

## **The use of social networking sites by students of The Polytechnic, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

Social networking sites (SNSs), are vital tools of getting information, and most students are availing themselves of the much opportunities to exploit them for academic output. The study therefore examined the use of social networking sites by students of The Polytechnic Ibadan, Oyo state, Nigeria. Descriptive survey design was adopted and the study population consisted of 2156 students. The stratified random sampling technique was used to select a sample of 255. Questionnaire was the instrument used for the data collection. Data were analysed using simple descriptive statistics of frequency counts, percentages, mean and standard deviation for the five research questions in the study. Respondents indicated that they used social networking sites for personal development (mean = 3.11), group discussion (mean = 3.07), and group presentation (mean = 2.70), and affirmed that social networking sites helped to meet the challenges of academic activities (mean = 3.01). Challenges such as battery life power outages (mean 3.08), accidental loss of data or damage of equipment (mean 3.02), and poor internet connectivity (mean = 2.63), were the major constraints faced in the use of social networking sites for their academic activities. It was concluded in the study that the respondents expressed social networking use helped to meet the challenges of academic output, by assisting in getting solutions to their academic tasks such as classwork/ projects/ group work, and others. The study recommended that students should be encouraged to use social networking sites in ways that could be beneficial to them, specifically for academic tasks.

**Keywords:** Social networking sites, students, use

### **Introduction**

In the 21st century, easy access to information and communication technology has become a major concern worldwide. Modern technology in communication has helped to serve as a means of connecting people and as a medium of interaction in the social world and educational arena. Consequently, higher education has explored the exciting opportunities technologies have brought to institutions, researchers and students. As a result, there has been rapid growth in the availability and uptake of online teaching and learning by many polytechnics, universities, and other institutions of higher learning (Ahmad et al., 2020). Technology has changed the way people interact and has brought about the emergence of an open social platform in the

form of social media. This allows people to connect quickly, making the world a global village. The advent of social networking sites (SNSs) has significantly impacted students' academic and social lives as a means of making connections for various purposes.

Social networking sites as described by Olamoyegun (2021) are interactive forms of media that allow users to interact with and publish to one another, generally by means of internet. Social networking sites are web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semipublic profile within a bounded system, to 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. Social

networking sites are tools that allow users to meet online via the Internet, communicate in social forum like Facebook, Twitter, etc., and other chat sites, where users generally socialise by sharing news, photo or ideas and thoughts, or respond to issues and other contents with other people (Lawal, 2020). Common examples of social networking sites are; Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, Flickr, etc. Social Networking is an interactive media format that allows users to interact with each other as well as send and receive content from and to each other generally by means of the Internet.

Social networking sites are not designed specifically to build and manage learning experiences, but are capable of providing great support to the new social orientation of educational processes because they allow a human connection more personal and motivating than other platforms. Digital natives, that is, students, think, learn and live differently. It is emphasised that students enjoy utilising Internet-based resources in their classrooms and are motivated to learn by using technology. On social networking platforms, students can reflect their relationships with others, and they generate social capital by sharing personal experiences within communities of interest. The affordability of social networking sites gadgets like mobile phones and computers further enable communication among broad circles of contacts, locally and globally, and permit the combination of activities of e-mail, messaging, website creation, diaries, photo albums and music or video uploading and downloading.

With the emergence of numerous Social Networking Sites (SNSs) available today, the socialisation patterns of students as well as academic use are liable to change. As these tools are used to mediate personal interactions and communication, as well as provide students with a powerful space for

socialising, learning, and participating in public life. Thus, the evolution of the internet has changed the entire concept of learning in the society through the use of social networking sites for social academic activities among students. This study therefore investigated the use of social networking sites by students of the polytechnic Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.

### **Statement of the problem**

Social networking sites (SNSs) such as Facebook, Myspace, WhatsApp, blogs, YouTube, and many others have become part of the students' lives, because the tools have helped to build inter connections among them based on related interests, work, interactions, and personal relationships. On the contrary however, observation revealed that majority of the students frequently use social networking sites for social activities and social engagements. As such, neglecting their serious academic output. Some students use SNSs to engage in chatting even during studies, while some go to the extent of abandoning their studies and travel to associate with social-media-friends. In view of this, there is likelihood that students might endanger their educational pursuits due to levity to studies and overuse of social networking sites only for social activities and social engagements.

Also, interactions with some of the students established that they are being faced with various challenges in using social networking sites for serious academic output, and that the prominent challenges include; cost of subscription, network irregularities, and poor searching and retrieval skills on the part of the students. To this end, this work examined the use of social networking sites by students of the polytechnic Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.

### **Literature review**

According to Asogwa, Ojih and Onoja (2015), Social Networking Sites (SNSs) are online community of internet users who want to communicate with other users about areas of mutual interest. Boateng and Amankwaa (2016) described SNSs as the applications that allow users to converse and interact with one another. Again, social networking sites are online space that are used by people to connect, share, communicate, establish or maintain connection with others for various purposes. SNSs are online platforms which enable people to build social networks or relations with other people who share similar personal or career interests, activities, backgrounds or real-life connections. Talaue, Alsaad, AlRushaidan & AlHagail (2018), emphasised that SNSs have become prominent communication tools, particularly in academic community, and many students, researchers, instructors, lecturers and other categories of users in the fields of knowledge are using these tools as teaching and learning aids.

According to Miller and Melton (2015), students use social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter environments more than once every day. Such widespread use of social networking sites has brought to mind the importance of the use of these environments in educational platforms. SNSs may provide contributions to the education environment such as improving communication, providing an opportunity to meet such environments, and eliminating communication problems (Özmen & Atici, 2014).

Eneogu, Ejimonye and Ejimonye (2018), acknowledged that in educational institutions, social networking sites permit researchers to have a positive outcome of their research works, alleviate the problem of information dissemination through the provision of internet services, help to bridge

the distance encountered in reaching one another. Social Networking Sites (SNS) assist in transferring huge information to a group of people at the same time. Therefore, social networking sites play the role of boosting communication among a large number of people at the same time by making reports visible instantly.

Students use social networking sites for various purposes including opinion sharing, information acquisition, entertainment, self-documentation, self-expression and social interactions, among others (Lemay, Bazalais, & Doleck, 2020). Educational use of social networking sites, such as accessing course information, organising group work, receiving feedback and interacting with instructors, have also been noted in the literature (Al-Qaysi, Mohamad-Nordin, & Al-Emran, 2021). Social Networking Sites (SNSs), such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter have become very popular for connecting with one another worldwide (Mark, Rice, Punyanunt-Carter, & Snidman 2023). SNSs help students interact with peers or others, share information, and meet with experts in a particular field to expand their knowledge connections and networks in online environments (Gafarov et al., 2021).

Studies established the relationship between social networking sites utilisation and students' academic output. Junco (2015), investigated the relationship between social networking sites utilisation and students' academic output, and found that freshmen suffered the highest decline in academic output from increased social networking sites use, while seniors were less severely affected. Tafesse (2020), found that increased use of social networking sites is negatively associated with academic output both directly, and indirectly, via decreased students' engagement.

Similarly, Sarwar, Zulfqar, Aziz, & Ejaz (2019), established that social

networking sites use contributes positively to students' academic output both directly, and indirectly, by enabling collaborative learning. Al-Rahmi et al. (2020) found that students' increased perceptions of social presence, interest, perceived enjoyment and perceived usefulness of social networking sites are positively associated with collaborative learning. Findings in the study of Giunchiglia, Zeni, Gobbi, Bignotti, & Bison (2018), indicated that increased social networking sites use during lecture hours and study time is negatively predictive of semester Graded Point Average (GPA) of the students. According to the study conducted by Alkan & Bardakci (2017), the students' use of online social networking sites for learning purposes are gathered under the categories of social interaction, following the shares, interacting with materials, collaboration, doing homework, and getting support.

On the challenges facing social networking sites utilisation by students, extant literature has provided an array of challenges of social media on students' academic output. The results of a study by Owusu-Acheaw and Larson (2015), showed that the use of social media had affected students' academic output as most of the respondents used social networking sites to chat rather than for academic purposes. Lawal (2020), found that even though there is high usage of SNSs by the students, it did not reflect that they are using it for academic pursuit. It was found that frequently spending time using social networking sites affected students' academic output.

### Research questions

The following questions are answered in the study:

1. What is the frequency of use of social networking sites by students

of polytechnic of Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria?

2. What are the purposes of use of social networking sites by students of polytechnics, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria?
3. What are the benefits derived from the use of social networking sites by student of polytechnic of Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria?
4. What are challenges faced in the use of social networking site by students of polytechnic of Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria?

### Methods

The research design employed for this study is the descriptive survey design. The population for this study consist of Higher National Diploma (HND) year 1 and 2 students of the Polytechnic of Ibadan Nigeria, and the Departments considered includes; Biology and Science Laboratory Technology (SLT) Departments with a population of two thousand, five hundred and forty six (2546). The stratified random sampling technique was adopted for the study, and a sampling fraction of 10% was used to select the sample size for each of the chosen departments. This therefore gives a total of 255 respondents. Questionnaire was the only instruments used for the data collection. The questionnaire was tested on social networking sites utilisation and academic output of students. The Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) was used for the analysis. Descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentages were used to analyse the research questions.

### Results and discussions

Descriptive statistics of frequencies and percentages re used for the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Results are presented using pie chart (figure).

Results in fig. 1 shows that most of the respondents 141(60.5%) were between age group 21 – 26 years, while 37(15.9%) were between age group 27 – 31 years. Only 6(2.6%) respondents were between age group 38 – 43 years. This thus means that most of the respondents were in their active

year of education at higher institution level of education having been less than 30 years.

Fig. 2 reveals that most of the respondents 136(58.4%) were female. This is adequate as females are often better respondents in a matter pertaining to Biology and Laboratory Technology.

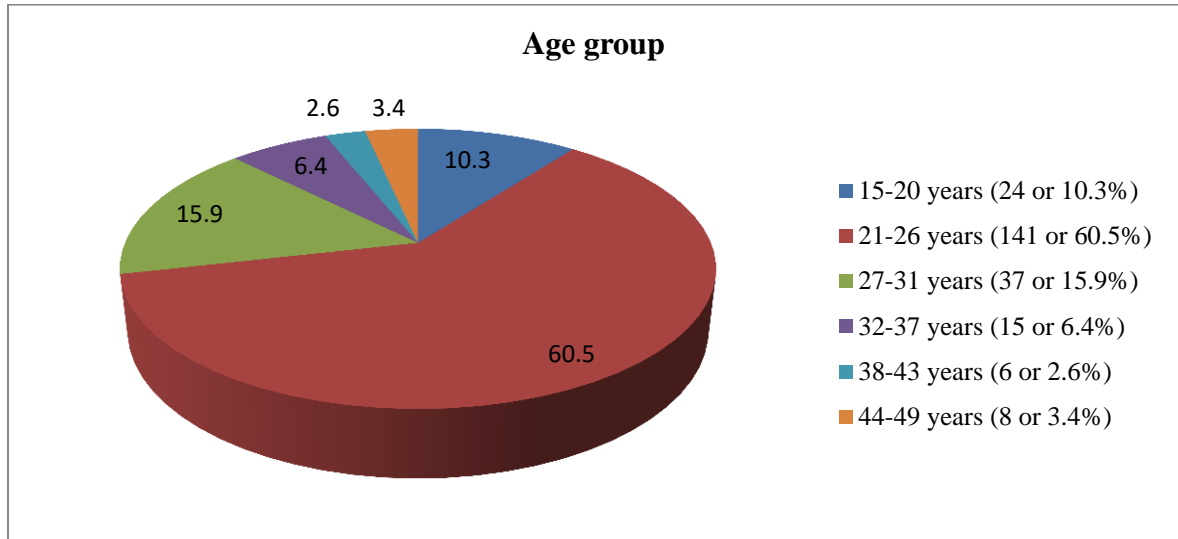


Figure 1: Respondents' age group

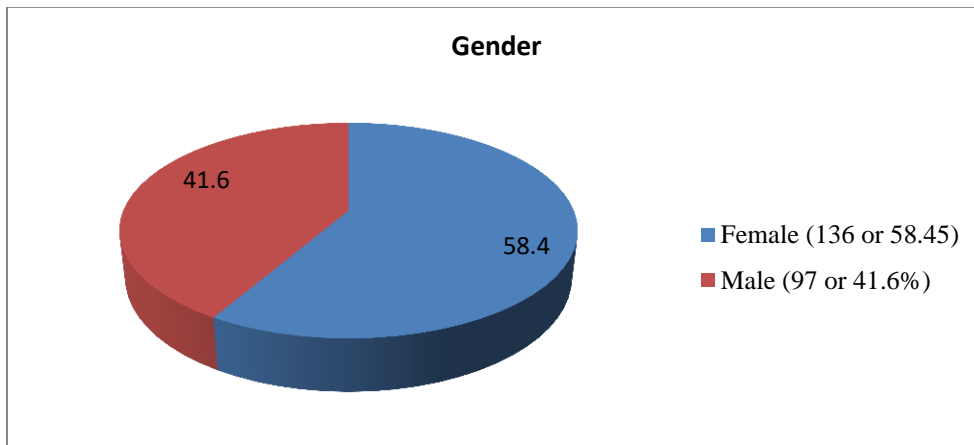


Figure 2: Gender of the respondents

**Research question one:** What is the frequency of use of social networking sites by students of polytechnic of Ibadan, Oyo

State, Nigeria? The data analysed to answer this question are displayed in Table 1.

Respondents' responses on frequency of use of social networking sites was measured using the scale: daily, weekly,

monthly, occasionally, and never (Table 3). Table 1 shows that most of the respondents indicated that they use: WhatsApp daily (mean = 3.47), Facebook (mean = 3.27), and Twitter weekly (mean = 3.41). This translates that WhatsApp and Facebook were used on a daily basis by the respondents, while twitter was used weekly. Corroborating this assertion is the study of Talaue, Alsaad, AlRushaidan & AlHagail (2018), which emphasised that SNSs have

become prominent communication tools, particularly in academic community, and many students, researchers, instructors, lecturers and other categories of users in the fields of knowledge are using these tools as teaching and learning aids frequently. In addition, Miller & Melton (2015), found that students use social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter environments more than once every day.

**Table 1: Frequency of use of social networking sites by the students N = 255**

Social networking sites	Daily		Weekly		Monthly		Occasionally		Never		Mean
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
2Go	30	12.9	26	11.2	33	14.2	117	50.2	27	11.6	2.64
BBM	28	12.0	111	47.6	30	12.9	31	13.3	33	14.2	3.30
Blogs	27	11.6	24	10.3	125	53.6	33	14.2	24	10.3	2.99
Eskimi	10	4.3	26	11.2	21	9.0	61	26.2	115	49.4	1.95
Facebook	110	47.2	26	11.2	27	11.6	42	18.0	28	12.0	3.27
Flicker	28	12.0	39	16.7	12	5.2	116	49.8	38	16.3	2.58
Google AD	25	10.7	20	8.6	112	48.1	42	18.0	34	14.6	2.83
Instagram	43	18.5	28	12.0	26	11.2	114	48.9	22	9.4	2.81
MySpace	31	13.3	18	7.7	23	9.9	42	18.0	119	51.1	2.14
Skype	18	7.7	28	12.0	35	15.0	126	54.1	26	11.2	2.51
Twitter	38	16.3	108	46.4	29	12.4	28	12.0	30	12.9	3.41
WhatsApp	35	15.0	116	49.8	30	12.9	27	11.6	25	10.7	3.47
YouTube	13	5.6	32	13.7	111	47.6	47	20.2	30	12.9	2.79

**Research question two:** What are the purposes of use of social networking sites by students of polytechnics, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria? The data analysed to answer this question are presented in Table 2.

Most of the respondents, as shown in Table 2, used social media for personal development (mean = 3.11), group discussion (mean = 3.07) and group presentation (mean = 2.70). It can be concluded that the respondents used social networking sites majorly for personal development, group discussion as well as group presentation. This agrees with study of Lemay, Bazelais, and Doleck, (2020), that Students use social networking sites for

various purposes including opinion sharing, information acquisition, entertainment, self-documentation, self-expression and social interactions, among others. Similarly, Educational use of social networking sites, such as accessing course information, organising group work, receiving feedback and interacting with instructors, have also been noted in the literature (Al-Qaysi, Mohamad-Nordin, & Al-Emran, 2021). In addition, SNSs help students interact with peers or others, share information, and meet with experts in a particular field to expand their knowledge connections and networks in online environments (Gafarov et al., 2021).

**Table 2: Purposes of use of social networking sites by students**

Purposes of use of social media	SA		A		D		SD		Mean
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Assignment	40	17.2	30	12.9	49	21.0	114	48.9	1.98
Class notes	33	14.2	38	16.3	37	15.9	125	53.6	1.91
Examination purpose	25	10.7	36	15.5	148	63.5	24	10.3	2.27
Group discussion	122	52.4	37	15.9	43	18.5	31	13.3	3.07
Group presentation	33	14.2	127	54.5	43	18.5	30	12.9	2.70
Learning	26	11.2	133	57.1	40	17.2	34	14.6	2.65
Personal development	131	56.2	29	12.4	41	17.6	32	13.7	3.11
Personal research	37	15.9	117	50.2	41	17.6	38	16.3	2.66
Professional growth	30	12.9	106	45.5	60	25.8	37	15.9	2.55
Project preparation	35	15.0	39	16.7	121	51.9	38	16.3	2.30
Reading	44	18.9	27	11.6	23	9.9	139	59.7	1.90

**N = 255**

**Research question three:** What are the benefits derived from the use of social networking sites by student of polytechnic of Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria? The data analysed to answer this question are depicted in Table 3.

As indicated in Table 3, a majority of the respondents expressed the benefits social media had on their academic output. That social networking sites enhanced sending of instant messages (mean = 3.03). They affirmed further that social networking sites helped to meet the challenges of academic activities (mean = 3.01). In the same way, respondents indicated that social networking sites assisted in getting solutions to classwork/ projects/ group work (mean = 3.01). This Corroborates with the findings of Sarwar, Zulfqar, Aziz, & Ejaz (2019), which established that social networking sites use contributes positively to students' academic output both directly, and indirectly, by enabling collaborative learning. Similarly, Al-Rahmi et al. (2020), found that students' increased perceptions of social presence, interest, perceived enjoyment and perceived usefulness of social networking sites are

positively associated with collaborative learning.

**Research question four:** What are challenges faced in the use of social networking site by students of polytechnic of Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria? The data analysed to answer this question are displayed in Table 4.

Most of the respondents indicated battery life power outages (mean = 3.08), accidental loss of data or damage of equipment (mean = 3.02), and poor internet connectivity (mean = 2.63), were the major challenges to the optimal use of social networking sites for their academic output (Table 4). The results agree with the study of Owusu-Acheaw and Larson (2015), which showed that the use of social networking sites had affected students' academic output as most of the respondents used social media sites to chat rather than for academic purposes. In addition, Lawal (2020), found that even though there is high usage of SNSs by the students, it did not reflect that they are using it for academic pursuit.

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**Table 3: Benefits of use of social networking sites by students**

Influences of use of social networking sites	SA		A		D		SD		Mean
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Assist me to collaborate and share personal information with my colleagues	109	46.8	26	11.2	58	24.9	40	17.2	2.88
Surfing for useful information	33	14.2	129	55.4	40	17.2	31	13.3	2.70
Help to get solutions to classwork/ projects/ group work	122	52.4	29	12.4	44	18.9	38	16.3	3.01
Sending instant messages	125	53.6	26	11.2	45	19.3	37	15.9	3.03
As a communication network with colleagues	33	14.2	133	57.1	34	14.6	33	14.2	2.71
Help develop my study skills	37	15.9	30	12.9	132	56.7	34	14.6	2.30
Help reduce the stress through which information is sourced and retrieved	116	49.8	35	15.0	38	16.3	44	18.9	2.96
Help me to exploit online resources effectively and efficiently for my academic activities	123	52.8	28	12.0	41	17.6	41	17.6	3.00
Make me independent user and learner	31	13.3	128	54.9	37	15.9	37	15.9	2.66
Social media have changed the way I interact, communicate, share and acquire knowledge	103	44.2	49	21.0	45	19.3	36	15.5	2.94
Social media help to meet the challenges of academic activities	125	53.6	22	9.4	50	21.5	36	15.5	3.01

N = 255

**Table 4: Challenges of use of social networking sites by students**

Challenges	SA		A		D		SD		Mean
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Accidental loss of data or damage of equipment	125	53.6	27	11.6	41	17.6	40	17.2	3.02
Battery life power outages	36	15.5	120	51.5	41	17.6	33	14.2	3.08
Devices too delicate	19	8.2	25	10.7	144	61.8	45	19.3	2.08
High cost of subscription	42	18.0	33	14.2	120	51.5	38	16.3	2.34
Inadequate knowledge to use social media	38	16.3	42	18.0	125	53.6	28	12.0	2.39
Lack of adequate search skills	25	10.7	34	14.6	124	53.2	50	21.5	2.15
Lack of fund to purchase the devices for social media	33	14.2	122	52.4	36	15.5	42	18.0	2.63
Low bandwidth	33	14.2	115	49.4	38	16.3	47	20.2	2.58
Poor internet connectivity	26	11.2	125	53.6	51	21.9	31	13.3	2.63
Poor vision	52	22.3	30	12.9	30	12.9	121	51.9	2.06

N = 255



## Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that greater number of the respondents have the knowledge of social networking sites and used them for various academic output. The observations drawn from empirical data revealed that the respondents expressed social networking benefitted them. Social networking sites enhanced sending of instant messages, helped to meet the challenges of academic output, by assisting in getting solutions to their academic output such as classwork/ projects/ group work. On the contrary, most of the respondents indicated battery life power outages, accidental loss of data or damage of equipment, and poor internet connectivity, were the major challenges encountered to the optimal use of social networking sites for their academic output. It is important to also conclude that the use of social networking sites is, and will continue to remain relevant and directly influence students' academic output. Again, there is significant relationship between social networking sites use and academic output of students.

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Lecturers should encourage students to make use of social networking sites in ways that could be beneficial to them especially academic purposes such as learning, online discussion, seeking academic help from academic faculty, downloading materials for reading and research purpose, and for solving academic related problems
2. Social networking sites should be made prominent communication tools in the academic communities, so that students, researchers, instructors, lecturers and other categories of users in the fields of knowledge will be making use of the tools as frequent as possible.
3. Lecturers should adopt the strategy of online learning by channeling assignments or academic discussions on social networking platforms to help make students invest their time wisely by concentrating more on their studies as well as inculcate the habit of using these media platforms for beneficial engagement.
4. Polytechnic managements are encouraged to ensure regular supply of power, increase the Internet bandwidth, and make adequate provisions for internet connectivity to alleviate all the challenges to the optimal use of social networking sites for students; academic activities.

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