

Attitudinal Disposition of Nigerian University Students toward Social Networking Sites

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Abstract—Internet has consolidated into a cohesive entity and amalgamated itself as a very powerful platform that has changed the way people do things. Social Networking Sites (SNSs) cannot be underestimated or jettison because no other communication medium which has given an international and globalized audience and dimension to the world like it. Facebook, Myspace, YouTube etc each of these and many other SNSs play a vital role on interaction and communication. The access to the internet for SNSs browsing is everywhere now. It is clearly established that even politicians, influential people, corporate managers, security agencies, lecturers, school administrators, and children are using SNSs thus students as well. Most SNSs are similar to each other there is commonality in their technical features. The study seeks to find out the level of students' attitude towards SNSs usage in the selected northern Nigerian universities. Quantitatively it was found that Nigerian students have positive attitude towards the SNSs; and that there is no significant difference in terms of gender. However, differences were found significant in terms of faculties in the extent of students' attitudes toward the SNSs usage.

Index Terms—Social Networking Sites; Attitude; Facebook; Interactionism

I. INTRODUCTION

Historically, in 1914 the protectorates of Southern and Northern Nigeria were amalgamated with the colony of Lagos. That was done by the former British colonial governor of the region called Fredrick Lugard. That gave birth what is now known as Nigeria.

For the past few years, the internet has consolidated into a cohesive entity and amalgamated itself as a very powerful platform that has changed the way people do business, or deal and perhaps the way the people communicate and educate. This has been possible through the use of Social Networking Sites (SNSs). As such the SNSs cannot be underestimated or jettison because no other communication medium, which has given an international or, a globalized audience and dimensions to the world like it. We have seen how some electronic and printed media houses like Aljazeera, BBC, Times Magazine, and CNN have linkages with Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, and YouTube. Each of these SNS plays a vital role on communication especially during the 2008 American election [1], Iranian 2009 elections [2] and Israel/Palestinian 2009 conflict and recently the Middle East revolution crises. Online SNSs have become the universal source of information and interaction for many millions of people, at homes, at businesses, at schools, places of work or universities. The access to the internet for SNS browsing is anywhere now a day. It is done in the school computer

laboratories, libraries, cafes and on mobile phones and PDAs. [5] stated that the proportion of teenagers use the mobile, 81.6% to stay in touch with friends or loved ones.

Now it is clearly established that beside students even politicians, influential people, corporate managers, security agencies, lecturers, school administrators, and children are using SNSs [6]. In Nigeria many have presence on SNSs even the current president is on Facebook just like the other prime ministers and the presidents across the globe i.e. US president. The university students' involvement in social networking sites has increased considerably. Yet the level of social network usage between the undergraduate and postgraduate students in the universities has not been ascertained clearly[3].

II. OBJECTIVES

The objective of this study is to find out: 1) the level of students' attitude towards SNSs usage in the selected Northern Nigerian universities. 2) The difference in attitude towards SNSs in terms of gender and faculty.

III. QUESTIONS

Questions asked are: 1) to what extent is the students' attitude towards SNSs in Northern Nigerian universities? 2) Is there any gender difference in the extent of attitude towards SNSs among Northern Nigerian universities students? 3) Is there any variation among the faculties in terms of the attitude towards SNSs among Northern Nigerian universities students?

IV. LITERATURE

One of the issues raised [4] was lack of theory that can explain the difference in success and failure by SNS with relevance to acceptance and usage in order to advice developers.

Symbolic interactionism, is one of the major theoretical perspectives in sociology. This perspective has a long intellectual history, beginning with the German sociologist Max Weber (1864-1920) and the American philosopher, George Mead (1863-1931). Both of them emphasized the subjective meaning of human behavior, the social process, and pragmatism. On this [7] stressed that Interactionists focus on the subjective aspects of social life, rather than on objective, macro-structural aspects of the social systems. For interactionists, humans are pragmatic actors who must continually seek to adjust their behavior to the actions of other actors in the society. Thus, the interactionist theorist sees humans as active members, and creative participants who construct their social world, not as passive, conforming objects of socialization [7]. In the same line [8] also asserts that symbolic interactionists are often

criticized by other sociologists for being overly impressionistic in their research methods and somewhat unsystematic in their theories.

A. Social Networking Sites

Social networking sites (SNSs) can be defined according to [9] as “web-based services that allow individuals to:

1. “Construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system,”
2. “Articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection,” and
3. “View and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site.”

Social networking has created new ways to communicate and share information. Social networking websites are being used regularly by millions of people, and it now seems that social networking will be an enduring part of everyday life.

Structurally most SNSs are similar to each other there is commonality in their technical features. It is observed [10] [11] most provides a profile which may include two specific modules, a comment section where other signed up users can leave their comments or messages, and a list of the user's friends.

B. Classification of SNSs

Some many more SNSs are said to be link to so many ideological interest or trying to promote certain creed or deceit. Many of these sites were religious, professional, cultural, and discretionary and many more pornographically in nature and by content others are religious like MyChurch, Muslimdotcom and Muxlima. But Xanga, QQ, Cybrowl, Hi5, Friendster, Ockut, Jaikuand so on are general. LinkedIn is for professional and Second Life is more of a game and virtual feelings and many more others.

C. Students' Attitudes, towards Social Networking

An attitude as a construct is hypothetical psyche response an action or reaction. It represents individual's dislike or like for something positively or negatively. Attitude is just a decision about something. Friendship and interaction result from attitude [12].

The ability to develop new relationships seems to be a stronger feature of social networking sites. Hence, [13] showed that most of friendships that begun through these sites led to face to face meetings and continued relationships. [4][3] further assert that “the way we feel influence the way we interact therefore private attitude can enhance or damage social relation.”

In similar occurrence [14] investigated the attitude towards SNSs and its usage and found gender difference where he reported female 92% and 80% male. He also reported differences in percentage in the SNSs usage among various faculty students. In her study [15] found that “gender, race and academic achievement have negatively influence student attitudes towards internet use”. In another recent study by [16] indicated that Facebook allow only people who know each other to access their profile It means everyone is likely to have any one as a friend.

It is understood from the available data from recent studies it indicates that many SNSs user students for that matter who turn to the internet or the SNSs like YouTube and so on for pornography or social contact do so because they consistently fail to succeed socially in their own world due to the gained bad behaviors from such action [17].

V. METHODOLOGY

This quantitative research designs was descriptive in nature and the 200 subjects were measured once by administering questionnaires from the six selected universities from which two from each of the three geo-political zone of the Northern region was selected by cluster sampling. The 200 sample respondents were randomly selected in consideration of various demographic characteristics such as gender and faculty. Fig. 1 and Fig. 2 show the gender distribution and their distribution according to faculty accordingly.

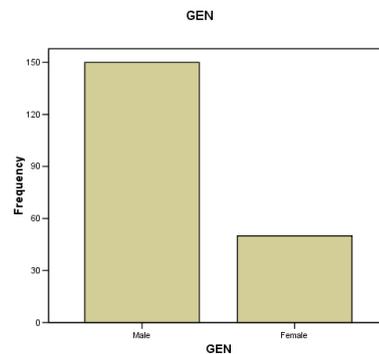


Figure 1. Distribution of respondents by gender

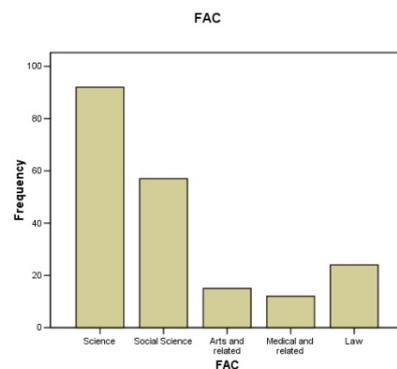


Figure 2. Distribution of respondents by faculty

Quantitative research is all about quantifying the relationships between variables. It is an established fact that such things like behavior tends to be difficult to control as it changes over time [18] pp327; [19] pp 256.

VI. RESULTS

Question one: What is the extent of students' attitude towards SNSs in Northern Nigerian universities?

The mean distributions result and mean plot of the students' opinions with regard attitude toward using social networking sites were presented in Table 1 and Fig. 3 accordingly below.

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Question two: Is there any difference among gender in the extent of attitude towards SNSs among Northern Nigerian universities students?

In table 2 below the Independent t- test result indicates the gender differences regarding the student's attitude toward SNSs in Northern Nigerian universities

Question three: Is there any variation among the faculties in terms of the attitude towards SNSs among Northern Nigerian universities students? Table 3 presents One way ANOVA result on Attitude toward SNSs among Students in Nigeria according to different faculties examined. Mean differences were presented in table 4 where Bonferroni test shows the differences that exist among the faculties.

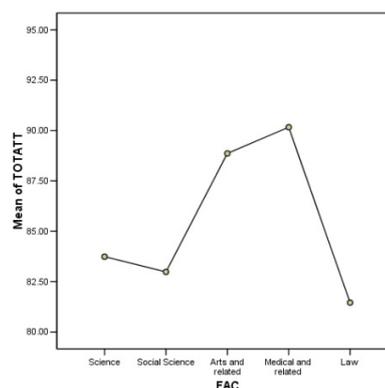


Figure 3. Mean plot of responses on total attitude by faculty

TABLE I.
EXTENT OF ATTITUDE TOWARDS SNSs AMONG NIGERIAN STUDENTS

	N	M	SD	SA		A		U		D		SD	
				N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
I have negative attitudes and values towards SNS different from that of other students in this university	200	2.9	1.3	37	18.5	35	17.5	49	24.5	46	23.0	33	16.5
My interpersonal offline relationships with other students have had a positive influence on my personal growth, values and attitudes.	200	3.6	.99	31	15.5	103	51.5	37	18.5	21	10.5	8	4.0
Since coming to this University, I have developed a close personal offline relationship with at least one lecturer.	200	3.2	1.3	38	19.0	63	31.5	34	17.0	39	19.5	26	13.0
My faculty/university is on SNS which has positive influence on my studentship, personality and attitudes	200	3.0	1.1	27	13.5	45	22.5	53	26.5	61	30.5	14	7.0
My SNS interactions have had a positive influence on my personal growth, values, and attitudes.	200	3.6	.98	41	20.5	86	43.0	50	25.0	17	8.5	6	3.0
Using online social networking site allows me to express my feelings clearly.	200	3.6	1.1	52	26.0	77	38.5	37	18.5	25	12.5	9	4.5
I feel SNS can be use to communicate exam leakage and exam malpractice activities.	200	3.2	1.3	47	23.5	49	24.5	48	24.0	24	12.0	32	16.0
I like SNS because I seek assistance from online friends about my problems	200	3.6	1.2	57	28.5	78	39.0	25	12.5	24	12.0	16	8.0
I like being independent of others when browsing SNS.	200	3.6	1.1	47	23.5	74	37.0	45	22.5	23	11.5	11	5.5
It has been difficult for me to contact and make friendship with other students	200	2.7	1.2	21	10.5	46	23.0	36	18.0	58	29.0	39	19.5
I prefer to always share and study with other students.	200	3.7	1.2	61	30.5	74	37.0	30	15.0	20	10.0	15	7.5
Among my friends on SNS are my lecturers who teach me in a class.	200	2.7	1.3	25	12.5	37	18.5	37	18.5	56	28.0	45	22.5
I am very sociable among colleagues both online and offline.	200	3.8	1.1	65	32.5	70	35.0	36	18.0	18	9.0	11	5.5
Few of the students I know would be willing to listen to me and help me if I had a personal problem.	200	3.7	1.1	51	25.5	85	42.5	34	17.0	20	10.0	10	5.0
I make friends very easily and quickly on SNS more than face to face.	200	3.3	1.3	52	26.0	56	28.0	27	13.5	40	20.0	25	12.5
I use to be shy with online friends so I control my interaction with them.	200	2.6	1.2	17	8.5	48	24.0	31	15.5	65	32.5	39	19.5
I consider myself un popular offline.	200	2.9	1.3	34	17.0	34	17.0	48	24.0	50	25.0	34	17.0
Using SNS has a place in my religious rules, regulations and injunctions.	200	2.9	1.3	31	15.5	42	21.0	51	25.5	42	21.0	34	17.0
I prefer interaction with my old friends and family members on SNS than others.	200	3.3	1.2	41	20.5	64	32.0	40	20.0	37	18.5	18	9.0
I dislike using SNS often especially during class hours.	200	3.5	1.3	58	29.0	71	35.5	25	12.5	22	11.0	24	12.0
In my opinion there is a need to control SNS usage during class hours in this university.	200	3.7	1.3	77	38.5	62	31.0	22	11.0	19	9.5	20	10.0
SNS can be use as teaching/lecturing medium in this university.	200	3.9	1.1	79	39.5	67	33.5	25	12.5	16	8.0	13	6.5
I am not interested in using SNS because it can be use for Internet scam, dupe and fraud	200	2.9	1.2	25	12.5	48	24.0	46	23.0	54	27.0	27	13.5
Seldom use of SNS may dehumanize and demoralize individual students.	200	2.8	1.2	21	10.5	52	26.0	51	25.5	37	18.5	39	19.5
Using SNS by university students has grown wide that will become inevitable in the near future	200	3.9	1.1	87	43.5	61	30.5	25	12.5	17	8.5	10	5.0
Valid N (listwise)	200												

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TABLE II.
GENDER DIFFERENCES AMONG NIGERIAN STUDENTS IN THE ATTITUDE TOWARDS SNS

		Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval	
									Lower	Upper
TOTATT	Equal variances assumed	2.661	.104	2.699	198	.008	5.25333	1.94604	1.41571	9.09096
	Equal variances not assumed			2.997	102.701	.003	5.25333	1.75277	1.77701	8.72966

TABLE III.
DIFFERENCES AMONG NIGERIAN STUDENTS IN THE ATTITUDE TOWARDS SNS IN TERMS OF FACULTY

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1031.840	4	257.960	1.789	.133*
Within Groups	28122.080	195	144.216		
Total	29153.920	199			

*p>0.05

TABLE IV.
BONFERRONI TEST OF COMPARISON ON DIFFERENCES AMONG NIGERIAN STUDENTS IN THE ATTITUDE TOWARDS SNS IN TERMS OF FACULTY

(I) FAC	(J) FAC	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Science	Social Science	.75667	2.02427	1.000	-4.9909	6.5042
	Arts and related	-5.12754	3.34394	1.000	-14.6221	4.3670
	Medical and related	-6.42754	3.68586	.828	-16.8929	4.0378
	Law	2.28080	2.75255	1.000	-5.5346	10.0962
Social Science	Science	-.75667	2.02427	1.000	-6.5042	4.9909
	Arts and related	-5.88421	3.48489	.929	-15.7790	4.0106
	Medical and related	-7.18421	3.81420	.611	-18.0140	3.6455
Arts and related	Law	1.52412	2.92217	1.000	-6.7729	9.8211
	Science	5.12754	3.34394	1.000	-4.3670	14.6221
	Social Science	5.88421	3.48489	.929	-4.0106	15.7790
	Medical and related	-1.30000	4.65106	1.000	-14.5059	11.9059
Medical and related	Law	7.40833	3.95264	.624	-3.8145	18.6312
	Science	6.42754	3.68586	.828	-4.0378	16.8929
	Social Science	7.18421	3.81420	.611	-3.6455	18.0140
	Arts and related	1.30000	4.65106	1.000	-11.9059	14.5059
Law	Law	8.70833	4.24582	.416	-3.3469	20.7636
	Science	-2.28080	2.75255	1.000	-10.0962	5.5346
	Social Science	-1.52412	2.92217	1.000	-9.8211	6.7729
	Arts and related	-7.40833	3.95264	.624	-18.6312	3.8145
	Medical and related	-8.70833	4.24582	.416	-20.7636	3.3469

VII. DISCUSSION

In the table 1 above out of the 25 question items asked on the attitude towards SNSs Usage item 1 (*I have negative attitudes and values towards SNS.*) has a very low mean= 2.9 and SD=1.3. The item was stated negatively and the responses out of the n=200 indicated agree=n46/23.0% and strongly disagree N=33/16.5%. This means majority denied having negative attitude towards SNSs usage. Another item (*I am very sociable among colleagues both online and offline*) has significant score of n=65/32.5% as strongly agree and n=70/35.0% as agree option. The item has the mean of 3.8 and the SD=1.1. Last Item 25 (*Using SNS by university students has grown wide that will become inevitable in the near future*) have a higher mean M=3.9 and SD having 1.1. This means many of the students are interested in using SNSs and are willing to continue with it. It also shows that they anticipated that the level of the usage will increase high that almost everyone will be using the SNSs among the students. It tally with [13] who showed that most of friendships that begun through these sites led to face to face meetings and continued relationships which subsequently boost the attitude towards SNSs. Many reported that SNSs have positive influence on their personal

growth, values and attitudes and that it allows them to express their feelings. Although overwhelming majority admitted that there is a need to control SNS usage during class hours because to them they dislike using SNSs often especially during class hours however majority accepted having positive attitude towards SNSs usage. More so many confirmed making friends very easily and quickly on SNS more than face to face. They consider themselves very sociable among colleagues both online and offline. Therefore they prefer to always share and study with other students and believed to be seeking assistance from online friends about their academic and personal problems.

To answer the second research question the independent t. test conducted on gender the n=200 respondents show the two groups consisting of the female group of n=50 and the male group of n=150. The t value has a significant score of 2.6 = .008 significance at two tails as shown in table 2 above. The table 2 also shows the F value was 2.66 with equal mean difference of .104 which shows that the t value slightly differs between the groups. The overall result indicated p>0.05 at two tailed. The magnitude of the difference was very little =.003. This suggests that there is no significant difference between the gender groups in the extent of attitude towards SNSs usage in the

northern Nigerian universities. This result concurs to [15] [14] whose results also confirmed that.

On the third question the one way ANOVA was used the result (table 3) shows the description of the faculties' scores in terms of the students' attitudes towards SNS Usage. The faculty of science has the highest $n=92$. Faculty of Medical and related has the lowest $n=12$. The general ANOVA group difference as shown in the table 3 above shows $F = (4, 257.9) = 1.7$ at .133 significance. Therefore there is significance difference among the faculties because $p > 0.05 (.133)$. Test of comparison (Table 4) also gives the difference between the individual group results against each other group. Where higher mean difference exist between medical and law while the lowest exists between the social sciences and sciences faculties.

VIII. CONCLUSION

If knowledge is power, communication is freedom. In sum, SNSs technologies such as Facebook, YouTube, MySpace and alike were found to be significantly used among students in Northern Nigerian universities. They provided such avenues for self expression especially among university students where they shared and interacted with each other. The study concluded that Northern Nigerian students significantly have high level of positive attitude towards SNSs they use SNSs to communicate and share information. It also concluded that there is no significant difference in terms of gender in the extent of SNSs usage. On the other there are significance differences among the faculties in the extent of SNSs usage. A number of the research limitations evident in this research can be overcome in future research. For example, there is the need to re-test these scales with a larger sample and confirmatory factor analysis this is in order to further confirm the validity of the constructs. Further studies are also required to targeting samples as unit of analysis other than university academic community. Due to fewer finance the present study was limited to only Northern Nigeria a wider area scope can be investigated to cover the whole of Nigeria.

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