



## **AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE MOST PREFERRED SOCIAL NETWORKING SITE AMONG LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH-SOUTH NIGERIA**

By

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### **Abstract**

The study looked at the social networking sites that library and information science students most like to use to generate content. To eliminate confusion, ten social networking sites were investigated. The researcher's self-created "The Most Preferred Social Networking Site Questionnaire" (MPSNSQ) was used to gather data for the descriptive survey design. To direct the investigation, research questions and hypotheses were developed. A total of 2764 library and information science students from south-south Nigerian institutions made up the population. Since the complete population was chosen for the study, no samples were taken. The questionnaire was analyzed using mean scores, and the hypothesis was tested using a t-test. According to the report, library and information science students chose WhatsApp over Tiktok as their go-to social networking site for information creation. Among the suggestions offered was that the respondents refrain from abusing social media by utilizing it for malicious purposes such as fraud, cyberbullying, and cheating.

### **Keywords:**

**Networking Site, Library and Information Science, Students.**



## Introduction

The terms "social" and "media" are combined to form "social media." Social implies gregariousness. It denotes something connected in certain cases and something trusted by society in others. From a biological standpoint, it refers to coexisting and growing in groups. Etymologically speaking, the word "media" comes from a Latin word that denotes a publishing and broadcasting organization. Hence, social media may be defined as an institution for publishing and broadcasting in society, a juxtaposition of these two terms (Obaro, 2013; Obaro, 2023). According to this perspective, social media serves as a platform that connects individuals and enables them to produce and exchange content with one another. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) and Obaro (2013), social media is a collection of web-based applications that enable the production and sharing of user-generated content and expand upon the conceptual framework and technological underpinnings of web 2.0.

Social networking has been really beneficial, particularly in this IT-heavy season. Through it, people, groups, and even students may build profiles, share information, and exchange ideas on a range of topics, including education. In reality, according to Oriafor (2019), it's a useful platform for electronic interaction and communication. It is also a tool for creating and disseminating information, which promotes creativity in pupils and aids in lowering social and status-based obstacles to group engagement and communication. Social media, or social networking sites, are the means by which all of these goals might be accomplished. Put another way, social media is a social tool for communication that incorporates social networking sites.

Social networking is a platform that connects individuals who have similar backgrounds, interests, hobbies, or even real-life relationships to establish social networks, or what might be called social kinfolk. Obaro and Ekeno (2023) pointed out in their writing about the advantages of social networking sites for knowledge generation that these sites are beneficial for academic objectives as well as other interpersonal ties. According to Oriafor (2019) and Egbule and Egbule (2008), accessing these websites can be used as an extracurricular activity and can lessen depression and social isolation. According to Umukoro (2019), although being addicted, it broadens one's horizons, improves peer connections, and fosters the interchange of ideas. It is a theoretical concept that is helpful in understanding how groups and organizations interact. On the social media platform Tik-tok, users can exchange interesting information in the form of dances and other data. Students studying library and information science, as well as younger generations, are drawn to these shared forms of theater and music.

In a same vein, the WhatsApp app facilitates messages and phone calls from any location. End-to-end encryption protects private communications, including audio and video conversations. Students studying library and information science are drawn to this application because it promotes privacy, which they also utilize to offer goods and services and engage in internet marketing. They carry out this on their status. Created in 2004, Facebook is owned by a California-based American technological company and is highly popular among the general public. Because of its high level of public trust and exposure, it is accepted by young people and college students who can work together intellectually with their peers and instructors. This media can be accessed from anywhere, but the account can be hacked (Obaro, 2017)

In this day of technology, Instagram has aided young people, including college students, in finding new methods to communicate with friends and family through the sharing, editing, and publishing of visual images with filters. Furthermore, youths, including library and information science undergraduates, have access to YouTube, another globally accessible social networking site

that was launched in February 2005. YouTube is a product of Google, which has its headquarters in California.

Concurrently, Twitter is another American product that was established in San Francisco, California, in 2006. As a microblogging social network, this platform is well-liked among students as it allows users to share brief postings in the form of text, videos, photographs, and other media. These entries are commonly referred to as tweets.

Nigerian undergraduates, particularly those studying information science and libraries, are huge users of LinkedIn. Due of the high rate of unemployment in the nation, the majority of undergraduates begin to subscribe to this application, particularly when they approach their 300 level. The explanations make sense. LinkedIn updates professional reputations, highlights job searches done online, and displays resumes. Although LinkedIn is generally free, there is a paid version called LinkedIn Premium Offers that includes extra services including online classes and seminars.

In spite of this, library and information science students use Telegram, a cloud-based, the fastest messaging social networking platform, to host online communities and coordinate academic tasks with up to 200,000 users in a group chat. This gives Telegram an advantage over other platforms. SnapChat enables young people and college students to have fun, which is a trait of teenagers. They accomplish this by utilizing this medium to share various occasions with friends and family. SNAP Inc. produced this application. All things considered, We Chat allows undergraduates to communicate by text, audio, video, and group calls. In fact, as the name implies, it helps in group conversation. This study was done since it will be fascinating to investigate them.

### **Statement of Problem**

Referred to as social networking sites, social media is an amalgam of several online platforms and technologies (Umukoro, 2019). Social networking sites and other platforms have developed into important places where individuals go to express and share their thoughts and experiences with others. Because it functions as a website where one can create an online profile, describe his interests, and add connections to them, it has evolved into a social tool for communication. Choi and Kang (2014) divided these social media platforms into two groups. They stated in one group that they are utilized for social networking, and in the other, for educational purposes. In addition, Lewis (2009) stated that the encyclopedia lists more than 150 social networking sites, adding that the list of these sites is actually infinite. These assertions were corroborated by Obaro (2023), who stated that new networking sites are created as knowledge grows and more discoveries are made throughout time, particularly with the introduction of ICT. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate various social networking sites and determine which one is most popular for information generating among library and information science students at universities in the geopolitical zone of southern Nigeria.

### **Purpose of Study**

This study is aimed at

1. Highlighting the types of social networking sites used by library and information science students for information generation
2. Examining the uses of the social networking sites by library and information science students for information generation.
3. Investigate on the most preferred social networking sites used by students of library and information science students for information generation.

## Research Question

The following research questions were used for the study.

1. What are the types of social networking sites used by library and information science students for information generation
2. What are the uses of the social networking sites by library and information science students for information generation?
3. What are the most preferred social networking sites used by library and information science students for information generation.

## Hypothesis

There is no significant difference between the types of social networking sites used by the male and female library and information science students for information generation.

## Methodology

The survey research design is employed in this study. This is appropriate because the questionnaire is the instrument used for the collection of data. The population of the study consists of 2764 respondents of library and information science students in the universities in south-south geo political zone of Nigeria offering library and information science as a course of study in the 2023/2024 session.

The south-south geo political zone of Nigeria is made up of six states namely Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo and Rivers State. And the universities therein offering library and information science are: University of Uyo (Uniuoy) Akwa-Ibom State, Niger Delta University (NDU) Bayelsa State, University of Calabar (Unical) Cross River State, Delta State University (Delsu) Delta State, University of Benin (UniBen) Edo state, Ambrose Ali University (AAU), Ekpoma Edo State and Ignatius Ajuru University (IAU) Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Out of these seven universities, three are federal universities – University of Benin Edo state, University of Uyo, Akwa-Ibom State and University of Calabar Cross River State. The other four are state universities meaning, they are owned by the individual state government and not the federal government.

## Population of the study

S/N	Name of University	100	200	300	400	Total
1	DELSU	132	120	140	110	502
2	UNIBEN	90	135	150	120	495
3	UNIUYO	80	90	120	75	365
4	UNICAL	75	98	110	122	405
5	IAU	75	88	110	76	349
6	NDU	80	95	85	90	350
7	AAU	78	74	86	60	298
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>610</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>801</b>	<b>653</b>	<b>2764</b>

There are 1078 men (39%), and 1686 women (61%) in the total population. Since the population is just sufficient, the census technique was used to count everyone, and no sample was taken. The respondents were questioned using a self-created survey called the "Most Preferred Social Networking Site Questionnaire" (MPSNSQ). There were two sections: A and B. The respondent's

personal characteristics were listed in Section "A," whereas Section "B" was created to collect information on the respondent's opinions about the study's topics. Just 10 social networking sites were examined, which was necessary to prevent ambiguity in the study and since the researcher's pilot study indicated that these sites were the most frequently utilized by students. Three specialists from Delsu Abraka—two from the department of library and information science and one from measurement and evaluation—face verified the "MPSNSQ." The final version of the instrument was created using their feedback, recommendations, and corrections. It was then given to 20 final-year LIS students from Abia State University UturuOkigwe, Abia State, Nigeria, who shared the same traits as the study participants. Using the Cronbach's Alpha method, reliability indices with an internal consistency of 0.89 were obtained. The 58 class coordinators, representing the various levels and institutions, were used to deliver the research instrument to the respondents. The coordinators were male and female. As research assistants, they received training. Every questionnaire was collected. Because the study assistants knew the respondents, who are their classmates or coworkers, a 100% retrieval was made feasible. The questionnaire was analyzed using the mean, and the hypothesis was analyzed using the t-test.

## Results

### Research Question One

What are the types of social networking sites used by library and information science students for information generation?

Item Status	Used	Not Used
Facebobook	2764	-
Youtube	2764	-
Twitter	2764	-
Linkedin	2764	-
Whatsapp	2764	-
Instagram	2764	-
Telegram	2764	-
Snapchat	2764	-
We chat	2764	-
Tiktok	2764	-

The data collected for the study showed the ten studied social networking sites are used by library and information science students of the universities in south-south Nigeria.

### Research Question Two

What are the uses of the social networking sites by library and information science students for information generation?

#### Usage of Social Networking Sites

S/N	Item Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
1	You have heard of social networking sites	2764	-	-	-	4.00
2	You have used the social networking sites	2764	-	-	-	4.00
3	You use them for inter personal relationships	2000	223	250	291	3.42
4	Also for academic purpose	2200	300	164	100	3.66
5	Generally for information generation	2764	-	-	-	4.00

6	You have positive attitude toward them	2225	200	183	156	3.62
7	You have negative attitude toward them	100	100	100	2464	1.22
8	You see their uses as addictive	2432	239	93	-	3.84
9	They also serve as extra curricular activities	2432	239	93	-	3.84
10	They help reduce social isolation/depression	2764	-	-	-	4.00
11	They broaden your horizon	2500	144	120	-	3.86
12	They help in enhancing peer interaction	2100	432	135	97	3.64
13	They are helpful in exchange of ideas.	2223	541	-	-	3.80

The study's results also showed that, among other things, these apps and social networking sites assist the respondents in gathering information for academic reasons. Despite being addictive, they aid in lowering sadness and social isolation, expanding their horizons, facilitating idea sharing, improving peer engagement, extracurricular activities, and interpersonal connections.

### Research Question Three

What are the most preferred social networking sites used by library and information science students for information generation.

### Preference of Usage

Item Status	Highly preferred	Moderately Preferred	Lowly Preferred	Not Preferred	N	Ranking
Facebook	2430	250	58	36	3.83	3
Youtube	1988	200	300	276	3.41	7
Twitter	2026	214	302	222	3.46	6
Linkedin	953	620	920	271	2.81	8
Whatsapp	2764	-	-	-	4.00	1
Instagram	2126	250	265	123	3.58	5
Telegram	2353	220	120	71	3.76	4
Snapchat	512	700	999	553	2.42	9
We chat	422	532	890	920	2.16	10
Tiktok	2523	120	89	32	3.86	2

The data collected showed the whatsapp as the most preferred social networking site, followed by tiktok and the lowliest preferred among all the studied social networking site is the we chat.

### Hypothesis

There is no significant difference between the type of social networking sites used by the male and female library and information science students for information generation.



### Mean analysis of male and female library and information science students on social networking sites preference.

Gender	N	Calculated mean	Bench mark mean	Evaluation
Male	1078	89.4	50	High
Female	1686	91.4	50	High

Male and female library and information science students have mean scores of 89.4 and 91.4, respectively, according to the analysis table. These means exceed the 50-point mean bench mark. This suggests that the social networking sites that male and female library and information science students use to generate information are much the same.

### Discussions

According to the research, 1078 respondents, or 39% of the total population, were male, and 1686 respondents, or 61% of the total, were female. This suggests that a higher proportion of female students than male students took part in the study.

In a similar vein, 10 social media platforms - Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Whatsapp, Snapchat, WeChat, Telegram, and WhatsApp, were examined. According to the data acquired, students utilized each of these 10 networking sites for a distinct purpose while generating information. Paxson (2010) provided support for this viewpoint when he stated that people utilize these media networks because they offer a unique combination of mass communication and interpersonal skills, emphasizing mobility and interaction.

The information gathered also demonstrated how well-versed in social media and social media networking sites university students studying library and information science in south-south Nigeria are. Obaro (2021) referred to these networking sites as applications in her writing, stating that although using them can be addictive, most young people refer to them as "Apps." Students have found these sites particularly useful for fostering interpersonal relationships, generating information, interacting with others, and exchanging ideas. Additionally, they benefit from extracurricular activities that extend their horizons, improve peer relationships, and lessen sadness and social isolation. These opinions are supported by Kirschner and Karpinski (2010), who claimed that social networking sites' explosive popularity and rapid growth are due to their heavy use by higher education institutions and schools, which has aided students in creating and participating in learning communities by sharing their experiences.

Similar to this, the study's analysis of 10 social networking sites showed that, among them, WhatsApp was the most popular and often used, followed by Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, SnapChat, and TikTok. Oladipo (2024), who conducted research on the top 23 social networking sites for 2024, holds opinions that are in opposition to this. According to the study, Facebook ranked first with 3.05 billion users, followed by WhatsApp with 2.78 billion, Instagram with 2.04 billion, LinkedIn with 424 million, TikTok with 1.22 billion, Twitter with 550 million, SnapChat with 750 million, YouTube with 2.49 million, Telegram with 800 million, and We Chat with 1.32 million users.

This makes sense because WhatsApp is the most widely used website and is simple to download on all Android and smartphone models. Nearly everyone uses it since it is so simple to use (Oriafor 2019). According to Obaro (2023), the majority of students in this ICT era are engaged in online marketing, advertising, and tiktok use, which may be the reason why they are favored. In a similar vein, they support students in producing and disseminating films and stories on a range of subjects and outcomes. In a similar vein, the survey found no discernible differences between male and female students' usage and preferences of the social media networking site. This is supported by Oriafor (2019) and Umukoro (2019), who noted that both men and women use social media and are interested in information technology.

## **Conclusion**

The study's findings indicate that although library and information science students are aware of and utilize social networking sites, their top choices are tiktok and whatsapp due to their accessibility, popularity, and ease of use. Particularly in this day of ICT, students utilize them for academics, business, and all forms of information creation.

## **Recommendations**

From the study it is therefore recommended.

1. Social networking platforms are useful for generating information, but people shouldn't misuse them by exploiting them for unethical activities like fraud, cyberbullying, and cheating.
2. More social networking sites should be studied.
3. The universities can consider having their own networking sites.



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