

## Use Of Social Networking Site By Students Of Hassan Usman Katsina Polytechnic

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### **Abstract**

The study investigates the use of social networking sites by students of Hassan Usman Katsina Polytechnic. A descriptive survey and simple random sampling technique were used to select the respondents from the Department of Library and Information Science and Mass Communication in the College of Arts and Liberal Studies. A structured questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection and Microsoft Excel Application was used as a tool in analyzing the data. The findings of the study reveal that the students are familiar with conventional social media networking sites such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, and have little familiarity with academic social networking sites like google scholar and Researchgate. The students use social networking sites daily to keep in touch with friends and family members, share pictures, videos, and share information for academic activities. It was discovered that the majority of the students spend two hours and above surfing on the sites. The students have positive as well as negative perceptions of the use of the social network. The major problems encountered in the use of social networking sites are time-consuming and a high cost of internet subscriptions. The study recommends that the management of the institutions and the library should organize training programs on the use of SNS to the students especially academic social networks where people share current research and discussion on various disciplines.

**Keywords:** Social Networking Sites, Academic Social Networking Sites, Polytechnic Students, Nigeria.

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### **I. Introduction**

Advancement in Information Communication Technology (ICT) particularly the World Wide Web and Internet technology has changed the way people communicate and share information among themselves. ICT has provided enhanced user access to information at a fingertip with the help of modern technology (Brahm, & Verma, 2018). The Internet is the most significant development in information transmission and it has led to the creation of online Social Networking Sites (SNS) (Olaleke, Iroju, & Olajid 2015). In the present digital environment, people make use of computers, smartphones, and the Internet to communicate and share information. The use of ICT and the Internet in communication has created user familiarity with several networking sites in which they can participate, communicate, and share information online.

Social networks are online services platforms that anchor building a social relationship between and among people who share a common interest (Eke, Omekwu, & Odoh, 2014). It is computer networks that link people, organizations, and knowledge and it allows users to share ideas, photos, videos, and to inform others about events and happenings around the world (Wikipedia, 2019). SNS consist of web-enabled software programs that allow users to search, browse, invite friends, interact and work collaboratively with other users (Singh, & Nigam, 2016), and it helps to connect people with similar interest and aims. People use SNS for personal communication as well as for professionals to contact with others (Dharuman, 2016). **ICT such as the desktop and laptop computers, handle mobile devices like iPad and smartphones, were used to communicate and share knowledge and ideas.**

The proliferation of SNS has impacted on the students' academic performance and that students' attitudes and behavior are changing in the way they communicate with friends and colleagues. They use available search engines and engaged in social activities by navigating through these sites. Saaondo, & Igbaakaa (2018) reveal that the perception and attitudes of students jointly predict students' use of social media networking sites. They usually create a WhatsApp group in which both the students and lecturers participate for proper communication. Information on lecture venue, time, and lecture notes are sometimes communicated through such group. According to Eke, Omekwu, & Odoh (2014), students use SNS to interact with

friends/Colleagues, discuss important national issues, watch videos and it has both a positive and negative effect on their academic learning.

SNS varies in format, purpose, and characteristics. The commonest types of SNS in use include Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Skype, etc. and Academic Social Networking Sites (ASNS) such as Academia.edu, Google Scholar, Researchgate, and LinkedIn. However, all SNS are used for communication and information sharing. The purpose cited by most researchers includes meeting new friends, keep in touch with old friends and family members, share information, discussion, locating people who have the same problem or interest, asking questions and getting answers, searching and downloading publications, etc. SNSs assist the students to evolve with the current shift in technology and information communication and provide the students with an opportunity to keep in touch with one another (Madhusudhan, 2012). In a nutshell, SNSs are the new epitome of electronic communication in a wide community and in a duplex manner to exchange, interact and share all kinds of information seamlessly (Brahm, & Verma 2018).

The benefit of SNS is that a user can maintain an account with each SNS of interest, and allow the user to partake in various communication activities that include personal and academic communication. For example, ASNS is meant for academic activities in which academics, students, and professionals use to collaborate with the scholarly community for information sharing, consumption, and dissemination of research output (Firdaus, & Haridasan, 2019). Students use these sites to download documents, ask questions, and view the development of research across disciplines. Facebook and WhatsApp were reported to be the largest SNS use by most students in tertiary institutions of learning.

Due to the explosive growth of information, society is moving towards online information resources and people continue to use different SNS to communicate with others via different networks. Munshi, Mostafa, & Alam (2018) citing Lenhart & Madden states that, since its inception, the SNS has attracted students in tertiary institutions of learning and researchers have conducted a number of studies in this regard. Most of the studies centered on students in developed countries. There is a need to explore how students in developing nations, particularly in polytechnics interact with SNS.

### **Objective of the study**

The major objective of the study is to examine the use of social networking sites by students in Polytechnic. The specific objectives were to:

1. Examine the student's level of awareness on different social networking sites.
2. Determine the frequency of visiting social networking sites by the students.
3. Find out the time spent by the students surfing on social networking sites.
4. Find out the preference and purpose of using social networking sites among the students.
5. Examine student's perception of the use of social networking sites.
6. Find out the problems encountered using social networking sites.

### **Scope of the Study**

The study covers National Diploma students from the Departments of Library and Information Sciences and Mass Communication in the College of Liberal Art of Hassan Usman Katsina Polytechnic.

## **II. Review of Related Literature**

Researchers have conducted a number of studies regarding students use of SNS. Velmurugan, & Natarajan (2015) conducted a study on the use of social networking sites to share information among undergraduates in the College library using questionnaire-based survey. Findings of the study reveal that almost the entire community surveyed are aware of SNS and have spent about three to four years surfacing on these sites. Findings also reveal that majority of the respondents indicated that SNS assist them in making new friends and share information for general knowledge. Although, the respondent reported slow Internet connection and lack of time as a barrier for proper use of SNS. In the same vein, Olaleke, Iroju, & Olajide (2015) carried out a study to assess the use of social networking sites by students of Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo, Nigeria. The aim was to investigate the impact of social networking site on the student's academic performance. The result of the study shows that the students use SNS frequently on a daily basis with female's student's population exceed that of their male counterpart. The result further shows that Facebook is the most used SNS by the students for communication and entertainment purposes. The study concludes that the majority of the students do not use SNS for academic activities despite the fact that it will foster their learning abilities through discussion and interacting with professionals in the relevant field.

Manca, & Ranier (2017) investigate the use of social media among researchers. The study employs an online survey through an open-source platform (Lime Survey) to cover Italian universities. The result of the study shows that the respondents are utilizing at least one tool of SNS. It was found out that Researchgate and Academia.edu were the most used SNS with 50.4% responses follow by LinkedIn 37.5%. The reason for using

SNS varies. Facebook was used to keep in touch with colleagues, LinkedIn is used to extend a professional network. Other SNS such as Twitter etc. were used to share professional interest while Researchgate and Academia.edu were used to give visibility to their professional work. Mohammad, & Tamimi (2017) investigate students' perceptions of using SNS in Saudi Arabia. The finding of the study shows that WhatsApp, was the most used SNS followed by Facebook and Twitter. The result further reveals that 42% of the students agreed that SNS has a negative impact on their studies and that it causes a distraction while studying from class and reading from their notes, and 44.59% students indicate that SNS assist them to get the lecture venue from time to time from the faculty members.

Chikweru, & Jabe (2018) examine the effect of social media networking sites usage and the academic performance of students in Rivers State University. Findings of the study reveal that the use of SNS negatively affects students' academic performance in which the majority of the students indicate that using SNS distracts them during lectures and library use hours and that they spend too much time surfing on the SNS. Firdaus, & Haridasan (2019) investigate the use of academic social networking sites among postgraduate's students. Findings of the study show that the students use ASNS that includes LinkedIn, Google Scholar, Researchgate, Academia.edu, etc. and the use of the ASNS was found to be frequent among the students, and they use it for searching and downloading of documents.

### **III. Methodology**

The study employs a descriptive survey design method using the questionnaire as an instrument for data collections. A sample of 150 students was randomly selected from the total population of 465 students in the Department of Library and Information Sciences and Mass Communication in the College of Liberal Arts, Hassan Usman Katsina Polytechnic, Katsina State, Nigeria. A simple random sampling technique was used in selecting the study sample. The data were analyzed with Microsoft Excel software using simple frequency count and percentage and where necessary the data is presented in graph.

#### **Data Analysis and Interpretation**

The analysis of the data gathered from the study is presented in this section. A total of 124 questionnaires were returned. After cross-examination of the questionnaire to see the level of completeness, it was discovered that 15 questionnaires were incomplete having a 30-40% response rate. In the end, 109 questionnaires representing a 72% response rate were found valid for analysis.

**Table 1.** Demographic Characteristics of respondents (n = 109).

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	93	71.5
Female	37	28.5
<b>Age Range</b>		
18-22	26	20
23-27	72	54.4
28-31	20	15.4
> 32	12	9.2
<b>Experience with Computer and Mobile Phone</b>		
Very Good	40	30.8
Good	71	54.6
Poor	15	11.5
Very Poor	4	3.1

The data in table 1 show the demographics of the students with the male constituting the majority (71.5%) and females (28.5%) who were between the age of 23-27 and 18-22 years and were good in the use of computers (54.6%).

**Level of awareness of SNS**

The students were asked to indicate their awareness or otherwise of different SNS and their responses are presented in Table 2.

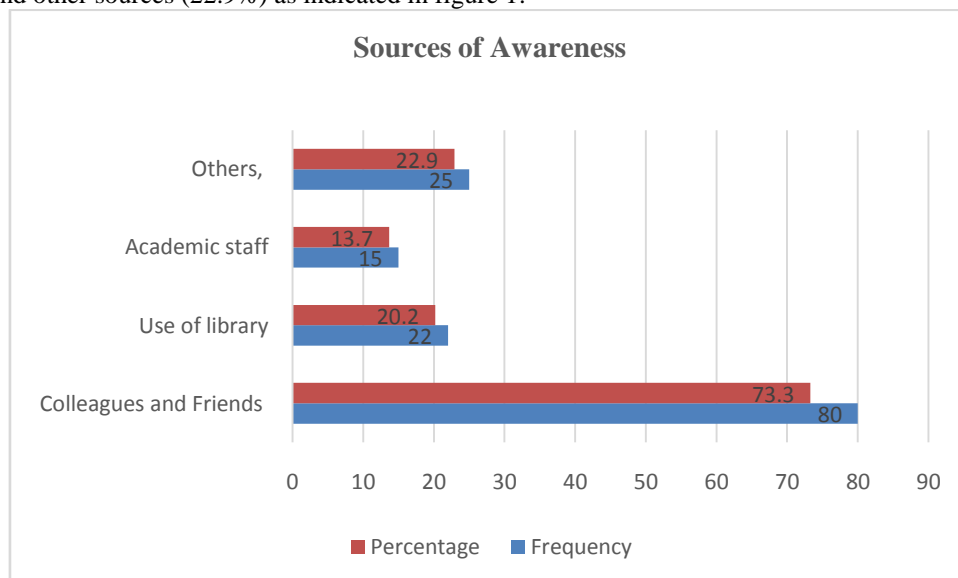
**Table 2 Level of Awareness of SNS**

S/N	Level of Awareness	Aware		Not Aware		Total	Rank
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%		
1	Facebook	109	100	0	0	109	1
2	Twitter	90	82.6	19	17.4	109	4
3	WhatsApp	109	100	0	0	109	1
4	YouTube	98	89.9	11	10.1	109	3
5	Instagram	105	96.3	4	3.7	109	2
6	Skype	89	81.6	20	18.4	109	5
7	LinkedIn	74	67.9	35	32.1	109	7
8	Myspace	45	41.3	64	58.7	109	9
9	Google scholar	59	54.1	50	45.9	109	8
10	Academia.edu	75	68.8	34	31.2	109	6
11	Researchgate	40	36.7	69	63.3	109	10

The data in table 2 show students level of awareness on different social networking sites. It is clear that all the students having Facebook and WhatsApp accounts. And Instagram rank 2<sup>nd</sup> (96.3%) followed by Twitter (82.6%) and Skype (81.6%). The data further indicates that most of the students were not familiar with academic social networking sites such as the Myspace (41.3%) responses, and Researchgate (36.7), though the majority are aware of LinkedIn (67.9%) Academia.edu (68.8%) and the google scholar with 54.1% response rate. Findings of the study is in agreement with the study of Velmurugan, & Natarajan (2015) who finds out that the majority of the students were aware of SNS and have spent about 2-4 years surfing.

**Sources of Awareness**

Students were asked to indicate their sources of awareness of SNS and their responses indicate that most them became aware through colleagues and friends (73.3%), use of the library (20.2%), academic staff (13.7%), and other sources (22.9%) as indicated in figure 1.



**Figure 1:** Sources of Awareness of SNS, Note: multiple answers are permitted (n=109)

### Frequency of Visiting SNS

Figure 2 shows the frequency usage of SNS among the students. It was revealed that 47.7% of students visit SNS on daily basis, 23.9% use the SNS twice a week, 10.1% indicated a visit to SNS on weekly basis and 18.3% use the SNS occasionally. This is in line with the study of Olaleke, Iroju, & Olajide (2015) and Firdaus, & Haridasan (2019) which shows that the students use SNS frequently daily and very few use SNS on weekly basis.

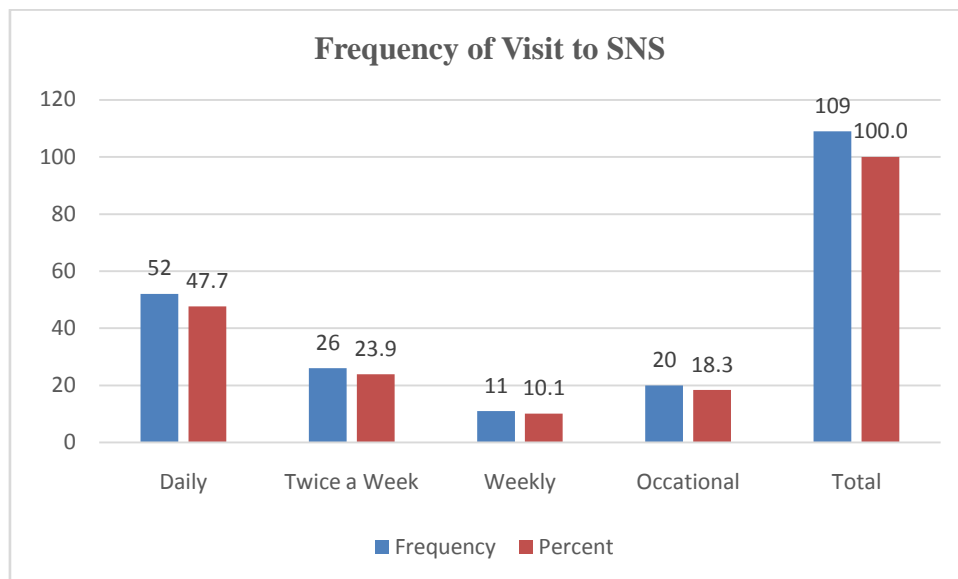


Figure 2: Frequency of Visit to SNS

### Time Spent on SNS

Figure 3 shows the time spent by the students surfing on SNS. The data indicates that the majority (50.5%) spend 2 hours and above using SNS and (29.4%) use between 1-2 hours while (20.2%) students spent less than 1-hour surfing. Despite the benefit of SNS, students spent more than 2 hours on SNS. This implies that they spend much time using SNS and this will have an effect on their academic learning. The findings of the study support that of Buhari, Ahmad, & Ashara, (2014), Adebayo, (2015) which found that most of the students spend more than one-hour surfing and it affects them in so many ways.

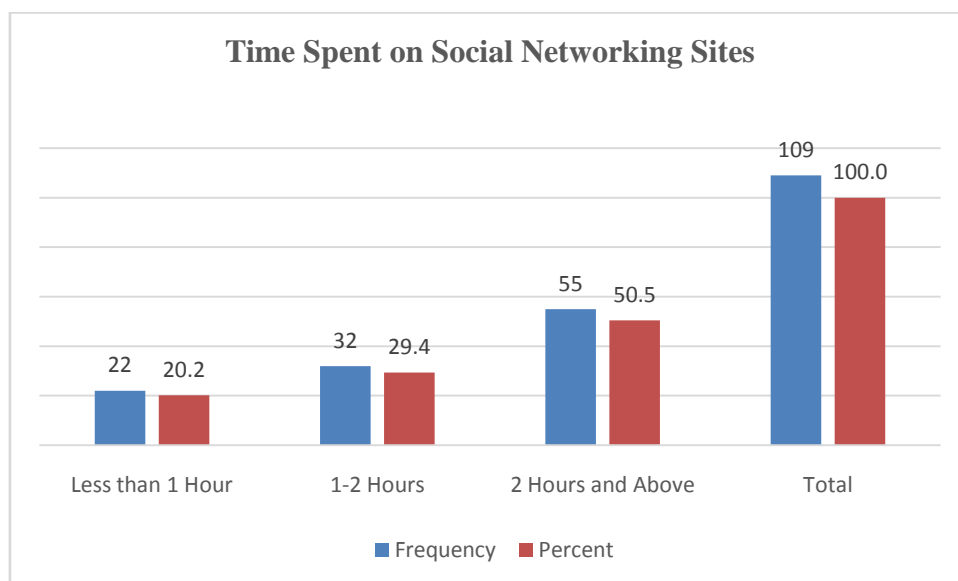


Figure 3: Time Spent on Social Networking Sites

### Preference of SNS

There exist various SNS in use. Some are used for socialization; others are purely for academic purposes. The students were asked to indicate the most preferred SNS, and the data in figure 4 show that

WhatsApp is the most preferred SNS with 87.1% responses follows by Facebook 73.4% and Instagram 67.9%. On ASNS it was revealed that Google scholar is the most preferred ASNS with 41.2% responses and Researchgate 27.5% responses. Findings of the study support that of Mohammad, & Tamimi (2017) which shows that WhatsApp, was the most used SNS by students follow by Facebook and Twitter.

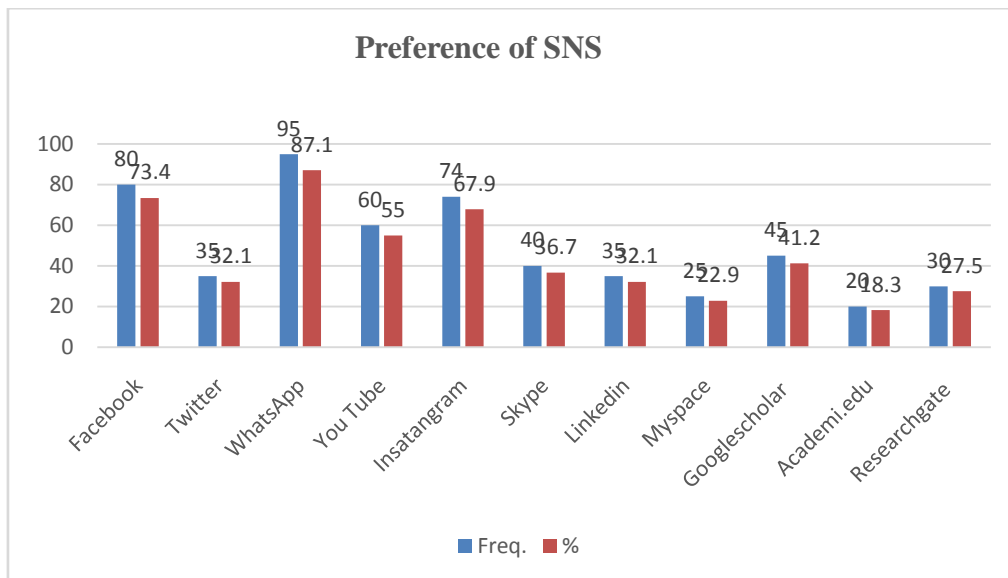


Figure 4: Students' preference on SNS, Note: Multiple answers are permitted, (n=109).

### Purpose of using SNS

SNS are used for a different purpose. The study made an effort to find out the purpose of using SNS by the students. It is clear from the data in table 3 that the students use SNS for several purposes. (87.2%) of the students use SNS to be in touch with family and friends, (79.8) indicates ease of communication, (73.4%) to share pictures and videos and (68.8%), to share information on academic activities (55.1%), and (66.1) use SNS for asking questions and getting answers while (32.1%) indicated they use of SNS for other purposes.

Table 3: Purpose of Using SNS, Note: Multiple answers are permitted (n=109).

S/N	Purpose of Using	Frequency	Percentage
1	To make new friends	57	52.3
2	To share information on academic activities	75	68.8
3	Ease of communication	87	79.8
4	To be in touch with family and friends	95	87.2
5	To share pictures, videos and music	80	73.4
6	Searching and downloading publications	60	55.1
7	Asking questions/getting answers	72	66.1
8	Others	35	32.1

### Students Perception in the Use of SNS

Students were asked 3 positive and 2 negative questions regarding the use of SNS and the data in table 4 indicate that the majority (77.9%) agree that SNS are easy to use and this may be the reason why they frequently visit the sites on daily basis. They were also asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement of difficulty in using SNS, and (56.9%) disagree while 43.1% agree. The students have a positive perception of the use of SNS for ease of communication (73.4%) and improving academic performance (68.8%). They also agreed that the use of SNS is affecting their academic learning with 72.5% responses.

**Table 4:** Students Perception in the Use of SNS, Note: Multiple answers are permitted, (n=109).

Perception of using SNS	Agree		Disagree	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Social Networking sites are easy to use	85	77.9	24	22.1
Social Networking sites are difficult to use	47	43.1	62	56.9
Using Social Networking sites help me to communicate with others easily	80	73.4	48	26.6
Social Networking sites Improves my Academic Performance	75	68.8	34	31.2
Social Networking sites affect academic learning	79	72.5	30	27.5

### Problems of using SNS

Table 5 shows the problems faced by the students while using SNS. It could be observed that the students encountered one problem or the other. The most prominent is time-consuming with (75.2%) responses, followed by the high cost of a subscription to data (72.5%), slow Internet connection (67.9%), detraction from academic activities (64.2%), and hacking of user account with (43.1%) responses.

S/N	Problems	Frequency	Percentage
1	High cost of data	79	72.5
2	Slow internet connection	74	67.9
3	Hacking of account	47	43.1
4	Time-consuming	82	75.2
5	Detraction from academic activities	70	64.2
6	Others,	35	32.1

**Table 5:** Problems of Using SNS, Note: Multiple answers are permitted, (n=109).

### IV. Findings of the Study

This research was conducted to examine the use of social networking sites by students. In this regard, the main findings of the study are summarized in line with the objectives of the study.

1. The students are more familiar with Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter, and has little familiarity with academic social networking sites such as Researchgate, LinkedIn, and Myspace. The students became aware of SNS through colleagues/friends, and the use of the library.
2. It was discovered that Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, and Twitter were the most used SNS by the students, and the majority of the students visit the SNS daily and twice a week.
3. Majority of the students spent between one hour above surfing on SNS.
4. The most preferred SNS among the students are WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram. The purpose of using SNS by the students are: to be in touch with family and friends, ease of communication, sharing pictures, audio, videos and sharing information on academic activities.
5. The students have both positive and negative perception of the use of SNS
6. The problems encountered by the students in the use of SNS are time-consuming and high cost of a subscription to data.

### V. Conclusion

The study investigates the use of social networking sites by students in the Department of Library and Information Sciences and Mass Communication of Hassan Usman Katsina Polytechnic. The students are very much aware of the existence of different SNS but were not familiar with academic social networking sites. This may result in the inability of the students to harness the potentials of these sites. It should be noted that ASNS offered an opportunity for the sharing of ideas among members and across the discipline. Students could keep up to date on the current research and development in their various subject areas using ASNS. The students use SNS to keep in touch with friends and family members and use the WhatsApp to communicate with colleagues on academic activities such as posting lecture venues, time and share documents between and among themselves. The students perceive the use of SNS as useful and at the same time indicated that it has a negative effect on their academic learning as they spent much time using SNS. It is suggested that the Polytechnic authority should inform the students on the benefit of using ASNS in order to tapped into the benefit of these sites through proper guidance. The Polytechnic library, on the other hand, should be conducting proper

information literacy program on the use of ICTs and the available SNS use to foster information exchange and sharing. This will have made the students be exposed to appropriate SNS to use for the purpose of academic learning. This type of program will also acquaint the students on the privacy issues associated with the use of SNS.

## VI. Suggestions

1. It is suggested that the management of the institution and the library should organize training programs on the use of ASNS to the students so that they can use them to access, receive and share information for academic activities.
2. The students need to be taught on how to properly use Facebook, Twitter, and other SNS for sharing information not only for making friends and chatting. They should also be careful in selecting the friends and don't give requests to any unknown persons or the persons without proper communication details like mobile calls using caller ID.
3. Social Networking Sites are having both positive and negative features. It is recommended that the students be careful in using SNS and be familiar with using authenticated data.
4. Before commenting on any government and other policies, you should not go beyond the law. Avoid posting illegal content and pictures, especially in groups.
5. Students need to be aware of security reasons and malware. Specifically, for women, don't post your personal data and photos.
6. Any persons trying to go beyond the limit of legal communications, aware the way of reporting or guidance services from the cybercrime department

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