

SOCIAL MEDIA USE AND COMPETENCE AMONG LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE UNDERGRADUATES IN SOUTH WEST, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The advent of social media as both a personal and educational tool for information sharing and social interaction among undergraduates, including *Library and Information Science (LIS) undergraduates*, has brought about the need to examine their social media competence and use. . This study, therefore, investigated social media use and competence among LIS undergraduates. A descriptive survey research design of the ex-post facto type was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised one hundred and eighty-seven (187) 300L and 400L undergraduates from selected universities. Simple random sampling techniques using ballot systems were used to capture the students who participated in the study. Data was collected with the use of a structured questionnaire. Results showed that the level of social media utilisation among LIS undergraduates in selected LIS schools in South-West Nigeria was high ($\bar{x} = 2.31$). The overall level of social media competence of LIS undergraduates was high ($\bar{x} = 3.02$). The challenges faced while utilizing social media are slow internet speed (172, 92.0%), power failure (164, 87.7%), and inability to get required information (164, 87.7%). Social media use and social media competence of LIS undergraduates in selected LIS schools have no significant difference by gender ($p = (0.633 > 0.05; p = 0.306 > 0.05)$). The study concludes that the high level of social media use and overall high competence reflect a shift towards online interactions. Hence, recommended that LIS undergraduates should be encouraged to build a social networking identity that would reflect real-world social competence.

Keywords: Social, Media, Competence, Library, Information Science.

INTRODUCTION

The advent of social media has revolutionised communication and interaction across the globe, significantly impacting the lives of users, particularly students. In the context of Library and Information Science (LIS) education, understanding how undergraduate students utilise social media is vital. As future

information professionals, LIS students must develop essential competencies in using various platforms for information dissemination, networking, and collaborative learning (Awodoyin & Okiki, 2023). Social competency has therefore been known as the ability of an individual to understand the feelings and emotions of others and react appropriately to circumstances (Okolugbo &

Ebenuwa-Okoh, 2023). Consequently, these social competencies need to be transferred to the virtual world because of the technological age we are in. Increasingly, educational institutions emphasise the significance of social media competence (SMC) in their curricula, as students benefit from the dual role of social media as both a personal and educational tool (Raja & Nagasubramani, 2018). Moreover, SMC encompasses not only the frequency of social media use but also the proficiency with which individuals can navigate these platforms for educational purposes. This competence involves skills such as critical thinking, information evaluation, and ethical use of online information (Jenkins et al., 2016). As LIS students are trained to manage information, it is incumbent upon educators to ensure that they can adeptly use social media to engage with information and contribute to discussions in their field.

Gender differences in social media use have become a subject of interest among researchers. Studies have shown that women generally engage more with social media platforms than men, often demonstrating higher levels of social competence in online interactions (Bennett, Wells & Rank, 2020). This trend is essential to explore in the context of LIS education since understanding these differences can help educators tailor their teaching strategies to effectively engage both male and female students in using social media for their academic engagement (Hargittai, 2015). A gap exists in understanding how gender influences these competencies within Nigerian LIS schools, necessitating further investigation into these dynamics.

The Nigerian higher education landscape, particularly in LIS programs, presents unique challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, inconsistent internet access, and varying levels of digital literacy among students (Olise,

Dipeolu & Oluremi, 2020). These factors may significantly affect social media use and SMC among LIS undergraduates. Previous studies have shown that students often encounter barriers that hinder their ability to make the most of social media platforms for academic purposes (Oduguwa & Adetunji, 2019). Understanding how these challenges intersect with gender differences can provide insight into creating supportive educational environments that foster effective social media use. As Nigeria strives to enhance its educational frameworks in response to global digital trends, understanding the specific needs and experiences of LIS undergraduates is crucial. Recent reports indicate that female students may benefit from targeted interventions to further develop their SMC, as they often express a higher engagement with social media platforms (Adegoke & Oduola, 2020). Social media utilisation further plays a significant role in the daily lives of undergraduates.

However, many LIS undergraduates perhaps struggle to maintain a healthy balance in their social media use and often lack confidence in their ability to utilise these platforms effectively. Observations indicate that while female undergraduates tend to utilise social media more than their male counterparts, both genders face challenges such as slow internet speed, power failure, and difficulty retrieving information. As a result of the foregoing, this study seeks to examine social media use and competence among LIS undergraduates in Southwest Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The rapid proliferation of social media platform utilisation has transformed how undergraduates, including Library and Information Science (LIS) students, access information, communicate, and develop social competencies. However, gender differences persist in various dimensions of social media

use, influencing academic engagement, information literacy, and social interaction. While some studies report no significant gender differences in social media usage of undergraduates (Okolugbo & Ebinuwa-Okoh, 2023), others highlight disparities in ICT competence, social media behaviour, and digital resource utilisation between male and female students. Despite these insights, there remains a dearth of literature on how gender influences social media competence specifically among LIS undergraduates in South-West Nigeria, a critical group tasked with becoming future information professionals. Additionally, a deeper understanding of these gender-based differences is essential for promoting equitable digital participation in LIS education. Hence, this study examined social media use and competence among LIS students.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study in the selected universities in Nigeria:

1. What is the level of social media utilisation among LIS undergraduates?
2. What is the level of social media competence of LIS undergraduates? and
3. What challenges are faced by the undergraduates while utilising social media?

Hypotheses

H₁: There will be no significant differences in social media use of LIS undergraduates based on gender.

H₂: There will be no significant differences in social media competence of LIS undergraduates based on gender.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The level of social media utilisation by undergraduates has been linked to both positive and negative outcomes. On one hand, it facilitates networking and learning

opportunities; on the other hand, improper use of social media has been shown to decrease individual productivity and reduce concentration levels (Onojah, Obielodan, Onojah, Ajala, Sotuminu, & Sulaimon, 2020). For example, the study on undergraduate students' use of social media in school: A need for regulatory policies in Nigerian universities revealed that the use of social media negatively affects students' academic performance by diverting their focus from studies and consuming valuable time (Nannim, Njoku, Onuoha, Orji, & Njoku, 2023). Examples of social media platforms utilised by undergraduates are Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, TikTok, YouTube, etc. This was corroborated in a study on gender variations in social media usage and its perceived impact on the academic performance of Nigerian science undergraduates; the study found that undergraduates commonly use social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Google+, and Twitter (Ogundele, Ogbonnaya, Awofodu, Odusanwo, Zangonde, Akhigbe, & Agboola, 2023). The utilization of social media among undergraduates is widespread, serving various purposes including communication, information sharing, and social interaction. Research further indicates that students use social media to build social competence and engage with a global community, thereby enhancing their academic and professional skills (Adetoro & Okike, 2022). However, the balance between beneficial use and potential drawbacks remains a subject of ongoing investigation.

The relationship between SMC and social media utilisation is complex and multifaceted. High levels of SMC are associated with more effective and responsible use of social media, whereas low SMC can lead to misuse and negative consequences. Studies have developed scales to measure SMC, providing valuable tools for assessing students'

competencies and identifying areas for improvement (Zhu, Yang, Xu & MacLeod, 2020). Instructors and administrators can use these instruments to tailor curricular activities and training programs aimed at enhancing SMC among students. This proactive approach helps in mitigating the risks associated with social media use while maximizing its benefits for academic and professional development. The development and assessment of SMC are crucial for ensuring that students can navigate social media platforms effectively and responsibly. Despite the growing integration of social media in higher education, many graduates lack adequate SMC necessary for professional environments (Novakovich, Miah, & Shaw, 2017). This competence gap is critical, as it affects students' online professional identity, digital citizenship, and career management (Benson & Filippaios, 2015; Xu, Yang, MacLeod, & Zhu, 2018). Furthermore, negative behaviors such as cyberbullying and the unauthorized disclosure of private information highlight the serious implications of deficient SMC (Watts et al., 2017; Hallam & Zanella, 2017). The necessity for promoting SMC in higher education is evident.

Social Media Competence: an individual's awareness of how to appropriately use social media to send messages, connect with others, and encourage conversation and community engagement without being unfriendly is therefore key in this era. Within higher education, the pedagogies related to SMC are still in the developmental stages (Novakovich, Miah, & Shaw, 2017). Literature suggests that college students are graduating without the appropriate levels of SMC required for professional settings (Benson & Filippaios, 2015; Moreno, Navarro, Trench & Zeffass, 2015). This competence gap between college students and the talents needed in professional settings is a critical issue facing higher education institutions, especially considering that social media participation can shape an

individual's online professional identity, digital citizenship, and social career management (Benson & Filippaios, 2015; Xu, Yang, MacLeod, & Zhu, 2018). Also, a study that assessed undergraduates' social competence on social media use in Nigeria found that there is a strong association between the social competence of the undergraduates and the use of social media (Adetoro & Okike, 2022).

However, other studies have shown that an individual's social media usage can negatively impact others through cyberbullying (Watts, Wagner, Velasquez, & Behrens, 2017) or the disclosure of others' private or sensitive information (Hallam & Zanella, 2017). Consequently, the occurrence of bullying and disclosure actions can be attributed to a deficiency in SMC.

Gender differences in social media utilisation are well-documented, with studies showing that females and males use social media for different purposes and with varying levels of intensity/competency. Females are generally more likely to use social media for social interaction and relationship building, while males tend to use it for information gathering and entertainment (Krasnova, Veltri, Eling & Buxmann, 2017). These differences also extend to the types of social media platforms preferred by each gender and their patterns of usage. For example, the study of Ogundele et al (2023) found that male science undergraduates prefer the use of Twitter and YouTube over other social media platforms.

Additionally, a study assessed undergraduates' social competence on social media in Nigeria and found that there is a difference in the use of social media based on gender and that gender is a moderator in students' social media use (Adetoro and Okike, 2022). A related study on gender variations in social media usage and its perceived impact on the academic performance of Nigerian science

undergraduates found that males are more addicted to social media usage than females, and the academic performance of males is more influenced by social media (Ogundele, Ogbonnaya, Awofodu, Odusanwo, Zangonde, Akhigbe, & Agboola, 2023). Furthermore, a study on the relationship between social media addiction and social competence among university graduates in Delta State found that there is no significant moderating impact of sex in the relationship between social media addiction and social competence among undergraduates in Delta State (Okolugbo & Eбенуwa-Okoh, 2023). The use of social media and its relevant competence, however, does not come without its significant challenges as revealed in the literature. Studies have shown that undergraduate students in Nigerian universities reported significant challenges related to weak/poor network connectivity, lack of free Wi-Fi, and the high cost of data, unstable electricity for powering devices, information overload, and issues like blackmail and intimidation on social media platforms (Nannim, Njoku, Onuoha, Orji, & Njoku, 2023).

METHODOLOGY

A survey research design of the ex-post facto type was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised all 300L and 400L undergraduates in three universities (University of Ibadan, Tai Solarin Federal University of Education, and Lead City University) in Ogun and Oyo states, Nigeria. Using a ballot system and simple random sampling techniques, one hundred and eighty-seven (187) 300L and 400L LIS undergraduates participated in the study. Data

was collected using a structured questionnaire. The aspect of the questionnaire on social media competence was adopted from Zhu, Yang, Xu, and MacLeod (2018) validation of the SMC questionnaire. The test-retest method was used to ensure the reliability of the instrument, after subjecting it to face validity by experienced teachers/scholars. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A solicits demographic data of the respondents; Section B focuses on the social media utilisation and competence of Library and Information Science (LIS) undergraduates in selected schools in South-West Nigeria.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What is the level of social media utilization among LIS undergraduates in selected LIS schools in South-West Nigeria?

The results in Table 1 revealed that LIS undergraduates in selected schools in South-West Nigeria exhibited a high level of social media utilization. The level of social media utilisation revealed that Facebook (72.2%) was highly utilized, closely followed by Google+ (61.0%). MySpace (56.1%) and WeChat (53.5%) also showed significant usage, with the students using them extensively. Notably, a small percentage of students reported not using these platforms at all, ranging from 4.8% for Facebook to 18.7% for Twitter and LinkedIn. Overall, the study indicates a strong presence of LIS undergraduates on various social media platforms. Overall, the mean score for social media utilisation was 2.31, indicating a high level of usage across different platforms.

Table 1: Level of social media utilization among LIS undergraduates

Social media	Highly utilized	Utilized	Not utilized	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Std. Dev
Facebook	135(72.2%)	43(23.0%)	9(4.8%)	2.67	0.56
Google +	114(61.0%)	59(31.6%)	14(7.5%)	2.53	0.63
WhatsApp	106(56.7%)	68(36.4%)	13(7.0%)	2.50	0.63

Blog	104(55.6%)	67(35.8%)	16(8.6%)	2.47	0.65
MySpace	105(56.1%)	64(34.2%)	18(9.6%)	2.47	0.67
Wechat	100(53.5%)	71(38.0%)	16(8.6%)	2.45	0.65
Instagram	93(49.7%)	80(42.8%)	14(7.5%)	2.42	0.63
Telegram	87(46.5%)	73(39.0%)	27(14.4%)	2.32	0.71
Youtube	90(48.1%)	65(34.8%)	32(17.1%)	2.31	0.75
Twitter	91(48.7%)	61(32.6%)	35(18.7%)	2.30	0.77
Badoo	88(47.1%)	67(35.8%)	32(17.1%)	2.30	0.74
LinkedIn	81(43.3%)	71(38.0%)	35(18.7%)	2.25	0.75
2go	71(38.0%)	83(44.4%)	33(17.6%)	2.20	0.72
Tumblr	70(37.4%)	79(42.2%)	38(20.3%)	2.17	0.74
Skype	68(36.4%)	78(41.7%)	41(21.9%)	2.14	0.75
Snap chat	69(36.9%)	76(40.6%)	42(22.5%)	2.14	0.76
Flicker	54(28.9%)	84(44.9%)	49(26.2%)	2.03	0.74
Pinterest	45(24.1%)	81(43.3%)	61(32.6%)	1.91	0.75
Overall mean = 2.31					

Research Question 2: What is the level of social media competence of LIS undergraduates in selected LIS schools in South-West Nigeria?

Results in Table 2 measured the level of social media competence using the parameters of Technical Usability (TU), Content Interpretation (CI), Content Generation (CG),

and Anticipatory Reflection (AR). Findings revealed that Technical Usability ($\bar{x} = 3.15$), Content Interpretation ($\bar{x} = 3.19$), Content Generation ($\bar{x} = 2.89$), and Anticipatory Reflection ($\bar{x} = 2.86$) were generally high. This implies that the level of social media competence of LIS undergraduates in selected LIS schools in South-West Nigeria was high.

Table 2: Level of social media competence of LIS undergraduates

S/N	Social Media Competence	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Std. Dev.
A.	Technical usability (TU): The ability to operate in social media environments					3.15	0.88
1.	I can create and manage my personal profile in social media environments	79 (42.2%)	76 (40.6%)	29 (15.5%)	3 (1.6%)	3.24	0.77
2.	I can use the hardware necessary to create social media content.	77 (41.2%)	74 (39.6%)	32 (17.1%)	4 (2.1%)	3.20	0.80
3.	I can use the software necessary to create social media contents	94 (50.3%)	46 (24.6%)	33 (17.6%)	14 (7.5%)	3.18	0.98
4.	I can use basic social media operating tools	85 (45.5%)	52 (27.8%)	35 (18.7%)	15 (8.0%)	3.11	0.98
5.	I know how to use social media search tools to gather information.	81 (43.3%)	57 (30.5%)	41 (21.9%)	8 (4.3%)	3.13	0.90
6.	I know how to use various media environments to research information	67 (35.8%)	69 (36.9%)	42 (22.5%)	9 (4.8%)	3.04	0.88
7.	I can perceive different opinions	83	64	35	5	3.20	0.84

	and thoughts in social media	(44.4%)	(34.2%)	(18.7%)	(2.7%)		
B.	Content interpretation (CI): The ability to filter through content and extract the appropriate meanings					3.19	0.8
8.	I am aware of potential information in social media	76 (40.6%)	63 (33.7%)	39 (20.9%)	9 (4.8%)	3.10	0.90
9.	I can notice inappropriate content in social media	79 (42.2%)	81 (43.3%)	25 (13.4%)	2 (1.1%)	3.27	0.73
10.	I can analyse the potential effects of	76	54	44	13	3.03	0.96
11.	I can evaluate the accuracy and validity of social media messages	87 (46.5%)	59 (31.6%)	39 (20.9%)	2 (1.1%)	3.24	0.84
12.	I can compare news and information across different social media environments	93 (49.7%)	64 (34.2%)	29 (15.5%)	1 (.5%)	3.35	0.75
13.	I can understand and interpret social media content from political, economic, and social perspectives	84 (44.9%)	56 (29.9%)	34 (18.2%)	13 (7.0%)	3.13	0.95
14.	I can determine whether or not social media content has commercial messages	104 (55.6%)	49 (26.2%)	31 (16.6%)	3 (1.6%)	3.36	0.81
15.	I can manage to classify media messages based on their producers, types, purposes, and so on	69 (36.9%)	60(32.1 %)	50 (26.7%)	8(4.3%)	3.02	0.90
16.	I can evaluate and consider social media's legal and ethical principles (copyright, human rights, privacy, etc.)	78 (41.7%)	79 (42.2%)	25 (13.4%)	5 (2.7%)	3.23	0.78
C.	Content generation (CG): The ability to communicate, convey beliefs, and meaningfully negotiate with others					2.89	0.92
17.	I can develop original, visual, and textual social media content	70 (37.4%)	76 (40.6%)	35 (18.7%)	6 (3.2%)	3.12	0.82
18.	I can select appropriate, related images to be posted on social media	64 (34.2%)	80 (42.8%)	35 (18.7%)	8 (4.3%)	3.07	0.84
19.	I can influence others' opinions when I participate in social media activities	68 (36.4%)	74 (39.6%)	34 (18.2%)	11 (5.9%)	3.06	0.88
20.	I can collaborate and communicate with different social media users	67 (35.8%)	59 (31.6%)	51 (27.3%)	10 (5.3%)	2.98	0.92
21.	I can have discussions and make comments to inform or guide people on social media	58 (31.0%)	60 (32.1%)	54 (28.9%)	15 (8.0%)	2.86	0.95
22.	I can design and deliver social media content that reflects critical thinking of certain	54 (28.9%)	58 (31.0%)	57 (30.5%)	18 (9.6%)	2.79	0.97

	matters						
23.	I would participate in a discussion on social media only when I know the subject area	46 (24.6%)	58 (31.0%)	61 (32.6%)	22 (11.8%)	2.68	0.97
24.	I can make contributions to social media by reviewing current events from different perspectives.	41 (21.9%)	67(35.8 %)	60 (32.1%)	19 (10.2%)	2.70	0.93
25.	I can build a social networking identity that is consistent with my real personal characteristics.	52 (27.8%)	58 (31.0%)	56 (29.9%)	21 (11.2%)	2.75	0.99
D.	Anticipatory Reflection (AR): The ability to be self-aware of one's actions and others' perceptions before generating content					2.86	0.94
26.	I would consider the possible consequences before using social media to write something	47 (25.1%)	63 (33.7%)	60 (32.1%)	17 (9.1%)	2.75	0.94
27.	I would consider how other people might perceive my contribution before I write something on social media	59 (31.6%)	66 (35.3%)	49 (26.2%)	13 (7.0%)	2.91	0.92
28.	I would use expletives to emphasize what I write on social media	45 (24.1%)	68 (36.4%)	55 (29.4%)	19 (10.2%)	2.74	0.94
29.	I would not attack others when I comment or post on social media	50 (26.7%)	60 (32.1%)	55 (29.4%)	22 (11.8%)	2.74	0.98
30.	I only comment on others' subject-specific contributions when I am familiar with the subject area	47 (25.1%)	59 (31.6%)	55 (29.4%)	26 (13.9%)	2.68	1.00
31.	Would participate in a discussion on social media only when I know the subject area	54 (28.9%)	64 (34.2%)	48 (25.7%)	21 (11.2%)	2.81	0.98
32.	I would raise different opinions in social media discussions only when I am convinced that my arguments are correct	47 (25.1%)	62 (33.2%)	54 (28.9%)	24 (12.8%)	2.71	0.99
33.	I would post comments on social media only when I am convinced that my views are correct.	80 (42.8%)	72 (38.5%)	34 (18.2%)	1 (.5%)	3.24	0.76
34.	I would consider whether my comments will affect others' thoughts and emotions	76 (40.6%)	75 (40.1%)	31 (16.6%)	5 (2.7%)	3.19	0.80
35.	I would think about whether other people might appreciate my contribution and comments on social media	70 (37.4%)	44 (23.5%)	44 (23.5%)	29 (15.5%)	2.83	1.10
Overall mean = 3.02							

Research Question 3: What challenges do LIS undergraduates face while utilizing social media for academic and social purposes?

Results in Table 3 revealed that the most significant challenges LIS undergraduates face include slow internet speed (92%), power

failure, and inability to get required information. Other challenges are authentication and identity theft (81.3%) and privacy and confidentiality concerns (78.1%). Notably, a significant proportion of students (40.6%) lack guidance or training on how to use the internet effectively.

Table 3: Challenges faced while utilizing social media

Challenges	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Slow internet speed	172	92.0
Power failure	164	87.7
Inability to get required information	164	87.7
Authentication	152	81.3
Privacy & confidentiality concerns	146	78.1
Spread of misinformation	143	76.5
Poor computer skills	137	73.3
Inadequate skills in internet browsing	135	72.2
Intellectual property theft	121	64.7
Prevent election interference	102	54.5
Time waster	89	47.6
No guidance/training on how to use the internet	76	40.6

H₁: There will be no significant differences in social media use of LIS undergraduates based on gender.

The results in Table 4 revealed that there is no significant difference in social media use among LIS undergraduates in selected schools in South-West Nigeria based on gender. The calculated t-value of -0.48 was not significant at the 0.05 level, with a p-value of 0.63, which is greater than 0.05. This indicates that gender does not have a significant impact on social

media use among LIS undergraduates. Although there is no significant difference, the mean values suggest that female students ($\bar{x} = 39.6$) have slightly better social media use than their male counterparts ($\bar{x} = 39.1$). However, it is essential to note that this difference is not statistically significant. Therefore, it can be concluded that social media use among LIS undergraduates in the selected schools does not vary significantly by gender.

Table 4: Difference in social media use among LIS undergraduates based on gender

Social media use	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Crit-t	Cal- t	DF	p value
Male	82	39.12	7.06	1.96	-.479	185	.633
Female	105	39.61	6.94				

H₂: There will be no significant difference in social media competence of LIS undergraduates based on gender.

Results in Table 5 revealed a slightly higher social media competence mean score of the female ($\bar{x} = 103.38$) LIS undergraduates than male ($\bar{x} = 101.71$). Similarly, the cal. t = -1.026

is not significant at 0.05 ($p = 0.306 > 0.05$). Therefore, social media competence among LIS undergraduates has no significant difference by gender. It could be inferred that

social media competence among LIS undergraduates in selected LIS schools has no significant difference by gender.

Table 5: Difference in social media competence among LIS undergraduates

Social media competence	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Crit-t	Cal-t.	DF	p value
Male	82	101.71	11.09	1.96	-1.026	185	.306
Female	105	103.38	10.96				

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study revealed a strong presence of LIS undergraduates specifically on social media platforms such as Facebook, Google+, WhatsApp, Blog, MySpace, and WeChat. This is consistent with previous studies by Ogundele et al. (2023) and Onojah, Obielodan, Onojah, Ajala, Sotuminu & Sulaimon (2020) that found that undergraduates in Nigerian universities use Facebook, Google +, WhatsApp, Wikis, Twitter, Blogs, Email, and YouTube. This finding further indicates that social media has become an integral part of the daily lives of young people, particularly university students, and understanding its impact on their academic and social interactions is essential.

The study also found a moderate level of social media competence among LIS undergraduates, indicating a strong relationship between social competence and social media use. This is supported by earlier findings of Adetoro and Okike (2023) that there is a relationship between social media use and social media competence. The social media competence of the LIS undergraduates further revealed that, on average, the students are fairly confident in their ability to use social media effectively, but their competence is not yet at an advanced or expert level.

The standard deviation (≈ 0.9) shows that responses were relatively consistent among

participants, suggesting that most undergraduates share similar levels of competence. The strongest area of competence among undergraduates is technical usability. Students show a high ability to create and manage personal profiles, navigate social media interfaces, and search and retrieve information effectively. This implies that the LIS undergraduates are technically adept and can easily handle the operational aspects of social media platforms, likely due to their daily exposure to these tools. The content interpretation (CI) as an indicator for social media competence also scored high, indicating that students can analyze and interpret content on social media. The content generation (CG) area scored moderately low, suggesting that while students can consume and analyse content, they are less skilled at producing original and meaningful content. Many LIS undergraduates were unsure about their ability to develop creative or critical posts and engage others effectively.

The anticipatory reflection (AR) area is the lowest-scoring dimension, revealing a weakness in ethical and reflective social media use. Undergraduates show limited awareness of the consequences of their posts, how others might perceive their comments, and the emotional and social impact of their online actions. This indicates a gap in responsible digital citizenship; while they know how to use social media, they may not always use it thoughtfully or respectfully. This finding is

consistent with previous findings from a study on the relationship between social media addiction and social competence among university graduates in Delta State; the study found that social media usage affects students' ability to interact effectively in real-life social situations, potentially leading to lower levels of social competence (Okolugbo & Ebebuwa-Okoh, 2023). The findings further revealed that LIS undergraduates are technically competent and reasonably critical consumers of social media content, but they are less competent as responsible and reflective content creators. Their strengths lie in operating and interpreting social media, while their weaknesses lie in ethical awareness and creative engagement.

Challenges such as power failure and inability to access required information, authentication, privacy, and confidentiality concerns all hinder social media use among LIS undergraduates. These findings are consistent with previous studies that identified bandwidth problems, unreliable power supply, inadequate free Wi-Fi, and the high cost of data (Adewojo & Mayowa-Adebara, 2016; Nannim, Njoku, Onuoha, Orji, & Njoku, 2023). Overall, the study highlights the importance of social media in the lives of undergraduates, providing a space for self-expression, relationship-building, and social competence (Okolugbo & Ebebuwa-Okoh, 2023). However, it also underscores the need to address challenges such as slow internet speed and power failure to enhance social media utilization.

The study further found that there is no significant difference in social media use between male and female LIS undergraduates based on gender. Both genders use social media at nearly the same level and with similar frequency or competence. The result suggests that gender is not a determining factor in the level of social media use among LIS

undergraduates. These findings are consistent with previous studies that reported that gender differences in social media engagement for learning are gradually diminishing among university students (Onojah, Obielodan, Onojah, Ajala, Sotuminu & Sulaimon, 2020). The findings further reflect a closing digital gender gap as both male and female students now have equal access, exposure, and competence in using digital platforms. It also implies that interventions or training programs on social media literacy for students can be designed uniformly, without necessarily tailoring them to gender differences.

There is no statistically significant difference in the social media competence of male and female LIS undergraduates. Both genders demonstrate comparable skill levels and abilities in using social media effectively. The implication of this finding is that gender is no longer a determining factor in social media competence among LIS undergraduates. The near-parity observed could be attributed to equal digital exposure and integration of social media tools within the university learning environment. Consequently, interventions aimed at enhancing social media competence can be designed uniformly, without emphasizing gender-specific differences. Emphasis should also be placed on improving critical, ethical, and creative engagement with social media, the areas where both genders still show moderate competence.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This study reveals that LIS undergraduates in selected schools in South-West Nigeria are avid social media users, with a moderate level of social media competence. However, they face challenges such as slow internet speed, power failure, and difficulty accessing required information. Interestingly, social media use and competence show no significant difference by gender, although females slightly

outpace males in both areas. The study also concludes that the strongest area of competence among LIS undergraduates is technical usability. This implies that the students show a high ability to create and manage personal profiles, navigate social media interfaces, and search and retrieve information effectively. Their high level of social media use and moderate competence reflect a shift towards online interactions.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommended that;

1. There should be a review of the curriculum in library schools to incorporate practical social media engagement, as this will help students develop practical experience in content creation, critical online communication, and professional social media usage.
2. LIS undergraduates should be encouraged to build a social networking identity that would reflect real-world social competence
3. The study recommended that since there is no significant gender difference in social media use, access to technological resources should be provided without gender bias or discrimination.
4. Library schools should continue to encourage both male and female students equally to participate in advanced technology workshops, reinforcing the finding that competence is not gender-limited.
5. Library schools should address challenges such as slow internet speed and power failure to enhance social media utilization.

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