



Sources of Awareness, Motivations and Usage Pattern of Social Network Sites among OTM Students: Case Study, Federal Polytechnic, Ede

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Abstract:- This study investigated the sources of awareness, motivations and usage pattern of social network sites among polytechnic students. The study was predicated on the observation that many students and young people are seen always on one social media or the other, without information on how they become aware, what gratifications they derived and frequency of usage of the social media platforms. Survey method was used. Sample was drawn from students of the Department of Office Technology and Management, Federal Polytechnic Ede, Osun State. Five research questions were raised and self developed questionnaire distributed to 400 respondents. Frequency and percentage methods were adopted in analyzing the data. The study revealed that respondents are aware of the different types of social media and engage in navigating the platforms for various reasons. The respondents were not specifically trained in the use of social media but got skilled through various means. Gratifications for using the media vary as each respondent spends much time on the media for socialization rather than for education, research and development. It was recommended that students need to be monitored on the use of the platform and educators should adopt social network sites usage more in their teaching, learning and research purposes.

Keywords: motivation, usage, OTM, Polytechnics, Social network sites

Introduction

Generations today are experiencing a new wave of interpersonal communication. The rise of online communication through social network sites, has shifted away from face-to-face models of interaction, to a more digital approach. The online technology and its seemingly unending innovations now mediate on how communication occurs between people and has showed that online interaction by people is significantly different from physical interaction in numerous ways.

Social Network Sites allow for wide range of communication, information gathering, sharing and entertainment. One can view people, places, events from different parts of the world and initiate, establish and maintain interpersonal communication and relationships. For a growing number of internet users, maintaining a profile on a social network site is part of everyday life. Jehovah Witness (2011) noted that social networking has become hugely popular and Chi (2013) remarks that social media has evolved to be a vital integration into the lives of the present generation of people is no exaggeration.

Social networking sites provide various interactive and inexpensive platforms. There are sites for sports, politics, business, academic, religion, and romance and so on. SNSs afford larger number of people connected and be related through sharing pictures or bookmarks, comments, and other services in the ways previously impossible. Onomo (2013) believes that, with over 200 social network sites on the internet the sites have become a worldwide tool for communication and exchange of ideas, helping individuals, private, public, social and business organizations and entrepreneur with just reasons to reach a phenomenally vast audience that could hitherto not be reached by traditional media at cheaper cost and with high level of speed.

Office Technology and Management (OTM) as an academic programme designed for National Diploma (ND) and Higher National Diploma (HND) levels in Nigerian Polytechnics. The objective of the course is to make the graduates fit properly into the office of any organization, and perform professionally the functions of the modern secretary. OTM students are expected to acquire an in-depth knowledge of ICT Office Applications, be familiar with management information systems, advanced webpage design and advanced desktop publishing. They are to apply the use of information technology to gather, organize, analyze and effectively communicate information. As such the use of modern technology by the students cannot be over emphasized.

The current generation of students in higher institutions is digital natives (Ogunlesi, 2012). Since their introduction, SNS have attracted a huge followership and generated increasing appeal and attention for different strata of students of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Facebook Statistics (2015) find that a good number of Nigerian users of SNS are youths and students. Social media, in some climes is used by students for getting latest updates on their subjects, amateurs for getting skilled information, parents and educators adopt SNS as learning tools. SNS allow

students to become more engaged in the construction of their own knowledge and through proper utilization to learning success. With the increase of the usage of all sort of social media by students, and the wealth of knowledge and information which can be disseminated using these platforms, it is surprising that little or no information on sources of awareness, motivation, and pattern of usage of the platforms by students is available.

Statement of the problem: Students and youths generally were seen always busy with their handsets, laptops as well as other ICT gadgets and it does not happen only once a day, navigating through one social media or the other. There is, however, no comprehensive knowledge and information of students' activities on social media. It is for this reason, this paper investigates sources of awareness, motivations, pattern and frequency of use of Social Media network among students of Office Technology and Management Students, Federal Polytechnic, Ede, Osun State.

Purpose of the study: The goals of the paper are to investigate sources of awareness, motivations, pattern and frequency of use of SNS among students of the Department of Office Technology and Management Federal Polytechnics, Ede, Osun State; contribute to the growing body of knowledge regarding the use of social media among students and to provide policy recommendations for students and management of institutions regarding the need to adapt to changes associated with the use of social media by students.

Research questions: For the purpose of this study, the following research questions are raised for investigation.

1. What are the students' sources of awareness and access points to SNS?
2. How long does students spend daily on SNS?
3. What are the rates of frequency and pattern of use of the SNS by the students?
4. To what extent are students motivated and attain their goals of using SNS?
5. How does new relationship originate on SNS?

Conceptual Framework

This study is premise on Media system dependency theory developed by Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin Defleur in 1976. The theory believes that MSD and their audiences are interrelated, having effects on each other. In other words, the more a person depends on media to meet needs, the more important the media will be in the person's life, and the more influence the media will have on the person. The Media system dependency theory provides a comprehensive conceptualization of three motivational goals: understanding, orientation, and play. Understanding- needs for individuals to have a basic understanding of themselves and the world around them. Orientation- needs for individuals to direct personal actions effectively and interact successfully with others and play (or recreation) - a way through which one learns roles, norms, and values and it is reflected in such activities as sport, dance, and celebration. From students' standpoint, any or combination of the goals can be motivational enough for engaging in at least one platform of the social media.

Empirical framework

Social network sites have been variously defined to describe different types of communication platforms and electronic ways of interacting. In his definition Sam, (2013) says

Social networking sites are internet-based locations that allow individuals and groups to interact. SNS are internet based services that promote online social interactions between two or more persons within a bounded system for the purpose of friendship, meeting other persons, and/or exchanging information, contains a functionality that lets users create public or semi public personal profit pages that contain information of their own choosing; serves as a mechanism to communicate with other users; and contains mechanism that allow users to search for other users according to some specific criteria. [p.17]

Several definitions (Bryer. & Zavattaro, (2011) and Boyd, & Ellison, (2013) explain social networking sites to be web based services that allow individuals to construct a 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. It is also seen as technologies that facilitate social interactions, make possible collaborations and enable deliberations across stakeholders.

Social media encompass tools as YouTube, Internet chat-room, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Electronic blog, Skype, 2go, MySpace, Friendster, among others. Social media are social instruments of communication where users seek information, interact and provide immediate reaction to the subject under discussion, serving as a two-way social networking communication channel. Every social network site gives an opportunity to its members to express their feeling and even attitudes about common criteria.

Schaefer (2009) argues that to become a member of any of the sites, users complete a personal profile stating their occupation, as well as interest, age, sex, languages spoken in addition to other needed information which may vary from site to site. Users decide for each established contact, which personal information to display – business address, private address, phone, e-mail etc. Users establish links with others by sending and receiving requests to add the other to their contact lists which form the social network.

In terms of daily use of all social media collectively, Rosen (2011) reports that between 1965-1979 people consumed approximately 13 hours of social media per day; 1980-1989 approximately 19 hours of social media per day; and from 1990-1999 the consumption of social media was approximately 20 hours per day. Presently, majority of user's access social media sites from their mobile phones, with facebook having the highest number of active population in Africa with about 120 million in June 2015, (Chukwuemeka 2015).

In a study on pattern of use of social sites in Nigeria, Nwosu (2011) reveals 90% of the respondents use social media as a platform of chatting, dating, e-mailing, photo/video sharing, and connecting with friends, while the remaining 10% said they sometimes use it to search for information besides connecting with friends. In another investigation by Onyeka Sajoh & Bulus (2013) it was discovered that most of the students and young adults in Nigerian tertiary institutions are always engrossed in the social networking site usage. The work surveyed 536 students' social networking sites usage in different tertiary institutions in Mubi Educational zone, Adamawa state. The result shows that all the respondents were on one social network or the other. The report confirmed Facebook is mostly used by students with 95%, followed by 2go with 81%, YouTube with 28% Twitter with 21%, MySpace with 8% and Skynet with 2% respondents using them daily.

Comparing the extent of the use of electronic and social media in selected two universities from Ghana and two from Nigeria with 400 respondents as samples, Talabi and Akinpelu (2011) show that the 400 respondents comprising students, lecturers and administrators daily use electronic media in one form or the other and for different goals and purposes. This means that social media networking sites are becoming widely spread than ever before while people's perception, purpose, level and motivational factors of the use of this technology is diverse.

On time spent on social media sites, according to Olubiyi (2012) most students are on one social media site or the others for almost 24 hours online. Everywhere they go, even while on commercial motorcycles, places of worship, relaxation centres etc, students and youths generally are always busy pinging, 2going or Facebooking, This is so because SNS is available to the public without government restrictions, and anyone with access can operate it and communicate with others. Indeed, no generation is more at ease with online collaborative technologies than today's youths and students who have grown up in an immersive computing environment. Whereas a notebook and pen had formed the tools kit of the older generations, today's students come to class armed with smart phones, laptops and iPods.

Historical background of Social Networking Sites

Six Degree, seen as the first modern social network, was launched in 1997. According to Wikipedia (2015) Six degree allowed its users to create profiles and become friends with other users, but without the provision for users to upload their profile pictures. Six Degree collapsed in 2001. Before then, it was actually quite popular and had around a million members at its peak. In 2002 Friendster was established. Friendster used separation concept, making it look like moving around a circle of friends with the display of the pathways connecting two or more people. By 2003, LinkedIn, the first mainstream social networks devoted to business and professionals was founded. LinkedIn are helpful for members seeking to find potential clients, business opportunities, jobs or job candidates and meeting other professionals across the globe. MySpace was founded in 2003 and by 2006 had grown to be a popular social network in the world, allowing users to customize the look of their profiles, post music from artists and embed videos from other sites on their profiles.

Twitter is the site that allows people to connect to others and follow their stream of thought through linked communications in no more than 140 characters long. In 2012 twitter has over 100 million active users, with over 250 million tweets being sent every day (James, Natalie & Des 2012).

Facebook was launched in February, 2004, attracted 450 visitors and 22,000 photo views in its first four hours online (Digitatrends 2015 & Wiki 2015). Ajose (2012) reports that by 2010 facebook had more than 500 million active users connecting with others, sharing thoughts and discussing concerns, forming groups and joining with others in mutual interests and the number is still growing. Facebook, enables its users in more than 70 languages present themselves in an online profile, accumulate "friends" who can post comments on each other's pages, and view each other's profiles. Facebook members can also join virtual groups based on common interests, see what classes they have in common, and learn each others' hobbies, interests, musical tastes, and romantic relationship status through the profiles.

WhatsApp, an internet based instant messaging application to send text, images, video, group chat and audio media messages, was launched in 2009. While in January 2015, WhatsApp was the most globally popular messaging app with more than 600 million active users 70% of those people active everyday. In April 2015, Whatsapp reached 800 million active users, (Wikki, 2015).

Other social networking sites like 2go, edu.com, Youtube, Bebo, My life, 12 Live journal, Delicious, Orkut, Ning, Think.com., Diigo, Blogs, Instagram etc have since been created and added to the SNS community, helping its users locate old and new friends, shape their personal profile via the Internet, disseminate ideas or opinions and building social relationships among people who share interests, activities as well as meeting other motives.

Basically, there exist two types of social media sites – general and specialized websites. The general network sites are for all and sundry and can be described as public domain programme. Many of such networks centres on interests, topics and hobbies, ranging from knitting, to travelling, backing to web designing, loving, marriage, dating, meeting former school classmates etc. Corroborating, Folorunso (2012) says that some social networking websites accommodate folks of all interest and backgrounds. Members can, in addition to their interest, locate members with

similar interests and reunite with old friends; stay connected with current ones, and even make new acquaintances Websites in this class have tight, niche focuses, and cater for specific groups of people. Indeed, social media, online platforms, digital technologies and collaborative networks have fundamentally changed the ways in which to socialize, amuse ourselves, and learn about the world, conduct public affairs and, above all, do business.

Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was adopted because it involved eliciting information from respondents. The population of the study was 580 registered full time students of the Department of Office Technology and Management at National and Higher National Diploma levels at The Federal Polytechnic, Ede, Osun State.

Sample and Sampling Technique

Sample for the study consisted of 450 students randomly picked from the population. In selecting the sample, numerical numbers was written on pieces of paper. These papers were rolled and put into a container, one rolled paper was picked after mixing up the paper, and the picked ones were not to be replaced before picking another, so that all respondents have an equal chance of being represented. This method led to the selection of 450 for sample.

Instrument: Instrument used for data collection was a self developed Social Media Usage Questionnaire (SMUQ). The questionnaire surveyed the sources of awareness, frequency of visiting, motives and pattern of us, as well as how contacts are made with SNS. The instrument was validated by experts from Federal Polytechnic, Ede and tested in a pilot study after which minor changes to the wording of some of the questions were made. Only 400 out of the 450 questionnaires administered were returned usable.

Results: The responses in the questionnaire were analyzed through frequency counts and percentages as follows:

Research question I: What are the students' sources of awareness and access points to SNS?

Table 1: Sources of awareness of SNS by respondents

Source of Awareness	Self trained	Colleagues/ friends	Parents	Reading of manuals, journal, magazines	Lecturers	Total
Frequency	275	75	11	31	8	400
Percentage	68.75	18.75	2.75	7.75	2	100

Table 2: Access Points to SNS

Access points to SNS	Cybercafé	Cell phone	Laptops + modem	Laptop with wireless facilities	IPods/ blackberry	Total
Frequency	25	265	105	-	5	400
Percentage	6.25	66.25	26.25	-	1.25	100

Research Question 2: How long does students spend daily on SNS?

Table 3: No of hours spent by students on SNS per day

No. of SNS	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 1	9	2.25
2-5	185	46.25
6-10	170	42.5
11 – 15	4	01
16 – 20	32	08
Total	400	100

Research Question 3: What are the rates of pattern and frequency of use of the SNS by the students?

Table 4: Frequency and pattern of using the SNS?

SNS	Frequency
Facebook	400
2go	397
WhaZup	395
You Tube	207

Instagram	98
Twitter	5
Skype	-
Myspace	-
LinkedIn	5
edu.com	-

Table 5: Frequency and pattern of use of SNS

Social media	Frequency of use			
	Daily	Weekly	Monthly &above	Never used before
Facebook	400	-	-	-
Twitter	-	-	5	395
2go	397	-	-	3
Whats App	395	-	-	5
Skype	-	-	-	400
LinkedIn	-	5	-	395
Instagram	22	35	41	302
Youtube	80	55	72	193
Skype	-	-	-	400
MySpace	-	-	-	400

Tables 4 and 5 show the patterns and frequency of usage of all social media listed and mentioned by respondents. Facebook has the highest level of daily usage, 2go, Instagram, YouTube are used daily on daily basis. Twitter is seldom used, while Skype and MySpace have never been used by the respondents.

Research question 4: To what extent are students motivated and attain their goals of using SNS?

Respondents were asked to indicate what motivates them into using social media network

Table 6: Motivation and goals of Use of social media

Item	Motivation of use							Total
	To belong	For entertainment	To make new contacts/friend	Communicating with old friends	Information on health and safety	Posting of general comments	For educational purpose	
Frequency	15	70	110	94	5	100	6	400
%	3.75	17.5	27.5	23.5	1.25	25	1.5	400

Research Question 5: How do new relationships originate on SNS?

Table 7: How new on-line relationships originate

Sources of new relationships	Frequency	%
From 'Person you may know' Menu	190	47.5
Persons introduced by another friend	135	33.75
Search for specific persons	35	8.75
Seeing a profile in a group	25	6.25
Send 'Friend request' randomly	15	3.75
Total	400	100

Table 7 shows that the two most commonly sources of new online friendship is 'Person you may know' (47.5%) and being introduced (33.75%), searching for specific persons (8.75%) and seeing a profile in a group (6.25%) are also used. Send Friend Request randomly has (3.75%) and is less used. This means that it could be dangerous or improper to do so.

Discussion: Results of this study indicate that many students are aware, have varied access points and are versatile with the use of social media (Tables 1&2). 66.25% and 26.5% access SNS through cell phones and laptops with modems respectively. This gives credence to the observation by Olubiyi (2012) that most students access SNS via computer, cell phone, computer tablets, laptops, Ipads etc. and many have made the sites parts of their daily activities.

Table 3 shows that over 97.5% of the respondents spend between 2-20 hours per day on social media. The implication is that even while in classrooms attending lectures, most students still find time to be on the SNS. This agrees with previous research outcomes that an average Nigerian student spends about 6 -7 hours on the internet daily, some do all night browsing (Oluwatoyin, 2011, Ajose, 2012, Afe & Bodunde, 2012). The table also shows that the respondents belong to the categories described by (Talabi, & Akinpelu, 2011) as long-core, short-core and light users, with each group of users exhibited varying degrees of engagement.

The entire respondents use facebook (Table 4), followed by 2go, Whats App, YouTube and Instagram. Myspace, Skype and Twitter are never used by all the respondents. Facebook is confirmed the most patronized social media worldwide, In 2011 Facebook was considered second only to Google as the world's most popular website (James& Des, 2012) and services on Facebook are available in more than seventy languages the world over, (Wikki, 2015) The worldwide popularity of facebook and its appeal to all categories of users, made (Jehovah Witness, 2012) to declare that 'if Facebook were to be a country, it would be the third largest behind China and India.' Additionally, the present study with its results agreed with the views expressed in Digitaltrends, (2015) that the use of Twitter is dominated by celebrities or large corporations and that Twitter is still the preserve of a few, while LinkedIn is for professionals.

Everyday, students engage in one SNS or the other for quite a number of hours (Table 3). Tables 4 and 5 show that students are on one social site or the other with majority of respondents making daily use of the sites that interest them. In a study of 884 students of different universities in Nigeria, (Onyeka, Sajoh and Bulus 2013) indicate that Nigerian youths spend too much time on social networking sites even point towards obsession and at the detriment of other necessary things such as their studies.

Table 6 shows that SNS are majorly used for entertainment, social activities, and general comments, but less for educational purpose. Ajose (2012, Afe & Bodunde, 2012) find that students and youths use social media for the many purposes including discussing serious national issues like the abduction, forceful marriage and eventual release of a 14 year old Ese from Balyelsa state, in Nigeria, politics, economy and religious matters. Others include the use of social media as a platform of chatting, dating, e-mailing, photo/video sharing, and connecting with friends. However, (Olowu & Seri, 2012, Ezeah, Euphemia and Obiorah, 2013, as well as Sanusi, Adelabu, & Okunade, 2014) had identified - learning about old friends, to gaining emotional support or as an information resource and maintaining or re-connect relations - as the real motive, but less for educational purposes

Respondents on table 7 showed that they start new contacts or relationships through different means. Lenhart and Madden (2007) opine that adding someone to the contact list does not imply starting a meaningful and long lasting relationship or interaction; almost half of these additions do not develop further, they run into weak ties; sometime run aground.

Conclusion

Based on the research findings, the following conclusions were made:

- It is no gainsaying the fact that social media networks have come to stay.
- That social media are accessible to OTM students through various points.
- That OTM students use social media networks for different motives
- That students spend much more time on social media and on non educational issues.
- The tool is amoral, neither good nor bad and only takes the form for which it is employed. Social media can be used positively or negatively.
- Students only need to be disciplined, focused and adopt the tools for educational purposes.

Recommendations

The number of hours and frequency of use of social media is on the high side and the purpose other than educational is unacceptable. Lecturers, guardians, parents and all those with interest in learning must caution the respondents as well as all students as this type of activities on social media may affect their academic achievements.

Many Nigerian youths using social media acquired the skill incidentally. Therefore, they need to be formally guided and monitored in online social network practices to bring out desirable effect, particularly in promoting their academics.

Lecturers must be vigilant of those students who love to sit at the back side of the classroom during lectures. They might be busy on the social media instead of paying attention to the lectures.

Lecturers are enjoined to expose their students to the dos and don'ts of the platforms to avoid falling victims of scammers and being addicted at the detriment of their academic pursuits.

It is necessary to include social media into academic purposes. Educators will have fewer problems using the media as the students are already familiar with the media, the students will move along with other developed countries of the world that use social media as a tool for instruction and classrooms will be more engaging and relevant.

Students should divert their time on social media to educational usage. It will help them to get vast knowledge on any topic and to apply various techniques while solving problems.

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