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INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING TOOLS ON THE CHANGING NATURE OF STUDENTS' INFORMATION ACCESS IN THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA

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Abstract:
This paper discusses the influence of social networking tools in changing nature of information access by the students in faculty of education, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria. The study was guided by three objectives and three research hypotheses. A descriptive survey design was adopted in this research, with population of four thousand, nine hundred and sixty-six (4,966) and sample size of three hundred and seventy (370) students selected randomly from the faculty of education. The instrument used to generate data is questionnaire and the data generated was analyzed using a non-parametric statistical tool of Kruskal Wallis (H-test) and Mann Whitney (U-test). The paper reviews some related literature on the concept of social networking in relation to information access. However, the finding shows that use of social networking tools has significant influence on extents of using social networking tools for information access among faculty of education students and there was also significant difference between the opinions of respondents on the use of social networking tools to access academic resources and those accessing non-academic resources. The study also revealed that the social networking tools used by the students to access information includes: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp, and LinkedIn e.tc. Equally, the paper identifies poor wireless connectivity, erratic power supply as challenges faced by students when accessing information using social networking tools. Possible recommendation was made such as the university library should improve the provision of online library services to the university community and the university management should also improve the network facility for efficient internet access to their students. Finally, the paper concluded that social networking tools are highly used and had influence the students' information access to both academic and non-academic resources in the faculty of education.

Keywords*:* Information Access, social media/Social Networking, Social Networking Tools, Social Networks, Web 2.0.

Introduction

Technology has certainly changed the society, and the internet is the decisive technology of the information age which has transformed the world to a global network. Technological facilities have changed the way we access, communicate, generate information and the way we plan and live our lives. This development has brought about a fundamental shift in patterns of communication, business and human relationships. The emergence of social networking is attributed to the invention of web 2.0 which describes by Kenton (2020) as the current state of the web, which has more user-generated content and usability for end-users. Social networking is an embracing term that refers to different social media services for user interactivity. According to Boyd and Ellison (2008) social networking vary in format and the number of features. They can incorporate a range of new information and communication tools, operating on desktops, on laptops, and on mobile devices etc. Semode, Ejitagha, & Baro (2017) states that social networking sites have become more widespread in the information world.

Information access refers to the means or modes through which information is made available, or to an entire range of possibilities for making information and information services available to the users (Manjunatha & Shivallngaiah, 2013). Hence, a person tries to access information through means and models like social media, personal contact, from a library or from electronic networks. The level of access to information and information resources is significant and positively correlated to the users' career success and satisfaction. Today, Social networks has been integrated into society by individuals, institutions and organizations to access information, communicate and provide to potential public. The changing user behaviours and their dynamic information needs cultivate the use of social networks in academic environment. Boateng and Amankwaa (2016) affirmed that social media has influenced instructors, students, and other academic stakeholders to unite with each other to promote knowledge construction in teaching and learning. For this reason, McLoughlin and Lee (2007) stated that the use of social media platforms has impacted positively on individuals through creating diversification between different categories of people. Indeed, social media has contributed greatly to facilitating learning in the 21st century. Thus, the study is carried out to determine the influence of social networking tools on the Changing Nature of Students' Information Access in the Faculty of Education Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

Statement of the Problem

Social networking tools are becoming more popular nowadays and are being used to facilitate communication and increase knowledge sharing. The exponential growth of information technologies has greatly influenced the methods, media and format of information. The mode of accessing information varies from format to format and type to type ranging from general browsing to use of specialized tools. It's in this context that the nature of users' access to information resources is affected.

However, there is a great concerned over the issue of internet addiction and increased amount of time spend by students on social media. Students prefer using their laptops, desktops and smart phone to access both academic and non-academic information resources. This led to the declines in library patronage from the students. Recently, during the covid-19 pandemic, Kashim Ibrahim Library have created online social media services (on Telegram), in order to provide library users with their information needs. Notwithstanding, many students are not aware of these services, while some have no interest in it. It has been observed that, the use of social media

had affected students' academic activities, as students used social media sites to chat rather than for academic purposes. Some students, instead of using the social media for learning purposes, have diverted their attention to, using for sexting, hacking, fraud and scams.

As such this study tends to explore how social networking tools influenced the information access of the students in the faculty of education of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were as follows:

1. To find out the extent of used of social networks by students in faculty of education.
2. To find out the types of information resources access by students using social network tools in the faculty of education.
3. To find out the problems encountered by the students when accessing information on social networking tools.

Research Hypothesis

The following research hypotheses were raised for the study:

HO_1: The extend of use of social networking tools has no significance influence on information access of students in faculty of education

HO_2: There is no significant differences among students in faculty of education in the use of social networks to access both academic and non-academic information resources.

HO_3: There is no significance difference among students in faculty of education in the problems encountered when accessing information on social networking site.

Review Related of Literature

Borgman (2000) well-defined access to information as "connectivity to a computer network and to available content, such that the technology is usable, the user has the requisite skills and knowledge, and the content itself is in a usable and useful form". Jaeger and Burnett (2005) defined information access as "the presence of a robust system through which information is made available to citizens and others". Such a system has physical, intellectual, and social components. Thus, information access is a combination of intellectual, physical, and social elements that affect the availability of information to individuals. However, Buckland (1991) offers an early example of the difficulties in articulating access. He lists six aspects of access-identification, availability, price (to the user), cost (to the provider), understanding, and acceptability - but understands most of these primarily in terms of technological capabilities and requirements.

The advent of social networking is attributed to the invention of web 2.0 which describes by Kenton (2020) as the current state of the web, which has more user-generated content and usability for end-users. Anderson (2007) defines Web 2.0 as a collective term for a group of web-based technologies that broaden user's communication capabilities and options. The web 2.0 domain has been introduced as an experimental field to be accepted and implemented for rendering virtual digital library services to patron (Saho & Sharma, 2015). Wenger (2004) says that Web 2.0 is having a dramatic consequence on how people work, communicate and collaborate. It opens a whole new world of social interconnectivity in which academics,

experienced professionals and students alike can now much more easily link with each other for life-like collective knowledge construction.

Concept of Social Networking/social media

Social networking and social media have been defined differently in different terms to mean the same thing. Anwar and Zhiwei (2019) viewed social media as social networking, and a collection of internet-based communities that allow users to interact with each other online. Sachin (2014) also viewed social networking as platform to build social networks or social relation among people who like to share interests, activities, background or real-life connections. Boyd and Ellison (2007) defined social network sites as public web-based services that allow users to develop a personal profile, identify other users with whom they have a connection, read and react to postings made by other users on the site, and send and receive messages either privately or publicly. These web-based services allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system. Social media is networking of information or knowledge using 21st century gadgets like smart phones or computer through the means of platform (website) and it is sharing among community or group of people that have the same ideology. Semode, Ejitagha, & Baro (2017) points out that, in social networking era, millions of people are turning to the internet to keep in touch with their friends, family and colleagues. Social media allow students from different schools or even different countries to come together over the internet and work on common projects. They can transmit research materials and disseminate papers and analysis to those working on that activity to buttress this stance (West, 2012).

Social networking are created in many forms and numerous social networking sites or tools are used by the student to access information such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, YouTube, LinkedIn, Flickr, telegram etc. Kumar (2015) viewed **Facebook** as best Social Networking Site frequented by students. **LinkedIn** is describes as the world's largest professional network on the internet use to find, connect and strengthen professional relationships (LinkedIn, 2021). **YouTube** is a social media platform that was launched in 2005 that allows billions of individuals to discover, access information, watch and share original user created videos (YouTube, 2015). This platform provides a forum to connect, inform and inspire individuals across the world. **Telegram** is cloud-based messenger with seamless sync access messages from several devices at a time. Users can exchange messages, photos, videos, audio, and file of any type up to 1.5GB (Manna & Gosh, 2018).

Influence of Social Networking Tools on Students

Students' academic life has moved to a different dimension since the introduction of these social media networks and several studies have confirmed that social media plays an important role to students in higher education including the study conducted by Wheeler et al. (2008); Rifkin, et al. (2009). In their study, they acknowledged four (4) major advantages of social media usage by students in higher education which included; enhancing relationship, improving learning motivation, offering personalized course material, and developing collaborative abilities. Connolly (2011); Zwart, Lindsay, Henderson and Phillips (2011) also agreed that the benefits of social media as encouraging greater social interaction via electronic mediums, providing greater access to information and information sources, creating a sense of belonging among users, reducing barriers to group interaction and communications such as distance and social/economic status, and increasing the

technological competency levels of frequent users of social media, among others. Fatokun (2019) state that social media use in universities has many advantages, these include enhancing relationship, improving motivation, offering personalized course material and developing collaboration abilities. Therefore, a direct relationship exists between social media usage and academic performance of university undergraduate students (Bamigboye & Olusesan, 2017). Khan (2010) revealed that a greater percentage of students including those at the PhD level commonly use social media to enhance their studies.

Methodology

A descriptive survey design is adopted in this research to investigating the influence of social networks on students' information access in the faculty of education, ABU Zaria. The population of the study comprise the undergraduate students of the faculty of education, a total of four thousand, nine hundred and sixty-six (4,966). Random sampling technique was used to select a sample size of three hundred and fifty-seven (357), on confidence level of 95.00% and significance of 0.05% from the population. This is in accordance with the research advisors (2006), which suggested in a population of 3501 to 5000, a sample size of 357 should be selected.

The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire, titled Social Networking Tools used for Students' Information Access Data Collection Questionnaire. The questionnaire was placed on Likert Scale as Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD). The questionnaire was submitted to two experts in the department of library and information science, ABU Zaria for face, content and construct validity. To analyze the null hypothesis, a non-parametric statistical tool of Kruskal Wallis (H-test) and Mann Whitney (U-test) was used.

Data Analysis

HO_1: The extend of use of social networking tools has no significance influence on information access of students in faculty of education.

Data on the extents of using social networking tools for information access among faculty of education students were collected. To test the null hypothesis one, Kruskal-Wallis (H-test) statistic was used. The summary of the analysis is presented in Table 1.0

Table1.0: Summary of Kruskal-Wallis test Analysis of Students' use of Social Networking tools for information access among levels.

Groups	N	Mean Rank	df	χ^2	p-value	Decision
100 level	36	73.96				
200 level	36	96.71	3	9.16	0.03	Rejected
300level	49	108.37				
400 level	75	104.69				

Significant at level of ≤ 0.05

Table1.0 presents the analysis of Kruskal-Wallis test with value of χ^2 is 9.16 and p-value of 0.03 at df of 3. The p-value is less than the alpha value. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, this shows that use of social networking tools has significant effect on extents of using social networking tools for information access among faculty of education students. But the significance effect is high with 400 level and 300 level, then followed by 200 level and 100 level in that order respectively.

HO2: There is no significant differences among students in faculty of education in the use of social networks to access both academic and nonacademic information resources.

Data on the opinions of respondents on the use of social networking tools to for academic and nonacademic information resources access by students in faculty of education were collected. To test the null hypothesis, Mann-Whitney (U-test) analysis was used to test the null hypothesis two. The summary of the analysis is presented in Table 2.0**:**

Table 2.0 Summary of Mann-Whitney (U-test) test Analysis on the use of Social Networking Tools to Access Academic Resources and Nonacademic Resources among Faculty of Education Students.

Groups	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Rank	χ^2	Df	p-value	Decision
ACACR	196	217.17	42565.00	6.07	368	0.03	Rejected
ACNACR	174	149.83	26070.00				

Significant at level of ≤ 0.05

Table 2.0 shows the result of Mann-Whitney (U-test) analysis with χ^2 equal to 6.07 and the P-value equal to 0.03. The P-value of 0.03 is less than the alpha value 0.05. It implies that there was significant difference between the opinions of respondents on the use of social networking tools to access academic and nonacademic information resources among faculty of education students. This shows that students who used social networking tools to access academic resource had higher mean rank meaning that they are higher in number than those that used the social networking tools to access nonacademic resource.

HO3: There is no significance difference among students in faculty of education in the problems encountered when accessing information on social networking site.

Data on the problems encountered among faculty of education students when accessing information using social networking tools were collected. To test the hypothesis three Kruskal-Wallis (H-test) statistic was used to test the hypothesis. The summary of the analysis is presented in table 3.0:

Table 3.0 Summary of Kruskal-Wallis test Analysis of the Problems Encountered Among Faculty of Education Students when Accessing Information using Social networking tools.

Groups	**N**	**Mean Rank**	**df**	χ^2	**p-value**	**Decision**
100 level	36	75.57				
200 level	36	96.86	3	9.88	0.02	Rejected
300level	49	96.72				
400 level	75	111.45				

Significant at level of ≤ 0.05

Table 3.0 shows the analysis of Kruskal-Wallis test with χ^2 value of 9.88 and p-value of 0.02 at df of 3. The p-value is less than the alpha value. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected which shows that, 400L students encounter more problem than all other levels, because of their frequent use of social networking tools to access information either academic or nonacademic.

Discussion of Findings

Table 1.0 shows that extend of use of social networking tools has significance influence on information access of students in faculty of education. The finding shows that 400 level and 300 level students used social networking tools to access information more than 200 level and 100 level students. This implies that social networking tools are highly utilized by the students to access information. It is in line with the findings of Khan (2010) who revealed that a greater percentage of students including those at the PhD level commonly use social media to enhance their studies. The study also revealed that Facebook, WhatsApp and YouTube are the major social networking tools used by the students to access information which also affirm the finding of Kumar (2015), who viewed that Facebook is the best social networking site (SNS) frequented by students. The finding also supports Tayo, Adebola and Yahya (2019) who disclosed that the social media platforms mostly used by the undergraduate students are WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.

Table 2.0 shows that students who used social networking tools to access academic information resource had higher mean rank of 217.17, meaning that they are higher in number than those that used the social networking tools to access nonacademic resource with mean rank of 149.83. This is in line with the findings of Fatokun (2019) who indicated that social media has slight positive influence on the students' academic performances where 60.8% of them often engage in educational activities. The finding further supported by Tayo, Adebola and Yahya (2019) who indicated that undergraduates used social media platforms mainly for socialization, information, and academic purposes.

Challenges

However, the findings shows that some of the challenges encountered by the students in the faculty of education Ahmadu Bello University Zaria were the slow wireless networks and erratic power supply. This affirms the finding of Obi, Okore and Kanu (2019) who stated that 97 % of the respondents agreed that erratic power supply inhibits use of Social Media by undergraduate students.

Conclusion

Social media or social networking has contributed greatly to facilitate learning ability of the students in the higher institutions through the use of either laptop or android phone to access information resources from the numerous social networking sites or tools such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, YouTube, LinkedIn, Flickr, telegram etc. However, the finding shows that, social networking tools are highly used and had influenced the students' information access to both academic and nonacademic resources in the faculty of education. Despite some challenges encountered by student such as poor wireless network and disruptive power supplied, the study revealed that Facebook, WhatsApp and YouTube are viewed frequently by the students in the faculty of education, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria.

Recommendations

1. The university management should improve the network facility for efficient internet access to their students.
2. The university library should improve the provision of online library services to the university community.
3. The university library should reform their user education programme on information resource access through social media.

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