

## **THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON INFORMATION GATHERING AMONG REDEEMER'S UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This paper examines the preferred social media platforms used by Redeemer's University students for information gathering, the types of social media platforms used by Redeemer's University students for information gathering, the information that college students look for on social media platforms and the length of time that students at Redeemer's University spend on social media. This paper explored Uses and gratification theory as the theoretical ferment and foundation that underpinned this study. The study found out that majority of Redeemer's University students use and prefer Twitter and Tiktok in gathering information from social media. Findings indicated that majority of Redeemer's University students, 68(36.9%) use the social media to gather information for entertainment purposes. The study also found out that majority of the respondents use phone in gathering information from the social media. The study discovered that most respondents spend 2-4 hours on time in gathering information and respondents gather information often from social media. Thus, the paper concluded that social media can be a valuable tool for information gathering among Redeemer's University students but it should be used responsibly and in moderation to avoid potential drawbacks. Educating students on critical thinking and information evaluation skills is crucial in this digital age. The study thus recommended that students in tertiary institutions should use Twitter, their preferred social media platform, to find academic journals and articles that would broaden and enhance their knowledge.*

**Keywords:** social media, information gathering, students, digital age, Redeemer's University.

### **INTRODUCTION**

In recent years, the proliferation of social media platforms has transformed the way people access and share information. Because social media is made up of a wide variety of different formats and themes and does not require significant internet knowledge or experience, its development sped up the process. According to Sudha and Kavitha (2016), this indicates that everyone can interact through social media. Neal (2012) asserts that social media, such as Facebook, YouTube, blogs, Twitter, Instagram, and other platforms, are simple platforms that anyone can use to communicate with others online. It makes it incredibly simple for us to have an online presence by allowing us to quickly and simply sign up for Twitter and Facebook accounts and publish information online. Additionally, it improves academic performance for kids to learn, gain knowledge, retain information, and allow them to communicate verbally or in writing (Kpolovie, Joe, and Okoto, 2014).

Young people utilise social media, according to Sharma and Shukla (2016), because it's difficult to maintain physical connections in today's fast-paced and hectic society. According to Ajayi (1995), using social media is a common coping mechanism for people in a culture where time spent with people is less important than time spent using technology. Others have agreed that the difficult coursework and tests that are a part of university life can make it stressful for students. Additionally, teenagers utilise social media frequently because they have reached a point in life where they spend the majority of their free time alone (Larson, 1990).

The majority of studies on social media have found that engaging in social media activities enhances one's social growth, however some have found the opposite. Yeboah & Ewur (2014) discovered that social media, such as WhatsApp, caused students to lose focus while in class, diverted them from finishing their assignments, and harmed their language proficiency, including spelling and grammar. Due to their frequent use of social media, students had to deal with issues such the need to respond to messages right away, being exposed to inaccurate or inappropriate media or information, mobile connectivity, and addictive-like behaviours that interfered with their academic performance (Ahad & Lim, 2014).

The extensive use of social media platforms in recent years has completely changed how people receive and share information. Social media has become an important source of information and communication for students. The impacts of this phenomena on students' information-gathering among themselves, however, have not been extensively studied in the context of Redeemer's University students. Understanding the complex effects of social media use on information collecting among students at Redeemer's University is the main issue at hand. Although social media platforms make it simple and quick to access a wide variety of information, there is growing worry that relying too much on them could affect the accuracy, reliability, and depth of the data collected. In addition, the continual exposure to a wide range of viewpoints and news stories on social media may help create echo chambers and filter bubbles, which may make it harder for kids to critically assess and synthesize information. Furthermore, the potential for information overload, coupled with the addictive nature of social media, might adversely affect students' academic performance, as excessive time spent on these platforms could divert their attention from essential academic pursuits.

Investigation is also necessary into how social media affects interpersonal communication, social relationships, in-person interactions, and use of academic resources. It is necessary to investigate if social media use among Redeemer University students competes with or supplements more conventional methods of information collecting, such attending lectures, using library resources, or having direct conversations with classmates and professors. Therefore, this study is required to look into many aspects of Redeemer's University students' usage of social media for information collecting. The study's findings will then be used to offer suggestions and guidelines for efficient and responsible information consumption in the digital era.

This study evaluated the preferred social media platforms used by Redeemer's University students for information gathering, look at the types of social media platforms used by Redeemer's University students for information gathering, Examine the information that

college students look for on social media platforms. Identify the length of time that students at Redeemer's University spend on social media.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **An overview of social media's history**

Social media is an online tool that enables the production and sharing of user-generated content. Tom Truscott and Jim Ellis from Duke University developed the Usenet, a global discussion system that permitted Internet users to submit open messages, according to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010). This is when social media was first invented. Social media has developed into a critical component of business marketing strategy over the past ten years. Social media refers to informational content that has been produced using publishing technology, is easily accessible, and is meant to promote engagement, communication, and influence among users as well as with the wider public (Bernardo et al., 2020). Collaborative Project (Wikipedia), Blogs and Microblogs (Twitter), Content Communities (U-tube), Social Networking Site (Facebook, 2go, BB chat, twitter, WhatsApp), Virtual Game World (World of War Craft), and Virtual Second World (Second Life) are the six categories into which Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) divided social media.

When Bruce and Susan Abelson created "Open Diary" in 1998, the term "blog" had not yet been used. It was a social networking site where members of a particular community could publish their daily diaries online. Studies have also revealed that people use social media for academic purposes (Musa, 2015), entertainment and recreational purposes to build relationships and communicate with others (Eke et al., 2014), to get the most recent information and news (Fasae & Adegbilero-Iwari, 2016; Statistica, 2018), shopping, job searching, and as a free-time activity (Lenhart et al., 2010). More academics are pointing out that most students spend a significant amount of time on social media (Apuke & Ezeah, 2017; Akintola, Bello & Daramola, 2016; Shittu, 2017). According to Iorliam and Ode (2014), Nigerians spend the most time on Facebook and WhatsApp out of all the social media platforms. Many students are also frequently spotted online. The majority of students use social media for less than an hour every day, according to a survey (Hassan & Landani, 2015). Some of the reasons people use social media include the following. Students first use social media to share knowledge, debate course content or subjects, and collaborate on homework assignments or term projects. Peer-to-peer information exchange and cooperation are also easily accessible through social media. In conclusion, the goal of this research is to shed light on the distinct ways that undergraduate students at Redeemer's University use social media to obtain information for their academic endeavours.

### **Theoretical framework**

Uses and gratification theory was the adopted theory for this study.

#### **Uses and gratification Theory**

Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler, and Miheal Gurevitch developed the audience-centered theory of uses and pleasure in 1974. It emphasises what people do with media rather than what media does to them. Understanding why and how people actively seek out particular media to meet particular requirements is helpful.

According to the notion, people actively shape the consequences of media messages rather than simply being passive recipients of them. Based on their needs, beliefs, and other factors, media audiences choose, attend to, perceive, and retain media offers selectively. Accordingly, there are as many justifications for media use as there are media users (Anaeto et al. 2008; Lundberg and Hulten 1968 pointed out five components of uses and gratifications). The audience make use of media in order to achieve an objective, The authority to connect need gratification with media outlet choice lies with the audience members, not with the media, Various media compete with many other sources of need satisfaction, Audience members are able to self-report their uses and gratification, Value judgement about the cultural significance of mass communication should be suspended while audience orientations are explored on their own terms.

Applications and Pleasure idea serves as a diversion from competing media effect theories that focus on the effects of media on individuals. What people do with media is explained, which is helpful. The notion holds that audiences are customers of the same product—media—which is widely available.

People are not merely passive recipients of messages; they are also active contributors to message effects. This is due to their deliberate selection, attention to, perception of, and retention of the media's message on the core of their needs and beliefs.

The uses and gratification hypothesis is pertinent to the current study since both hold similar fundamental beliefs and opinions about how social media can be used to obtain information. This makes it clear that while students have various demands. Students are given the freedom to choose, pay attention to, and remember whatever knowledge they choose from the internet based on their needs and beliefs, with the expectation that the social media they carefully selected to gather information from will meet those needs.

### **Research Methodology**

For this study, a descriptive survey research approach was chosen to examine how students at Redeemer's University use social media to collect information. Students at Redeemer's University in Ede, Osun State, make up the study's target group. 5332 students make up the student body. Therefore, this study examines how students at Redeemer's University use social media to collect knowledge. A self-administered questionnaire with closed-ended questions is the data collection tool for this study. The questionnaire was created in a way that would enable respondents to provide acceptable and essential responses. Participants from various levels who may use digital banking services will be chosen using a purposive sample technique.

**Sample:** The Taro Yamane Formula is:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e')^2}$$

Where n= Sample size

N= Study Population

1= Constant

e= Tolerable error margin

$$n = \frac{5332}{1 + 5332 (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{5332}{1 + 5332 (0.0025)}$$

n= 5332/1+13.33

n= 5332/14.33

n=372

sample size is 372

### **Method of Data Analysis**

Simple statistical illustrations like tables and frequency percentages would be used to illustrate and analyse the study's results. The method's application made it possible to convey the facts in a more straightforward way.

In this chapter, data on how students at Redeemer's University utilise social media to gather information are analysed. The researcher offers all the information that needs to be analysed as well as the responses to the study questions. There are two sections to the study: In the first, demographic information from respondents—including gender, age, and class level —is presented and analysed. In the second, information gathered in response to research questions is presented. The percentage and frequency were used to analyse the data in the tables in the two parts. 327 of the 372 copies of the questionnaires that were distributed were returned. This represent 87.9% return rate

**Table 1: Distribution of Respondents According To Sex**

Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	147	45
Female	180	55
Total	327	100

Table 1 shows that 147 (45%) of the respondents are male students, while 180(55%) of the respondents are female students. Thus, there are more female respondents than the male respondents.

**Table 2: Distribution of Respondents According To Age**

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
14-19	180	55
20-24	119	36.4
25-30	28	8.6
Total	327	100

Table 2 shows the level of respondents according to age, 180 (55%) of the respondents falls between 14-19 age bracket, 119(36.4%) falls between 20-24, 28(8.6%) falls between 25-30. Thus, it can be deduced that the majority of respondents is 180(55%) which falls between 14-19.

**TABLE 3: Distribution of Respondents from each level**

Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
100 level	127	38.8
200 level	75	22.9
300 level	44	13.5
400 level	47	14.4
500 level	34	10.4
Total	327	100

Table 3 shows the respondents' level in the university. The result indicated that the survey covered all levels in the University. This implies that the research was carried out to reflect that the use of social media on information gathering among under graduate of all levels.

### **RESEARCH QUESTION 1: What Type of Social Media Platform Do Caleb Students Use In Gathering Information?**

**Table 5: Frequency table on the use of social media**

Ratings	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	327	100
No	0	0
Total	327	100

Table 5, shows the use of social media by the respondents. 327(100%) of the respondents make use of social media. Therefore, it can be deduced that majority of the respondents make use of social media in gathering information

### **RESEARCH QUESTION 2: If yes what type of social media do you use?**

**Table 6: Frequency table on the type of social media that is use**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
WhatsApp	94	28.7
Tiktok	100	30.6

Twitter	58	18
Instagram	50	15
Facebook	8	2.4
Telegram	7	2.1
Linked in	6	2
Others	4	1.2
Total	327	100

Table 6 above, shows that 94 (28.7%) of respondents use WhatssAp, 100(30.6%) use Tiktok, 58(18%) of respondents use Twitter, 50(15%) of respondents use Instagram, 8(2.4%) respondents use Facebook, 7(2.1%) respondents use Telegram, 6(2%) respondents use linked in, while 4(1.2%) of respondents use others. From the above table, it can therefore be deduced that majority of respondents make use of Tiktok the most

**Table 7: What gadget do you use in gathering information from the internet?**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Phone	225	69
Tablet	20	6
Laptop	81	24.7
Computer	1	0.3
Total	327	100

Table 7 indicate that 225(69%) of the respondents make use of phone in gathering information, 20(6%) of the respondents make use of tablet, 81(24.7%) of the respondents make use of laptop, while 1(0.3%) make use of computer. Thus, the findings show that majority of respondents prefer phone in gathering information

## **RESEARCH QUESTION 2:**

**What Is the Most Preferred Social Media Platform Redeemer's University Students Use In Gathering Information?**

**Table 8: Frequency on the most preferred social media platform use to gather Information**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
WhatsApp	65	20

Tiktok	81	25
Twitter	93	28
Instagram	61	19
Facebook	8	2
Telegram	4	1
LinkedIn	9	3
Others	6	2
Total	327	100

Table 8, shows that 93(28%) of the respondents prefer twitter, 81(25%) of the respondents prefer Tiktok, 65(20%) of the respondents prefer WhatsApp, 61(19%) of the respondents prefer Instagram, 8(2%) of the respondents prefer facebook, 8(1%) of the respondents prefer Telegram, 9(3%) of the respondents prefer LinkedIn, 6(2%) of the respondents prefer other social media platform in gathering information. It can be deduced that the majority of the respondents prefer Twitter in gathering information from social media.

**Table 9: How often do you use social media to gather Information?**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Often	171	90.5
Rarely	18	9.5
Never	0	0
Total	190	100

Table 9 shows that 172(90.5%) of the respondents make use of social media often, 18(9.5%) of the respondents make use of social media rarely, while 0(0%) of the respondents don't make use of social media. The frequency above shows that majority of the respondents use social media often.

**Research question 3: What type of information do RUN students gather from the internet?**

**TABLE 10: Frequency on the type of information RUN students gather from the internet**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Education	103	31.4
Entertainment	115	35
Politics	10	3



Religion	6	2
Health	20	6
Fashion	71	22
Others	2	0.6
Total	327	100

Table 10 above reveals the type of information students gather from the social media. 103(31.4%) of the respondents prefer education, 115 (35%) prefer entertainment, 10(3%) prefer politics, 6(2%) prefer religion, 20(6%) prefer health, 71(22%) prefer Fashion, while 2(0.6%) prefer others. Thus it can be deduced that majority of the respondents prefer entertainment in gathering information from social media.

#### **Research Question 4: What is the period of time RUN students spend on social media in gathering information?**

**Table 11: Frequency on the period of time RUN students use in gathering information**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
30min -1 hours	81	25
1-2hours	106	32
2-4hours	92	28
4-6hours	23	7
6-8hours	15	5
9-10hours	10	3
Total	327	100

Table 11 above indicate that 81(25%) of the respondents spend 30min-1hours in gathering information from the internet, 106(32%) of respondents spend 1-2 hours, 92(28%) of respondents spend 2-4hours, 23(7%) of respondents spend 4-6hours, 15(5%) of respondents spend 6-8hours, 10(3%) of respondents spend 9-10hours. Thus it can be inferred that majority of the respondents spend 2-4 hours of their time in gathering information from social media.

#### **Discussion of Findings**

This study confirms that Redeemer's University students make use of social media. In response to Research question 1 & 2, findings show that majority of Redeemer's University students use and prefer Twitter and Tiktok in gathering information from social media. In relation to Research question 3, findings indicated that majority of Redeemer's University students, 68(36.9%) use the social media to gather information for entertainment purposes. In table 7, it was observed that majority of the respondents use phone in gathering information from the

social media. The theoretical framework of the study was based on uses and gratification theory. Survey research was adopted with the aid of self-administered questionnaires. A total of 372 copies of questionnaire were administered to the respondents in Caleb University. Three hundred and twenty-seven (327) copies of the questionnaire were returned to the respondents representing 88%. Findings reveal that all the respondents make use of social media and that respondents from Redeemer's University prefer Twitter and tiktok in gathering information. Findings show that most respondents spend 2-4 hours on time in gathering information and respondents gather information often from social media. Findings reveals that majority of the respondents from Redeemer's University make use of phone to gather information from social media.

### **Conclusion**

The study examined the use of social media among Redeemer's University students. The study highlighted that majority of the students make use of social media. Although, in the course of this study, it was found out that when students gather information from their preferred site, they might experience fraud or scams which might have an adverse effect on them. However, it is clear that Twitter is the most preferred social media platform use by the students in gathering information. As noticed in the findings, Redeemer's University students, uses social media platform majorly for entertainment purposes, instead of using it to acquire knowledge. Social media can be a valuable tool for information gathering among Redeemer's University students but it should be used responsibly and in moderation to avoid potential drawbacks. Educating students on critical thinking and information evaluation skills is crucial in this digital age.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Students in tertiary institutions should use Twitter, their preferred social media platform, to find academic journals and articles that would broaden and enhance their knowledge. The only way the pupils can compete favourably with their peers from other parts of the world is through this. Universities should once more incorporate the use of modern information communication technology into their curricula, especially the more accessible communication tools and websites like cell phones, Facebook, Twitter, etc. that allow students to share intellectual knowledge: Additionally, parents, guardians, and tutors should keep an eye on how and why their students utilize these websites. It is important to encourage students to use websites more creatively for both their own gain and the sake of society.

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