

Influence of academic social networking sites on research productivity of library and information science lecturers in Nigerian universities

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Abstract

This paper is an overview of the influence of academic social networking sites and management policy on research productivity of library and information science lecturers in Nigerian universities which was anchored on two specific objectives. The paper examined issues relating to the influences of the use of academic social networking sites on research productivity of lecturers identified include: management of an online persona, diffusion of studies, collaboration, information management, and measurement of impact. outcomes of the study showed the influence of management policy on lecturers' research productivity to thus include: organisation's research objectives; decentralization; leadership; support for research; policy regimes to motivate lecturers' research activities; and resources. It uses the conceptual and documentary method by using the various related literature to achieve the two stated objectives. Based on the identified factors, the paper recommends the LIS Lecturers commitment to utilisation of academic social networking sites for research visibility and formulation of management timely review of university policies on research productivity of the lecturers among others. The paper conclude that academic social networking sites and university management policies impact research output by LIS lecturers, influencing visibility and encouraging research. And recommends creating social environments that are appropriate for academic purposes networking sites and implementing management policies to make research output more visible. Academic staff should actively utilize academic social networking for research productivity, acquiring necessary ICT and information literacy skills. University administration should also establish guidelines requiring LIS instructors to have profiles on these platforms, benefiting both the university and the instructors.

Keywords: Academic social networking sites, LIS lecturers, management policy, research and research productivity.

Introduction

The growth of the library and information science (LIS) profession is contingent upon the quantity of research conducted as well as the dissemination and application of the research findings, as is the case with other disciplines. Additionally, there is evidence of an increased demand for new knowledge and skills from employers of LIS graduates in light of the constantly evolving digital environment (Sharma, 2019). Prior research in the field of library and information science has demonstrated that research is largely an underutilized resource, with the

potential to significantly contribute to the profession's development going unacknowledged (Gardner, 2022, Chang, 2021, Ahmad et'al., 2020 and Abbott & Cox, 2020). The issue of Nigerian librarians' limited publication in outlets indexed by Scopus and Web of Science has become more pressing in recent years. These publications are frequently utilized for ranking reasons and are significant indications of the caliber and volume of university research (Onwubiko, 2023).

Although it is acknowledged that librarians may find it difficult to publish in

these venues, many still encounter difficulties like the rigorous peer-review procedure and high rejection rates. For example, compared to their colleagues in other African nations, Nigerian librarians publish less in publications that are indexed by Scopus and Web of Science, according to a study done by Okeji (2020). Because of this, librarians frequently have to turn to less respectable media sources, which can be detrimental to their ability to progress in their careers. There may be a way to solve this issue with academic social media. Numerous advantages are available to researchers through these online platforms, such as enhanced connectivity, chances for cooperation, exposure to high-caliber research, and availability of research instruments and methods (Míguez-González et al., 2017). Librarians can therefore benefit greatly from using academic social media as a support system to improve the quantity and caliber of their research. In light of this, the paper set out to look into how academic social media affects librarians' publication output in sources that are indexed by Web of Science and Scopus.

Bapte et al. (2024) asserted that because information is stagnant, research is an essential part of any career. Research aids in practice enhancement and refinement as well as the investigation of new frontiers. Any topic of study offers the chance to investigate potential answers for the ongoing problems that impact the practice. However, according to Abbott and Cox (2020), research is done to meet needs related to learning, home life, and careers in addition to serving as a recipe for creating solutions. The author goes on to say that study would assist fulfill egoistic needs like visibility and recognition as well as sate curiosity. In closing, Abbott and Cox (2020) noted that

research is done by others in order to gain benefits connected to their careers, such as promotions, tenure, or permanent positions. This is especially true in academic settings. This ultimately implies that study would promote growth or self-development.

Parker (2024) was primarily concerned with the advantages that an organization could obtain from undertaking research. According to Parker (2024), conducting research not only gives you a bigger advantage over competitors in obtaining and preserving research money, but it also increases your ability to attract highly qualified and engaged staff members. The author goes on to say that a company can improve its chances of "rubbing shoulders" with the greatest and have the ability to create a more stimulating work environment for all parties concerned by conducting research. As a result, this gives hope, especially to LIS professionals, who work hard to improve the standing of their field in the increasingly cutthroat digital landscape.

Kassim (2024) claimed that LIS research aids in decision-making and problem-solving in libraries and information centers. In addition, the authors stress that LIS research adds value to librarianship by enhancing the management and provision of information services, adding to the body of scholarship and professional knowledge, and helping to elevate the academic status of librarians. This justifies the increased need for librarians to continue embracing the paradigm shift and stop seeing themselves as just custodians of knowledge but also knowledge creators. Kennedy and Idowu, Ocholla and Onyancha (2023) also share this school of thought, indicating that librarians' research is critical for it fosters their growth and careers. Research by librarians would

foster fresh learning and increase their awareness and interest. The researcher conjectured that this would so facilitate efficacious interplay between research and practice, perhaps yielding a robust theoretical framework that fosters the growth and well-being of the practitioner community.

It is clear that the status and professional advancement of academic staff members in postsecondary institutions are directly impacted by research productivity. Research productivity is seen by most higher education institutions vying for the highest institutional ranking and peer prestige as one of the most important markers of educational excellence. The creation of a ranking and rating system in higher education institutions is mostly dependent on research production. Thus, it is now believed that measuring research production is crucial to motivating and elevating academics to produce their best work.

Despite the importance of research productivity, it is observed that academic staff in Nigeria, including those at federal universities in North-central Nigeria, have an incredibly low level of research productivity (Babalola 2015). This unfavorable situation has been noted with great concern by the researcher, and it has been confirmed by Simisaye and Popoola (2022); (Simisaye, 2019) and Haruna et al. (2023). They noted that low levels of research productivity would undoubtedly have a negative impact on academic staff's ability to advance their careers in tertiary institutions.

Educators can improve their teaching, research, and other academic activities by using academic social networking sites since they provide a plethora of academic activities. This is due

to the fact that online social networking platforms provide a plethora of advantages to researchers, such as enhanced connectivity, chances for collaboration, exposure to high-quality research, and access to research tools and skills. Additionally, the management policy of an academic institution can serve as a further motivator for lecturers to use academic social networking sites to support their research productivity, as effective management policies consistently result in high productivity in any given organization.

Academic social networking sites (ASNS) are online platforms that enable researchers, scholars, and academics to connect, collaborate, and share knowledge with each other. These platforms provide a virtual environment for academics to discuss research, share publications, and participate in online communities related to their field of study. Characteristics of Academic Social Networking Sites; Professional networking: ASNS focus on professional relationships and collaborations among academics; Knowledge sharing: ASNS enable users to share research, publications, and other academic content. Discussions and forums: ASNS often feature discussion boards, forums, or groups where users can engage in conversations related to their research interests; Profile creation: Users can create profiles showcasing their academic background, research interests, and publications. Some Examples of Academic Social Networking Sites: (link unavailable): A popular platform for academics to share research papers, monitor analytics, and follow other researchers; ResearchGate: A networking site for scientists, researchers, and academics to share publications, collaborate, and connect with peers; Mendeley: A reference management tool

that also allows users to create profiles, share research, and connect with other academics; LinkedIn (Academic and Researcher Groups): While not exclusively an academic networking site, LinkedIn features various groups dedicated to academic and research topics. ORCID: A registry of unique identifiers for researchers and scholars, which also provides a platform for connecting with other researchers and sharing research outputs. These platforms have transformed the way academics collaborate, share knowledge, and advance research in their respective fields.

Research productivity of lecturers refers to the quantity and quality of research outputs produced by lecturers, typically measured over a specific period. Here's a definition and enumeration of the concept. Research productivity of lecturers encompasses the creation, dissemination, and application of new knowledge, ideas, and innovations through various research outputs, such as publications, presentations, patents, and other scholarly activities. Research productivity of lecturers can be measured through various indicators, including: Publications: Number of articles, papers, chapters, and books published in reputable journals, conferences, and publishing houses; Citations: Number of times a lecturer's publications are cited by other researchers, indicating the impact and influence of their work; Research Grants: Number of research grants and funding secured by lecturers to support their research projects; Patents and Intellectual Property: Number of patents, copyrights, and other forms of intellectual property developed by lecturers; Presentations and Conference Papers: Number of presentations, keynote speeches, and conference papers delivered by lecturers at national and international

conferences; Editorial and Review Activities: Number of editorial board memberships, guest editorships, and peer-review activities undertaken by lecturers; Awards and Honors: Number of awards, honors, and recognition received by lecturers for their research contributions; Collaborations and Partnerships: Number of research collaborations, partnerships, and networks established by lecturers with other researchers, institutions, and industries; Research Supervision: Number of graduate students supervised by lecturers, indicating their contribution to the development of future researchers; Knowledge Transfer and Impact: Number of research outputs that have been translated into practical applications, policies, or commercial products, demonstrating their impact on society. By considering these indicators, institutions can evaluate the research productivity of their lecturers and identify areas for improvement, ultimately enhancing the quality and impact of their research outputs.

The objective of this paper is to examine the influence of academic social networking sites on research productivity of LIS lecturers in Nigerian universities. The paper will specifically address the place of research productivity in career advancement of university LIS lecturers, factors inhibiting research productivity of LIS lecturers in Nigerian universities as well as influence of academic social networking sites on research productivity of the Nigerian LIS university lecturers. The foregoing specific areas of focus should form the structure/sub-headings hereunder in addition to conclusion and recommendations. Relevant current literature should be cited in the various sections.

The influence of academic social networking sites on research productivity

Majumdar (2022) stated that academic social networking sites (ASNS) are primarily used by researchers for the following reasons: they can consult previous research when selecting a topic; they can use Google forms to collect data using a questionnaire; they can avoid spending time, money, and effort on field visits to gather data; they can use project management tools like Trello, which encourage team members to participate in all stages of a project and facilitate timely completion of necessary tasks; and finally, they can increase their exposure on academic platforms.

ASNS functions similarly to a lecturer who posts his or her curriculum vitae (CV) online to build a personal profile that includes work and educational history, conferences attended, presentation credits and publishing list are all accessible to the public. If a lecturer uses platforms that link to a database of journal papers, other scholars can easily stay up to speed on the lecturer's most recent accomplishments by searching their profile in these ASNS databases (Tuten, 2023). ASNS has the potential to drastically revolutionize the ways in which knowledge is shared and exchanged in academic settings. By offering forums for international contacts amongst scholars, they may have an impact on the dynamics and makeup of the research community (Chang and Kabilan, 2024).

Academic social networking sites (ASNSs) offer new avenues for connection, cooperation, and knowledge acquisition due to the paradigm shift in how lecturers and researchers seek out information. Academic Social Networking Sites (ASNS) bring researchers and lecturers together in one place. When ideas are freely shared and

discussed in public, information flows freely as well (Weissburg et al., 2024). Contributions of scholarly papers, abstracts, and links to published works are welcome on these websites. They also enable users to interact with other experts and track the demand for published work. They facilitate the public dissemination of research findings and foster scientific collaboration (Saadat, Shabani and Asemi, 2024).

Chang and Kabilan (2024) assert that ASNS have the power to radically alter the ways in which academics disseminate and publish their knowledge. Chang and Kabilan (2024) assert that academic social networking sites have the power to alter the composition and dynamics of the research community by offering venues for ties amongst scholars worldwide. According to Weissburg, *et al.*, (2024), additional possible effects of ASNS include:

1. Academic social networking sites may be a great resource for finding new routes in research, creating instructional materials, and working together on projects. Researchers and lecturers with comparable interests can cross paths.
2. In addition, academic social networking sites give scholars and instructors access to resources they wouldn't otherwise have, such as textbooks and instructional materials.
3. Academic social networking sites can also help professors stay up to date on the latest advancements in their areas of expertise.
4. Lecturers can stay in touch with friends and colleagues, talk about new findings, and learn more about events within their department.

The patterns of research output and online exposure in the academic community could be completely transformed by ASNS. By providing forums for global scholarly interactions, they could impact the composition and dynamics of the research community. Weissburg, *et al.*, (2024) state that ASNS encourages instructors to post drafts, lectures given at conferences, and full-text publications that have been published in scholarly journals online for public access. They also promote communication between readers and researchers by enabling instructors and other readers to comment on articles or ask the author questions about them. Chang and Kabilan (2024) list the following five benefits that academic social networks offer to researchers:

1. **Managing an online persona:** A digital social network's personal profile, which comprises details like a user's name, photo, and any other identifying information they choose to post, is its primary and most crucial element. In addition to these specifics, the ASNS platform gives lecturers the opportunity to showcase their ideas, experiences, and skills, as well as the quantity of citations and downloads of their work, all of which help them build an online persona and enhance their reputation in the industry (Ortiz-Vilarelle, 2022).
2. **Study diffusion:** The platform gives professors and other account holders a location to post publications to the internet. Additionally, it notifies interested people via direct email whenever a new article in a field they choose as being of interest to them is

published. Yan, et al. (2023) state that there are two mechanisms available for this use. In the active mode, network members opt to follow writers they know or find interesting, based on their research interests. The other is passive; it involves the network suggesting to the user (via the website and email address) that they read fresh articles written by writers that are related to their interests or that they can directly contact, like a department or organization. In this way, information regarding a new item is quickly finds readers in the community who are interested in its subject (Jordan, 2019).

3. **Collaboration:** One-person research has essentially vanished as the academic research field has grown more networked and collaborative in recent decades (Ebersole, *et al.*, 2024). The capacity of digital technology to overcome geographical barriers promotes cross-border and cross-disciplinary cooperation. Some academics contend that by fostering the development and growth of researchers' professional networks, academic social networks mimic—and in some circumstances even enhance—the social activity experienced at conferences (Ansari and Khan, 2020).
4. **Information management:** According to Ahmed (2022) ASNS can be a resource for gathering and organizing private academic information, such as drafts, ideas and anything else that a researcher on the network gathers from

articles, references, and citations. Because of this feature, an academic social-network site may be considered as a collaborative information-management system (Saadat, Shabani and Asemi, 2024).

5. **Measuring impact:** Academic impact is determined by an article's citation count and the caliber of the journals it appears in. Online academic networks provide extra metrics, such as the quantity of people who read or download an article (Wiechetek and Pastuszek, 2022).

The influence of management policy on research productivity

To find out what influences lecturers' research performance, three techniques might be used: individual, institutional, and a combination of the two. Institutional considerations are crucial in creating a research culture that encourages increased interaction and information transfer to society, claim Salinas-Avila et al. (2020). Previous research that looked at institutional determinants have identified a few factors associated to university policy. Nonetheless, it appears that the impact of management policy in particular has not received much attention. As a result, it is valuable to enumerate some of the management policies that affect professors' research output;

Goals of the research

Establishing objectives and creating plans of action for the advancement of university research are necessary for promoting lecturers' research output. For academics to have a strong research record, the university's research plan and objectives need to be feasible, transparent, and widely

publicized (Tuan et al., 2022). If the university and faculty arrange their research strategy and objectives in multiple dimensions (top down, bottom up, cooperation between units and groups), they will be more realistic and yield better implementation outcomes (Helali, 2022; Stupnisky, Larivière, Hall and Omojiba, 2023). Individual researchers' goals and interests in their work do not always have to collide with the institution's and the faculty's research objectives (Heng, Hamid and Khan, 2020).

According to Tuan et al. (2022) Research production among professors is positively benefited by universities that have, development aims and goals based on the research university model, since these universities offer more robust research support systems. Therefore, given the histories of lecturers and schools, a realistic strategy with targets that are both clear and acceptable is needed to enhance research production. In light of the information that is currently accessible, the following theory was proposed.

Decentralization

Numerous studies have shown that university teachers' levels of autonomy and decentralization have an impact on the caliber of the research they generate. Stupnisky, et al. (2023) state that "assertive-participative governance" is a method used by successful research organizations, where management decisions are made with the participation of several stakeholders and an emphasis on collaboration and feedback systems. The idea of "shared governance," which places an emphasis on member connections, academic freedom, and equal participation in governance activities, enhances and facilitates cooperation

between academic institutions and their instructors and administrators, which in turn aids in raising the productivity of research. Numerous studies have also shown the connection between autonomy and research production when instructors, such as those by Alifah, Maarif & Sumertajaya (2022) and Stupnisky et al. (2023) possess a suitable degree of decentralization. High degrees of decentralization for individual members are often present in administrative organizations along with autonomy; these organizations tend to be research-driven.

Leadership

Several studies have shown the importance of leadership and its effect on lecturers' research production (Roos, Sassen and Guenther, 2023; Alifah, Maarif and Sumertajaya 2022; Helali, 2022; Kwiek and Roszka, 2024). Research output benefits from leadership attributes, according to Roos, Sassen and Guenther (2023): Researchers hold leaders in high respect for their abilities in research, their guidance and leadership in research, and their crucial responsibilities in participatory management. According to Owan, Ameh and Anam (2024) the position of the organizational leader is especially important in setting the research's aims and objectives.

Support for research

Numerous studies have demonstrated the value of research sponsorship. If a school implements a policy of openly supporting research activities, as recommended by Afriana and Khoirunurrofik (2024), research output among faculty members and instructors will increase. According to Kwiek and Roszka, (2024), a culture that is focused on research is developed through more frequent research-promoting activities,

and this in turn influences research consciousness and competitiveness. Similarly, Owan, Ameh and Anam (2024) discovered that an organizational climate with sufficient staff members to support lecturers' research activities in addition to offering sufficient research assistance has a beneficial impact on research performance.

Studies that cover administrative and financial support in further detail exist. Roos, Sassen and Guenther (2023) demonstrated that the ability of stakeholders to support lecturers' work, notably in the form of administrative assistance from staff members and department coordinators, is one of the critical factors determining lecturers' productivity as researchers. Studies by Stupnisky et al. (2023), Tazegul et al. (2024) and Helali (2022) had similar results, demonstrating the importance of administrative and logistical assistance for faculty and school productivity in research.

Policy regimes to encouraged research activities of academics

Research productivity has been shown to be positively impacted by the regulatory framework for lecturers, as evidenced by several studies carried out in the context of higher education. According to Rose, *et al.* (2020), policy regimes that prioritize research time, compensation, increases and promotions, incentives and rewards, and support teaching employment are all beneficial for lecturers' career progression possibilities at universities. (Subject satisfaction, timetables, and teaching assistants) all impact the research achievements of lecturers. According to Mirhosseini, Rashed and Shirazizadeh (2024), the elements that have the strongest effects on research productivity include funding, availability of research

assistantships, time spent on research, pay growth, and rankings based on research accomplishments. Maral (2024) also found the following important variables: adequate and commensurate income, promotion and reward, recognition for research effort, administrative and teaching work requirements, research autonomy, research autonomy, appropriate workload policies, research autonomy, research skill education, lecturers' connections, and organizational research objectives.

Reward system use is mentioned in several studies, such as those by Tuan *et al.* (2022), Haneen *et al.* (2024), Tazegul *et al.* (2024), Helali (2022), and Trueblood, *et al.* (2024). However, Trueblood *et al.* (2024) discovered that when a compensatory regulatory grading system is in place, professors will choose "easy" assignments over challenging ones, putting quantity before quality.

Resources for research

Maral (2024) presented data demonstrating the impact of resource-related factors on research, such as the availability of libraries, infrastructure and technology, and research funds (excluding government funding). According to Mirhosseini, Rashed and Shirazizadeh (2024), the variables that have the largest impacts on research output are funding, the availability of research assistants, and the amount of time spent on research.

Kwiek and Roszka (2024) highlighted a number of resource-related variables, including research funds (from government, private, and university sources); facilities and equipment (information technology, conference rooms, equipment for experiments or research); human resources (academic achievement of

students, competence of research assistants and research fellows); and library and magazine resources (print books and journals, digital resources for books and magazines, research software, and digital resources for schools). The data study showed that research funding variables are considered to be the most influential category. Human resources, journal and library resources, facilities, and equipment are the next most influential categories, in that order. Databases and research resources are two of the most important factors influencing research output, according to Modupe and Olayiwola (2024). However, a number of additional issues, such as a lack of funding and research assistants as well as restricted research budgets, were found to be significant barriers to lecturers and professors publishing their findings.

Conclusion

The results of the literature search demonstrated that the use of academic social networking sites and university management policies have a variety of effects on the research output produced by LIS lecturers, including research visibility and policy regimes that encourage lecturers to conduct research. In general, this research offers theoretical and practical implications. It might support academics, administrators, and legislators in finding ways to improve the output of scientific research and support universities' long-term viability.

The following recommendations are given in light of the differing opinions found in the literature on the impact of management policies and academic social networking sites on the research productivity of academics in library and information science in Nigerian universities:

1. According to the study, a supportive academic social networking environment will boost research output visibility and enhance faculty members' access to and use of e-resources at universities. Therefore, in keeping with the growing global trend of digital education, university administrations employing LIS professors ought to greatly expand their investments in ICT infrastructure, including computers, the Internet, computer networks (campus, intranet, and LAN), and virtual/digital libraries.
2. Based on the aforementioned, it is also advised that LIS lecturers receive fair training or retraining on the use of academic social networking sites and the management policy on research productivity of library and information science lecturers. Academic staff members receive specialized training, retraining, or user education on social media networking on a regular basis from relevant institutions like university libraries or ICT centers. The administrations of universities should support and encourage LIS lecturers to attend national and international workshops, conferences, and seminars so they can learn about the best practices for academic social media networking in contemporary research.
3. The study suggests that appropriate academic social networking sites be created, and that management policies and procedures be put in place to help make the research output of faculty members in Nigerian universities more visible. Policies and strategies that will support fair and long-term exposure of LIS professors' research publications in academic institutions. In order to encourage lecturers to access and use academic social networking sites, this should essentially include annual budgetary allocations for the purchase of ICT infrastructure, the hiring, training, and retraining of ICT personnel and librarians, as well as training and retraining academic staff on visibility of lecturers' research productivity.
4. Given the paradigm change in information-seeking behavior from print to e-resources and the resulting beneficial impact on research productivity, academic staff members should actively utilize academic social networking for research productivity. To enable them to access, this should entail ongoing acquisition of important ICT and information literacy skills. They utilize specialized academic social media platforms as well as e-resources, or online databases, throughout their many fields of study. In order to improve their research productivity, they should seek to gain the necessary ICT and academic social media networking usage abilities. These will allow students to access and use e-resources in their studies.
5. The study suggests that university administration put in place guidelines requiring LIS instructors to have profiles on the academic social networking site or platforms.

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The university would gain from this as well as the LIS instructors.

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