



## **SOCIAL NETWORK, SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR AND SUSTAINABLE EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF ADOLESCENTS, NIGERIA.**

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### **ABSTRACT**

**Purpose:** The aim is to study the impact of social networking and sexual comportment on sustainable educational development.

**Design/ Methodology/ approach:** The study population consisted of all young adults in Ogbomoso North Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. At the time of this research, there were twelve secondary schools in Ogbomoso North Local Government. Four hundred (400) samples were selected from six schools using the simple random sampling method. An instrument titled Impact of Social Networking and Sexual Comportment Scale was administered to obtain information from the respondents. To find the solution to the problem of this study two hypotheses were tested.

**Findings:** The study disclosed that the impact of social networking and sexual comportment of in-school adolescents based on gender and age were not significantly different. The following conclusion was made that social networks impact the sexual comportment of adolescents, gender and age are not barriers. Based on the information gathered during this research, it was proposed that schools should provide enlightenment programmes for both students and parents and that students should not be allowed unsupervised access to social media. Improper guidance, control and zero supervision of adolescents could be detrimental to the overall sustainable educational development. Schools should enact laws that will restrict students from having access to phones and gadgets, especially within school premises.

**Research Limitation/ Implications:** The study is an investigation of social networks on adolescents' sexual comportment in Nigeria. This implies that the study covers only Secondary Schools that are located in Nigeria.

**Practical Implication:** The knowledge advanced in this study will inform teachers and other stakeholders in education on the need to promote social media education among young people, especially high school students.

**Social Implications:** This study helps Government to organize intervention programmed such as seminars and symposiums to enlighten students on the proper way of making use of the internet most especially for educational and sustainable development.

**Originality/ Value:** Few studies exist on the aftermath of social networks on the sexual comportment of adolescents in Nigeria. The study contributes to the current debate on the regulation of social networks for sustainable social and educational development.

**Keywords:** *Adolescents; educational development; Influence; sexual comportment; social network.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Adolescents are endowed with great strength, vitality and energy, this often makes them tend to be explorative in their quest for information, knowledge and adventurous in the different aspects of their endeavours. The adolescent stage also includes physical development such as restlessness and fatigue due to hormonal changes. Adolescents tend to be more involved in physical activity because of the increased energy. There is the development of sexual awareness which often cause changes in their body size and shape. It is the transition between childhood and adulthood. Abdullahi & Abdulquadri (2018) asserted that the adolescence period is referred to as the phase of maturing into adulthood in human development and it extends to the age at which an individual is capable of sexual reproduction and it terminates legally at maturity. Aside from maturation physically and sexually young adults tend to move towards social, economic independence and identity formation, there is the desire for skill acquisition that often require them to carry out adult roles and responsibilities. (Brown, 2008).

A social network is a form of the digital platform that enables people to engage based on shared interests and traits. A social network is a form of computer-based technology that enable people to share ideas, thoughts and information through the building of virtual network and communities. Social networking allows for digital interaction through the medium of technologies which allows for the sharing of ideas, information on personal issues or career interests. There are social network sites that could be used to promote business, training, advertisement, shopping, conferences and meetings are also carried out through this medium virtually. (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). There are quite a number of these social network sites such as 2go, Twitter, BBM, Skype, YouTube, Pinterest, TikTok etc.

Undiyaundeye (2014) observed that more than ever before there are more young people that tend to assess their favourite social networking sites more regularly and frequently now and the percentage of the youths that own their handset has greatly increased. A survey conducted by some American researchers found that more teenagers have forwarded or displayed nude or semi-nude pictures of themselves and also had recorded videos of themselves (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2010). There are various observations about the youths spending more time engaging themselves with the internet that many spend hours connecting to the internet that they spend few moments with their parents and their academic pursuit. (Brown,2008). There seems to be a great concern from the parents, the school administrators and the general public about how this trend is having an adverse effect on their learning activities, concentration in the classroom, social development and many other related issues. (Ito, Horst, Bittanti, Boyd, Herr-Stephenson, Lange & Robinson, 2009). It has also become a serious concern among various stakeholders in the Sub-Sharan African countries especially Nigeria that the internet and social network is now promoting individualistic traits and tendencies among young people and that sexually related materials and issues are now becoming the source of attraction to this teaming populace. It is even evident that many youths tend to be attracted to view sites that have an instance of sexual relation. (Akinwale,

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2010; Abdullahi, Adekeye, Mahmoud & Akor, 2013; Asekun-Olarinmoye, Asekun-Olarinmoye, Adebimpe & Omisore, 2014).

For most young people nowadays, social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram, and Telegram have become a blazing obsession. Although media usage has become an integral part of the daily life of adolescents, there seem to be lots of risks associated with social media usage which tend to have contrary effects on their overall development including their social well-being, psychologically, emotionally, physically and mentally. This has led many youths into various crimes and criminal tendencies such as cyberbullying, sexting, exposure to pornography and excessive time wastage on assessing the internet severally on daily basis. (Barak, 2005). Although, many schools in Nigeria have created strict rules and regulations that restrict the usage of handheld phones and other gadgets while in school during lessons many adolescents are still able to connect to the internet during school hours, causing distractions as well as having a negative impact on their sexual overall behaviour (Lanre-Babalola, 2018). At times there are some students with pornographic films stored on their phones, they often pass this around to their mates while lessons are going on in the classroom. Some are in the habit of coming to school to watch downloaded films when lessons are going on in the classroom. All these are causes of distraction to many students who are supposed to concentrate on their learning activities. Whereas, some are regular at film houses that they do not spend the whole period of learning activities in the school.

Boys seem to be more interested and carried away oftentimes with issues related to music, entertainment, making new friends, playing games online, downloads, while ladies do seek relevant knowledge on homework, relationships with others and they often have a desire to associate and interact with friends through sincere and open talk, innovation into new careers ventures, knowledge and improvement through the reading of books (Jochen & Valkenburg, 2008). Young females that are involved with the internet issue tend to report a cordial and harmonious association with their partners despite their differences. Whereas, the young males with low morale and self-esteem that are involved in social networks tend to be more concerned about internet issues related to sexual relationships with other people. Young ladies that are involved with internet issues seem to have decent and worthwhile life that many may not have been involved in sexual relationships with others especially those who are unmarried. While, the young men that are often connected to the internet are likely to experience unfavourable attitudes towards sexually related issues (Nwagwu, 2017).

Studies by Carroll, Padilla-Walker, Nelson, Olson, Namara & Madsen (2008) revealed that males tend to report a more positive attitude towards pornography much earlier in life than females. It is also reported that young girls are often more regular with the internet than men and that men respond more adversely to issues from the site they visit and are more frequent to sexting sites than females. Gender differences were identified in exposure to pornography and those who utilize the media daily are prone to visit sites that deal with sexting young men do have more experience than young ladies (Adebayo, Udegbe & Sunmola, 2006; Arulogun, Ogbu & Sunmola, 2006).

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Research has shown that more than 48% of the Nigerian youths within the adolescent age range utilise the internet facilities and a large proportion of these youth log on to it on daily basis (Lenhart, Madden & Hitlin, 2005). It was observed that with the advent of the internet and social network among in-school adolescents many of them no longer have time to face their academics with every sense of seriousness. There is poor attendance at school while some are not often in the school until the close of school hours (Maeve, 2014). It is asserted by many researchers that there tends to be a correlation between the vulnerability of youths to sexually related internet content and the act of participating in the actual activities (Hoff, Greene & Davies, 2003; Henessey, Bleakly & Fishbein & Fishbein, 2009). There is an observation that the gender of the youths and age seem to have a great effect on their sexual comportment and relationship while the young men tend to form more cordial and formidable relationships with the opposite sex (William. 2016). Many of the female youth are likely to be impregnated and drop out of school while some may risk having an abortion which is dangerous as it may lead to death. To sustain the adolescents' education, there is a need to take proactive steps.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The impact of social media on secondary school adolescents' sexual comportment cannot be overemphasized. The media has positive and negative impacts on the general life of adolescents, but the negative effect seems to be outweighing the positive. Although many adolescents tend to say that they connect to the internet for academic purposes, many do not invariably visit the site that has to do with academic issues. Most times adolescents tend to waste a lot of time on sites that have to do with sexually related issues. This tends to be a form of distraction to their learning activities.

Some adolescents are introduced early to sexting sites which could be detrimental to their psychological, emotional and physical well-being. Many of these youths may often be rather too young to handle such early exposure. This could lead to some other complications like early exposure to the sexual relationship which eventually could cause unwanted pregnancy, abortion, dropping out of school, contracting of venereal diseases, HIV and other related infections. Some become truants in the process; some are introduced to gangsters and cultism.

To avoid all these related vices and issues which could be detrimental to the overall well-being of these adolescents, there is, therefore, the need to do a study on the impact of social media on secondary school adolescents' sexual traits.

### **Hypotheses**

1. The impact of social networks on the sexual comportment of in-school adolescents based on gender will not be significantly different.
2. The influence of the social network on the sexual comportment of in-school adolescents based on age will not be significantly different.



## METHODOLOGY

A descriptive research design was used. The descriptive survey design is adopted because it enables the capturing of a large sample size for the study and a questionnaire was used in the gathering of data on the impact of social networks on the sexual comportment of in-school adolescents in Ogbomoso, Nigeria to permit generalizing the population under study. The population of this research consisted of all in-school adolescents in Ogbomoso North Area, while the sample was chosen from four secondary schools, in the metropolis. The sample of 100 respondents were selected from each of the four schools’ summing up to 400 respondents. A simple random sampling technique was used to select the schools and the sample size from each of the schools that took part in the study.

A personally developed questionnaire by the researcher was used to collect data. The questionnaire consisted of twenty items related to the impact of social networks and sexual comportment among in-school adolescents. The questionnaire has two sections: 1 and 11.

Section I consists of information on personal data such as gender, age and class level, while section II consists of 20 items on the impact of social media on sexual behaviour among adolescents.

The questionnaire was designed in the form of Very Much True of Me (VMTM), Generally True of Me (GTM), Rarely True of Me (RTM) and Never True of Me (NTM).

For the data analysis, the researcher used both descriptive and inferential statistics. For the descriptive statistics, percentage was utilized, while inferential statistics were used to test the hypotheses.

## RESULTS

Demographic information (i.e. gender, age and class level) of the subjects formed the intervening variables of the study. Therefore, the result of demographic data on the respondents in table 1.

*Table 1: Descriptive Analysis of the Variables of Gender, Age and Class Level*

| S/N         | Variables | Total | Percentages |
|-------------|-----------|-------|-------------|
| GENDER      | Male      | 199   | 49.7        |
|             | Female    | 201   | 50.3        |
|             | Total     | 400   | 100.0       |
| AGE         | 0 – 15    | 153   | 38.3        |
|             | 16 – 20   | 227   | 56.7        |
|             | 21 – 26   | 20    | 5.0         |
|             | Total     | 400   | 100         |
| CLASS LEVEL | JSS       | 197   | 49.3        |
|             | SS        | 203   | 50.7        |
|             | Total     | 400   | 100         |

The information on the table indicated that 199 of the respondents were males, while 201 were females. Also, 153 were between the age range of 0 – 15 years, while 227 were between the age



range of 16 – 20 years and 20 were within the range of 21 – 26 Again, the table also indicated that 197 were in JSS level while 203 were in SSS level.

In this study, two hypotheses were tested. The first and second hypotheses were tested using inferential statistics. The results are presented in tables 2-3

Ho<sub>1</sub>: The impact of social networks on the sexual comportment of in-school adolescents based on gender will not be significantly different.

*Table 2: t-test on the effect of social networks on sexual comportment of in-school adolescents on the basis of gender*

| Gender | N    | $\bar{x}$ | SD    | df  | t-cal | P value | Decision |
|--------|------|-----------|-------|-----|-------|---------|----------|
| Male   | 199  | 39.32     | 17.10 | 398 | 1.91  | 0.057   | Not sig. |
| Female | 20.1 | 36.02     | 17.34 |     |       |         |          |

Table 2, shows that the impact of social networks on the sexual comportment of in-school adolescents based on gender is not significantly different.

Ho<sub>2</sub>: The impact of social networks on sex comportment of in-school adolescents based on age will not be significantly different.

*Table 3: ANOVA summary showing the effect of social media on sexual behaviour among secondary school students based on age.*

|                | SS        | Df  | MS     | Fcal  | Sig  |
|----------------|-----------|-----|--------|-------|------|
| Between groups | 1188.49   | 2   | 594.25 | 2.012 | .135 |
| Within groups  | 117240.30 | 397 | 595.32 |       |      |
| Total          | 118428.79 | 399 |        |       |      |

Table 3, shows that the impact of social networks on the sexual comportment of in-school adolescents based on age is not significantly different.

## DISCUSSION

The result indicated that in-school adolescents' participation in social internet mediums, may often lead them to watch pornography films, and movies and may probably increase risky sexual behaviour. This could lead many of them to become sexually active at a very tender age and some may also experience teenage pregnancy and other sexually transmitted diseases. This tends to indicate that quite a large number of these youths have been exposed negatively to the social network through the medium phones, tablets, iPad etc. Many of these students are distracted to the extent that many them found it difficult to concentrate on their academic pursuits. The result of the findings also consented to the fact that there is an effect of social networks on the sexual comportment of adolescents. This is also in line with the postulation of Owns, Behun, Manning & Raid (2012) that youths are often made bare to items and issues that have to do with sexual relationships which often could be detrimental to their overall development.



The result further indicated that the impact of social networks on the sexual comportment of in-school adolescents based on gender is not significantly different is under the findings by the American Academy of Pediatrics (2010) that more youths have forwarded or displayed nude or semi-nude pictures themselves and had videos recorded of themselves. The findings of this study are contrary to the study by Caroll, Padilla-Walker, Nelson, Olson, Namara & Madson (2008) found that males tend to report more positive attitudes toward pornography sites intentionally. Whereas Adebayo, Udegbe & Sunmola (2006) were able to identify that differences were noted based on gender and exposure to pornography. Arulogun, Ogbu & Dipeolu (2016) asserted that youths that utilise the media daily and regularly are prone to visit the site that deals with sexting that young men do have this experience more the girls. The bottom line is that both males and females tend to be exposed to sexual behaviour through the social media that which they interact. This invariably tends to have an adverse effect on their academic career, which is probably what accounted for some boarding secondary schools disallowing their students to come into their schools with phones, iPad or iPhone. This could be a means of assisting the students to avoid distraction especially as it relates to their academic pursuit and their sustainable overall development.

Another finding revealed that the impact of social networks on the sexual comportment of in-school adolescents based on age is not significantly different. Research has indicated that more than 48% of the Nigerian youths within the age range of 12-17 years make use of the internet and almost half of this population have limitless internet access frequently (Lenhart, Madden & Hitlin, 2005). The result of this finding is also supported by Maeve (2011) that the advent of the social network on different forms of the electronic gadget and varying internet mediums has made many young people accustomed to them that many of them no longer have time for readings, serious academic studies and better future. The age of the adolescents notwithstanding many of them are so accustomed to the social network that they hardly have time for any other thing again. Some of these students can do anything to get the latest phones so that they can be connected to the internet. Some students do not concentrate while in the classroom again, but they are many currents with happenings on the internet.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

According to the outcomes of this research, it was concluded that secondary school adolescents are influenced by social media in their sexual behaviour. These social networks which include Facebook, Twitter, 2go, Email, WhatsApp, Tiktok and YouTube tend to adversely affect their academic performance and overall sustainable development in life. The result indicated that there was no significant difference in the influence of social media on sexual behaviour based on gender and age among adolescents in Ogbomoso metropolis.



## Recommendations

- Government should organize intervention programmes such as seminars and symposiums to enlighten the students on the proper way of making use of the internet most especially for educational and sustainable development.
- Parents should be involved in training and educating their children on the proper use of social media. They need to explain to them how to utilize and make positive use of social media.
- Schools should not encourage the usage of phones especially when they notice that the students are not utilizing them positively.
- Stakeholders in the educational sector should organize workshops to educate adolescents on the appropriate ways of using the social network.
- Guidance counsellors should give good and proper counselling on the effective utilization of social media.

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