

Use of Social Media for Sexual Expression among Adolescents in Ilorin Metropolis

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Abstract

Applying uses and gratifications theory (UGT), this research examined the motives for using social media for sexual expression among adolescents in Ilorin metropolis. Survey research design was used to conduct the study where copies of questionnaire were administered to obtain data from 363 adolescents within the age group of 13-17 in secondary schools. Results indicated that majority of respondents' motives for sexual expression on social media is to derive certain information on their personal preference. The study concluded that, adolescents in Ilorin metropolis use social media for sexual expression to gratify informational needs. Therefore, it was recommended that further study should be conducted with a focus on the impact of sexual expression on social media on adolescents' attitude, behavior and safety.

Keywords: Adolescents, Sexuality, Sexual Behavior, Social Media.

1. Introduction

The usage of social media is becoming worrisome especially among the children and adolescents; while the medium is a platform for social changes, it has the potential for providing the ideal and right sexual orientation in a positive or negative manner (Amoo, 2013). In an era when issues of sexual reproductive health and rights have become important and sometimes threatening to human existence, it is imperative to examine the abuse of these tools and their implications on the state of health, considering the fact that "health is the wealth of every nation".

The social media could represent a 'gap-filler' and dependable source of the much desired information among the adolescents in traditional African and Nigerian setting to be precise, which place restrictions on sexual information (Collins, Martino & Shaw, 2011). This is made easy because the media (internet, Facebook, videos and the likes) are increasingly more explicit in sexual content. Making reference to the traditional media, it has been reported that more than half (56%) of all television shows contain sexual content and they could include scenes that can possibly fuel risks of sexual activity (Collins, Martino & Shaw, 2011).

According to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), (2016) the access and usage of Internet has increased tremendously in Nigeria like other developing nations. The number of internet users rose from about 100,000 internet users in 1999 to 11million in 2008, to 46 million in 2011 and almost up to 95 million users in 2016. Also, the numbers of people accessing the Internet increased within five years from 0.06% to 3.6% between 2000 and 2005 and thereafter increased from 24% to 32.9 percent between 2010 and 2012. As at 2016, the proportion of individuals using Internet was 52%. Also, mobile cellular users increased from 30,000 in 2000 to 112.8 million in 2012 to 207 million in 2016.

Social media has considerable potential for its uses in conveying messages about responsible sexual behavior (Jan & Kristopher, 2011). Considering the audience to this technology, knowledge relating to abstinence, effects of abortion, girl-child marriage, infant mortality, pregnancy prevention, and the like, can be effectively disseminated to the right audience through the medium (Tang, Gu & Whinston, 2012).

The evolving abuses of these technologies by adolescents could be products of limited or lack of control over their uses (Lenhart, Purcell, Smith & Zickuhr, 2010). In addition, the susceptibility of children and adolescents to peer pressure, inadequate formal and informal sexuality education and lapses on the part of the governments could be hindering forces to sexual benevolent use of social media (Amoo, 2013).

In light of the exponential growth of social media usage among adolescents, this study intends to provide the key motivations for using social media for sexual expression in the context of ritualized or instrumental purpose. Sexual expression in this context refers to sending, receiving, or forwarding sexually explicit messages, chats, write ups, comments, photographs, or images chats or short videos that depicts blowing kisses, dressing aimed at showing any part of the body, finger to indicate fuck you etc on social media. Ritualize social media use denotes the habitualise use of the medium to gratify diversionary needs or motives. A habitual user uses social media full time for companionship, relaxation, arousal and escape and while an instrumental social media user uses the medium for a specific goal usually for the purpose of specific information and news.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To examine the form of social media adolescents frequently use.
2. To assess the satisfaction adolescents derive from using social media for sexual expression
3. To determine the motives behind adolescent use of social media for the expression of sexuality.

2. Adolescents and Social Media

Amoo (2013) defined social media as the use of websites for social interaction including social networking sites such as face-booking, twitting, videoing, YouTube, gaming and virtual worlds like Club Penguin, Second Life and the Sims. Amoo (2013) continued by saying that, adoption of social media has become a blended global social fabric among the teaming population of adolescents and children. Today's world could be described as a social media world where considerable hours and money are invested on new media sources. Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn Whats App are successful examples. Gwenn and Kathleen (2011) noted that, teenagers spend up to 8 hours a day on social network services. More than 22 percent of teenagers log on to one form of social media or the order over 10 times a day.

The relevance of social media in the quest for information especially among the children and adolescents cannot be overemphasized. Due to the increasing popularity of social media usage, personal social interaction with friends, family, academic and professional contacts have transformed itself from offline reading into an online entity (Musa, Azmi & Ismail, 2015). As a system, it brought immense changes to life especially among children and adolescents round the globe. It offers opportunity for people to contact with their loved ones easily notwithstanding the distance, watch television without television, buy and sell products without physical touching (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2011; Gwenn & Kathleen, 2011). According to Lenhart, Purcell, Smith and Zickuhr (2010)

social media helps children and adolescents, especially the school going, to learn and accomplish many vital tasks/assignments.

2.1 Adolescent and Sexuality

According to Amoo (2013) adolescence is the onset of physical/sexual maturation and reproductive capacity. Adolescent as conceptualized in this context are teenagers, developing from a child to an adult who falls within the age group of 13 to 17. Adolescents in Nigeria constitute over 42 percent of the total population out of which 48 percent are girls and the remaining 52 percent are boys (Nigeria Demographic Profile, NDP, 2018). While they could be adjudged as having potential to become fathers and mothers, it is unequivocal that they are not matured enough to become responsible father or mother of responsible children, which makes it exigency that sexuality education is popularized among them (Adepoju, 2005). According to Vandenbosch, Van Oosten and Peter, (2015), adolescents use social media to a highly advantage by checking news feeds and posting updates daily and distributing sexually suggestive images of themselves. Although, these populations have numerous needs and their rights to know about their bodies, to be educated and informed about their sexual health must be protected. As expected, they face myriads of social, emotional, psychological and cultural challenges (Strasburger, 2010) especially in receiving and gaining access to the right information about sexuality.

Kapidzic and Herring (2015) found out that the female adolescents were more likely to post pictures which depicts nudity than the male. In another study of 100 Facebook profiles of Dutch adolescents between the ages of 11 to 18, Doornwaard, Moreno, van den Eijnden, Vanwesenbeeck, and Ter Bogt (2014) found that adolescents do not share comments about sexual experiences or behaviors and romantic relationships. They do not reveal personal images of full or partial nudity on their personal profiles. In a longitudinal study carried out by Vandenbosch, Van-Oosten and Peter (2015) to investigate the exposure to sexual reality on television content and pornography on Internet is related to sexual self-presentation on social media among 1,765 adolescents between the ages of 13 to 18 years, they found out that adolescents are inspired and produced a replica of the sexual contents they watch on reality television content on social media by distributing sexual images of themselves on social media. A study by Daniels (2016) evaluated the perceptions adolescents' male on how female who presented themselves on Facebook profiles in either a sexualized or nonsexualized manner. 117 college men looked at a Facebook profile with either a sexualized profile photo or a nonsexualized profile photo of the opposite sex by evaluating the profile owner. Findings point out that the sexualized profile owners were seen as less physically attractive, less socially appealing, and less competent to complete tasks. General dating attitudes or interest were largely not impacted by the type of profile photo. Findings concluded that using a sexualized profile photo on Facebook comes with some interactive costs for young women.

In a research carried out by Nagaddya, Kiconco, Komuhangi, Akugizibwe and Atuhairwe (2017) on evaluating the impact of social networking material on adolescents' sexual behavior in Kampala, they found out that unrestricted social networking sites usage by adolescents in Uganda has led to indulging in risky sexual behavior. The result of their survey is agreed by majority of the study respondents and was concluded that Parents may need to restrict access and use sexual content especially pictures and videos available on social networking site among the adolescents.

2.2 Uses and Gratification Theory

The Uses and Gratification approach has one simple tenet: people are different and they use mediated communication for a variety of purposes. Uses and Gratification posits that audiences or recipients of mass communication messages actively select the media they want to be exposed to, they actively perceive it following their personal pre disposition like needs, beliefs, values etc., and actively retains the message they want and discard the others. According to Bryant and Oliver (2008) the uses and

gratification approach helps to give a clear representation of the interpersonal communication drives that user have when engaging social networking sites (SNS).

Lau (2016) says that Uses and Gratification Theory is “concerned with (1) the social and psychological origins of (2) needs, which generate (3) expectations of (4) mass media or other sources, which lead to (5) differential patterns of media exposure (or engagement in other activities, resulting in (6) need gratifications and (7) other consequences, perhaps mostly unintended ones”. The key premise of the theory is that people choose specific media to satisfy their different needs. It is believed that differences in needs affect how and why media are consumed. According to Ruggiero (2000), adopting the uses and gratifications approach will allow researchers to outline and comprehend the significance of the uses of mediated communication, along with the numerous variables that should be taken into account for any type of media analysis. Following the above trend, this study explored the motives adolescents use social media for sexual expression.

3. Methodology

Cross-sectional survey method of data collection was used in this study. Using disproportionate stratified sampling technique, the researcher served self-administered questionnaire purposively on senior secondary school students who use social media within the age group of 13 to 17 within Ilorin metropolis. The population of this study was drawn up from the projected population of youths between the age group of (12-18) in Kwara state made available by the Kwara State Bureau of Statistics (2017). This projected population of youth figures was used to represent the population of adolescents in Ilorin metropolis. Therefore, the population of this study is 347,163. Following the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determinants table, 382 adolescents were sampled out of a population of 347,163 adolescents in Ilorin metropolis. However, out of the 382 questionnaire administered, three hundred and seventy eight (378) were returned. Of the returned questionnaires, only three hundred and sixty three (363), representing 95% of total questionnaires, were valid for analysis. Respondents were sampled to obtain data on their demographic variable, pattern of social media usage, and the motives for using social media for the expression of sexuality. Scaled items used in measuring instrumental and ritualized motives were found to be reliable all attaining above 0.70 Cronbach's Alpha coefficient with (instrumental motives = .756 and ritualized motives= .793). The results of the survey was loaded into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 for statistical analysis. Data collected were analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation.

4. Results

Table 1. Information on Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	147	40.5
Female	216	59.5
Total	363	100
Age		
13 years old	28	7.7
14 years old	81	22.3
15 years old	108	29.8
16 years old	79	21.8
17 years old	67	18.5
Total	363	100
Educational level		
SS1	122	33.6
SS2	166	45.7
SS3	75	20.7
Total	363	100

Source: Author's field Survey, 2018.

Table 1 showed that the total Participants for the study were 363 with female having the highest numbers of respondents (216) accounting for 59.5% of the total population. Greater part of the participants was 15 years old (29.8%), this is followed by those who are 14 years old accounting for (22.3%). those who were 16 years old accounted for (21.8%) of total respondents, those who were 17 years old accounted for 18.5% while those who were 13 years old formed 7.7% of the total respondents. Majority of the respondents (45.7%) were students of SS2, this is followed by students in SS1 (33.6%) followed by those in SS3 (20.7%).

Table 2. Pattern of Social Media Usage the expression of sexuality

Social media use	Yes	%	No	%	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook	328	90.4	35	9.6	363	100
Instagram	70	19.3	293	80.7	363	100
Twitter	24	6.6	339	93.4	363	100
Myspace	3	0.8	360	99.2	363	100
Badoo	8	2.2	355	97.8	363	100
Snapchat	43	11.8	320	88.2	363	100
Whats App	137	37.7	225	62.0	363	100

Source: Author's field Survey, 2018.

Table 2 reveals the pattern of social media usage among adolescents in Ilorin metropolis. Facebook (90.4%) is the most used social media; this is followed by those that used Whats App (37.7%). Only (19.3%) used instagram, followed by (11.8%) who used Snapchat, (6.6%) who used twitter, (2.2%) used Badoo and (0.8%) used Myspace. The result indicated that, most of adolescents in Ilorin metropolis use popular social media (Facebook).

Table 3. Hours Spent on Social Media

Hours spent on social media	Frequency	Percentage
0-2 hours	197	54.3
3-5 hours	106	29.2
6-8 hours	23	6.3
9 hours and above	37	10.2
Total	363	100.0

Source: Author's field Survey, 2018.

Table 3 shows that more than half of the respondents (54.3%) spent between 0-2 hours in a day on social media, slightly above one quarter of the respondents (29.2%) spent between 3 to 5 hours on social media daily, (10.2%) of the respondents spent more than 9 hours on social media while only 6.3% of the respondents spent between 6 to 8 hours on social media daily.

Table 4. Medium Used In Accessing Social Media

Medium used in accessing social media	Frequency	Percentage
personal phone	258	71.1
friends phone	23	6.3
cyber café	4	1.1
Laptops	10	2.8
parent's phone	68	18.7
Total	363	100.0

Source: Author's field Survey, 2018.

Table 4 indicates that, close to one third of the total respondents used their personal phone to access social media (71.1%). This is followed by those who access social media using their parents phone (18.7%), (6.3%) of the respondents access social media using their friends phone, (2.8%) used laptops while only (1.1%) of the total respondent access social media using cyber café.

Table 5 shows that, more than half of the respondents paid little attention to erotic post (53.2%), while close to one quarter of the respondents (24.2%) paid moderate attention to erotic post, (12.4%) of the

respondents paid very much attention to erotic post, while only (10.2%) paid much attention to erotic post on social media.

Table 5. Attention Given To Erotic Post

Attention given to erotic post	Frequency	Percentage
Little	193	53.2
Moderate	88	24.2
Much	37	10.2
very much	45	12.4
Total	363	100.0

Source: Author's field Survey, 2018.

Table 6. Satisfaction Derived from Using Social Media for the Expression of Sexuality

Satisfaction derived from Expression of sexuality on social media	Frequency	Percentage
Information	188	51.8
affiliation (friendship)	51	14.0
Entertainment	86	23.7
personal/undisclosed	38	10.5
Total	363	100.0

Source: Author's field Survey, 2018.

Table 7. Instrumental Motives for Using Social Media for the Expression of Sexuality

A	Instrumental Motives	1	2	3	4	5	M	SD	%
1	To share personal concerns on sexuality	36.6	26.2	9.9	19.0	8.3	2.36	1.36	47.2
2	To share latest pictures/activities on myself	21.5	19.6	11.0	33.3	13.6	3.00	1.41	60.0
3	To get information on current happening on how to express myself	15.4	14.0	13.5	36.1	20.9	3.33	1.36	66.6
4	To share notes on religious values on sexuality expression	18.2	18.7	14.6	29.8	18.7	3.12	1.40	62.4
5	To share notes on cultural values on sexuality expression	19.3	20.7	17.9	27.8	14.3	2.97	1.35	59.4
6	To share ideas/information with regards to my business	17.4	13.5	12.9	32.5	23.7	3.32	1.41	66.4
7	To generate ideas for my business (e.g make up, photography, fashion designing)	15.7	9.9	12.1	30.4	31.4	3.52	1.42	70.4
8	To get information about how it affects peoples' health	11.6	12.1	12.7	33.1	30.6	3.59	1.34	71.8
	TOTAL								63.02

Source: Author's field Survey, 2018.

Table 6 shows that more than half of the respondents (51.8%) sought to gratify information need when using social media for the expression of sexuality. this is followed by those who used social media for entertainment (23.7%), (14%) used social media to gratify affiliation (friendship) needs while (10.5%) used it for personal undisclosed needs.

Table 7 presents the instrumental motives for using social media for sexuality. The statement ‘To get information about how it affects adolescents health’ have the highest mean with (Mean= 3.59) although the statement ‘to generate ideas for my business (e.g make up, photography, fashion designing)’ have the highest standard deviation (SD=1.42). Conversely, the statement ‘To share personal concerns on sexuality’ has the lowest mean with (M=2.36) although the statement ‘To share notes on cultural values on sexuality expression’ have the lowest standard deviation with (SD=1.35). therefore, on the satisfaction derived for instrumental usage, it is noted that most of the respondents view expression of sexuality as a means of getting general information about what is happening in the world affecting business, health, business ideas.

Table 8. Ritualized motives for using social media for sexuality in percentage

RITUALISED MOTIVE	1	2	3	4	5	M	SD	%
To get updates on latest expressions on sexuality	37.2	25.1	9.9	17.9	9.9	2.38	1.39	47.6
To while away time	30.6	20.9	14.0	25.1	9.4	2.62	1.38	52.4
To get updates on gossips about celebrities/friends/family/colleagues and their sexual expressions	29.8	19.3	10.5	25.9	14.6	2.76	1.46	55.2
To chat with friends and family member on sexuality	24.8	20.4	12.7	23.1	19.0	2.91	1.48	58.2
To maintain new and old boyfriend /girlfriend relationship	32.0	21.8	10.7	19.6	16.0	2.66	1.49	53.2
To make new boyfriend /girlfriend	31.7	22.3	12.9	21.5	11.6	2.59	1.42	51.8
To build network with others who share same sexual concerns	30.9	22.6	16.8	17.9	11.8	2.57	1.39	51.4
To share link relating to entertainment on sexuality	32.2	24.0	16.5	19.3	8.0	2.47	1.33	49.4
To share movies, hobbies, previews, music, post on sexuality.	28.4	19.6	11.6	21.5	19.0	2.83	1.51	56.6
TOTAL								54.6

Source: Author's field Survey, 2018.

Table 8 presents the ritualized motives for using social media for sexuality. It is noted that the statement ‘To chat with friends and family member on sexuality’ with the mean (M=2.91). Although, from the standard deviation, the statement ‘To share movies, hobbies, previews, music, post on sexuality.’ Have the highest (SD=1.51) followed by the statement ‘To maintain new and old boyfriend /girlfriend relationship’ with (SD=1.49). The statement with the lowest mean is ‘To get updates on latest expressions on sexuality’ with (M=2.38) while the statement with the lowest standard deviation is ‘To share link relating to entertainment on sexuality’ (SD=1.33). therefore, on the satisfaction derived for ritualized usage, it is noted that most of the respondents view expression of sexuality as a means of playing games, means of chatting with friends and family, updating their statues, sharing links relating to entertainment on sexuality and making new friends. Thus, looking at the overall average percentage of the statistics, (54.6), it falls within the category the group indifference, which means, most of the respondent neither agree nor disagree to the fact that they use social media for the expression of sexuality for ritualized purposes.

5. Discussion

This study examined the use of social media and sexual expression among adolescents in Ilorin metropolis. Built on the uses and gratification theory, the study examined patterns, motives for social media use and the satisfaction derived from the expression of sexuality on social media. The findings revealed that Facebook and whatApp are the most used. This findings concurs with the earlier study carried out by Ajike, and Nwakoby (2016) who reported that about 71% of adolescents use of social

media. Also, good number of the respondents claimed that they spend less than two hours on social media giving it little attention to erotic post even though majority of the respondents have personal phone. This showed that the adolescents in Ilorin metropolis have less attachment to social media.

Four satisfactions derived for using social media for sexual expression was examined in this study namely; Information, affiliation (friendship), entertainment; and personal undisclosed. Result suggested that Majority of the respondents (63.5%) agree that they use social media for information purposes. This is followed by those who use social media for entertainment. These findings are supported by Othman, Apandi & Ngah (2016) who found that the most popular reasons in using the social media are to find the information and to communicate with family and friends. They also noted that entertainment also is one of the main reasons of using social networking sites.

The study also confirmed that respondents have several motives for using social media for the expression of sexuality. With reasons peculiar to 'To get information about how it affects peoples health, 'to generate ideas for my business (e.g make up, photography, fashion designing), To get information on current happening on how to express myself among others drive participants' in the study to use social media for the expression of sexuality, the result of this study showed that majority of the respondents in this study use social media for the expression of sexuality for Instrumental purposes. On the other hand, ritualized motives such as 'To share movies, hobbies, previews, music, post on sexuality.', 'To chat with friends and family member on sexuality', 'To get updates on gossips about celebrities/friends/family/colleagues and their sexual expressions' among others drive participants' in the study to use social media for the expression of sexuality. The finding agrees with the result of the study carried out by Subrahmanyam et al. (2008) who reported that social media has made it much easier for young adults to obtain variety of information and satisfaction on the content they received.

6. Conclusion

This study set out to examine the motives for using social media for sexual expression by adolescents in Ilorin metropolis. The findings of this study showed clearly that social media usage is very essential and an integral part of the activities of adolescents in Ilorin metropolis, because most of the respondents possess a personal phone and those without a personal phone either use their friends phones or parents phone to logging to their accounts on social media.

The results also revealed that by expressing sexuality on social media, to generate ideas for their businesses (such as make up, photography, fashion designing) is the major reason adolescents in Ilorin metropolis use social media for expressing sexuality even though they also use it as a means of getting current information on how to express themselves. Based on the information acquired, it is fair to say that adolescents in Ilorin metropolis use social media for instrumental purposes.

Considering the wide usage of social media among adolescents, further studies should be conducted with a focus on ascertaining the impact of sexual expression on social media on adolescents attitude, behavior and safety. Also, further study can also be conducted to measure the usage of sexual pictures among social networking sites.

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