

Perception and Uses of Social Networking Sites by Undergraduate Students in Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State, Nigeria

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Abstract - This study investigates the perception and use of social networking sites among undergraduate students in Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State, Nigeria. The main purpose of the study is ascertained the popularly used SNS, the purpose of using the SNSs, the perception of students towards SNSs and identify the impact of the use of SNSs by the undergraduate students. The study adopted descriptive research. The population of the study is 300 registered undergraduate students of Niger Delta University Library. Questionnaire was used to collected data. The result shows that Facebook, Google and WhatsApp are the popularly used social networking sites. Social relation, academic learning activities, sharing of information, etc. are the purpose of using social networking sites. The findings also revealed positive perception towards the use of social networking sites and, positive impact of using social networking sites. Arising from the findings some recommendations were made.

Keywords: Social Media, Social Networking Sites, Social Relation, Facebook, Niger Delta, Nigeria

I. INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of information and communication technologies and the Internet have significantly transformed the means of communication among people globally particularly among students and the younger generation. The mid 1970s witnessed unimaginable development in the number of means students interact with one another, lecturers, library staff, etc. as a result of the advent of social networking sites. Social networking sites (Facebook, Blogs, Twitters, etc.) are important platforms that librarians and library users shared information in Nigeria and other parts of the world. Since the inception of social networking sites, they have been a very good and easy source of communication among lecturers, students, librarians, etc. In affirmation, Singh & Gill (2015) attested that "social networking sites (SNSs) are the virtual space among people who mutually share information and use it as an effective means of communication" (p.20). Singh & Gill further stated that "Social networking sites are the new avatar of communication to mass of people for two-way communication of exchange, interactions and sharing all kinds of information seamlessly" (p.20). Similarly, Boyd & Ellison (2007) described social networking sites as: Web based services that allow individuals to construct at public

or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system (p.211). Al-rahim, Othman & Musa (2014) as cited in Elkased, Wong & Fung (2016) attested that the: New generations of Web 2.0 and Web 3.0 have added more enthusiasm and excitement for people to spend many hours on Internet based applications, especially social networking media such as facebook, LinkedIn, twitter, etc (p. 192). Elkased, Wong & Fung further stated that "a big portion of the social networking media users are youths who are mostly university students (p.192). Similarly, librarians have also adopted social networking sites in the library to enable them to disseminate and share information among the library users. New arrival information, opening hours, expiring of loan notice, available books, current research report are some key information librarians used social networking sites to disseminate to their library users.

Experience shows that some of the social networking sites are more preferable and, are widely used by students and other categories of users for one reason or the other. In spite of the sites widely used, the sites have positive and negative impacts on their respective users. Specifically, experience shows that social networking technologies have a lot of positive impacts on users, such as fast communication, sharing of current research findings, speedy dissemination information, etc. and as well several negative impacts such as devoting more time on social media sites, lack of concentration on academic activities, over-depending on the sites for academic activities, the use of wrong spelling of words, unwarranted relationship, criminal act, fraudulent act, etc.

This has generated different perceptions towards social networking sites among users. To some groups of users, the regular uses of the sites have more positive impact than negative impact while, others are of the opinion that the regular use are of more danger than benefits. These have constituted a problem. The problem is that "What is the perception and impact of the use of social networking sites by undergraduate students?" Therefore this study is

conducted to ascertain the popularly used social networking sites, the purpose of use, perception of users towards the sites and impact of the sites among the undergraduate students in Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. The specific objectives of the study are:
2. To know the popularly used SNS among the students.
3. To determine the purpose of using the SNSs among the students.
4. To establish the perception of the students towards SNSs.
5. To identify the impacts of the use of SNSs by the undergraduate student.

III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the popularly used SNSs among the students?
2. What are purposes of using the SNSs among the students?
3. What is the perception of the students towards SNSs?
4. What is the impact of the use of SNSs by the undergraduate student?

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

Eke, Obiora & Odoh (2014) carried out a study to investigate the use of Social Networking Sites among the Undergraduate Students of University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN). The objectives of the study are to ascertain the various categories of social networking sites used by undergraduates, to examine the extent of usage of social networking sites by undergraduates, to examine their purposes of using social networking sites, to determine the benefits of using social networking sites and to identify the dangers associated with social networking and to proffer strategies to ameliorate such dangers. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design which was employed to derive responses from a sample size of 150 undergraduate students of university of Nigeria Nsukka who were selected via random sampling techniques. Data were collected from this population using questionnaire.

The 150 respondents completed and returned the questionnaire correctly representing 100% response rate. Means (\bar{x}) were used to analyze the six research questions that guided the study. The result of the study reveals that the entire student were using the social networking sites in interaction with friends, connecting to their class mates for online study and for discussing serious national issues and watching movies etc. There are also laudable benefits of using social networking sites and dangers associated with social networking and such dangers can be ameliorated using the strategies available in the work.

Drawn from the findings, it was recommended that university authorities should organize seminars to enlighten

students on the not-so good aspects of social networking sites etc. In addition useful suggestions for further research were equally made (p.1).

Manjunatha, Varalakshmi & Guruprasada (2016) examine the Perception and use of Social Networking Sites (SNSs) by the Postgraduate Students of the University of Mysore. The prime objective of the study is to assess the use of most popular SNSs, purpose of use of SNSs, most employed tool for accessing SNSs, awareness level regarding security concerns and problems faced by the respondents while accessing the SNSs. The questionnaire method was used for data collection. A total of 110 questionnaires distributed to the postgraduate students of 21 departments and 102 filled-in questionnaires were received back with the overall response rate of 92.72%. The findings of the study shows that the majority of respondents 64(62.75%) are Female.

The ‘Google+’, ‘YouTube’ and Facebook are most preferred SNSs by the highest number of respondents representing mean value 3.21, 3.08 and 2.93 respectively. About 69.61% the respondents use the SNS for the purposes of the ‘academic’. 88.24% respondents use Mobile as prime tool for using SNSs. 30 (29.41%) respondents have more than 3 years of experience in using the SNSs and 37(36.27%) spend 1 to 3 hours per day for using SNSs. Friends searching or adding’ is the most useful function of the SNSs.

The highest number of respondents has personal friends on SNSs and permits their friends to view their profile information. 77(75.49%) respondents were engaged in other activities like internet browsing and searching while accessing the SNSs. The majority of respondents secure their accounts by avoiding friend requests from unfamiliar persons. 73(71.57%) respondents accepted that the use of SNSs effectively helping in studies and learning and lack of time is major hurdle for accessing the SNSs (p.131).

Wang (2013) reported that: Facebook use in instruction assists students in achieving better grades, higher engagement, and greater satisfaction with the university learning experience. The used of Facebook as an educational communication and interactions enable faculty member to assume a more active and participatory role in their teaching and learning activities (p. 180).

Similarly, Yang and Brown (2015) also attested that: Facebook is useful in maintaining social connections, leading them to spend more time using the site, which contributed to better social adjustment in college. They engaged in more Facebook interaction with on-campus friends, which in turn facilitated social adjustment in college and satisfaction with college life.

Although undergraduate students are always using social media, it is important that they maintain a healthy balance between how much time they spend using social media, and how much time they spend on their academics (p.45).

V. METHODOLOGY

The study employed descriptive research. The population of the study comprises all the registered undergraduate students of Niger Delta University Library. A questionnaire titled “Use and Impact of Social Networking Sites Questionnaire (UISNSQ)” was used to collect data from the respondents. The population of the study comprised 300 registered library users. The questionnaires were administered personally to the students on their visits to the library. Out of the 300 questionnaires administered to respondents only 276 were returned and used for the study. The data elicited from the respondents were analyzed using arithmetic mean, grand mean 2.50 and standard deviation. Items with mean scores equal or more than 2.50 were regarded as agreed while; the ones less than 2.50 were regard disagreed to the items.

VI. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The data obtained from the respondents is presented in tables for easy understanding and interpretation.

TABLE I DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Gender	No of Respondents	Percent
Male	131	(47.47)
Female	145	(52.53)
Total	276	(100)

Table I showed that male (47.47) and female (52.53) actively participated in the study. This indicated that both sex make use of social media network.

TABLE II THE MOST COMMONLY USED SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES (SNS) BY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN NIGER DELTA UNIVERSITY, WILBERFORCE ISLAND.

SNS	Mean (X)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Facebook	3.09	1.76
Twitter	1.79	1.33
Instagram	1.91	1.38
Google	2.94	1.76
YouTube	2.02	1.48
WhatsApp	3.32	1.82
Blog	1.39	1.17

Sources: Field work 2017

Table II reveals means of 3.09, 2.94 and 3.32 for Facebook, Google and WhatsApp respectively, indicating their agreement with the items as the popularly used social networking sites in Niger Delta University by undergraduate students.

Table III shows the grand means of 2.85 for the undergraduate indicating their agreement with the seven items as purpose of using social networking sites.

TABLE III THE PURPOSE OF USING SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES (SNS) BY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN NIGER DELTA UNIVERSITY, WILBERFORCE ISLAND

Purpose of using SNS	Mean(X)	SD
Social relation	3.06	1.74
Academic learning activities	3.17	1.78
Communication school authority	2.05	1.42
Adjustment of oneself in campus	2.44	1.56
To communicate with family members	3.14	1.77
To share information	3.29	1.81
Grand Total	17.15	4.14
Grand Mean	2.85	1.68

Sources: Field work 2017

TABLE IV THE PERCEPTION TOWARDS THE USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES (SNS) BY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN NIGER DELTA UNIVERSITY, WILBERFORCE ISLAND

Perception towards the use of SNS	Mean(X)	SD
Satisfied social relation	2.89	1.74
Satisfied academic learning activities	3.06	1.69
Satisfied my communication with school authority	2.27	1.50
Satisfied adjustment of oneself in campus	2.42	1.49
Satisfied sharing of information	3.19	1.78
Grand Total	13.83	3.71
Grand Mean	2.76	1.66

Sources: Field work 2017

The table IV shows the grand mean of 2.76 for the undergraduate students, indicating their agreement with the six items as their perception towards social networking sites.

TABLE V THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF USING SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES (SNS) BY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN NIGER DELTA UNIVERSITY, WILBERFORCE ISLAND

Impact of the using SNS	Mean(X)	SD
Spending too much time on SNS	2.5	1.58
Visiting SNS when studying	2.35	1.53
Negative effect on face-to-face communication	2.40	1.54
Lax attitude for using proper spelling and grammar	2.89	1.7
Regular use caused sleeping problem	2.47	1.57
Regular use caused anxiety and depression	2.20	1.48
Grand Total	14.81	4.33
Grand Mean	2.11	1.45

Sources: Field work 2017

Table V above shows the grand mean of 2.11 for the Under graduate students, indicating their disagreement with the six items measuring the impact of social networking sites. H1

states that there is no significant difference between male and female undergraduate students in reading periodicals in Niger Delta University.

VII. TESTING OF HYPOTHESES

The two hypotheses formulated to guide the study were statistically tested with chi-square.

H1.

VIII. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The finding revealed that Facebook (3.09), Google (3.92) and WhatsApp (3.32) are the commonly used social networking sites among the undergraduate students in Niger Delta University. The analysis further shows that Google is the most commonly used social networking site, followed by WhatsApp while, Face book is indicated as the least commonly used social networking site. This could be the fact that Google is the most preferred and commonly used site by academia and researchers in academic institutions. Google site is more on academic activities than other information. That may be the more reason why students concentrate more in the site to search for current research findings and other academic information to support their learning activities in the campus. The indication of Whatsapp and Face book as the most commonly used sites might be as a result of their users' friendly and easy communication capacity. The finding is in agreement with Adithya, Ali, Mahadevamurthy & Hydarali, (2013) when they found out that "Student frequently used general SNSs consisting Facebook, YouTube and Google+ for the purposes of finding the information and interacting with the friends" (p.1).

The study also reveals that social relation; academic learning activities, communication, adjustment of oneself in campus and sharing of information are the purpose of using social networking sites. This could be as a result of technological advancement and the increase used of information and communication devices in academic institutions. The findings are in confirmation with Eke, Obiora & Odoh (2014) that reported that all the "Student were using the social networking sites in interaction with friends, connecting to their class mates for online study and for discussing serious national issues and watching movies etc" (p.2)

Similarly, the findings reveal that the students have positive perception towards the use of social networking sites. The findings are in agreement with Wang (2013) research study that revealed that: Facebook use in instruction assists students in achieving better grades, higher engagement, and greater satisfaction with the university learning experience. The used of Facebook as an educational communication and interactions enable faculty member to assume a more active and participatory role in their teaching and learning activities (p.180).

Finally, the study reveals more positive than negative impact on using social networking sites among the students.

The findings show that the students are disagreement with the items investigated, as being the impact of using social networking sites. This simply implies that the advantages of using social networking sites are far greater than the disadvantages as indicated by the responses of the students. The findings of the study are in corroboration with Eke, Obiora & Odoh (2014) when they stated that "there are also laudable benefits of using social networking sites" (p.2).

IX. CONCLUSION

The present study is carried out know the commonly used social networking sites, purpose of using, perception towards SNSs and the impact of SNSs among undergraduate students in Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State Nigeria. Google +, WhatsApp and Face book are the popularly or commonly used social networking sites in the university. And the social networking sites are use for communicating with family members, social relations, academic activities, sharing of relevant information, etc. The students indicated positive perception towards the use of social networking sites. The students also indicated that the social networking sites have positive impact on their academic activities and social lives. More specifically, the using of the sites does not cause any negative impact on their face-to-face communication, sleeping problem in the classroom, anxiety and depression in the lives.

X. RECOMMENDATION

Arising from the findings of this study the following recommendations were made

1. The increase use of social networking sites will enhance teaching and learning activities among the students and as well within students and lecturers. The increase use can only be facilitated adequate ICT infrastructure in the campus where the students can access Internet services in the classrooms and their hall of residents. Therefore, the university management should take it as priority to provide adequate Internet facilities in the campus.
2. The students to an extent identified the popularly used SNSs, the purpose of using SNSs, the perception towards SNSs and the impact of SNSs among undergraduate students. However, for the purpose of generalization of the findings of study, more and in-depth studies should carry out to cover all the universities in the state.
3. Finally, form the study it is obvious that the uses of mobile devices have improved independent learning activities among the students. To encourage or accomplish the drive of the students, the library management should collaborate with the university management to subscribe to databases that are relevant to the various faculties study areas. Fund for this purpose can be made available through creating special fund for the library development.

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