

# Usage of Social Media Tools by Library and Information Science (LIS) Students in Nigerian Library Schools

Ebiere Diana Orubebe\*, Oluchi Cecilia Okeke\*\*,  
Bolaji David Oladokun\*\*\*, Benedicta Okechukwu Uchendu\*\*\*\*

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigated the use of social media tools by LIS students in Nigerian library schools. In so doing, the study examines the types of social media platforms utilized by Library and Information Science (LIS) students, the most commonly visited sites, and the challenges associated with social media use. A descriptive survey design was employed, and convenient sampling was used to select 248 LIS undergraduate students from five Nigerian universities. A structured questionnaire, validated by experts, was the primary instrument for data collection. The findings reveal that WhatsApp, TikTok and YouTube are the most frequently utilized platforms for communication, content consumption, and interaction, while professional and educational tools like LinkedIn and Microsoft Teams are less commonly used. The most significant challenge faced by students is the high cost of internet access, which limits their engagement with social media. Other challenges include misinformation, poor connectivity, and lack of computer literacy. The study recommends that educational institutions integrate both socially engaging and professional platforms into the academic process and develop policies to make internet access more affordable. Further, promoting digital literacy and responsible social media use is essential for improving student engagement and academic performance.

## 1. Introduction

Social media platforms provide individuals with the opportunity to engage in two-way communication, enabling anyone with an online account to share their thoughts and opinions with other users. These platforms, which are web-based technologies, empower people and groups to create, share,

\* Central Library, Rivers State University, Port Harcourt (ebiere21910@gmail.com) (First Author)

\*\* Enugu State University of Technology, Enugu State (oluchukwu.okeke@esut.edu.ng) (Co-author)

\*\*\* Federal University of Technology, Department of Library and Information Technology, Ikot Abasi, Nigeria (bolaji.oladokun@yahoo.com) (Co-author)

\*\*\*\* University Library, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Port Harcourt Rivers State Nigeria (benedicta.uchendu@iaue.edu.ng) (Co-author)

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and exchange information in an online environment (Bakare, 2018). Through social media, both individuals and organizations can establish profiles and disseminate information about various activities and interests. With its rapid expansion, social media now connects individuals from all corners of the globe.

Social media, in general, refers to the use of digital tools that facilitate social interaction. It encompasses web-based and mobile applications that allow users to create, engage with, and share both user-generated content (e.g., personal photos, videos, writing) and existing media (e.g., news, radio, television) in a multiway communication environment. Social media has become integral to student life, providing platforms where libraries can connect with their users and the broader university community. Increasingly, social media is recognized as a valuable educational tool that can enhance student performance (Rajendrasing et al., 2023).

Undergraduate students, defined as those pursuing but not yet having completed their first degree at universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, or monotechnics, frequently access social media through laptops, mobile phones, and other digital devices. In Nigeria, undergraduates use these platforms for various purposes, including chatting, reading news, making online transactions, video and audio calls, group discussions, and research. Popular social media platforms among students include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp, and blogs, which allow users to share content globally without the limitations of distance or cost (Kutu & Kutu, 2022). Social media, recognized as an important educational resource, enriches students' learning experiences and contributes to their academic growth (Ashraf et al., 2021).

The use of social media for academic purposes plays a crucial role in enhancing undergraduate performance. Consequently, there is increasing interest in how these platforms can be leveraged to improve academic achievement. Social media not only facilitates communication between companies and consumers but also helps tertiary institutions disseminate coursework, encourage student discussions, and address administrative matters (Akande, 2022).

In higher education, online learning through social media has become widespread due to its flexibility in terms of time and location (Cant et al., 2021). Social media supports collaborative learning, fosters critical thinking, and enhances communication and writing skills, as noted by Warsah et al. (2021). The authors further emphasize its role in facilitating communication between lecturers and students. With the advent of social media tools, many students now use these platforms to research, complete assignments, and communicate with professors and lecturers (Aduba & Mayowa-Adebara, 2022). This study, therefore, seeks to assess the use of social media by undergraduate students in Nigerian library schools.

### *1.1 Statement of the Problem*

Despite the growing integration of social media into academic and personal lives, there remains a significant gap in understanding its specific impact on library and information science (LIS) undergraduate students in Nigerian universities. While social media has revolutionized communication, learning, research, and education worldwide, including in Nigeria, its use as an educational tool offers both opportunities and challenges. Benefits such as flexibility in time and location, enhanced

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learning experiences through simulations and virtual laboratories, and improved feedback mechanisms make social media a valuable resource in education (Balci et al., 2015).

Several studies have explored social media usage among university students in Nigeria, with a focus on its impact on information retrieval, academic success, and general student engagement (Akinboro & Olayinka, 2023; Ademiluyi & Ademiluyi, 2020; Bashir et al., 2021; Ekwueme et al., 2018; Oyetola et al., 2023; Rasheed et al., 2020). However, no comprehensive research has specifically examined the patterns of use of social media use among LIS undergraduate students in Nigerian library schools. This lack of focused research represents a critical gap in the literature, as the unique academic and professional needs of LIS students may influence their use of social media in distinct ways. Addressing this gap, the present study aims to investigate how LIS undergraduate students in Nigerian library schools use social media, exploring its potential to enhance their learning experiences and academic performance. By filling this gap, the study seeks to contribute to the understanding of social media's role in the education of future librarians in Nigeria.

### *1.2 Research Objectives*

The general objective of the study sought to investigate the usage of social media by library and information science students in Nigerian library schools. The specific objectives were to:

- (1) Determine the types of social media utilized by LIS students in selected library schools in Nigeria
- (2) Determine the social networking sites commonly visited by LIS students
- (3) Identify the challenges associated with the use of social media among LIS students

## 2. Literature Review

### *2.1 Types of social media utilized by students*

A variety of social media platforms are widely utilized by students for both academic and personal purposes, with studies highlighting specific tools and their distinct roles. Among these platforms, Facebook and WhatsApp are two prominent examples. Facebook, known for its social networking features, is commonly used by students to seek and share information. In Malaysia, international students were found to use Facebook extensively for information-seeking purposes (Bukhari et al., 2020), with similar trends observed among students in other countries. Despite a generally positive attitude towards Facebook as an educational tool, students tend to use it more for extracurricular activities rather than academic purposes (Holly et al., 2023).

WhatsApp, on the other hand, has gained popularity as a mobile communication tool in educational settings. Its features, such as group chats, ease of information sharing, and accessibility, make it a convenient platform for student interaction and collaboration. Studies have demonstrated that WhatsApp enhances student learning by facilitating instant feedback, enabling group discussions,

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and improving engagement with course content (Maharani et al., 2021; Haron et al., 2021). Students have generally shown positive attitudes towards the use of WhatsApp in both academic and non-academic settings. Its widespread adoption has been particularly evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, where it played a crucial role in remote learning by connecting students and instructors efficiently (Van den Berg & Mudau, 2022).

Beyond Facebook and WhatsApp, other platforms like Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram are also significant in the academic context. Twitter, for instance, has been identified as an effective tool for enhancing writing skills among senior high school students (Espinoza-Celi & Pintado, 2020). The micro-blogging format of Twitter encourages concise and focused communication, which benefits students in improving their written production. YouTube, on the other hand, is frequently used by students for sharing and accessing educational videos, contributing to self-directed learning and supplementing traditional classroom instruction.

## *2.2 Social media sites commonly visited by students*

Various platforms have emerged as popular tools for communication, learning, and leisure among students across different regions. Sayeed et al. (2023) explored the problematic use of social media, particularly Facebook, among university students in Bangladesh during the pandemic. Their study revealed that Facebook was a highly visited platform, with 37.1% of students exhibiting signs of problematic use. The widespread use of Facebook for non-educational purposes, such as entertainment and downloading media, highlights the platform's dominance in this group. Facebook's accessibility, ease of use, and broad social networking capabilities make it a primary choice for students.

Kutu et al. (2022) investigated the awareness and challenges of social media usage among post-graduate students in South Africa during the lockdown. The study identified Facebook, Instagram, Zoom, Twitter, and WhatsApp as the most frequently accessed platforms. Each platform serves specific needs; for instance, WhatsApp is highly regarded for its ease of communication, while Instagram and Facebook are used for broader social engagement. These findings emphasize the integral role of these platforms, particularly for academic and collaborative purposes, as students turned to social media for maintaining academic connections during the pandemic. Bakare (2018) delved into the frequency of social media usage among students, revealing that platforms like Facebook are central to daily student life. The study found a significant correlation between age, gender, and urban residence with the number of hours spent on social media, particularly Facebook. Urban students and those above 20 years old spent a considerable amount of time—between five and eight hours daily—on social media platforms. This underscores the pervasive presence of Facebook as a top choice among students.

Nduka and Popoola (2024) conducted a descriptive survey to assess the awareness and usage frequency of social media technologies among postgraduate students of Library and Information Science (LIS) in Nigerian universities. They distributed structured questionnaires to 919 LIS post-graduate students, achieving an 81% response rate with 742 usable returns. The analysis, using mean and standard deviation, revealed that students frequently used social media platforms such as Wikipedia ( $\bar{x}=3.94$ ), Instagram ( $\bar{x}=3.86$ ), Facebook ( $\bar{x}=3.85$ ), Zoom ( $\bar{x}=3.78$ ), LinkedIn ( $\bar{x}=3.69$ ),

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YouTube ( $\bar{x}=3.54$ ), and Twitter ( $\bar{x}=3.52$ ). The study concluded that awareness and usage of social media among these students were high, and it recommended incorporating social media training into the LIS curriculum to enhance effective usage.

In a separate study, Friday et al. (2024) examined the adoption of social media in teaching LIS by lecturers in ten South-South Nigerian public universities. Utilizing a descriptive research approach, they surveyed 94 LIS lecturers, with 73 responding, resulting in a 77.66% response rate. The findings indicated minimal adoption of social media for instructional purposes among lecturers. However, those who did adopt social media used it to deliver lectures and share course materials, reporting benefits such as staying updated, improved communication with students, and enhanced digital skills. Challenges identified included unstable internet connectivity, erratic power supply, and limited digital literacy.

Olanusi and Falade (2023) conducted a study to explore the use of social media among undergraduate students of Library and Information Science (LIS) at Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko. The study revealed that a majority of the students used social media daily, with Facebook being the most frequently used platform. The primary device for accessing social media was the mobile phone, and the main purpose of usage was to interact with colleagues. However, the respondents acknowledged that social media often caused distractions.

In another study, Ansari and Khan (2020) examined the role of social media in collaborative learning. The study identified various platforms, including Facebook and WhatsApp, as critical tools for facilitating interactions between students and educators. WhatsApp, in particular, emerged as a popular platform for real-time collaboration and information sharing. The ability to engage in peer discussions and receive timely feedback from instructors made these platforms indispensable for academic success. Ernala et al. (2020) provided further insights into Facebook usage, particularly how students misreport the amount of time they spend on the platform. The study found that younger users and those who spent extended periods on Facebook tended to underestimate their usage. Despite this misreporting, Facebook remained a heavily visited site, with participants frequently accessing it for both academic and social reasons. The ubiquity of Facebook in student life is thus evident, even when students may not fully acknowledge the extent of their usage. Lastly, Escamilla-Fajardo, Alguacil, and López-Carril (2021) introduced TikTok as an emerging platform in higher education. While traditionally known for entertainment, TikTok was used pedagogically in a sport sciences course, demonstrating its growing influence in educational contexts. The study highlighted TikTok's potential for engaging students, fostering creativity, and promoting active learning. Although not as widely used as Facebook or WhatsApp for academic purposes, TikTok's popularity among younger students signifies its increasing relevance.

### *2.3 Challenges associated with the use of social media by students*

The increasing integration of social media into academic and social life has provided numerous benefits to students, but it also presents a variety of challenges that can hinder effective use. Several studies have explored these challenges, particularly in the context of educational environments. Sobaih et al. (2020) highlight multiple challenges associated with the use of social media for academic

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communication, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. One key issue was the sudden transition to online learning, which introduced a new culture of digital communication that institutions, faculty members, and students were not adequately prepared for. The absence of ethical guidelines exacerbated the situation, as inappropriate language and informal communication styles disrupted the quality of academic exchanges. Furthermore, the overwhelming volume of student inquiries became burdensome for faculty members, as they were unable to respond to every question promptly. Privacy concerns also emerged, with both students and faculty members expressing discomfort about sharing personal information, such as phone numbers and social media accounts, which blurred the lines between professional and personal lives. In addition, the diversity in student learning preferences created further challenges, as educators struggled to accommodate varying expectations—some students preferred written materials, while others favored video lectures or live discussions. More so, Olanusi and Falade (2023) acknowledged that social media often causes distractions.

Nasution (2022) echoes the sentiment that integrating social media into learning environments can be problematic. In the context of language learning, the study found that students and educators face difficulties when attempting to blend traditional educational methods with social media platforms. Assignments and class activities that rely on social media tools can create confusion and lead to inefficiencies in the learning process. The challenge lies in developing an approach that ensures social media enhances learning without causing distractions or diluting the quality of instruction. Also, Kutu et al. (2022) investigated the financial and technical barriers that hinder the use of social media for academic purposes. Their study on postgraduate students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal during the COVID-19 lockdown revealed that high costs associated with purchasing internet data bundles and smartphones were significant obstacles. Many students could not afford the resources needed to access social media platforms effectively, limiting their ability to engage with academic content. Additionally, poor internet connectivity further exacerbated these issues, as slow or unstable connections prevented students from fully participating in online discussions and learning activities. These challenges are particularly prevalent in developing countries, where infrastructure and economic constraints limit access to technology. Taken together, these studies illustrate the complexity of the challenges students face when using social media for educational purposes. Technical difficulties, such as poor internet connectivity and the high cost of data and devices, create barriers to effective participation. Privacy concerns, the lack of preparation for digital learning, and the overwhelming volume of communication further complicate the situation for both students and educators.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a descriptive survey design, which is deemed appropriate for collecting data from a large population in a systematic manner. The descriptive survey method allows the researcher to gather detailed information about the characteristics, behaviors, and opinions of respondents related

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to the research objectives. The design is particularly suitable for this study because it aims to describe the types of social media used, the commonly visited social media sites, and the challenges associated with the use of social media among undergraduate students in selected library schools in Nigeria.

### *3.2 Sampling Technique and Population*

The study employed convenient sampling to select the respondents from the population of undergraduate students of Library and Information Science (LIS) at selected universities across Nigeria. Convenient sampling was chosen because the researchers had easier access to these universities, enabling the efficient collection of data within the constraints of time and resources. Additionally, convenient sampling ensures that students who were available and willing to participate in the study were included, which increases the response rate and ensures adequate representation from each selected university. The total population of the study consisted of 248 undergraduate students from five Nigerian universities offering LIS programs. The universities involved and the corresponding number of students available for the study were: Rivers State University, Port Harcourt (65 students); Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba, Kogi State (94 students); University of Uyo, Uyo, Akwa Ibom (44 students); University of Abuja (31 students); and Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Agbani (14 students). Although these figures do not represent the total number of LIS students in each institution, they reflect the subset of students who made themselves available to participate in the survey and complete the questionnaire.

### *3.3 Instrument for Data Collection*

The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire, divided into two main sections:

- **Section A:** Collected respondents' demographic information, including gender, year of study, and faculty.
- **Section B:** Addressed the research objectives through three subsections:
  - (1) **Research Objective 1:** Types of social media utilized by LIS undergraduate students.
  - (2) **Research Objective 2:** Social networking sites commonly visited by LIS students.
  - (3) **Research Objective 3:** Challenges associated with the use of social media.

The structured questionnaire was validated by two experts in the field of Library and Information Science. They reviewed and provided feedback on grammatical errors, the sequence and order of the items, and the suitability of the response options, ensuring the instrument's reliability and validity.

### *3.4 Data Analysis*

The data collected were analyzed using both frequency counts and percentages to describe respondents' demographic characteristics. To answer the research questions, the study employed the mean to determine respondents' agreement or disagreement with various factors, based on a four-point Likert scale. Each item on the Likert scale was scored from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly

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agree). To interpret the results, a mean score of **2.50 or higher** indicated agreement with the statement, while a mean score of less than 2.50 signified disagreement. This approach allowed for a straightforward and quantifiable understanding of students’ perceptions regarding their use of social media.

#### 4. Results

A total number of 248 questionnaires were distributed to LIS undergraduate students in the universities understudied and 245 were completed and returned representing a 98.8% return rate.

Table 1. Respondents’ socio- demographic characteristics

| Demographic Variables | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------|-----------|----------------|
| <b>Sex</b>            |           |                |
| Male                  | 98        | 40             |
| Female                | 147       | 60             |
| <b>Level</b>          |           |                |
| 100                   | 56        | 22.8           |
| 200                   | 45        | 18.3           |
| 300                   | 33        | 13.5           |
| 400                   | 111       | 45.3           |

Table 1 above shows that 98 (40%) respondents were male while 147 (60%) respondents were female. This implies that female respondents were more than the male ones. Also, data in the table showed that 56 (22.8%) were in 100 level, 45 (18.3%) were in 200 level, 33 (13.5%) were in 300 level, 111 (45.3%) were in 400 level. This implies that, majority of the respondents were in 400 level.

Table 2. Types of social media utilized by LIS students

| Types of Social Media | N   | Mean | SD    |
|-----------------------|-----|------|-------|
| WhatsApp              | 248 | 3.06 | 35.98 |
| Facebook              | 248 | 2.99 | 34.37 |
| LinkedIn              | 248 | 2.23 | 20.63 |
| Instagram             | 248 | 2.93 | 28.07 |
| Telegram              | 248 | 2.90 | 31.29 |
| Zoom                  | 248 | 2.79 | 20.21 |
| Microsoft Teams       | 248 | 2.36 | 38.58 |
| Google Plus           | 248 | 2.05 | 33.98 |
| YouTube               | 248 | 3.04 | 39.72 |
| TikTok                | 248 | 3.05 | 41.68 |
| Skype                 | 248 | 2.37 | 50.05 |
| Snapchat              | 248 | 2.22 | 22.98 |

Keys: N= Sampled Population,  $\bar{x}$ =mean, SD: Standard Deviation

Table 2 indicates the types of social media utilised by LIS students. The most frequently utilized social media platforms by LIS students include WhatsApp ( $\bar{x} = 3.06$ ), TikTok ( $\bar{x} = 3.05$ ), and YouTube ( $\bar{x} = 3.04$ ). These platforms have emerged as the dominant choices for communication, content consumption, and interaction. Facebook ( $\bar{x} = 2.99$ ), Instagram ( $\bar{x} = 2.93$ ), Telegram ( $\bar{x} = 2.90$ ), and Zoom ( $\bar{x} = 2.79$ ), are also popular among the students, further highlighting the significance of these platforms for both academic and personal use. However, less commonly used platforms include Skype ( $\bar{x} = 2.37$ ), Microsoft Teams ( $\bar{x} = 2.36$ ), Snapchat ( $\bar{x} = 2.22$ ), LinkedIn ( $\bar{x} = 2.23$ ), and Google Plus ( $\bar{x} = 2.05$ ), which suggests that students do not rely heavily on these platforms for regular activities. The low usage of these professional and educational tools points to a preference for more socially engaging platforms, possibly due to the nature of the interactions and content offered on them.

Table 3. Social Media Networking Sites Commonly Visited by LIS Students

| Social Media Sites | N   | Mean | SD    |
|--------------------|-----|------|-------|
| WhatsApp           | 248 | 3.06 | 35.98 |
| Facebook           | 248 | 2.99 | 34.37 |
| LinkedIn           | 248 | 2.23 | 20.63 |
| Instagram          | 248 | 2.93 | 28.07 |
| Telegram           | 248 | 2.90 | 31.29 |
| Zoom               | 248 | 2.79 | 20.21 |
| Microsoft Teams    | 248 | 2.36 | 38.58 |
| Google Plus        | 248 | 2.05 | 33.98 |
| YouTube            | 248 | 3.04 | 39.72 |
| TikTok             | 248 | 3.05 | 41.68 |
| Skype              | 248 | 2.37 | 50.05 |
| Snapchat           | 248 | 2.22 | 22.98 |

Keys: N= Sampled Population,  $\bar{x}$ =mean, SD: Standard Deviation

In terms of the most commonly visited social media sites, data in Table 3 reveals that WhatsApp ( $\bar{x} = 3.06$ ), YouTube ( $\bar{x} = 3.04$ ), and TikTok ( $\bar{x} = 3.05$ ) again stand out as the most frequently accessed platforms. The consistency of high means across these platforms shows that students are heavily engaged with multimedia and instant messaging services. Other platforms like Instagram ( $\bar{x} = 2.93$ ), Telegram ( $\bar{x} = 2.90$ ), and Zoom ( $\bar{x} = 2.79$ ) are also regularly visited, reflecting the growing relevance of both social and video communication tools in the students' daily routines. However, sites like Skype ( $\bar{x} = 2.22$ ), Microsoft Teams ( $\bar{x} = 2.36$ ), LinkedIn ( $\bar{x} = 2.23$ ), Snapchat ( $\bar{x} = 2.22$ ) and Google Plus ( $\bar{x} = 2.05$ ) are less visited, indicating a lower interest in professional networking and ephemeral content.

Table 4: Challenges Associated with the Use of Social Media by LIS Students

| Challenges                                  | N   | Mean | SD    |
|---|-----|------|-------|
| Internet addiction                          | 248 | 3.25 | 52.16 |
| Distraction                                 | 248 | 3.12 | 42.10 |
| Anti-social behaviour                       | 248 | 3.31 | 59.03 |
| Cyber bullying                              | 248 | 3.07 | 49.24 |
| Writing and spelling skills deficiency      | 248 | 3.20 | 53.49 |
| Lack of privacy                             | 248 | 3.24 | 55.09 |
| Posting of rumours and lies                 | 248 | 3.34 | 59.06 |
| Lack of computer literacy skills            | 248 | 3.30 | 60.85 |
| Availability of too many social media tools | 248 | 3.17 | 47.06 |
| High cost of internet access                | 248 | 3.41 | 56.48 |

Keys: N= Sampled Population,  $\bar{x}$ =mean, SD: Standard Deviation

Table 4 indicates the challenges associated with the use of social media by LIS students. Data reveals that students face a variety of challenges when using social media, with the most significant being the high cost of internet access ( $\bar{x}$ = 3.41). This highlights the financial burden many students face when trying to access social media platforms, which can limit their ability to fully engage with these tools for both academic and personal purposes. Another major challenge is the posting of rumours and lies ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.34), which underscores the issue of misinformation prevalent on social media platforms. This challenge is closely followed by concerns related to anti-social behaviour ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.31), suggesting that social media may sometimes foster isolation or disengagement from face-to-face interactions. Additional challenges include lack of computer literacy skills ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.30), internet addiction ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.25), lack of privacy ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.24) and writing and spelling skills deficiency ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.20). These challenges reflect both personal and technical barriers that students encounter, ranging from excessive screen time to concerns about personal information security. Furthermore, availability of too many social media tools ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.17), issues such as distraction ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.12) and cyberbullying ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.07) indicate that the sheer variety of platforms can overwhelm students, contributing to their inability to focus effectively on academic tasks.

## 5. Discussion

The findings in this research have been discussed based on the structure of the questionnaire which as earlier noted was constructed in line with the study’s specific objectives.

### 5.1 Types of social media utilized by LIS students

The findings reveal that among Library and Information Science (LIS) students, the most frequently utilized social media platforms are WhatsApp, TikTok, and YouTube. These platforms are primarily used for communication, content consumption, and interaction. This finding aligns with the global

trend where WhatsApp has gained prominence as a mobile communication tool, particularly in educational settings. Its features, such as group chats, ease of information sharing, and real-time collaboration, make it an invaluable platform for student interaction. This is consistent with the findings of Maharani et al. (2021) and Haron et al. (2021), who noted that WhatsApp enhances student learning by facilitating group discussions and increasing engagement with course content. YouTube also emerged as a popular platform among LIS students, reflecting its role in providing educational videos and self-directed learning opportunities. The platform's multimedia format allows students to access tutorials, lectures, and other learning resources that complement traditional classroom instruction. As highlighted by Espinoza-Celi and Pintado (2020), YouTube plays a crucial role in enhancing student engagement, making it a vital tool for both academic and personal development.

While TikTok is typically associated with entertainment, its growing popularity among students may be attributed to its short, engaging video format that appeals to younger audiences. The educational potential of TikTok is gradually being explored, as demonstrated in studies where the platform has been used to foster creativity and curiosity (Escamilla-Fajardo et al., 2021). This indicates a shift in how students perceive and use the platform, transitioning from pure entertainment to educational and interactive content. Interestingly, Facebook and Instagram, though still widely used, are less dominant than WhatsApp and YouTube. This finding is consistent with studies such as Bukhari et al. (2020) and Holly et al. (2023), where Facebook was primarily utilized for extracurricular activities rather than academic purposes.

On the other hand, platforms like LinkedIn, Microsoft Teams, and Google Plus are less commonly used by LIS students. This suggests a preference for more socially engaging platforms rather than professional networking or formal educational tools. LinkedIn, which focuses on professional development and career networking, may not be as appealing to students who are more interested in peer interaction and entertainment. Similarly, Microsoft Teams and Google Plus, which are often associated with formal educational or corporate settings, may lack the social appeal that rives engagement on platforms like WhatsApp and TikTok.

### *5.2 Social Media Networking Sites Commonly Visited by LIS Students*

The findings reveal that WhatsApp, YouTube, and TikTok are the most frequently visited social media platforms by LIS students. These platforms are favored for their multimedia content and instant messaging features, reflecting the students' engagement with interactive and accessible tools. WhatsApp, in particular, is highly valued for facilitating real-time communication and collaboration, aligning with studies by Ansari and Khan (2020) and Kutu et al. (2022), who emphasize its importance for academic interactions. Platforms like Instagram, Telegram, and Zoom also see regular usage, indicating the growing relevance of both social engagement and video communication tools in students' daily routines. This is consistent with the findings of Kutu et al. (2022), where these platforms played a key role in maintaining academic connections, especially during the pandemic.

In contrast, LinkedIn and Snapchat are less frequently visited, showing a lower interest in professional networking and ephemeral content. This contrasts with studies like Bakare (2018) and Sayeed et al. (2023), which highlighted the widespread use of platforms like Facebook for non-academic purposes.

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Despite Facebook's dominance in other studies, its usage for entertainment and social engagement is more pronounced than in the present findings. Lastly, TikTok's growing popularity is notable, as demonstrated in Escamilla-Fajardo et al. (2021), who pointed out its educational potential in engaging students and promoting creativity.

### *5.3 Challenges associated with the use of social media by LIS students*

The findings reveal that the high cost of internet access is the most significant challenge for LIS students using social media. This financial burden limits their engagement, both academically and personally. This aligns with Kutu et al. (2022), who highlighted similar financial barriers, especially the cost of data and devices. Additionally, poor connectivity further hampers effective participation, especially in developing countries.

Another major issue is the spread of misinformation, with students concerned about rumours and false information. This challenge, coupled with the rise of anti-social behavior, suggests that social media can foster negative social interactions, leading to isolation. Sobaih et al. (2020) also pointed out similar challenges, noting that social media can blur the lines between professional and personal interactions, contributing to misuse and unethical communication. Findings revealed that lack of computer literacy and privacy concerns are also prevalent, reflecting both personal and technical barriers. These findings resonate with Nasution (2022), who noted that integrating social media into learning can cause distractions and lead to inefficiencies. Other challenges, such as internet addiction and the overwhelming number of platforms, further underscore the difficulties students face in maintaining focus and balancing their use of social media.

## 6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of this study highlight the types of social media platforms frequently utilized by LIS students, the sites they commonly visit, and the challenges they face in using these platforms. WhatsApp, TikTok and YouTube emerged as the most popular platforms, used extensively for communication, content consumption, and interaction. Despite their widespread usage, professional and educational tools like LinkedIn and Microsoft Teams are less frequently engaged with by the students. Challenges such as high internet costs, misinformation, and technical barriers like poor connectivity and lack of digital literacy significantly impact students' ability to utilize social media effectively. These findings underscore the importance of accessible and responsible social media use in academic settings. Based on the study's findings and conclusion, the following recommendations were proposed:

- (1) Educational institutions should promote the use of socially engaging platforms like WhatsApp and YouTube in academic settings while integrating professional tools such as LinkedIn and Microsoft Teams to balance entertainment with professional growth.
  - (2) Institutions should encourage the use of academic-friendly platforms like YouTube and Zoom
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- for both learning and collaboration to optimize student engagement in academic activities.
- (3) Policies should be developed to provide affordable internet access and data bundles for students, while also creating awareness about digital literacy and responsible use to combat misinformation and manage time spent on social media.

## 7. Implications of the Study

The study has implications for practice in teaching and learning in the LIS profession, policy, and future research. In terms of its implications for teaching and learning, the preference for platforms like WhatsApp and YouTube highlights the need for educators to incorporate more multimedia and real-time communication tools into the teaching process, enhancing student engagement and collaborative learning. Secondly, there is a need for policy interventions that address the high cost of internet access and promote digital literacy programs, ensuring that students can use social media platforms responsibly and effectively in academic contexts. Finally, further studies should explore the long-term effects of social media use on student learning outcomes, particularly focusing on the role of professional networking platforms and their integration into academic curricula.

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[ About the authors ]

**Ebiere Diana Orubebe** is the acting university librarian of Rivers State University, Port Harcourt. She holds a Bachelor's and master's degrees in Library and Information Science and is pursuing a doctoral degree in library and information science.

**Oluchi Cecilia Okeke** is the Head of Department, of Library and Information Science, Enugu State University of Science and Technology. She holds Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctorate Degrees in Library and Information Science. She is a member of the Nigerian Library Association, Association

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of Women Librarians in Nigeria, and National Association of Library and Information Science Educators. She has several publications including articles in referred Journals, conference papers, chapters in books and books.

**Bolaji David Oladokun** is an enthusiastic researcher and lecturer at the Department of Library and Information Technology, Federal University of Technology, Ikot Abasi, Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria. He holds a First-Class degree in Library and Information Science and a Diploma in Mass Communication with distinction. He also has a Master's degree in Library and Information Science from Ignatius Ajuru University of Education in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, where he finished with distinction. He is also a Certified Librarian in Nigeria (CLN) and a Nigerian Library Association (NLA) member. He is also a member of the Nigerian Association of Library and Information Science Educators (NALISE) and the Association for Information Science and Technology (ASIS&T). He has authored over 100 articles published in accredited journals, conference proceedings, and book chapters. He also has three (3) books to his credit in the library and information science field.

**Benedicta Okechukwu Uchendu** is the E-Librarian of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. She is a certified Librarian of Nigeria and a member of the LIBSENSE Open Science Nigeria; she is committed to promoting Open Science practices in the country. Her research interests include library automation, research data management, open science, and information needs and utilization. She holds both a bachelor's and a master's degree in Library and Information Science, and I am currently pursuing a Ph.D. in the same field.

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