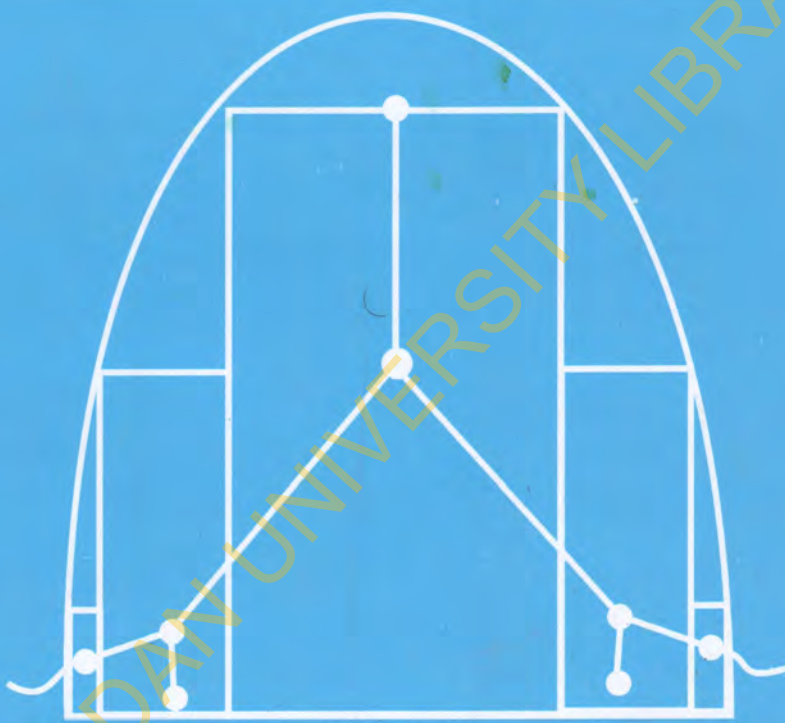


2/4

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT (IJEM)



VOLUME 15 NO. 1, 2017

Published by

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT,
UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN, ILORIN, NIGERIA**

Improving the Utilization of ICT, Social Networking In the Academic Community of the University of Ibadan, Nigeria

Isah E.A. Ph.D.

Department of Educational Management,

Faculty of Education

University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria

+2348138436380; +2348100933586

emmanisah2005@yahoo.com

Abstract

The problems with Information and Communications Technology [ICT] have received scholars' attention over time. ICT has continued to attract attention as new trends evolved with one of such being the Social Network Media with capacity of linking like minds in divers places together for a common purpose. Despite internet challenges across Africa, modern Internet Service Providers (ISP)s have enabled most academics (lecturers and students) access it. Emerging social network media presents a platform and veritable tool for lecturers-students interaction in academic communities. This study investigated access and utilization of social network media/services for academic purposes in the University of Ibadan. The study formulated 5 research questions adopting the survey to elicit responses from an instrument titled 'Social Networking and the University of Ibadan Questionnaire' (SNUIQ -r'=0.89). The multi stage sampling procedure was used to select respondents totaling 523 made up of faculty members and students. SNUIQ is subdivided into 3 sections with section A eliciting responses on demographic details, Section B, techniques of Social Networking and section C on the Utilization of Social Networking. Findings were presented using descriptive statistics as frequency counts, charts and graphs that indicated that over 60% of the academic community had awareness of the use of Social Networks. 68% use more of Twitter and Instagram while above 65% do not use SNM for academic interaction. It was suggested that the university should ensure that Social networks are developed to help academic activities.

Key Words: Social Network; Social Network Media; Social Network Media Services

Introduction

The profile of Information and Communications Technology [ICT] has continued to rise globally that it has continued to catch the attention of researchers including Nigeria. Its prospects, possibilities and challenges have been explored in all professions including education. Several studies have

pointed to the indispensability of ICT to either developed, less developed and emerging nations. Any nation that intends to make a footprint in the sands of time of time embraces ICT hence the Federal Ministry of Education (FME) made it a compulsory subject at the senior secondary school level in Nigeria. At the turn of the century, several scholars decried the absence of a viable ICT policy in African countries. Prominent among such scholars are Lundu and Mbewe [1993] with Nnebe [2008] complementing such calls. Over the years the challenges of ICT became evident as seen in the works of Alli [2009], Babalola [2010a], Isah [2012] and the FRN [2006].

In Alli [2009], it was well explained that the major challenges of ICT among tertiary institutions involved the dearth of hardware and software which are not produced in Africa. Alli [2009] explained that most technology centres in Africa generally and in Nigeria specifically utilize outdated equipment whose spare parts may not be easily located hence most times equipment upgrade will be the alternative and with poor funding of universities, such funds are not often available. The result of the malaise according to Alli [2009] is frequent absence of ICT services or its epileptic provision making most universities incomparable to their counterparts in the west thus bring about the production of internationally uncompetitive graduates in a globalized competitive employment market. The foregoing position was earlier mentioned by Okhiria [2007]. Again among the challenges associated with ICT in Africa as enunciated by Babalola (2010 and 2011) include absence of critical infrastructure in Nigeria such as electricity and hardware. In a paper delivered at a Trust Africa sponsored dialogue conference on Higher Education [Babalola, 2010b], elaborated on the challenges associated with the procurement and utilizations of bandwidth among African Higher Education institutions. In another paper Isah (2014), further alluded to ICT challenges as data and curriculum challenges. A similar study by Emunemu, Isah and Isuku (2014) on students perspectives on the Open Distance Learning (ODL), revealed that the absence of core infrastructural facilities affect and influence education at all levels. The findings of the study indicated that a significant difference existed among participating and accredited universities in Nigeria on the availability of ICT equipment to different categories of students in various schools while the preference of ICT hardware utilization among students varied. The study observed the same result with internet access in accredited universities.

The prospects of ICT cannot be over emphasized as it currently stands in higher education especially universities. The arrival of ICT has in a way changed the lexicon of educational provision which used to be through the regular classrooms. In a study, Ajadi (2012) described modes of academic services delivery in schools that included the regular face to face mode in which students interact with teachers on the learning basis face to face. The study further

identified correspondence studies that takes place with lecturers and students having to communicate via the postal systems and eventually the open distance learning etc. In the study, Ajadi (2012), explained that the open distance learning is a mode of education facilitated and founded on the use of ICT. This was corroborated by Okunade [2012]. Educational media is fast changing as other services are also changing. The arrival of e-library, e-business, e-commerce are all part of the changing experiences associated with ICT and education. Just as these changes are ongoing, communication media has began to witness a changing landscape which commenced with the e-mail. At the commencement of the e-mail, there was the use of the Internet Service Providers (ISP) as infrastructure for internet access was not readily accessible. Internet access was only for a few. Though this situation has changed in Nigeria over the past one and half decades of the new millennium, new challenges continue to emerge. The immediate concern of this paper is the communication media which has expanded beyond the regular e-mail. New modes of communications have emerged that are useful to educational institutions that include the social media.

The significance of a study of this nature becomes very crucial as we observe the role and position of university education in nation building. The roles assigned to university education in Nigeria can be well articulated from the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) and the works of Akangbou (1985). Both works see the university system as an avenue for the production of high level technical manpower for any nation hence world renowned economists did not fail to advice governments to invest solidly in education. Specifically for the university of Ibadan, its position stands strategic in Nigeria and Africa being the pioneer of university education in Nigeria. This paper is of the opinion that with its classification by the National Universities Commission (NUC) as a first generation university, policy success at the University of Ibadan (UI) can easily percolate into other universities hence this study investigated the use of social media websites in the educational advancements of the university community.

From the perspective of this study, a university community consists of its personnel (students and lecturers), metropolis (infrastructural facilities). It is clear that these two have complimentary roles on one another. In most advanced climes especially in universities and world class institutions, communication and interaction between lecturers and lecturers, lecturers and students is the essence of education. Okhiria (2007) did not fail to point out that a core difference between products of Nigeria universities and their counterparts from other parts of the world lay in their inability to access ICT materials. In subsequent studies after Okhira (2007), Isah, Emunemu and Fabunmi (2012), dwelt extensively on the availability and access of lecturers to ICT equipment in first generation universities. The study found low access to ICT equipment by lecturers in Universities where such equipment were available. The study corroborated

Babalola (2010) position that indicated that not much has changed between 2010 and 2012 on the issue of access to ICT materials. However, the methodology of access is fast changing again with the introduction of social media. The question therefore is what is a social media? what are the types of social media currently available?

At this juncture, this paper will want to state from its research inspirational perspective that social media equipment and types have become many. Its availability and access depends on the type of media you are searching for and the purpose. The types to be used in this paper will depend on those available and already accessible to the generality of lecturers and students not only in the University of Ibadan but in other climes, universities and are already on the internet. This is so because as at today, not much has changed between the findings of 2010, 2012 and 2015 on the access of lecturers and students to internet services as services rendered by most first generation universities ICT centers continue to be epileptic, while no appreciable changes have been seen in critical infrastructural developments as electricity in the universities and in Nigeria.

The purpose of this study is to find out the level of ICT utilization specifically narrowing down to lecturer/student interaction using the social network services (SNS). The study investigated the levels of awareness of stakeholders on the potentials of the SNS as well as investigated the levels of relationships that exist between equipment, software and stakeholders (lecturers/students)

The Social Network Media

Though there could be several definitions and descriptions of the term social media, this paper understands that this subject is all about communication and how to reach a large audience electronically. According to Boyd and Ellison (2007) from the universities of California and Michigan both in the United States of America on www.mimosa.pntic.mec.es conceptualized social media as an electronic social (public) network sites that allows people of different ages, races, genders, interests, professions and dispositions share ideas or interact on mutually beneficial issues on the internet. In the description of Boyd and Ellison (2007), social media also referred to as social networks describes them as providing social network services (SNS). What type of social network services do they provide? They serve as links to strangers and people of like minds in need for different issues to a common platform. Boyd and Ellison (2007) identified some social network sites to include; LinkedIn, face-book, QQ, Hi5, MySpace, etc In a similar write up, the following types of network sites for social media were identified. This time it was based on their types for example; Profile based SNS that shows members profiles the show-members names, ages, pictures interests, likes and dislikes. These forms of websites could leave opportunities for leaving messages and contacts.

Another one is the content based SNS and identified in these groups are; Flickr, YouTube and last.fm. There is also the White-label SNS that offer members the

opportunities to create and join communities. There is the Mobile SNS; MySpace, Twitter, MYUBO etc that allows users and members to interact with phones, pictures, videos etc. Micro-blogging/Presence updates services include; Twitter, Jaiku etc. There are several visible social network media online that were not popular at the time several of the above authors wrote. Among those prominent now include Baidoo and Twoo.

It can be seen that the social network media has become popular and could be used for several purposes. Still on the work of Boyd and Ellison (2007), before the arrival of SNS, social user groups were prevalent on the internet. In a survey by Smith and Duggan (2013) of the Pew Research Centre on www.pewresearch.org observed that 73% of adult online users use social network media while 42% of those adults use multiple social network media. According to a survey by Ruben (2008), over 148 higher education schools were involved in the use of social network media with a major part using conversation blogs for the dissemination of information. In another survey retrieved from www.babson.edu that surveyed the use of social media among higher education functionaries observed that social network media has become popular among lecturers and students for passing information, submitting assignments and communicating issues to class members. In the survey, it was observed that over 400 million people use face book with 50% of them logging into their face book at least once in a day. However, the ages of those involved in social networking has not been too stressed but Ruben (2008) and Boyd and Ellison (2007) explained that most social network sites do not admit members who are less than 18 years of age. However, with the growing popularity of the social network media globally, what is the hope of it for the University of Ibadan? How popular is it for the majority of lecturers and students?

Statement of the Problem

The growing popularity of the Social Network media for various uses and its usage in higher education in other climes inspired the enquiry of such popularity at the University of Ibadan noting that 21st century education is mainly associated with ICT. ICT and the social network media are utilized in the dissemination of information, receiving assignments, submitting same and connecting with people of like minds online. The benefits of social networks in educational institutions cannot be over emphasized as previous researches indicate that 73% of adult online users log into face-book. Surveys also show that 42% of users log into the Face- book once a day. The importance of communication between students and lecturers is important. The University of Ibadan occupies a unique place among higher education institutions in Africa and in Nigeria hence this important tool in ICT (SNS) is investigated to find out the extent to which members of the university of Ibadan academic community have adopted its tenets. The study investigated the levels of stakeholders awareness of the provisions of SNS, levels of utilization with a view to establishing whether a

relationship exist among the various variables.

Research Questions

The following research questions were developed to give focus to the study

1. What is the level of awareness of the university of Ibadan community (lecturers and students) on the existence and potentials of Social Network websites/services?
2. Do members of the University of Ibadan community (lecturers and students) belong to several social network groups?
3. What is the interaction level of the University of Ibadan community (lecturers and students) on social network media?
4. Are there evidences of university of Ibadan students' interaction with class mates on educational issues on social network media platforms?
5. Does age show any impact on the use of social networks?
6. Is there any evidence of university of Ibadan lecturers' interaction with students on educational issues on the social network website/media platforms?

Methodology

The study adopted the survey research design of the '*ex post facto*' type. The total study population consisted of all lecturers in the 13 faculties of the University of Ibadan totaling 1,460 and 400 level students that totaled 3,413. The multi state sampling procedure was adopted in selecting respondents. Stage 1 involved the selection of faculties using the simple random sampling technique to select 46% of faculties which came to the Faculties of; Agriculture, Arts, Education, Law, Pharmacy and Social Science. Stage 2 involved the use of purposive sampling technique to select 20% of lecturers in the sampled faculties and students. The third stage involved the purposive selection of Directors in the University who constitute a part of the academic community as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Selection of Respondents in Faculties (Lecturers and Students)

S/N	FACULTIES	LECTURERS				FINAL YEAR STUDENTS				TOTAL SAMPLE
		M	F	T	20%	M	F	T	20%	
1	Agriculture	116	41	157	31	154	156	310	52	83
2	Arts	147	27	174	35	199	359	558	112	147
3	Education	104	40	144	29	246	276	522	104	133
4	Law	14	13	27	5	61	92	153	31	36
5	Pharmacy	23	20	43	9	31	29	60	12	21
6	S. Science	92	20	112	22	237	62	299	60	88
7	Directors of Centres	Directors selected here include; academic planning, physical CEDEV, ARCHIS, Inst. of Educ. And other centres at the University of Ibadan								15
	Total	496	161	657	131	928	974	1,902	371	523

Source: *Extracts from academic planning unit of the University of Ibadan (2014)*

A researcher developed instrument titled 'Social Network Media in the University of Ibadan Questionnaire' (SNUIQ) was adopted for the study. SNUIQ consist of 3 sections A-C. Section A elicited demographic information from respondents while Section B elicited information on the technical awareness and knowledge of Social Networks. Section C elicited responses on Social Network Media/Services and their educational perspectives. The instrument was subjected to face and content validity by colleagues and experts in educational management/management information systems in the Faculty of Education and the Institute of Education of the University of Ibadan. A trial test of the instrument on students and staff of the university outside the target population (faculty) yielded 'r'-0.89 reliability coefficient using the Crombach alpha statistic. Test items in sections B and C were designed after the Likert type scale of SA = Strongly Agree (4) points, A=Agree (3) points, D-Disagree (2) points and SD =Strongly Disagree (1) point. The corrections observed were effected and the instrument served on respondents using trained assistants. Data from retrieved instruments were collated. The research questions were answered using descriptive statistics as frequency counts, mean, percentages and standard deviation.

Results and Findings

From the 523 sampled respondents served with questionnaire, 513 representing 98% were received. The received questionnaire had the distribution represented in the Pie Chart below (Fig 1)

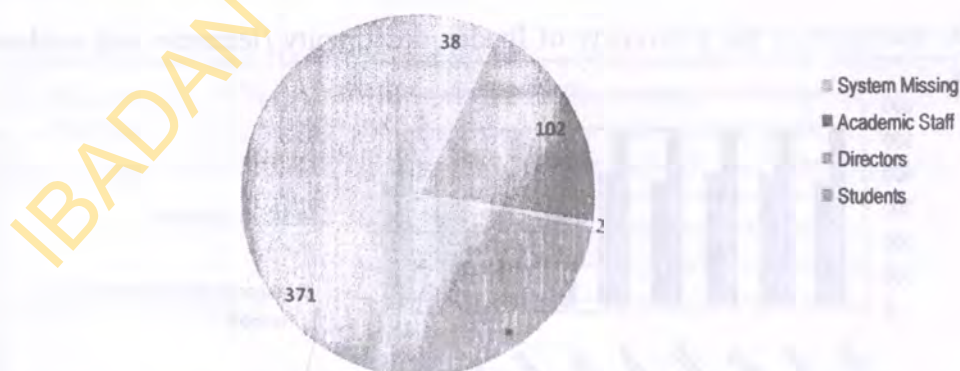


Figure 1: Distribution of responses received from respondents

Research Question 1

What is the level of awareness of the University of Ibadan community (lecturers and students) of the existence of social networks and their uses?

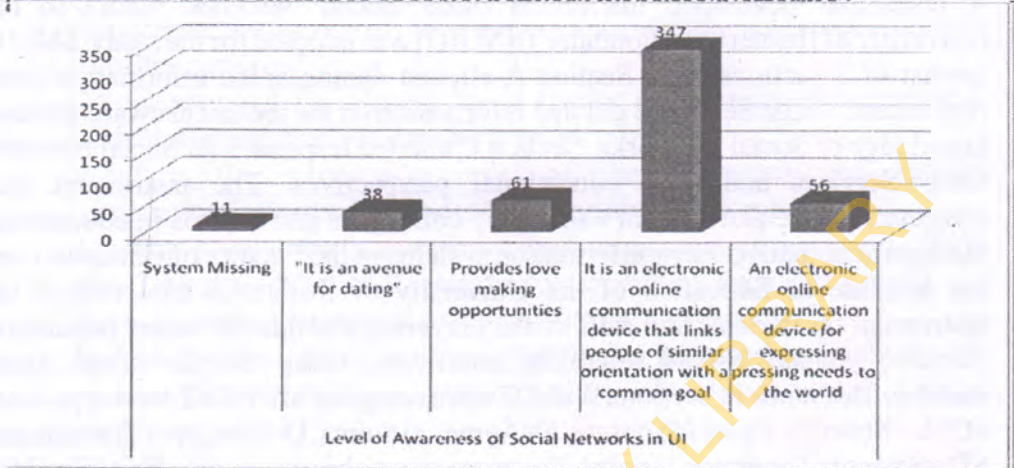


Figure 2: Chart showing responses to test question by all categories of respondents

The response in figure 1 showed that 347 respondents representing 68% clearly responded to the right answer as provided in the test question and an indication that the community is not completely ignorant of the use, potential and services of Social Networks.

Research Question 2

Do members of the University of Ibadan community (lecturers and students) be

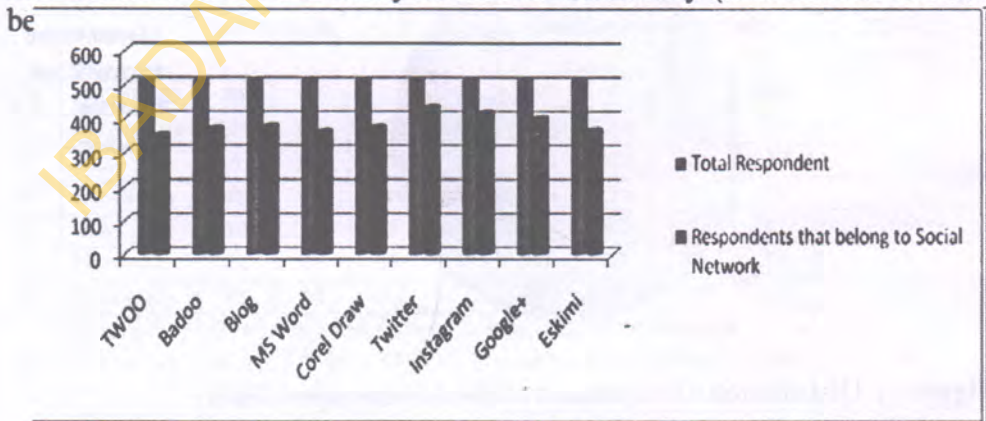


Fig 3: University Community (lecturers and students) interaction on Social Networks

Figure 3 shows the number of staff and students that engage in the listed networks. The number indicates that almost all respondents are involved in more than 1 network. The levels of patronage can be seen from the extent of the bars.

Research Question 3

What is the interaction level of the University of Ibadan community (lecturers

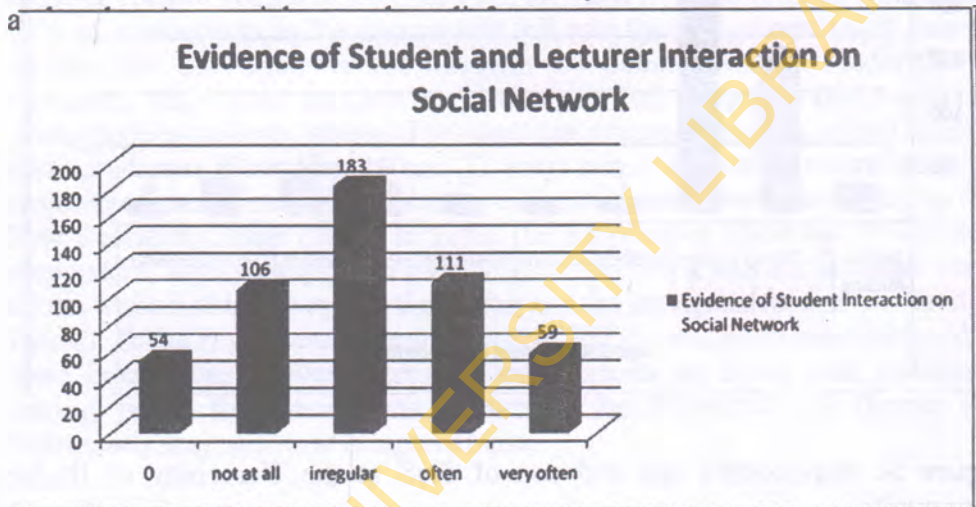


Fig 4: Evidence of levels of interaction on SNM at University Community Levels

The result show that 106 representing 21% of respondents don't interact while 183 representing 35% interact irregularly. On the average 170 representing 32% do some interaction. It indicates that though the community members are on the network, the social networks are used for other purposes rather than academics.

Research Question 4

Are there evidences of University of Ibadan students' interaction with class mates on educational issues on social network media platforms?

This research question is still answered in figure 4. Since most of the users are

irregular on the use of interaction for academic purposes, then they may not be using it to contact their classmates for academic purposes. Figure 2 also provides an insight into the answer for research question 4. Though most users know and understand the uses and potentials of SNS, their uses are yet to be customized in the university to academic purposes.

Research Question 5

Does age have any impact on the use of social networks as evidenced from

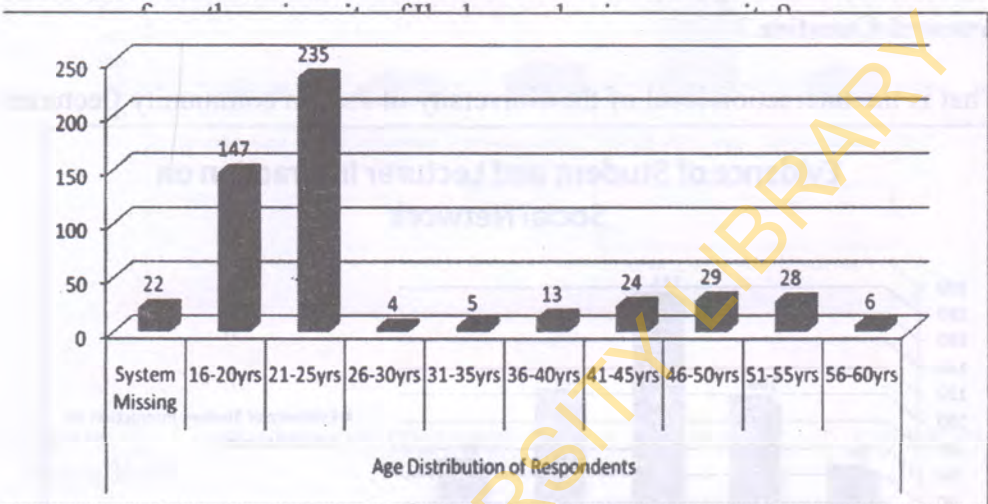


Figure 5: respondent's age and use of SNS at the University of Ibadan Community

Discussion

The popularity of the use of social network cannot be over-emphasized in the present digital dispensation world-wide. The truth is that the social network media assists among other things to locate people, events and disseminate information among diverse people irrespective of location and environment. From the findings of this study the University of Ibadan academic community is not left out. From the works of Ruben (2008), Boyd and Ellison (2007) and Isah, Emunemu and Fabunmi (2012), it is evident that the University community has good hardware and software to accomplish tasks on various ICT issues. Arising from the findings of Babalola (2010), Isah (2012), it is also evident that ICT infrastructure is growing by the day which may not be unconnected with calls from scholars for the provision of more funds to the Nigerian academic community.

Arising from Table 2, 347 respondents representing 66% of the sampled community members supplied the correct answer to what a social network media

is. This indicates that only 34% could not do so for now. It is expected that with more advocacy, in less than no time, every person in the community will be aware. Again, it is so clear that members of the community will patronize several social network media at the same time. The largest patronage is to twitter followed by Instagram (Fig 3) but curiously, the findings in Figure 4 indicated that out of 523 sampled respondents, 343 representing 66% have either not interacted at all or did not interact with classmates on academic matters but interact on other issues. This finding is of importance to all stakeholders of the academic community of the University of Ibadan as it will facilitate information dissemination and communication.

Another curious finding is that out of 523 sampled respondents, 382 representing 73% of respondents in the community fell into the age groups 16-26 years. It implies that both students and lecturers use Social Network Media (SNM). However, while most scholars may conclude that the predominant users are young people-students, it should be noted that average schooling age of Nigerian undergraduates is between 16 and 22 years hence it cannot be concluded that majority of users are students only, there are other users who are not students. The Pew Research Center (2013) reported the adoption of SNM by 74% of adult respondents in its survey but in its survey, the face book was the dominant use by adults while in this survey it is the twitter and the Instagram for the University of Ibadan. In the Pew research centre report of 2013, it was also observed that there were interactions between lecturers and students on SNM with institutions having pages for interactions. However, the University of Ibadan (UI) community may need to leverage on these.

Conclusion

This study premised on several studies which have since shown poor access to ICT services at the University of Ibadan. This survey indicates that such assumptions are gradually easing away. The results of this study has showed that well over half of respondents are versed on the use of SNM and actually deploys it in disseminating information, linking up with friends and mates but not used for educational purposes. It is the position of this paper that SNM can be adopted for class discussions, interactions and lecturer to student activities.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are hereby made;

1. The University of Ibadan should create an enabling SNM platform in its website to enable lecturer/student interaction or vice versa as it marches towards a first class world university.
2. There should be adoption of digital teaching in all faculties, not on

selected areas.

3. Lecturers should be trained more on the novelties of the use of digital platforms especially the use of blogs and other teaching related platforms.
4. Classes and faculties should be encouraged to open web pages on the UI website platforms for the uploading and downloading of assignments, coursework and continuous assessments. This has been successfully attained by the University of Ibadan Distance Learning Center and can be deployed in the regular programme.
5. Policy makers must continue to fund the digitalization programme through the provision of such infrastructure as; ICT laboratories, digital blackboards and how to use them efficiently.

References

- Ajadi, O.T. (2012). *5 Instructional Delivery Modes and Distance Learners Academic Performance in Southwestern Nigeria Universities*. A Ph.D Thesis of the University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.
- Akangbou, S.D. (1985). *Introduction to Educational Planning in Nigeria*. Vikas Publishing House, PVT Ltd, Anserhi Road, New Delhi, India
- Alli, M.H. (2009). *Centre for Information Technology (CIT), Bayero University, Kano*. Quaterly News Bulletin, Kano, Nigeria. Vol 4: 3; 26-28
- Babalola, J.B. (2010a). *Transition from Chalkboard to Digital Whiteboard: Keeping Pace with Challenges of the 21st Century Learning Technologies in Developing Economy*.
- Babalola, J.B. (2010b). *Economics of Transforming Higher Education in Africa*. A paper presented in Trust Africa's Higher Education Experts and Policymakers Dialogue on Trends, Themes, Challenges and Opportunities from higher Education in Africa held from 27-28th September 2010 in the University of Bostwana, Gaborone, Bostwana.
- Boyd, D.M. and Ellison, N.B. (2007). *Social Network Sites: Definitions, History and Scholarship*. Journal of Computer Mediated Technology Vol 13. A Publication of the International Computer Association, USA. Pp 210-230.
- Duggan, M. and Smith, A. (2013). *Social Media Update 2013 in Pew Review Centre Studies* in <http://www.pewinternet.org/reports/2013/social-media-update.aspx> retrieved 18th September, 2015

Emunemu, B.O., Isah, E.A., and Isuku, E.J. (2014). *Students Perspectives on Open Distant Learning in Universities in Southwest Nigeria*. Journal of Sociology and Education in Africa (JOSEA), Vol. 12, No. 2. Kampala International University, Kampala, Uganda. Pp 307-320

FRN (2004). National Policy on Education. Federal Government Press, Abuja, Nigeria

Isah, E.A. (2012). *Management of Information as Predictor of Academic Planning Effectiveness in Nigerian Universities*. A Ph.D Thesis of the University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.

Isah, E.A. (2014). *Establishing Management Information Systems in Nigerian Schools*. B.O. Emunemu and F.S. Akinwumi [Eds], Educational Management Papers in Honour of Professor John Iheukwemere Nwankwo. Department of Educational Management, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria. Pp 493-504

Isah, E.A., Fabunmi, M. and Emunemu, B.O. (2012). *Information Availability for Educational Management in Nigerian Universities: Options for Reforms*. African Journal of Pedagogy Vol 4. Kampala International University College, Daresalam, Tanzania. Pp 157-173

Lundu, M.C & Mbewe, G (1993). *Factors Restraining the Formulation and Implementation of a National Information Policy (NIP) Process. The Zambian Experience*. African Journal of Library and Information Science. Nigeria 3.1:23-33

Nmembe, H.E. (2008). *National Policy on Information Technology (IT). Policies of the Federal Republic of Nigeria: The Obasanjo years (1999-2007)* Vol. 3:45-91, Nigeria.

Okhiria, P (2007). *Zinox Spearheads ICT Revolution in Nigerian Schools*. Vanguard Newspapers, Thursday 8th February, 2007. Pp 32

Okunade, A.O. (2012). *Distance Learning: Solution to Admission Problems*. Official News Letter of the Distance Learning Centre, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria. October 2012. Nigeria.

Reuben, R. (2008). *The Use of Social Media in Higher Education for Marketing and Communications: A Guide for Professionals in Higher Education*.