



**SOCIAL MEDIA AND SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AMONG STUDENTS OF
TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN OYO STATE, NIGERIA (A CASE
STUDY OF THE OKE-OGUN POLYTECHNIC, SAKI)**

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Abstract

There has been increasing use of the social media among Nigerian youths. However, this is not without some problems, like increasing rates of crime and social vices. This paper critically examined the psychological implications of the use of social media among students of the Oke-Ogun Polytechnic, Saki, Oyo state, Nigeria. Using survey method through administration of questionnaires, the paper found out that social media have impacts of social behaviour of the students. The paper, therefore, recommended that efforts should be made to censor information circulated on the social media and that parents should also monitor activities of their wards on social media platforms.

Keywords: *social media, social behavior, social vices, crime, psychological implications*

Background to the Study

One sure way of keeping in touch with our contemporary world is through communication, as it has continued to be a vital component of human life and existence over ages. Communication enhances the exchange of ideas, views, information, experience, and the sharing of meanings between and among persons, cultures, societies and nations. This obviously necessitates the continuous study of communication and how it affects our social, economic and political life. According to Jowett and O' Donnell (2006), communication is a process of exchange in which sender and receiver create, acquire, transmit and use information. They explained that when the information is used to accomplish a purpose of sharing, explaining or instructing, this is considered to

be communicative information. People seek information when they need to understand their world, and effective and error-free communication process is needed to ensure social harmony in any society.

Mass media are channels of the most rapid and effective means of disseminating information to large number of people. Rogers (1983) defines mass media as all those means of transmitting messages that involve a mass medium such as radio, television, newspapers and so on which enable a source of one or a few individuals to reach an audience of many. According to Umuerrri and Galadima (2012), mass media are those organs charged with the responsibilities of disseminating information, ideas, attitude and values to heterogeneous population simultaneously. The primary functions of the mass media are to source for and disseminate information to members of the general public. Thus, the media have always been acknowledged as one of the most powerful agents of socialization and mobilization.

Meanwhile, technological change, specifically the revolution in information technologies such as the internet, has profoundly increased how cultures, ideologies and information travel among people. It has empowered individuals and groups to create “their own media” and to overcome most of the obstacles associated with the traditional means of communication. Brian (2006) noted that the internet has dramatically reduced communication costs. Expectedly, for about two decades now, social media have continued to shape thoughts and behaviour of people all over the world (Muslim & Abegunrin, 2017). The uncensored and unregulated internet-enabled social media have increasingly continued to shape thoughts and behaviours of people across the world.

Studies have identified Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Whatsapp, Blogs, Youtube as the most commonly used social media platforms (Fasunwon, 2019). The universal application of the internet and the attendant popularity of the social media has led to diffusion of cultures and redefinition of cultural norms and values in many non-western societies. Ghonim (2011) notes that the liberation of any society begins with the access to the internet. This is because the internet has become the most commonly used source of information of domestic and international occurrences in many societies (Fasunwon, 2019).

In Nigeria, Social media have continued to attract patronage especially among youths. Citing Internet World Stats, Timileyin Akindahunsi (2019) says, Facebook alone has 17 million Nigerians as subscribers. There is no doubt that the internet-enabled social media platforms have further enhanced exchange of

information, ideas, views, experience etc. among Nigerians. Accessibility to mobile phones and other ICT gadgets has been identified as one of the factors that accounted for the popularity of social media platforms among Nigerian youths. Apparently, the internet enabled social media have given Nigerians the opportunity to access information than ever before (Muslim and Abegunrin, 2017).

Statement of the Problem

The universal application of the internet and popularity of social media have obviously increased the rate at which people exchange information and ideas across the globe. This has consequently led to diffusion of cultures and social norms. In Nigeria, the internet-enabled social media platforms have given people of the country the opportunity to access information than ever before. Meanwhile, this is not without some social problems like increased rate of crimes and moral decadence among youths. Therefore, this study critically examined the psychological implication of the use of social media among students of the Oke-Ogun Polytechnic, Saki, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Objective of the study

The main objective of this study is to examine the effects of social media use on social behaviour among students of tertiary institutions in Oyo state. Flowing from this are the specific objectives as follow;

- To identify the purposes for which students of The Oke-Ogun Polytechnic, Saki, Oyo State, use the social media,
- To examine the psychological implications of social media use on the students

The meaning of social media

There is no universal definition of social media, as the concept has been viewed from different perspectives by different scholars (Ajayi and Adesote, 2015). According to Chinedu and Adibe (2012), social media belong to a new category of media that focus on social networking, allowing users to express themselves, interact with friends, share personal information and publish their own views on the interact. Madeline (2011) defines social media tools as websites that interact with the users, while giving them information. In their own view, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) describe social media as internet-based

applications built on the technological and ideological foundations of web 2.0 similarly, Boyd and Ellison (2007) see social media as web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system.

Meanwhile, Chinedu and Adibe (2012) note that the use of the social media tools continue to grow considerably and offer people great opportunities for interaction and creativity. This view is corroborated by Ajayi and Adesote (2015), who declare that the emergence of the new social media is a major phenomenon that has transformed the interaction, communication and sharing of information among people throughout the world in the 21st century. The implication of this is that the emergence of the social media has revolutionized communication among people all over the world. Chinedu and Adibe (2012) add that the possibilities the social media have created in human interaction and communication are beyond bounds.

However, it should be pointed out that Madeline (2011) identifies the four most widely and effectively used of Social Media Networks (SMNs) to include: Facebook, Twitter, Youtube and blogging. According to him, Facebook was launched as a social networking website exclusively for Harvard University students in 2004, while Twitter was launched as a real-time information network that connects people to latest information about what they find interesting in 2006. Stork (2011) explains further that Youtube is the first website dedicated solely to uploading and sharing personal video, and that blogs are an easy-to-use content management tool which “requires merely internet access and typing skills”. Ajayi and Adesote (2015) note that in Nigeria, social media networks like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are among the most visited websites, due to their participatory, interactive and cost-effective nature. From the above explanations, it can be said that social media include diversified internet based tools and applications based on particular philosophical ideology and technological foundations and functionalities. Hansen et al. (2017) define social media as a set of online applications and tools that provide ways of social interaction and communication between digital media users.

Theoretical Framework

This study will make use of two different theories in examining the impacts of social media on social behavior of students of the Oke-Ogun Polytechnic, Saki,

Oyo state. The theories are; Social Learning Theory and Uses and Gratification Theory.

Social Learning Theory

Social Learning Theory (Albert Bandura, 1977) focuses on how people develop cognitive functioning. The theory argues that new behaviors can be acquired by observing and imitating others. It emphasizes the importance of observing, modeling and imitating the behaviors, attitudes and emotional reactions of others. This theory is useful in examining the effects of social media messages on the behavior of their audience.

Uses and Gratification Theory

The second theory used in this study is the Uses and Gratification Theory. This theory, according to Cantril (1942) cited in Olagunju (2016, examines why people use the media and what gratifications attract and hold them to the kind of media they choose. The basic assumption of the theory is that media use depends on the perceived satisfaction, needs, wishes or motives of the prospective audience member (McQuail, 2000). In other words, media users actively choose and use the media to meet their own needs. The Uses and Gratification theory is appropriate in examining what motivate students to use the social media.

Methodology

Survey method was used for the research work. The research instruments used were questionnaires. Total number of 100 questionnaires were administered among students of the Oke-Ogun Polytechnic, Saiki (TOPS), Oyo State, Nigeria. 20 questionnaires were administered among students in each of the five schools of the institution namely; School of Business and Communication Studies (SBCS), School of Financial Management Studies (SFMS), School of Environmental Studies (SES), School of Science (SS) and School of Engineering (SE). Quantitative data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistical method. Also, the data were analyzed relying on the two theories adopted for the study (Social Learning Theory and Uses and Gratification Theory).

Results and Discussion

As stated above, the total number of 100 questionnaires were administered to students of the institution, twenty in each school (faculty). Sex distribution of the respondents shows that 52 of them (52%) are males, while 48 (48%) are females. Also, 72 (72%) of the respondents are in National Diploma classes (ND), while 28(28%) are in Higher National Diploma (HND) classes.

Age distribution of the respondents

Age bracket (Years)	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
18 – 21	62	62%
22-25	31	31%
26 above	7	7%

Source: Field work, 2021

The above table shows that 62% of the respondents are between ages 18 and 21, 31% of them are between ages 22 and 25, while only 7% are 26 years old and above. This shows clearly that majority of the students are between 18 and 21 years of age. This reflects the age at which students leave secondary schools and get admission into higher institutions of learning in Nigeria.

Which social media platform (s) do you use?

Social media platform(s)	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Facebook alone	6	6%
Facebook and WhatsApp alone	78	78%
Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter and Instagram	16	16%

Source: Field work, 2021

Data obtained revealed that almost all the students are on both Facebook and WhatsApp. Only 6% of the respondents use only Facebook, 78% of them use both Facebook and WhatsApp, while 16% of them combine other social media

platforms like Twitter and Instagram with Facebook and WhatsApp. This indicates that Facebook and WhatsApp are the most used social media platforms among the students.

For how long have you been on the social media?

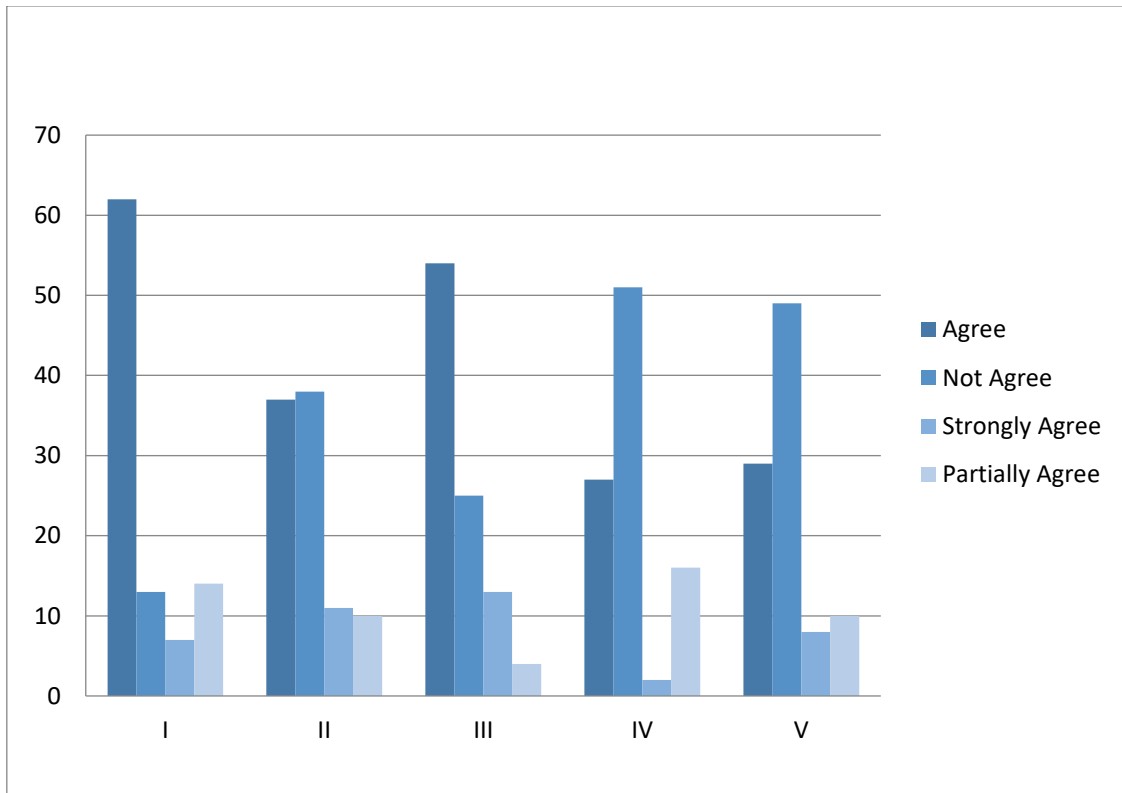
Number of Years	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Below five years	26	26%
Above five years	74	74%

Source: Field work, 2021

The above table shows that 74% of the respondents have been on the social media for more than five years. Many of the respondents joined social media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp while still in secondary schools. The implication of this is that majority of the respondents started using social media when they were below fifteen (15) years of age. 62% of the respondents are between ages 18 and 21, while 74% of them have been using social media for more than five years.

Questions on social media and social behavior

S/N	Questions
i.	Do you agree that social media influence the way you think and behave?
ii.	Do you agree that social media influence the way you dress and the kind of clothes you wear?
iii.	Do you agree that social media influence your relationships with your friends and family members?
iv.	Do you agree that social media somehow influence your thoughts on drugs, alcohol, sex, and parties?
v.	Do you agree that your parents/guardians will not be pleased if they get to know of your activities on the social media?



Question i: 62% of the respondents agreed that social media influence the way they think and behave, 18% of them partially agreed, 12% of them strongly agreed, while only 8% disagreed. This shows that in all 92% of the respondents agreed that social media influence the way they think and behave.

Question ii: 38% of the respondents agreed that social media one way or the other influence the way they dress and the kind of clothes they wear, 13% of them strongly agreed, 10% of them partially agreed, while 39% of the respondents disagreed. In all, 61% of the respondents agreed that social media influence the way they dress and the kind of clothes they wear.

Question iii: 56% of the respondents agreed that social media one way or the other influence their relationships with their friends and family members, 14% of them strongly agreed, 5% of them partially agreed, while 25% of them disagreed. In all, 75% of the respondents agreed that social media influence their relationships with their friends and family members.

Question iv: 51% of the respondent did agree that social media somehow influence their thoughts on drugs, alcohol, sex, and parties, 28% of them agreed, 17% partially agreed, while only 4% of them strongly agreed that social media somehow influence their thoughts on drugs, alcohol, sex, and parties. In all,

51% of the respondents disagreed that that social media somehow influence their thoughts on drugs, alcohol, sex, and parties, while 49% of them agreed.

Question v: 46% of the respondents did not agree that their parents/guardians will not be pleased if they get to know of their activities on the social media, 38% of them agreed, 10% of them partially agreed, while 6% of them strongly agreed. In all, 54% of the respondents agreed that their parents/guardians will not be pleased if they get to know of their activities on the social media.

Conclusion

There is nexus between the use of social media and social behaviour among students of The Oke Ogun Polytechnic, Saki. 92% of the respondents agreed that social media influence the way they think and behave; 61% of them agreed that social media influence the way they dress and the kind of clothes they wear; 75% of them agreed that social media influence their relationships with their friends and family members; while 54% of the respondents agreed that their parents/guardians will not be pleased if they get to know of their activities on the social media. The findings corroborate earlier studies which had established the fact that people learn a lot on the social media. The Social Learning Theory argues that new behaviors can be acquired by observing and imitating others. It emphasizes the importance of observing, modeling and imitating the behaviors, attitudes and emotional reactions of others. This theory is useful in examining the effects of social media messages on social behavior of students.

Recommendations

The study, therefore, recommends that efforts should be made to censor information circulated on the social media. Parents should also monitor activities of their wards on social media platforms.

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