspectives on the research findings am communicating, revealing whether the findings are in my area of expertise or another person's knowledge | 2.55 | A |
| I always ensure transparency on the research findings am communicating, stating the research funders as well as interested institutions, collaborators or partners | 2.54 | A |
| I always state the scientific status of the research findings am communicating, showing whether the results align with broad consensus or otherwise | 2.52 | A |
| I always ensure that the research findings am communicating is correct, containing relevant facts about both results and the research involved | 2.46 | A |
| Grand mean = 2.51 | | |

Researchers' Field Survey, 2024.

Table 6 indicates that the respondents generally agreed on the principles followed in using social media for research communication with (grand mean = 2.51). Specifically, the respondents agreed that they always ensure that the research findings they are communicating clarify any uncertainties, stating any limitations/weakness relating to the results and their interpretations ($\bar{X} = 2.64$), followed by always ensure that the research findings they are communicating are relevant, containing the information the recipients needed for understanding the research results ($\bar{X} = 2.59$), always state their perspectives on the research findings they are communicating, revealing whether the findings are in their areas of expertise or another person's knowledge ($\bar{X} = 2.55$) and always ensure transparency on the research findings they are communicating, stating the research funders as well as interested institutions, collaborators or partners ($\bar{X} = 2.54$).

Table 7: Advantages of using social media for research communication by lecturers in tertiary institutions in Kwara State, Nigeria

| Options | \bar{X} | DR |
|---|-----------|----|
| Enables me to minimise the hierarchy for participation, debate and engagement in my research findings, leading to wider inclusion | 2.69 | A |
| Enables me to collaborate research information sharing, knowledge creation and management | 2.68 | A |
| Enables me to amplify the visibility and citation impact of my research work | 2.66 | A |
| Enables me to quickly disseminate my research findings | 2.66 | A |
| Enables me to establish my identity in relation to the social and political context of my study | 2.65 | A |
| Enables me to connect and engage with wider audiences | 2.64 | A |
| Enables me to link my personal networks to my other published research works | 2.64 | A |
| Enables me to connect with the broader research community | 2.62 | A |
| Enables me to create platforms for young or underrepresented researchers to create a voice for themselves, making their expertise and contributions known | 2.62 | A |
| Enables me to report my findings in brief, simplest and easily understandable terms | 2.59 | A |
| Enables me to accomplish my set of research/scholarly targets | 2.57 | A |
| Grand mean = 2.64 | | |

Researchers' Field Survey, 2024.

Decision Rule: If mean is 1.0 to 1.74 = Strongly Disagree (SD); 1.75 to 2.49 = Disagree (D); 2.50 to 3.24 = Agree (A); 3.25 to 4.0 = Strongly Agree (SA).

Table 7 reveals that the respondents generally agreed on the advantages of using social media for research communication with (grand mean = 2.64). Specifically, the respondents agreed that communicating research findings on social media minimises the hierarchy for participation, debate and engagements, leading to wider inclusion (\bar{X} = 2.69), followed by enables collaborations of research information sharing, knowledge creation and management (\bar{X} = 2.68), amplify the visibility and citation impact of my research work and quick dissemination of research findings (\bar{X} = 2.66) respectively, leads to connection and engagements with wider audiences and linking personal networks to other published works (\bar{X} = 2.64) respectively.

Table 8: Problems encountered in using social media for research communication by lecturers in tertiary institutions in Kwara State, Nigeria

| Options | \bar{X} | DR |
|--|-----------|----|
| I am not aware research can be communicated with social media | 2.92 | A |
| I am not aware of research communication approaches I can use on social media | 2.76 | A |
| I am not aware of research communication principles supported by social media | 2.69 | A |
| I am not interested in using social media for research communication | 2.47 | D |
| I do not have adequate ICT skills to navigate social media for research communication | 2.37 | D |
| Lack of media literacy makes me avoid using social media for research communication | 2.36 | D |
| Differences in the languages and definitions used in academia and in practice makes me avoid using social media for research communication | 2.33 | D |
| Poor internet connectivity makes me avoid using social media for research communication | 2.30 | D |
| High cost of internet access makes me avoid using social media for research communication | 2.25 | D |
| I feel it is unethical to share my research findings on social media | 2.25 | D |
| Grand mean = 2.47 | | |

Researchers' Field Survey, 2024.

Decision Rule: If mean is 1.0 to 1.74 = Strongly Disagree (SD); 1.75 to 2.49 = Disagree (D); 2.50 to 3.24 = Agree (A); 3.25 to 4.0 = Strongly Agree (SA).

Table 8 points out that the respondents generally disagreed on the problems encountered in using social media for research communication with (grand mean = 2.47). Specifically, the respondents agreed not to be aware that research can be communicated on social media ($\bar{X} = 2.92$), followed not to be aware of research communication approaches they can use on social media ($\bar{X} = 2.76$) and not aware of research communication principles supported by social media ($\bar{X} = 2.69$). On the other hand, the respondents disagreed to not interested in using social media for research communication ($\bar{X} = 2.47$), not having adequate ICT skills to navigate social media for research communication ($\bar{X} = 2.37$) and lack of media literacy makes me avoid using social media for research communication ($\bar{X} = 2.36$).

Discussion of Findings

Social media has become a vital tool for research communication among researchers. Findings of this study showed that the respondents used academic social networks (ResearchGate, Academia and others), WhatsApp, Instagram, LinkedIn, X and Facebook for research communication. The high usage of academic social networks for research communication by the respondents showed an encouraging trend towards the use of ResearchGate and LinkedIn for sharing research outputs as enjoined by Adetayo (2023), Ajegbomogun and Oduwole (2018).

Specifically, the use of WhatsApp, X and Facebook by the respondents aligned with the findings of Orubebe et al. (2024) which reported the frequent use of WhatsApp and LinkedIn for research communication. The findings also corroborate the findings of Ajegbomogun and Oduwole (2018), Gholampour et al. (2024), Grossman et al. (2021), Wolf, Sims and Yang (2018) where they found that researchers were using some social media platforms such as X, Facebook and blogs for research communication. The respondents' disagreement to the use of Pinterest for research communication is worrisome. This is because Pinterest is one of the social media platforms the respondents can be using for posting pictures on their research findings.

Findings further revealed that the respondents communicate journal articles, book chapters, conference proceedings, reviews, monographs, seminar papers and books on social media. These align with the reports of Grossman et al. (2021) Wolf, Sims and Yang (2018) that researchers in the 21st Century tend to be using for the dissemination of seminar papers, conference proceedings, journal articles, PowerPoint presentations, books, monographs and book chapters. Also, the respondents agreed to be sharing PowerPoint presentations, brief articles, research pictures, short research videos, research podcasts and infographics on social media. This corroborates the claims of Grossman et al. (2021) that the using of ResearchGate for sharing PowerPoint presentations and research articles, YouTube and TikTok for short research videos and WhatsApp for infographics and pictures have made research outputs easily communicated to wider audience. However, the respondents' non usage of social media for to sharing visual summaries of key findings of articles negates the findings of Grossman et al. (2021).

On the approaches of communicating research findings on social media, the respondents agreed on communicating research findings on social media themselves, while disagreed to the other options. Hose (2023) asserted that research findings can be communicated on social media in four major ways including authorial, departmental, institutional or hiring external agencies. Thus, what the findings are indicating is that only the authorial approach is being adopted for research communication on social media by the respondents.

It can be assumed that the non-exploration of the other approaches by the respondents can limit their research visibility. Carter and Paulus (2022) opined that social media is valuable to the research communication process by serving as links connecting interdependent networks of researchers, journalists, editors and media on the efficient and effective dissemination of research findings. Studies by Bakare (2018) and Rajendrasing, Vinu and Jarad (2023) have validated this assertion by reporting that the usage of different approaches for research communication on social media allows researchers' audience to share their thoughts and opinions and helps the researchers to enhance their research presence and visibility.

It is interesting to find that the respondents follow all the major research communication principles as stated by Svenska (2024). The respondents tend to ensure that the communicated research findings are correct, relevant, clarify uncertainties and scientific status, making their perspectives known and transparency. Doing this enables the respondents to reshape the contours of scholarly publications (Rao et al., 2024) and accomplish set scholarly targets (Ajegbomogun & Oduwole, 2018).

Affirming aforementioned benefits of research communication on social media are the respondents' agreement that communicating research findings on social media minimises the hierarchy for participation, debate and engagements, leading to wider inclusion, enables collaborations of research information sharing, knowledge creation and management, amplifies the visibility and citation impact of my research work and quick dissemination of research findings, leads to connection and engagements with wider audiences and linking personal networks to other published works.

These findings align with the reports of various studies on the advantages of research communication on social media. Gholampour et al. (2024) found that posting research findings on social media widens the readership of the research. Similarly, Adetayo (2023), Ezeh et al. (2024) also noted that sharing research findings on social media can potentially improve researchers' research outputs and enhance research visibility. The findings also supported the notions of Fasola and Abimbola (2023), Gholampour et al. (2024), Hose, (2023), Lim and Kumar (2024), Wiechetek and Pastuszak (2022) that the use of social media for research communication by academics can foster collaborative research information sharing, knowledge creation and management, amplify citation impact of their work, potentially bolster the international recognition of research units, enables researchers to quickly disseminate their most important findings and links to their published work throughout their personal networks.

Findings finally showed that the respondents are not aware that research can be communicated on social media, not aware of research communication approaches they can use on social media and not aware of research communication principles supported by social media. These align with the aspect of research approaches used by the respondents where they agreed to only communicating their research findings on social media themselves. However, the findings contrast the aspect of research

communication principles where the respondents claimed to be following all the principles when communicating their research on social media. Nevertheless, the findings affirmed the points of Hose (2023), Svenska (2024) that some researchers do not communicate their research findings on social media because of lack of knowledge of the approaches of research communication and poor awareness of research communication and its principles.

However, the respondents' disagreement to the other problems contrasts the points of Ajegbomogun and Oduwole (2018), Orubebe et al. (2024), Wolf, Sims and Yang (2018) that that most researchers have not been leveraging social media for research communication because of problems associated with high cost of Internet access, poor Internet connectivity and lack of media literacy, low level of ICT skills and variation of the languages and definitions used in academia and in practice.

Conclusion

Social media is one of the technological products of the 21st Century reshaping and transforming every human endeavour. With respect to research communication, this study brings into fore that lecturers in public polytechnics in Kwara State, Nigeria used academic social networks (ResearchGate, Academia and others), WhatsApp and LinkedIn for communicating journal articles, book chapters, conference proceedings, reviews, monographs, seminar papers and books. The lecturers shared PowerPoint presentations, brief articles and research pictures on social media themselves. It is important to also state lecturers in public polytechnics in Kwara State followed research communication principles. The use of social media for research communication helps the lecturers in public polytechnics in Kwara State minimises the hierarchy for participation, debate and engagements, leads to wider inclusion in research communication, enables collaborations of research information sharing, knowledge creation and management and facilitates quick dissemination of research findings. However, these advantages are hindered by limited awareness of research communication approaches supported by social media.

Recommendations

Based on findings, this study hereby recommends that:

1. The management of public polytechnics in Kwara State, Nigeria, should be supporting their lecturers by posting their research outputs on the polytechnics' social media platforms. This will add to the credibility of the polytechnics and also create wider visibility for the lecturers.
2. The management of public polytechnics in Kwara State, Nigeria, should train their lecturers on the use of social media for data communication. This will equip the lecturers on the use of data visualisation tools to create visual abstracts/summaries when communicating research findings on social media.

3. The management of public polytechnics in Kwara State, Nigeria, should institutionalise partnerships with funders, collaborators and media houses that can give their research outputs wider visibility. This will contribute to the research credibility of the polytechnics.
4. The departments in public polytechnics in Kwara State, Nigeria, should constitute a committee that will be responsible for communicating lecturers' research on social media. This will enhance the research drive in the department, foster research collaborations and enhance the research contributions of the department to the emerging body of knowledge.

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