

A photograph of a library interior, showing rows of bookshelves filled with books and several computer workstations with monitors displaying web pages. The image is framed by a blue border that appears to be peeling away from the cover.

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Contents

14. Management of Public Sector Records in Nigeria
- *Abiola Abioye* - 142
15. Awareness, Perception and Observance of Information on Patients' Rights by Doctors in Three Selected Hospitals in South West Nigeria
- *Benson Macaulay Oweghoro* - 171
16. Use of Social Media by Part-Time Students of the Polytechnic Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria
- *Airen Adetimirin, Sunday Adebisi Adeyemo & Olawale Oyewole* - 195
17. Publishing in an Electronic Age: Prospects and Challenges
- *Clement Adeniyi Akangbe* - 212
18. User Education as a Determinant of Library Use and Deterrent to Users' Deviant Behaviour in Three University Libraries in Oyo State, Nigeria
- *Afusat Olaide Akinsanya & Olalekan Abiola Awujoola* - 227
19. Prospects and Challenges of Teaching Computer-Aided Indexing in Library and Information Studies Programmes of the University of Ibadan, Nigeria
- *Osarobu Emmanuel Igudia & Sodiq Onaolapo* - 240
20. Influence of Exposure to Television and Social Media Explicit Images on Spousal Sexual Communication
- *Macharia Kiruhi and Wambui Kiai* - 255
21. Influence of the Automated Library System on the Cataloguing and Classification Practices in Academic Libraries in South-West Nigeria
- *Mary Nwanne Nwokeoma & Thomas Ayinla Ogunmodede* - 284
22. Impact of Library Resources on Academic Performance of Osun State University Students in Faculty of Education, Ipetu-Ijesa Campus, Osun- State, Nigeria
- *Bilikis Adefunke Babarinde & Kusoro Abiodun Adio* - 308

23. Battle Against Students' Plagiarism in Nigerian Universities for Academic Scholarship: Is Use of the Two-Edged Sword All that Matters?
- *Olawale Oyewole* - 330
24. X-Raying the Effects of Economic Recession on Academic Libraries' Services in Nigeria
- *Clement Chukwuma Okeji & Ibrahim M.M. Furfuri* - 348

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Use of Social Media by Part-Time Students of the Polytechnic Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Social media provides the avenue for communication and interaction among students and lecturers using multimedia features such as texts, pictures and videos. Despite the benefits associated with the use of the social media, it seems most students use social media mostly for various purposes other than academic activities. The main objective of this study is therefore, to find out the use of social media for academic purpose among part-time students in the Polytechnic Ibadan. A sample of 213 year one part-time National Diploma (ND) students was selected and data were collected using a questionnaire. Results revealed that Facebook was the most available and the most used social media for academic purpose. Majority of the students

chose learning and assignment as the academic activities that necessitated their use of social media. Erratic power supply of electricity and high cost of subscription to internet data bundle were the major challenges encountered by the students. Recommendations based on the outcome of this study were highlighted in this study.

Keywords: Social media, part-time students, polytechnic, Nigeria
Introduction

Introduction

The polytechnic is an institution established essentially for the production of middle level technical manpower. The Polytechnics in Nigeria are established to produce middle level manpower needed for industrial and technological development of the country. Two types of certificates are awarded at this level, namely: the National Diploma (ND) and the Higher National Diploma (HND). Students in Polytechnic undertake preliminary, ordinary (OND) or higher (HND) national diploma courses on part-basis. The regular students attend lectures every day of the week, while the part-time students attend lectures twice a week, once a week or occasionally. Part-time mode of study affords individuals who are employed to seek further knowledge and also get certified with diploma certificates

These academic activities include assignment completion, classwork, sharing of educational materials, learning, project, etc. Many students prepare course assignments, make study notes, tutor themselves with specialised multimedia, and process data for research projects. Students now use ICT for academic activities, Ufuophu and Ayobami (2012) observe that the ICTs include internet, satellite, cable data transmission and computer assisted equipment. All these are ICTs resources that can be used for academic purpose by polytechnic student. Social media is a product of ICT.

Davis *et al* (2012), refer to social media technology (SMT) as "web-based and mobile applications that allow individuals and organisations to create, engage, and share new user generated or existing content, in

digital environments through multi-way communication". Through this platform, individuals and organisations create profiles, share and exchange information on various activities and interests. An interesting aspect of social media is that, it is not limited to desktop or laptop computers but could be accessed through mobile applications and smart phones making it very accessible and easy to use. Examples of these social media platforms both on the web and mobile application include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Whatsapp, Instagram, blogs, etc.

Andreas and Micheal (2010) also view social media as a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Social media could be categorised into eight areas that are inter-dependence by their mode of usage by college students. One of the most commonly cited benefits of social media by students is their ability to facilitate collaborative learning and communication among peers and with people outside academia (Collins &

Hide, 2010; Rowland's *et al.*, 2011). Another frequently reported advantage of social media is its remarkable ability to facilitate information distribution.

Studies have been carried out to examine the use of social media. Camilia, *et al.*, (2013) examine the effect of social media sites usage on the study of Nigeria students in three higher institution in Mubi, Adamawa state, Nigeria, and reported that Facebook was mostly used by the students (95%). In another study conducted by Muriithi and Muriithi (2013) on students' motive for utilising social media network sites in private universities in Dar Salam, Tanzania, the findings indicated that Facebook was the most used social media network. It was found in their study that Facebook has the highest number of users with (46.1%), followed by Twitter (15.5%) while LinkedIn (2.3%), was the least used social media. The researchers also found that some of the respondents used more than one social network sites accounts and this increased total frequency.

The use of the social media by polytechnic students is

not free from challenges. Ezeani and Igwesi (2012) identify the challenges that Nigeria students face in the use of social media as lack of awareness, bandwidth problems, technophobia, and lack of maintenance culture, unreliable power supply, and copyright issue. Many factor might be responsible for this ranging from poor power situation in the country and lack of orientation in the part of some users on the benefits associated with the social media. Sanusi, Adelabu and Okunade (2014) note that the constraints that students face in the use of the social media for learning in Nigeria include lack of basic amenities, lack of conducive environment, lack of access to computer, cost of internet connection and lack of enthusiasm on the part of instructor. These show that there is a correlation between economic status and the use of social media.

Statement of the problem

The rapid advancement of media technology has had a great impact on the way students communicate on a daily basis. The growing dimension of the use of the social media among

the youths of today cannot be over emphasised. Over the years, the social media among students has become increasingly popular. Despite the benefits associated with the use of the social media by students, it seems as if most students utilise the social media mostly for various purposes other than academic activities. This is because observations and findings from studies revealed that most of the students used the social media for the purposes of watching films, discussion of national issues like politics, economy and religion matters, and connection with friends, access news, download of movies, songs and the upload of pictures. Interactions with some polytechnic students also revealed that some of them use the social media to share academic information, while others use the social media for basically communication purposes. It is against this background that this research is being conducted to ascertain the impact of students' use of social media sites by part-time students of the Polytechnic Ibadan on their academic performance.

Research Questions

The following research questions were asked to guide the study:

1. What are the various types of social media available to part-time students of the polytechnic Ibadan for academic purpose?
2. What are the social media used for academic purpose by part-time students of the Polytechnic Ibadan?
3. What are the access points to the use of social media for academic purpose by part-time students of the Polytechnic Ibadan?
4. What are the various academic activities that part-time students use social media for?
5. What is the frequency of social media use for academic purpose by part-time student of the Polytechnic Ibadan?
6. What are the constraints to the use of social media for academic purpose by part-time students of the polytechnic Ibadan?

Literature Review

Studies have been conducted on the availability of social media

and most especially on the use by students. Reuben (2008) reports on the use of social media in higher education (college) in Australia and notes that Facebook has great potential for engaging college students since the medium itself continues to have a dominating presence among 90% of all college goers. The statistics released by statista.com also showed the availability level of Facebook to be high. As at March 2015, Facebook had 1.451 billion users. This number no doubt will also include polytechnic part-time students.

Research has established that facebook seem to be the most used social media by students. Acheaw and Larson (2015) study students of the Polytechnic of Koforidum in Ghana were surveyed and results showed that 66.4% of the respondents identified Facebook as the most used social media, followed by Whatsapp 19.9%, while Yahoo Messenger 1.3% was the least. Similarly, in another study conducted by Muriithi and Muriithi (2013) on students' motive for utilising social media network sites in private universities in Dar

Salam, Tanzania, indicated that Facebook was the most used social media network (46.1%), followed by Twitter (15.5%) while LinkedIn (2.3%), was the least social media.

Students accessed social media through various ways, Muriithi and Muriithi (2013) in a study on students' motive for utilising social media network sites in private universities in Dar Salam, Tanzania found that majority of respondents (46%) used the social media through their Mobile phones, (23%) of the correspondents used computer only, while (30%) of respondents used both mobile phones and computers. The results of the study show that majority of the respondents representing 46% use mobile phone to access social media.

There are many academic activities that necessitate the use of social media for academic purpose. Tella (2009) also conducts a study in Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Unwana, Nigeria and outlines different academic activities to include reading, assignment completion, examination preparation and improvement of lecture notes. He further explains that without assessments and examinations,

it would be very difficult for students to progress in their academic pursuits. It is equally important for students to develop their personality and build their personal competence in various ways during the period of academic engagement as this will assist them to prepare for the future.

The students use social media at different frequency. Stefan and Agbaee (2011) study how campus students are using social media to support their studies and found in their studies that "64% of polytechnic students use social media to 'connect with classmates' to study at least several times per month, 41% used social media work for class assignments' at least several times per month. Naeema (2011) studied the purpose of using social media among the student of Sultan Qaboos University, Oman and found that the purpose for using social media includes general group discussion and idea exchanging, connecting with classmate about university life, asking question or response to a question, assignment preparation and argument. This shows that academic sharing, exchanging ideas and discussion

were found to be top most priority to the majority of the students.

Buhari, *et al.* (2014) surveyed the use of the social media by Polytechnic students in Kaduna Polytechnic and found out that most of the respondents used the social media all day between 6am-6pm, while others indicated that they spent more than five hours daily using the social media. Camilia, *et al.*, (2013) also examine the effect of social media sites use on the study of Nigeria students in three higher institution in Mubi, Adamawa state, Nigeria, 52% of the respondents used it for about 2 to 4 hour per day, while 4% of the respondents use the social media for about 8 to 10 hours each day.

Polytechnic students have also experienced some challenges in the use of the social media for academic purpose. Mohammed and Suleimon (2013) in their study of students of Nuhu Bamali Polytechnic, Zaria, Nigeria showed that insufficient finance was among the constraints that limited the use of social media by most of the respondents. The findings of Sanusi *et al* (2014) identify the

cost of internet connection as a factor that hindered the use of the social media by Nigerian student.

Methodology

The descriptive survey was used and the population consisted of 1442 year one part-time National Diploma (ND) students of the polytechnic Ibadan, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. The multi-stage random sampling technique was adopted to select three faculties while purposive sampling was used to select two departments with the highest number of ND1 part-time students. A sampling fraction of 40% was used to get a sample of 213. The questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection and descriptive statistics of frequencies, tables and percentage counts were used for data analysis.

Results

Demographic characteristics of respondents

Table 1 showed that most of the respondents 48 (22.7%) were from Business Administration department, followed by civil Engineering 34 (16%) of the res-

pondents. While the least respondents 21 (9.6%) were from Land Surveying and Geoinformatics and 18 (8.5%) from Fine and Applied Arts respectively. With respect to age, the table reveals that majority of the respondents 115 (54%) were be-

tween age 21-26, while the least 8 (3.8%) were between age 31-35. Results also showed that 143 (67.1%) of the respondents were of the male gender, while 70 (32.9%) of the respondents were females.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Departments		
Electrical Engineering	27	12.7
Civil Engineering	34	16
Business Administration	48	22.7
Purchasing and Supply	33	15.5
Office and Technology Managements	32	15
Fine and Applied Arts	18	8.5
Land Surveying and Geoinformatics	21	9.6
Age (years)		
16-20	70	32.9
21-25	115	54
26-30	20	9.3
31-35	8	3.8
Gender		
Male	143	67.1
Female	70	32.9

Answers to the research questions

Research question one: What are the various types of social media available to part-time students of the polytechnic Ibadan for academic purpose?

The result revealed that majority of the students (98.12%) indicated that facebook was most available social media to the part-time students followed by Google+ in the order of most available social media as expressed by (80%) of the part-time students while LinkedIn was the least available social media. However, it also

revealed that most of the part-time students in the three Faculties indicated that MySpace and LinkedIn (24.4%) and (17.9%) respectively was not available to them.

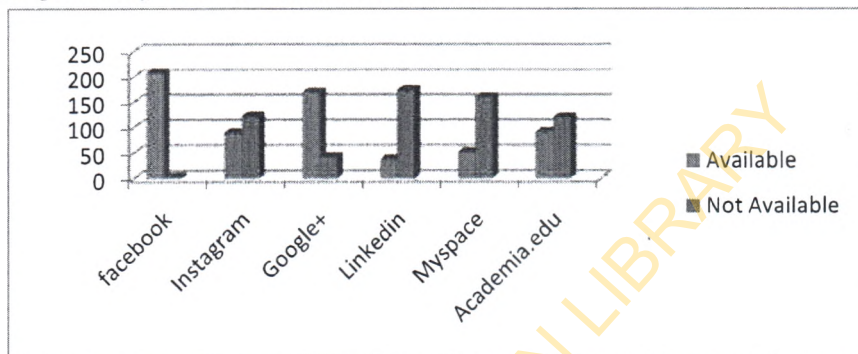


Figure 1: Availability of Social Media for academic purpose

Research question two: What are the social media used for academic purpose by part-time students of the Polytechnic Ibadan?

The part-time students indicated that the most used social media for academic purpose is Facebook with (87.8%) respondents. The second most used social media as indicated by part-time student was Google+ with (76.6%) of the respondents. While the least used were MySpace with (27.7%) and LinkedIn (22.1%).

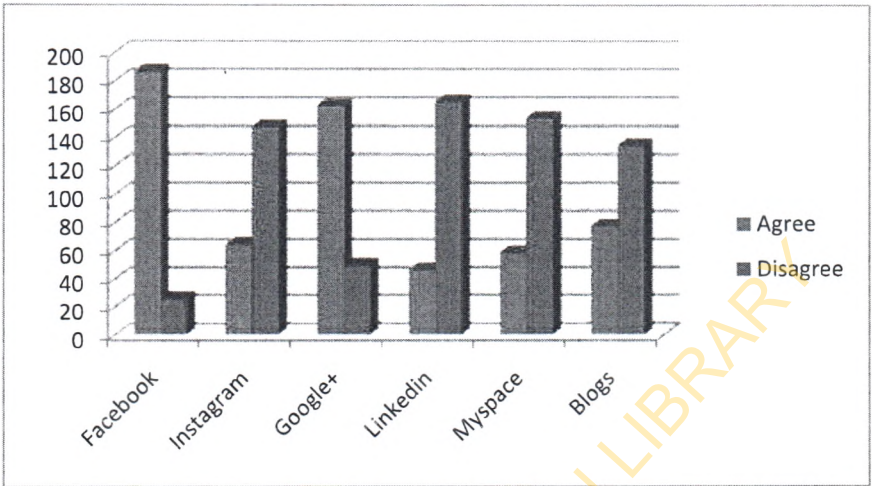


Figure 2: Use of social media

Research question three: What are the access points to the use of social media for academic purpose by the part-time students?

Fig.3 showed that mobile phone (98.1%) was the most used access point to social media by the part-time students followed by Laptop (82.1%). Laboratory (55%) and Tablet (48.8%) were the least access points for social media use by the students.

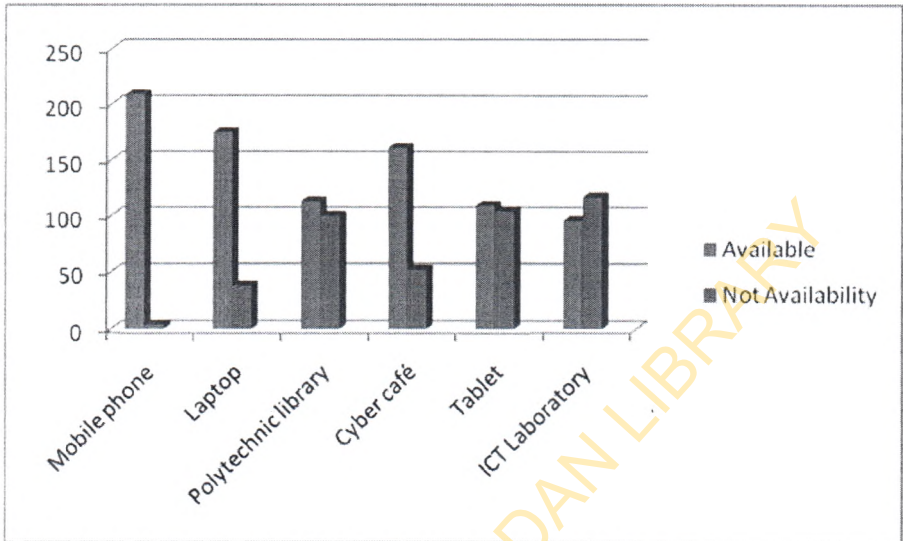


Figure 3. Access points to Social Media for Academic Purpose

Research question four: What are the various academic activities that part-time students use social media for?

Part-time students used social media to perform different academic activities. Majority of them (97.2%) indicated that Learning necessitated their use of social media, while (94.83%) chose assignment as academic activities that necessitated their use of social media. While examination preparation and continuous assessment preparation were the two least academic activities that necessitate their use of social media as indicated by (77%) and (79.3%) of the respondents.

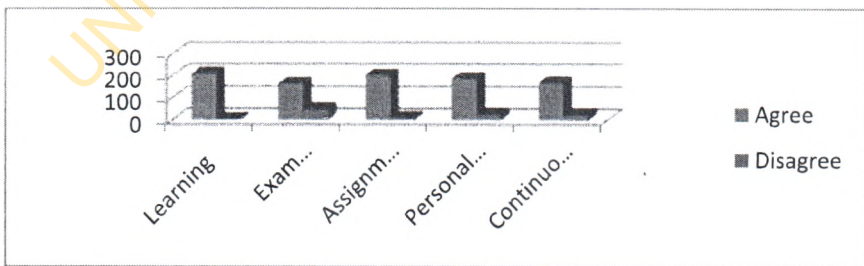


Figure 4. Academic activities necessitating the use of Social Media

Research question five: What is the frequency of social media use for academic purpose by part-time student of the Polytechnic Ibadan?

Figure 5. Indicated the frequency of time spent on social media by part-time students. Majority of the part-time students (88.813%) used Facebook daily. This was followed by Google+, which was also used daily by most of the respondents (48.35%). While the least-used social media was LinkedIn (14.55%) followed by MySpace (16.4%).

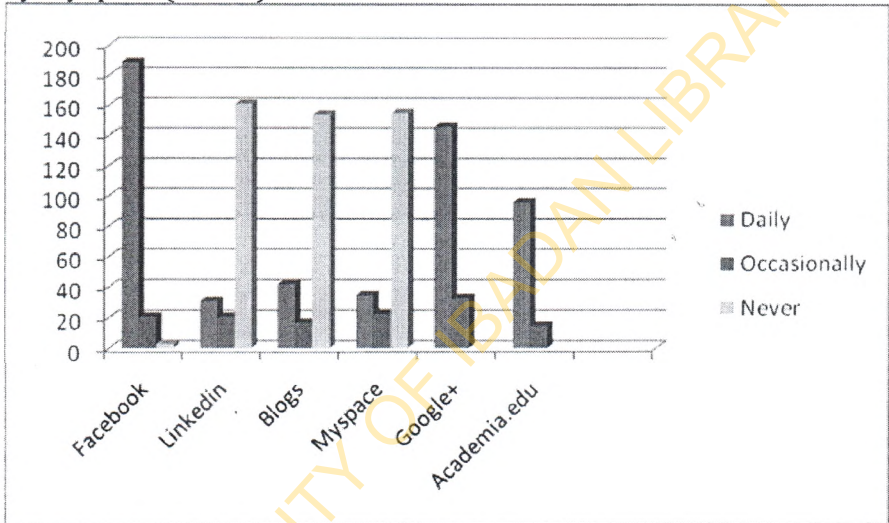


Figure 5. Frequency of use of Social Media

Research question six: What are the constraints to the use of social media for academic purpose by part-time students of the polytechnic Ibadan?

The part-time students faced several challenges in their use of Social Media for academic purpose. Majority of them (89.7%) indicated that erratic power supply was the major constraints, while (81.2%) identified high cost of subscription to internet bundle as a constraint to the use of social media for academic purposes. Other constraints that hinder the use of social media for academic purpose as indicated by (56.3%) and (76.6%) were apathy of friend to communicate academic issues and poor internet connectivity. The three

major constraints that hindered the use of social media by the students in a descending order were: erratic power supply (89.7%), high cost of subscription to internet data bundle (81.7%), and poor internet connectivity (76.6%).

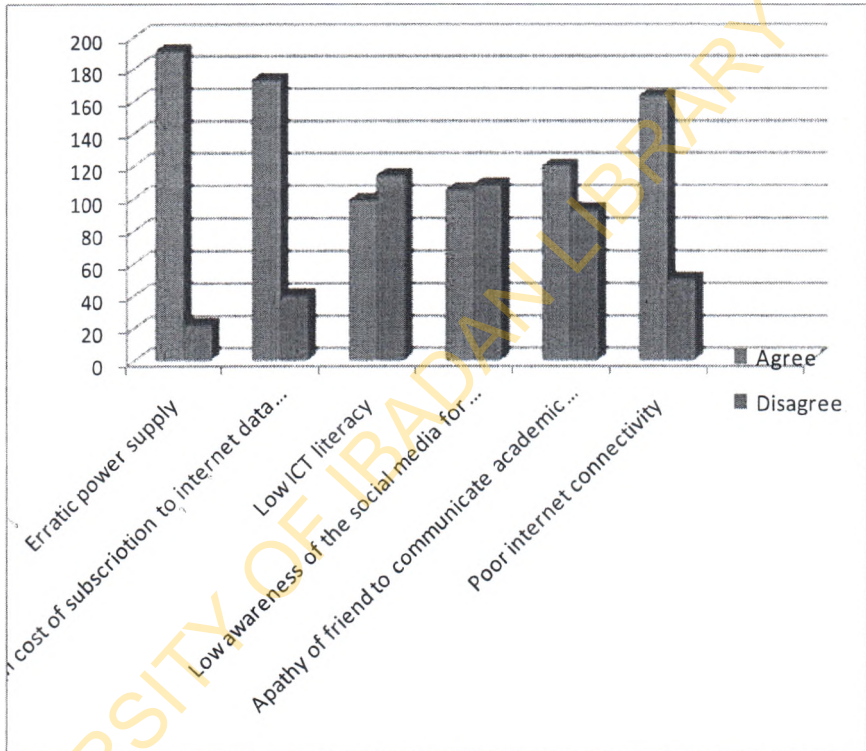


Figure 6: Constraints to the Use of Social Media for Academic Purpose

Discussion of the findings

Majority of the part-time polytechnic students indicated that the six social media available to them included Facebook, Instagram, Google+, LinkedIn, MySpace and Blogs, but the most available social media was Face-

book. A number of factors might be responsible for this ranging from the type of communication gadgets used by the students to their level of exposure to Information and Communication Technology (ICT). For instance, it takes a tablet, windows phone,

android or the computer to enjoy using Skype, Instagram and MySpace. A student whose phone cannot access these social media will consider them to be "unavailable". While even Java phones have Facebook pre-loaded on them. This agrees with the findings of Reuben (2008) who reports that Facebook has a dominant presence among 90% of students.

The study also found out that the most-used social media was Facebook. This could be due to Facebook being the most available social media to the students. This corroborates with the findings of Camilia *et al* (2013) who examined the effect of social media sites usage by students in three higher institutions in Mubi, Adamawa state, Nigeria and discovered that almost all the respondents (95%) agreed that Facebook was the most used social network.

The findings also showed that most of the respondents accessed social media through their mobile phone. This could be as a result of the prevalence of different types of mobile phones with internet capabilities at an affordable rate among the students as made available by different Chinese companies.

This is consistent with the findings of Shehu and Shehu (2014) in their study of challenges of social networking on students' reading habits in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria who find out that 140 (52%) students accessed the social networking sites through their cell phone.

Learning and completion of assignment were the major academic activities that necessitated the use of the social media by majority of the respondents. This could be because most of the students that were sampled were still in their first year of study and as such they would not engage in project writing and intensive research. This was in agreement with the statements of Subramaniam *et al* (2013) in Malaysia who explained that part-time polytechnic students in Malaysia should utilise the social media for academic activities like learning, assignment completion, and oral presentation and study sessions.

The respondents also stated that they utilised Facebook daily and this can be attributed to its being the most available social media to the respondents. This is also consistent with the results of the study conducted by Buhari *et al* (2014)

on Kaduna Polytechnic students Nigeria and found that most of the Polytechnic students with a mean score of 4.6, 3.4 and 3.2 spent more than five hours daily using Facebook, spent the all the day 6am to 6pm and all night 6pm to 6am on Facebook.

The study identified erratic power supply as the major constraint, followed by cost of subscription to internet data bundle as the second highest constraint faced by the respondents in their use of the social media for academic activities. This may be a manifestation of the fact that most of the respondents of this study noted that they had a personal monthly income below 10,000 Naira. It is from this money that they would pay essential bills and also get some daily necessities. This was also alluded to by Mohammed and Suleimon (2013) in their study of students of Nuhu Bamali Polytechnic, Zaria, where result showed that insufficient finance was among the constraints that limited the use of social media by most of the respondents. The findings of Sanusi et al (2014) on the challenges and prospect of social media among Nigeria students also

identified the cost of internet connection as a factor that hindered the use of the social media by the respondents.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The use of social media has changed the mode of social interaction in an unprecedented way. Social media by virtue of the network reach, present a very good medium that can impact not only on the social life of part-time polytechnic students but also on their academics. If the social media is not solely used for social reasons, part-time polytechnic students will maximise the potentials inherent in their use. Polytechnic management should make provision for an internet hotspot within the campus that can provide access to the Internet. This will limit the subscription of students to costly internet data bundles provided by the telecommunication networks. Lecturers in the polytechnic should encourage the use of the social media for academic purpose by giving discourse topics to the part-time polytechnic students that will

require them to use the social media to send their posts. Alternative sources of electricity like solar, generator sets and inverter should be provided to address the issue of erratic power

supply respectively within the campus. This will assist the part-time student to power their smart phones whenever they are on campus.

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