



**CHALLENGES OF USING TWITTER BY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS, NNAMDI AZIKIWE UNIVERSITY, AWKA, ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The study focused on identifying the challenges that undergraduate students encounter while using twitter. Two research questions guided the study. The population of the study was eighty(80) 200 level students of the Department of Library and Information Science, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria. Instrument for data collection was questionnaire. The data collected were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages. The findings of the study showed that undergraduate students encountered some challenges in the utilization of twitter. Among the challenges identified were paucity of digital/high cost of Internet, posting of lies and rumours on the web, paucity of privacy, paucity of ICT/computer/smart phones and epileptic power supply.*

**Keywords:** Twitter, Undergraduates, Challenges, Use.

**Introduction**

Twitter as one of the social media platforms is very vital in information dissemination. It is a social media platform that allows users to share short messages called "tweets" with their followers. It is a popular communication tool that is used by individuals, organizations and businesses for a variety of purposes.

Twitter is an effective communication tool because it allows users to connect with others in real-time, share information quickly and easily, and engage with others on a global scale. According to Java, Song, Finin and Tseng (2007), twitter provides a platform for micro blogging, which allows users to share short messages that can be easily and quickly disseminated to a large audience.



Twitter has become an increasingly popular tool in the field of education, as it allows for the sharing of information, collaboration and networking among students, educators and researchers.

One way in which twitter is being used in education is to facilitate communication and collaboration among students and educators. It is in view of this that Junco, Heiberger and Loken (2011), stated that twitter can be used to engage students in discussions, share resources and foster a sense of community within the classroom. By using twitter, students can ask questions, share ideas and collaborate on projects in real-time, regardless of their physical location.

On other hand, twitter is also used in education as a tool for research and professional development. Hence, Carpenter and Krutka (2014), noted that twitter can be used to keep up with the latest research and trends in the field of education, as well as to network with other professionals in the field. By following experts in the field, educators can stay informed about the latest research and best practices, and engage in discussions with other professionals about key issues in education.

Twitter can also be used to support learning outside of the classroom. According to Manca and Ranieri (2016), twitter can be used to create a personal learning network, where learners can connect with others who share similar interests and engage in discussions and collaborations around specific topics. By using twitter, learners can access a wealth of information and resources, connect with experts in the field and engage in discussions and debates with other learners around the world. In other words, twitter has

become a valuable tool in the field of education, facilitating communication, collaboration and professional development among students, educators and researchers. As the use of twitter is increasing, more people in the field of education will become conversant with it and utilise it for academic purposes.

While twitter can offer several benefits for academic purposes, there are some challenges associated with using the platform. Some of the challenges of using twitter include: Information overload, privacy and ethics concerns, distractions and time management and limited functionality for academic purposes.

One of the main challenges of using twitter is the potential for information overload. As noted by Veletsianos et al. (2012), twitter can be a fast-paced and constantly evolving platform, which can make it difficult for individuals to keep up with all the information being shared. Moreover, it can be challenging to filter out irrelevant or low-quality contents and focus on the most relevant and valuable information.

Privacy and ethics concern is another challenge of using twitter. Daniels and Thistlethwaite (2016), asserted that twitter can be used to collect and analyze data related to individuals' opinions and behaviors, including students. However, this raises concerns about privacy and informed consent, as well as the potential for misuse of data.

Twitter can also be a potential source of distractions and time management issues, particularly for students. Kirschner and Karpinski (2010), opined that social media platforms like twitter can be distracting and



can interfere with students' ability to focus on their academic work. Moreover, the constant notifications and updates on twitter can lead to students spending more time on the platform than they intended, which can negatively impact their productivity and academic performance.

Meanwhile, twitter's limited functionality for academic purposes can also be a challenge. While twitter can be used for sharing links and resources, it may not be the best platform for more complex academic discussions or collaborations. As noted by Manca and Ranieri (2016), twitter's character limit can make it challenging to express complex ideas or engage in in-depth discussions.

The challenges of using twitter are not insurmountable. Some renown researchers have suggested some solutions to these challenges. Some of the solutions are: Digital literacy and skills development, establishing guidelines and best practices, integrating Learning Management Systems (LMS), and engaging in digital citizenship.

To overcome the challenges associated with using twitter, some researchers have suggested some strategies which include: Digital literacy and skills development, establishing guidelines and best practices, integrating Learning Management Systems (LMS). Olatokun and Ojo (2016) emphasized the importance of digital literacy and skills development. Acquisition of digital literacy and necessary skills would enable students and educators to effectively navigate twitter, filter relevant information, and critically evaluate the credibility of sources. This includes understanding privacy settings, using appropriate hashtags, and employing strategies to manage time and minimize

distractions. By developing digital literacy skills, individuals can better utilize twitter's potential for academic purposes.

On the other hand, Nwachukwu and Adeoye (2020) stressed the importance of establishing guidelines and best practices for using twitter in academic settings. Institutions can develop policies that outline acceptable use, privacy considerations and guidelines for professional conduct. Educators can provide students with clear instructions on how to engage in academic discussions, share resources, and interact with peers and professionals in a respectful manner. By establishing guidelines, students can navigate twitter in a more structured and purposeful manner, ensuring it is used effectively for academic purposes.

Another strategy is to integrate twitter with existing Learning Management Systems (LMS) used in Nigerian universities. It is in line with this that Eke and Ani (2020) highlighted the potential benefits of integrating twitter with LMS platforms such as Module or Blackboard. This integration can facilitate seamless communication, resource sharing, and discussion forums, while providing a more controlled and focused academic environment. By combining the functionalities of twitter and LMS platforms, educators can create a comprehensive and structured learning experience for students.

Developing digital citizenship skills is equally crucial for using twitter and other social media platforms responsibly and ethically. It is in view of this that Oyeleke (2020) emphasizes the need for students to understand their roles as responsible digital citizens. This involves promoting respectful



and inclusive online interactions, being aware of privacy concerns, and critically evaluating the information shared on twitter. Educators can incorporate discussions on digital citizenship into their curriculum, helping students navigate the challenges of twitter while promoting ethical and responsible use.

With the enormous benefits derived from twitter, it is expected that many undergraduate students will embrace its usage, especially Library and Information Science students. But contrary to this, some undergraduates seem not to use twitter due to so many reasons. One of such reasons could be the challenges they encounter in the course of using twitter. Lack of the awareness of the benefits of using twitter may also be one of the factors that hamper their use of twitter. Therefore, this study is set to determine the challenges of using twitter by the undergraduate students of Library and

Information Science (LIS), Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the challenges faced by LIS undergraduates in the utilization of twitter tools in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka?
2. What are the solutions to the challenges faced by the undergraduates in the utilization of twitter tools?

**Research Method**

Descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The population of the study was eighty (80) 200 level students in Department of Library and Information Science, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The instrument for data collection was questionnaire. Data collected were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages.

**Presentation of Results**

**Research Question 1:** What are the challenges faced by LIS undergraduates in the utilization of twitter?

**Table 1: Challenges Faced by LIS Undergraduates in the Utilization of Twitter**

S/N	ITEMS	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Paucity of ICT/Computer/high cost on smartphone	3	4
2.	Paucity of privacy	12	17
3.	Paucity of digital/high cost of internet access	39	57
4.	Paucity of time to use twitter	3	4
5.	Inadequate power supply	3	4
6.	Posting of lies and rumours on the web	10	14
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1 above shows that a good number of the students 39 (57%) indicated that paucity of Digital/ICT skills is one of the challenges facing the effective utilization of twitter. This was followed by paucity of privacy 12 (17%) and posting of lies and rumours on the web

10(14%). These challenges could discourage the students from using twitter.

**Research Question 2:** What are the possible solutions to the challenges faced by the undergraduates in the utilization of twitter?



**Table2: Solutions to Challenges faced by Undergraduates in the Utilization of Twitter**

S/N	ITEMS	Frequency	Percentage
7.	Tertiary institution management, government and parents should provide computer/smartphone to students; this will influence them towards improved twitter usage in learning	30	43
8.	Twitter management should think of how to create room for privacy in the use of twitter	2	3
9.	Training should be organized for students on the use of twitter by government, university management and professional bodies.	20	29
10.	Undergraduate students should be allowed enough time to use twitter to enable them use twitter tools in learning process.	2	3
11.	University management should buy generators as an alternative source of power supply and the federal government of Nigeria should review the power in the country so as to ensure uninterrupted power supply	15	21
12.	Instead of posting lies and rumours on the web, twitter users should post nice tweets which will be informative to users.	1	1
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2 above shows the possible solutions to the challenges faced by the undergraduates in the utilization of twitter. As many as 30(42%) of the students stated that tertiary institution management, government and parents should provide computers/smart phones to students; this will motivate them towards improved twitter usage in learning. This was followed by 20 (29%) who indicated that training should be organized for students on the use of twitter by government, university management and professional bodies. Such training will equip the students with the skills necessary for using twitter. Also, 15(21%) of the respondents suggested that university managements should provide generators as alternative source of power supply.

**Discussion of Findings**

The findings of the study revealed that undergraduate students faced some challenges while utilizing twitter. The identified challenges include: paucity of digital/high cost of internet, posting of lies

and rumours on the web, paucity of privacy, paucity of ICT/computer/smart phones, epileptic power supply. This agrees with the finding Ofodu (2007) who stated that irregular power supply in the country is a major obstacle to the use of Internet services in all spheres of the economy.

Also, the findings of the study revealed that other solutions to the challenges faced by undergraduates in the utilization of twitter are: tertiary institution management, government and parents should provide computer/smart phones to students; twitter management should think of how to create room for privacy in the use of twitter; training should be organized for students on the use of twitter by government, university management and professional bodies; university management should buy generators as an alternative source of power supply and the federal government of Nigeria should review electricity supply in the country so as to ensure uninterrupted power





supply. This aligned with Akporhonor and Ivwighreghweta (2017) who suggested that awareness and steady power supply are necessary in improving use of social media for academic purposes by the younger generation. Steady power supply will go a long way in encouraging the undergraduates to use twitter, especially for academic purposes.

### Conclusion

Based on the findings, it was concluded that the undergraduates actually faced some challenges while using twitter and that these challenges could be tackled if necessary strategies are employed.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendation were made:

- 1.The University Management, Head of Department of Library and Information Science and Library Management should endeavour to tackle the challenges faced by the undergraduates in the utilization of twitter.
2. LIS students should be encouraged to use twitter for academic purposes. For instance, lecturers can give them online assignments to enable them use twitter to support learning.

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