UTILIZATION OF TWITTER BY UNDERGRADUATES OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE NNAMDI AZIKIWE UNIVERSITY, AWKA, ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA

Dr Esther Ekene Aghauche
Department of Library and Information Science
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
Email: ee.aghauche@unizik.edu.ng; Tel: 08035406774
&
Dr Florence Amaka Nwofor
Department of Library and Information Science
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
Email: fa.nwofor@unizik.edu.ng; Tel: 08064172806
&
Dr. Amaka Raymonda Obiamalu
Department of Library and Information Science
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
Email: ar.obiamalu@unizik.edu.ng; Tel: 08136214159

Anthoniette Chinecherem Ndanwu
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
Tel: 09050124808

ABSTRACT

The study investigated the use of twitter by undergraduate LIS Students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra state, Nigeria. Three research questions guided the study. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised 80 200 level students in Department of Library and Information Science, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. Data collected were analyzed using frequency and percentages. Findings of the study revealed that undergraduate students' main purpose for using twitter was to chat with friends, some of the undergraduates also relied on twitter site for information around the world and few used it for academic purposes. Also, the undergraduates used twitter site daily and majority of the undergraduates spent one (1) hour to two (2) hours on twitter visit in a day. Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made: University management, Head of Department of Library and Information Science and Library Management should organize seminars, orientations and workshops for undergraduate students in the university on the imperative use of twitter for academic purposes; lecturers should give the students online assignments to enable them use twitter site to support learning and Library and Information Science (LIS) students should be encouraged to use social media such as twitter to enhance learning of LIS courses.

Keywords: Twitter, Use, Undergraduates, Library and Information Science (LIS)

Introduction

Advancement in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has really made the world a global village where information can be shared or disseminated through various media such as the Internet. The emergence of the Internet and the migration from analogue to digital has brought a lot of changes in the process of imparting knowledge, acquiring skills and values. The Internet occupies a specific place in the life of students and the younger generations. The rate at which undergraduates use social media sites is on the increase. This is why Ekwelem and Onyeizu (2020) asserted that a big portion of social media users is made up of youths. The Internet has brought social media, a new platform for enhancing learning, entertainment and communication among students and Library and Information Science (LIS) students in particular.

Different types of social media used by students in this 21st century includes: Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, MySpace, Blogs and Google+. On Campus and Online, students share information to the online communities, send text messages to friends, peers, families, check their twitter handles and otherwise surf the Internet. One of the social utility and free access websites that connect people through the Internet is Twitter.

Twitter 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.

One of the key features of twitter is its use of hashtags, which are keywords or phrases that are preceded by the "#" symbol. According to Chung and Kim (2018), hashtags allow users to categorize and search for tweets on a specific topic, making it easier to find and share information on a particular subject. Hashtags can also be used to join conversations and engage with others who share similar interests. Twitter is also an effective communication tool for businesses and organizations. According to Qualman (2013), twitter can be used to build brand awareness, engage with customers, and promote products and services. By using twitter, businesses can interact with customers in real-time, respond to inquiries and feedback and build relationships with their audience.

Twitter is a powerful communication tool that allows users to connect with others in real-time, share information quickly and easily, and engage with others on a global scale. Its use of hashtags makes it easier to categorize and search for information on specific topics, while its real-time nature makes it an effective tool for businesses to engage with customers and build relationships. Twitter has become an increasingly popular tool in the field of

372

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. According to Junco, Heiberger and Loken (2011), 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. Another way in which twitter is being used in education is as a tool for research and professional development. According to Carpenter and Krutka (2014), 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 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. Its use in education is growing, and as educators become more familiar with its capabilities, it is likely that more innovative uses of twitter will be manifested in the classroom and beyond, especially in Library and Information Science.

Library and Information Science is a merger of Library Science and Information Science. Library Science is the field of study that teaches how to manage books and other information resources, particularly through collecting, preserving, and organizing books and other materials in libraries, while Information Science is an interdisciplinary field primarily concerned with the analysis, collection, storage retrieval and dissemination of information (Harsha, 2014). Library and Information Science programme is a tertiary education program that gives students the training and basic skills needed to excel in the world. It prepares students with practical skills and knowledge needed to function effectively in the library. Library and information science is an academic study which prepares students for job placement in library career.

Twitter has been developed to provide students many educative opportunities, access to information being the most important. Students now have access to twitter, share information, use it in their learning around the world. The use of twitter in learning makes students appreciate learning activities of everyday life.

Despite the fact that many social media exist, there is no single social network that is regarded as best for learning in tertiary

373

institutions. What matters is the ability of LIS students to make up the short falls of whatever social network they want to use. Efficiency and effectiveness of the students depend on their ability to operate smart phones and this requires the acquisition of new techniques, new knowledge and new skills of manipulating the device.Thus, Amiruzzaman and Amiruzzaman (2022) in their study indicated that how students use twitter matters more than the amount of time they spend using it for their studies

In recent years, social media platforms have emerged as powerful tools that revolutionize communication, collaboration, and information sharing across various domains. Among these platforms, twitter has gained significant popularity due to its ability to disseminate real-time updates and facilitate instant interactions among users. Its concise and succinct nature, coupled with its wide reach, makes twitter a potential asset for academic purposes, particularly for undergraduate students.

In the field of Library and Information Science (LIS), where the acquisition, organization, and dissemination of information are central, it becomes crucial to explore how undergraduate students are utilizing twitter for academic purposes. Understanding the motivations and patterns of twitter usage among undergraduate students in LIS department can provide valuable insights into the ways social media platforms can enhance their academic pursuits. By uncovering the specific purposes for which students use twitter, researchers and educators can devise strategies to effectively integrate twitter into their pedagogical approaches.

While there have been studies conducted on the use of social media platforms in education, including twitter in various contexts, limited research has specifically focused on the utilization of twitter by undergraduate students in LIS Department, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Therefore, conducting an empirical investigation within this specific context is essential to bridge the existing gap in literature and provide context or specific insights that can inform decision-making processes; hence, the need for this study.

Twitter as a social network platform helps students to keep up with current affairs, trends, events and academic activities. Yet, despite the numerous benefits of twitter, it seems that students are still unable to efficiently utilize the micro blogging service in their learning. The potentials of these benefits appear not to be known to some students, hence less focus on their adoption. This knowledge gap hampers the ability of educators and administrators to effectively leverage the potentials of twitter to enhance teaching, learning, and professional development within the LIS domain. Therefore, the main problem of this study is to determine the purpose of twitter usage by undergraduate LIS students, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Research Questions

1. What are purposes for using twitter by LIS undergraduate students, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka?
2. What are the frequencies of usage of twitter by LIS

undergraduates, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka?

3 How many hours do the undergraduates spend on twitter per visit?

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 I: What are the undergraduates' purposes for the usage of twitter?

Table I: Undergraduates' Purposes of Usage of Twitter

S/N	ITEMS	Frequency	Percentage
1.	To create/post photo (nudity)	1	1.43
2.	To do online dating	3	4.29
3.	To share and exchange academic information to read for exam and test	3	4.29
4.	Source friendship update	5	7.14
5.	To chat with friends	30	42.85
6.	To aid research/learning	1	1.43
7.	To communicate with lecturers	1	1.43
8.	To communicate with celebrities	5	7.14
9.	To receive world/surrounding information	20	28.57
	TOTAL	**70**	**100**

Table1showed that the major purpose for use of twitter among undergraduate students was to chat with friends 30 (42.85%). The result also indicated that they also used it to receive world/surrounding information 20(28.57%)

Research Question 2: What are the frequencies of usage of twitter by the undergraduates?

Table II: Frequency of Use of Twitter

S/N	ITEMS	Frequency	Percentage
10.	Daily	51	72.86
11.	Weekly	12	17.14
12.	Occasionally	7	10
	TOTAL	**70**	**100**

Table 2 indicated that majority of the students 51(72.86%) are using twitter daily compared with weekly 12 (17.14) and occasionally 7 (10) usage. It is evident from the study that many of the students used twitter daily, an indication that they derived benefits from it.

Research Question 3: How many hours do the undergraduates spend on twitter sites per visit?

Table 3: Hours Undergraduates Spent on Twitter Per Visit

S/N	ITEMS	Frequency	Percentage
13.	30 mins – 1 hour	12	17.14
14.	1 – 2 hours	39	55.71
15.	2 – 4 hours	9	12.86
16.	4 hours and above	10	14.29
	TOTAL	**70**	**100**

Table 3 shows that 39 (55.71%) of the undergraduates spent 1 hour to 2 hours on twitter per visit, 12 (17.14) use 30 mins to 1 hour, 10 (14.29%) use twitter for 4 hours and above. The result shows that the students appreciated the benefits of twitter hence they spend such number of hours on it daily.

Discussion of Findings

Findings from the study revealed that LIS undergraduates' main purpose of using twitter is to chat with friends. This agrees with the study of Akporhonor and Vwighreghweta (2017) who found out that students use social media for the purpose of chatting with friends. On the other hand, it is also an indication that the students did not understand or may not be aware that twitter can also be used for academic purposes.

Findings from the study has showed that undergraduates use the twitter daily. This is in line with the finding of Oyadonghan and Flent (2015), who found out that undergraduate students use facebook daily.

The study has also shown that majority of the undergraduates spent one (1) hour to two (2) hours on twitter visit in a day. This is also in line with the study of Akporhonor and Ivwighreghweta (2017), who found out that undergraduates spent 1 hour to 2 hours on social media per visit. Since students chat mainly with their friends, it is not surprising to note that they spent such length of time on twitter visit daily.

Conclusion

The findings of the study have shown that undergraduates spent 1 hour to 2 hours on twitter per visit. Based on the findings, the study concludes that students spent their time for fun, or entertainment rather than using twitter for academic purposes. This could be attributed to the fact that the students may be ignorant of the educational value of twitter.

Recommendations

Based on the findings the following recommendations are made:

1. University management, Head of Department of Library and Information Science, and Library Management should organize seminars, orientations and workshops for undergraduate students in the university on the necessity of use of twitter for academic purposes.

2. Lecturers should give the students online assignments to enable them use twitter to support learning.

3. Library and Information Science (LIS) students should be encouraged to use social media such as twitter to enhance learning of LIS courses.

REFERENCES

Akporhonour, B.A., & Ivwighreghweta, O.I. (2017). Social media use among undergraduate in Delta State, Nigeria. *Nigerian Journals of Library and Information Science (NJLAIS), 2*(1), 1 – 14.

Amiruzzaman, S & Amiruzzaman M.D (2022) Use of twitter among college students for academics: mixed methods approach social science. Retrieved from https//doc.org/Researchgate/10.3390/socialscience

Carpenter, J. P., & Krutka, D. G. (2014). How and why educators use Twitter: A survey of the field. *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*, *46*(4), 414-434.

Chung, N., & Kim, J. (2018). Hashtagging your way to social media: A linguistic analysis of hashtags on Twitter. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media,62*(3), 382-400.

Ekwelem, N.C & Onyeizu, S (2020) Academic use of Social networking sites by library and information science students, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. *International Journal of Engineering Science and Computing (IJESC) 10*(7).

Harsha,G.C (2014) Information Science. Retrieved from https//www.slideshare.net

Java, A., Song, X., Finin, T., & Tseng, B. (2007). Why we Twitter: understanding microblogging usage and communities. Proceedings of the 9th WebKDD and 1st SNA-KDD 2007 workshop on Web mining and social network analysis, 56-65.

Junco, R., Heiberger, G., & Loken, E. (2011). The effect of Twitter on college student engagement and grades. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning, 27*(2), 119-132.

Manca, S., & Ranieri, M. (2016). Is Facebook still a suitable technology-enhanced learning environment? An updated critical review of the literature from 2012 to 2015. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning, 32*(6), 503-528.

Qualman, E. (2013). *Socialnomics: How social media transforms the way we live and do business*. John Wiley & Sons.