The Effect of Social Networking Sites Usage on the Studies of Nigerian Students

[1,] Onyeka Ndidi Camilia, [2,] Sajoh Dahiru Ibrahim & [3,] Bulus Lucy Dalhatu
Department of Computer Science, Federal Polytechnic, Mubi, Adamawa State Nigeria

---*ABSTRACT*--
These days most of the students and young adults in Nigerian tertiary institutions are mostly and always engrossed in the social networking site usage. Have you thought of what they might be doing there? This paper surveyed students' social networking sites usage and how it affects them. It examines the role which frequent use of social networking sites playin their studies. Questionnaires were designed and sent out to 600 respondents of the different tertiary institutions in Mubi Educational zone, Adamawa state, Nigeria. A Polytechnic, a State University and a State College of Health Technology were used for the study. Out of the 600 questionnaires distributed, 536 were completely filled and returned giving a return rate of 89%. The data collected were analyzed using frequencies; percentages and graph representations while the hypothesis was tested using chi square (X^2). The hypothesis that the frequent use of social networking sites by student of tertiary institutions in Mubi, Adamawa state Nigeria has no effect on their studies was accepted at 5% level of signifance. It was recommended that students should learn to manage their time properly and teachers should use social networking sites to promote teaching-learning process.

KEYWORDS: *Social Networking Sites, Study, SNSs, Tertiary institution, Usage, students*

I INTRODUCTION

With the nature of the cyber world around us today and how students are immersed in it, there is growing concern on how it affects them.The Internet is more than just a means of seeking information. People discovered that the Internet could be used to connect with other people, whether for business or commercial purpose, make new friends, reawaken old friends and long lost relatives. The emergence of social networking sites (SNSs) simplify the whole process as they are easier to use and navigate. Their use does not require advanced knowledge and experience of the internet and are made up of a wide array of different formats and topics; this means that just about anyone can connect[3].Kuppuswamy& Narayan [12], observed that the internet is more about blogs, podcasts, Facebook, Myspace, and Orkut. These are some of the tools and technology associated with a recent phenomenon called social networking and is present everywhere. In [2], Social Networking Site (SNS) was defined as a web-based service that allows individuals to:

A.   Construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system.
B.   Articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection.
C.   View and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system.

The history of SNSs dates back to the late 1990s, suggesting that they are not as new as they may appear in the first place. With the emergence of SNSs such as Facebook, Twitter, Linkedinetc, overall SNS usage has accelerated in such a way that they are considered a global consumer phenomenon. Today, studies suggest that between 55% and 82% of teenagers and young adults use SNSs on a regular basis [13].Relative to the general population, adolescents and young adults are the heaviest computer and Internet users, primarily using it for completing schoolassignments (46%), e-mail and/or instant messaging (36%), and playing computer games 38%; (DeBell& Chapman, 2006 as cited in [11]). Social networking sites are the latest onlinecommunication tool that allows users to create a public or private profile to interact with people in their networks [2].

II   PERCEPTIONS OF SOCIAL NETWORKING

Social network sites deeply penetrate their users' everyday life and, as pervasivetechnology, tend to become invisible once they are widely adopted, ubiquitous,and taken for granted (Luedtke, 2003 as cited in [4]).Social networking has become part of the daily life experiences for an increasing number of people. The rapid adoption of social network sites by teenagers in the United States and in many other countries round the world raises some important questions. Why do teenagers flock to these sites?

What are they expressing on them? How do these sites fit into their lives? What are they learning from their participation? Are these online activities like face-to-face friendships, or are they different, or complementary? [1].Social network sites (SNSs) such as Friendster, CyWorld, and MySpace allow individuals to present themselves, articulate their social networks, and establish or maintain connections with others. These sites can be oriented towards work-related contexts (e.g., LinkedIn.com), romantic relationship initiation (the original goal of Friendster.com), connecting those with shared interests such as music or politics (e.g., MySpace.com), or the college student population (the original incarnation of Facebook.com). Participants may use the sites to interact with people they already know offline or to meet new people [5].

Social networking has become part of the daily life experiences for an increasing number of people [12]. Socializing via the Internet has become an increasingly important part of young adult life[7].The popular image of young people is of them with their faces glued to screens while they are constantly texting, checking e-mail, or updating theirFacebook pages. The stereotype is that we are becoming increasingly disconnected from the world around us.The truth is that through the use of cell phones, laptops, iPods, and online "social networks" such as MySpace, young people are not only staying connected with their peers but are also becoming more adept at keeping up with world events and helping to shape them [9].With so many social networking sites displayed on the internet, students are tempted to abandon their homework and reading times in preference for chatting online with friends. Many students are now addicted to the online rave of the moment, with Facebook, Twitter etc. Today most youths and students possessFacebook accounts. The reason your ward is performing badly in school might not be far- fetched. While your mind might be quick to blame the poor quality of teachers, you might have to think even harder, if you have not heard of the Facebook frenzy [15]. Olubiyi [17] noted that these days' students are so engrossed in the social media that they are almost 24 hours online. Even in classrooms and lecture theatres, it has been observed that some students are always busy *pinging*, *2going* or *Facebooking*, while lectures are on. Times that ought be channeled towards learning, academic research and innovating have been crushed by the passion for meeting new friends online, and most times busy discussing trivial issues.Hence most students' academics suffer setback as a result of distraction from the social media. In [14], it was observed that the use of these sites also affects students' use of English and grammar. The students are used to short forms of writing words in their chat rooms; they forget and use the same in the classrooms. They use things like *4* in place of *for*, *U* in place of *You*, *D* in place of *The* etc. and this could affect their class assessment.

III   LITERATURE REVIEW

In a study of 884 students of different universities in Nigeria, [18]indicated that youths in Nigeria are spending too much time onsocial networking sites at the detriment of other necessary things such as their studies. They explained that Youths' use of these social networking sites even point towards obsession. The youths have made the social media their top priority and continued to need more usage in order to feel satisfied In [16], a study on Facebook and Academic Performance in Nigeria Universities was carried out on 122 university students; they tested six hypothesesto know the effect of Facebook on the academic performance of students in selected universities. The study tested among other hypotheses that the more time a student spends on Facebook, the lower his or her grade point average will be. This was proven to be wrong.The study of [8] investigated the intensity of SNSs use among the students of Jordanian universities and suggested that SNSs can be used as an academic tool for communication and interacting with/between educators and students alike. The study encouraged the integration of SNS into learning management systems.The model proposed by [3] on the perceived influence of academic performance using social networking, was interpreted based on the academic performance of Faculty of Computer Science and Information Systems students using SNSs in University of Technology Malaysia. The study identified three basic activities common to all students involved in using SNS for academic purpose. The activities include: communicating with the faculty and university authority, communicating with lecturers and supervisors, making academic discussions with classmates and chatting with friends in respect to topics of educational interest. The study confirmed that majority of students agreed that the social networking media have positive influence on their academic performance and concluded that there is need for the faculty policy makers to evolve strategies to guide and ensure that social networking sites are adopted mostly for academic purposes especially among the undergraduate students of the faculty

Enikuomehin [6], evaluated the direct consequences of ICT in Nigerian Universities. The paper investigated the popularity of internet serviceswithin the university community and its consequences in academic performance affected by the useof social networks. The study showed that there is a great adverseeffect in the areas of combining social and mediaexploration like Facebookingwith real studying andconsequently leading to lower CGPAof student users.

In [17], the author observed that the bone of contention of the social media is the obsessive attitude of Nigerian youths towards its use. He pointed out that youth waste their time through idle chats and other immoral acts.The result is that quality time that ought to be spent on academic research and other productive networking is lost.

IV   THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

Students of tertiary institutions in Adamawa state these days are always very busy with their handset and laptops. Give most students access to the Internet and they will spend considerable time chatting, checking their email, their Facebook profile,their MySpace Web page, updating their Twitter accounts and their LinkedIn account, and it does not happen only once a day. It is speculated that an average Nigerian youth spend about 6 -7 hours on the internet daily, some do all night browsing [10]. When do they have the time to read/study their books or make research? This paperinvestigates the effect of social networking siteusage on the studies of students of tertiary institutions in Mubi Educational zone, Adamawa state, Nigeria

V   METHODOLOGY

The instrument used for data collection for this study was the questionnaire method. This was because of the nature of information required and the form of analysis to be conducted. A 16-question structured questionnaire was designed and administered to students from three different institutions of higher learning situated in Mubi, Adamawa state, Nigeria. The institutions include: The Federal Polytechnic Mubi, Adamawa State University Mubi and College of Health Technology. The questionnaires were designed in anonymity to enable the student fill them truthfully without fear of intrusion of privacy. Of the 600 questionnaires administered, 536were returned adequately filled.

Research Questions
The following research questions were used to guide the study
i.   Which of the SNSs is mostly used by students?
ii.   How much time do students spend on the SNSs daily?
iii.   Why do students of tertiary institutions use SNSs?
iv.   How does the use of SNSs affect students' academics?
v.   Do students use the SNSs for their academic assignments?

Hypothesis:H_0: Frequent use of Social networking sites by the students has no effect on their studies

Data Analysis: Data collected were statistically analyzed using descriptive statistics like frequencies, percentages, and graphs. The null hypothesis involved in the study was tested using chi-square.
Among the 536 questionnaires filled, 300 respondents (56%) were male while 236 (44%) were females. Of the respondents, the majorities; 46%, were between 22 and 25 years old, while 4% were 15 to 17, 20% were 18 to 20, and 30% were between 26 to 40 years old. Out of the 536 respondents, 520 (97%) respondents are aware of and use the SNSs while 16 (3%) are not aware and do not use the SNSs. Below are the analyses.

Research question 1: Which of the SNSs is mostly used by students of Tertiary institutions in Mubi?

Table 1: SNS mostly used by students.

SNSs	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Facebook	494	95
2go	420	81
You Tube	140	28
Twitter	109	21
Skynet	16	2
Myspace	42	8

From table 1, of the six social networking sites used by students, Facebook is seen to be mostly used by student with 95% (494) respondents using it on a typical day. This is followed by 2go with 81% (420) respondents, You Tube with 28% (140) respondents, Twitter with 21% (109), Myspace with 8% (42) and Skynet with 2% (16) respondents using them daily. This shows that Facebook is the social networking site mostly used by students of tertiary institutions in Mubi, Adamawa state, Nigeria. Fig. 1 below further displays the graphical distribution of the percentages above.
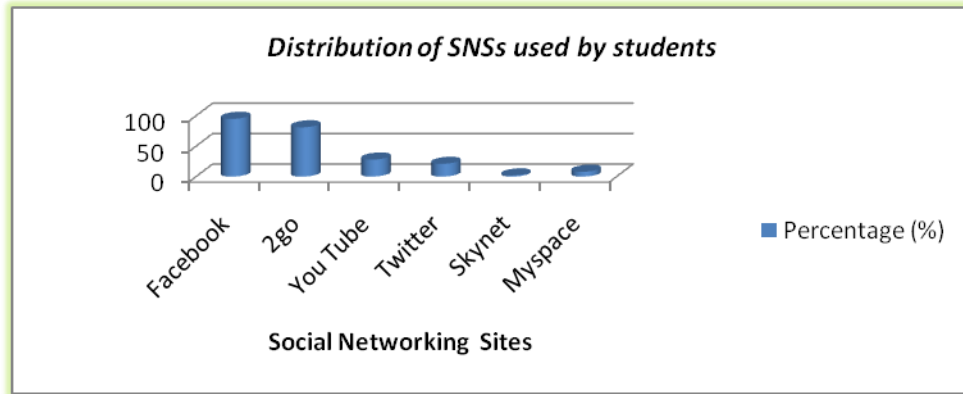
Fig.1: Representation of the SNSs used by students

Research question 2: How much time do students spend on the SNSs daily?
Table 2: Time spent by students on the SNSs daily

Hour(s)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0 -1	203	39
2 – 4	270	52
5 -7	26	5
8 – 10	21	4
Total	**520**	**100**

Table 2shows that 39% of the respondents use the SNSs for about one hour each day, 52% of the respondents use it for about 2 to 4 hour per day, 5% of the respondents use it for about 5 to 7 hours per day and 4% of the respondents use the SNSs for about 8 to 10 hours each day. From this study, it means that most students of higher institutions in Adamawa state, Nigeria use the SNSs for 2 to 4 hours daily. Fig. 2 shows the distribution of hours spent by students on the SNSs
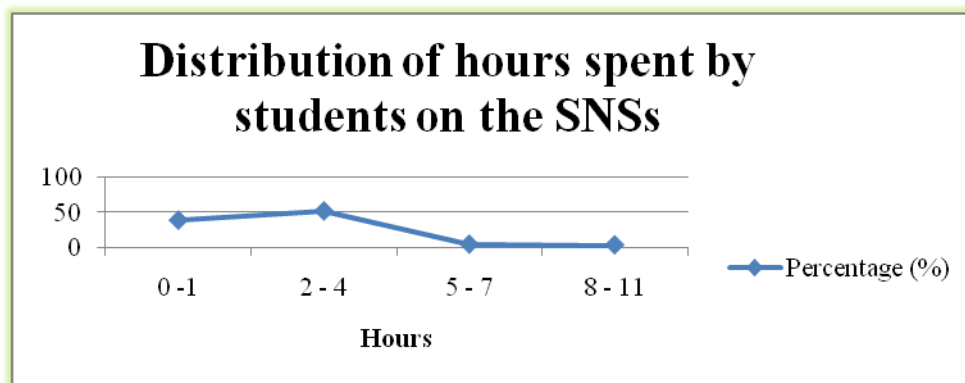

Fig. 2: Representation of the time spent by students on the SNSs daily

Research question 3: Why do students of higher institutions use SNSs?

Table 3: Reasons students use the SNSs

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage (%)
To keep in touch	265	51
To while away time	146	28
To belong	26	5
Solving social problems	83	16
Total	**520**	**100**

As seen from table 3 above, 51% of respondents use the SNS to keep in touch with friends and family members, 28% use it to while away time, 5% of the respondents say they use the SNS just to belong while 16% use it to

solve their social problems. This shows that most of the students of tertiary institutions in Mubi, Adamawa state, Nigeria use the SNSs to keep in touch.Fig. 3 below further distributes reasons why students use the social networking sites.
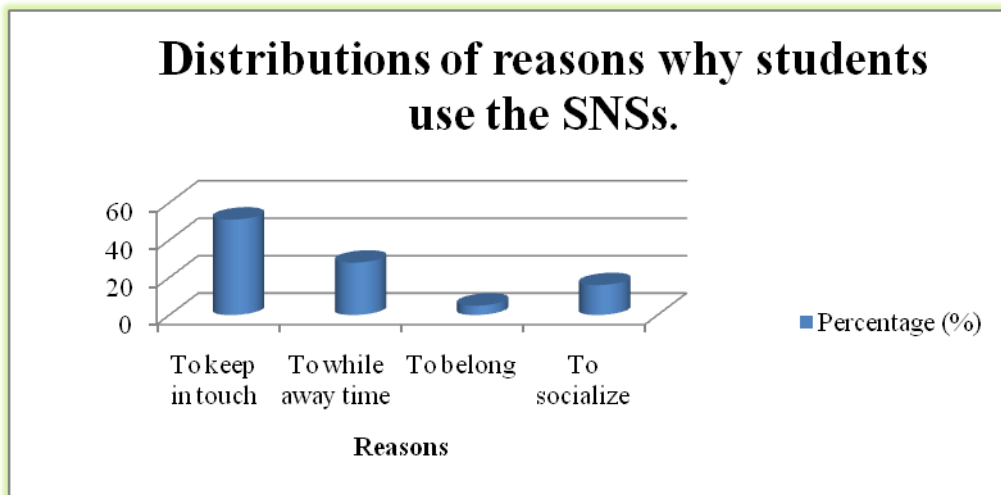

Fig. 3: Representation of reasons why students use the SNSs

Research question 4: How does the use of SNSs affect students' academics?
Table 4: the effect of the use of SNSs on students' academics

Effects	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Positively	135	26
Negatively	166	32
No effect	218	42
Total	**520**	**100**

Table 4 shows that 26% of respondentsagreed that the use SNSs affect their academics positively, 32% are affected negatively while 42% are not affected in any way by their use of the SNSs. This shows that though students devote their times on the SNS, their studies and academics are not affected by it as seen by the percentage of *no effect*(42%).Fig. 4 below further displays the distribution of the effect of SNSs on the studies of students.
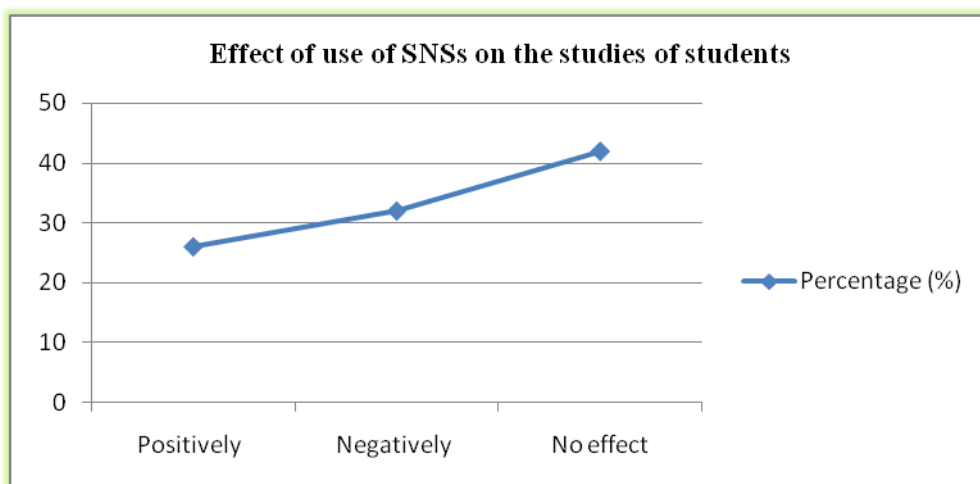

Fig. 4: Representation of the effect of use of SNSs on the studies of students

Research question 5: Do students use the SNSs for their academic assignments?
Table 5: Students' use of SNSs for academic assignments

Effects	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	385	74
No	135	26
Total	**520**	**100**

Table 5 shows that 74% of the respondents agreed to using the SNSs for their academic assignment while 26% said they do not use it for their assignments. Fig. 5 below shows the distribution of the use of SNSs for academic assignments.
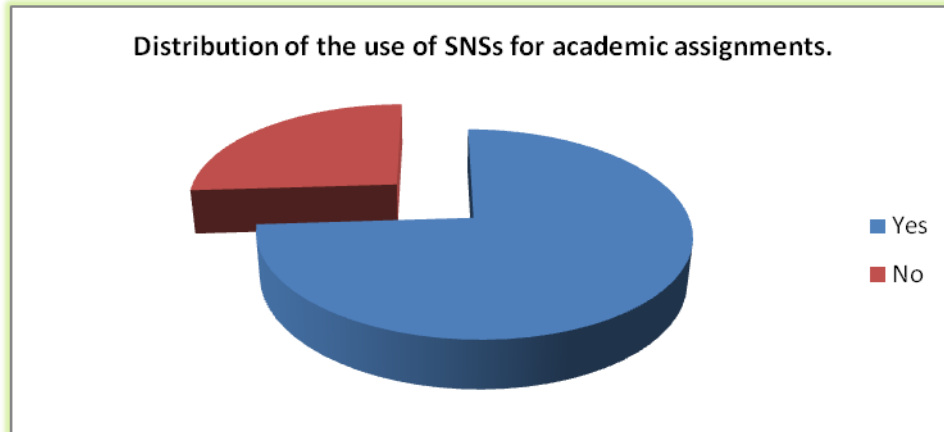

Fig. 5: Representation of Students' use of SNSs for academic assignments

Research hypothesis
H_0= Frequent use of Social networking sites by the students has no effect on their studies

The data used to test the hypothesis are drawn from the questionnaire. They include
1) At times do you use the SNSs (like chatting) when lecture is going on?
2) If yes do you understand the lecture?
3) Do you have special time for using the SNSs?
4) At times do you use the SNSs (like chatting) while studying?

Table 6: Variables of Frequent use of Social networking sites

	Yes	No	Total
1	239	281	**520**
2	130	390	**520**
3	78	52	**130**
4	161	359	**520**
Total	**608**	**1082**	**1690**

$$C_{ij} = \frac{(R \times C)}{G}$$

Chi square (χ^2) is used for the analysis;

Table 7: Chi-square distribution

	Observed (O)	Expected (E)	|O - E|	(O - E)^2	(O - E)^2/E
1	239	187.08	51.92	7.21	0.04
2	281	332.92	51.92	7.21	0.02
3	130	187.08	57.08	7.56	0.04
4	390	332.92	57.08	7.56	0.02
5	78	46.77	31.23	5.59	0.12
6	52	83.23	31.23	5.59	0.07
7	161	187.08	26.08	5.11	0.03
8	359	332.92	26.08	5.11	0.02
Total					**0.36**

χ^2= chi- square value, O = observed value, E = expected value

$$Degree\ of\ freedom(df) = (R-1)(C-1),\ df = (4\text{-}1)(2\text{-}1)=3,\ \alpha = 5\%\ ;\ X^2_{tab} = 7.815;$$

$$X^2_{cal} = \sum_{i=1}^{n} \frac{(O_{ij}-E_{ij})^2}{E_{ij}},\quad X^2_{cal} = 0.36$$

Chi square (X^2) = 0.36

The table value of chi square at alpha = 0.05 and df = 3 is **7.815.** Which is greater than the calculated chi square therefore we accept the null hypothesis. This means that the frequent use of the SNSs by students has no effect on their studies.

VI   DISCUSSION

The studytested a hypothesis that the frequent use of Social networking sites by students has no effect on their studies. The hypothesis was accepted and proven to be correct. The study revealed that the frequent use of the social networking sites has no effect on the students' studies. The result obtained in thisstudy supports the deductions of [16] that the use of Facebook does not have adverse effect on the academic performance of students in the Nigerian Universities. It is also in line with the study of [3] whichconfirmed that majority of students agreed that the social networking media have positive influence on their academic performance.
This study contradicts the findings of[18]which indicated that youths in Nigeria are spending too much time on social networking sites at the detriment of other necessary things such as their studies. The study was also not in agreement with[6], who concluded that most of the students wasting their time onsocial networking sites.

The findings of this study shows that the students of tertiary institutions in Mubi educational zone use Facebook (almost all the students haveFacebook account)more than any other social networking sites followed by 2go and Youtube. This shows that Facebook is the most popular SNSs used by students in Mubi. The study also revealed that they mostly use these sites for keeping in touch. They do this by updating their status regularly, writing on friends' walls and uploading pictures. Some of these students also go online just to while away their time; these times would have been used for more important things in that they allocate more time for SNSs and less time for studying. The study also noted that the students spend two to four hour (2 – 4 hours) daily on the SNSs doing their updates, postings and other visitations. A majority of the students agreed to using the SNSs for their academic assignment. This is a good development on the use of SNSs because this comes at the time when the needs for academic contents are highly needed on the SNSs. The researchers observed that with the widespread of internet services provided by telecommunication companies in Nigeria, and the increased use of internet via computers, smart phones, tablets and other handheld devices, students have been seen to always spend a lot of time on the internet. Students are able to use the internet more probably because of cheaper data services provided by the telecommunication companies in Nigeria.

VII   CONCLUSION

Although this study revealed no effect in the students' use of SNSs on their studies, the researchers still see the need for creatinga balance between the use of SNS and studies. This is because students are seen using the SNS even in the lecture hall while lectures are going on and also while reading (studying). There is need for students to learn time management and to allocate, to each task, a specific timeframe. Students and young adults should always make out special time for using the SNSs and not to devote all their available time to it. The researchers believe that thiswould increase students' academic performance. Since students are also using SNSs for their academic activities, lecturers should useSNSs to enhance teaching-learning process by uploading academic contents for use by the students.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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BIOGRAPHY

Onyeka, Ndidi Camilia is a Lecturer in the Computer Science Department, Federal Polytechnic Mubi, Nigeria. She holds M.Sc. in Computer Science from University of Ibadan, Nigeria. Her research interests include Information Security, Social Networks, Software Engineering and Pervasive Systems.

Sajoh, Dahiru Ibrahim is the Project Leader of Software Engineering Group at Federal Polytechnic, Mubi. He got his M.Sc. in Software Engineering from De Montfort University, Leicester in 2012. He received a B.Tech in Computer Science from Federal University of Technology Yola, Nigeria, in 2008. His interest areas include Software Engineering, Pervasive System and Artificial Intelligent.

Bulus, Lucy Dalhatu is a Master student Computer Science at Adamawa State University, Mubi Nigeria. She is a member of Software Engineering Group. She obtained her BSc in 2007 from Adamawa State University, Nigeria. Her area of interest includes Database management information system and computational modelling. She is a member of NCS.