



## **Social Media and Psychosocial Behaviour of Senior Secondary School Students in Uyo Local Government Area**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper investigated the relationship between Facebook and psychological behaviour of Senior Secondary School students in Uyo Local Government Area. The sub-variable under study was aggressive rebellious tendency as it relates to Facebook usage. One research question gave rise to one null hypothesis to direct the study. Descriptive research design was employed by the researchers to carry out the study. 1097 participants (511 males and 586 females) were selected from the population of 8644 Senior Secondary Two Students from nine Public Secondary Schools. Simple random sampling technique was used for the selection. The researchers designed questionnaire tagged Social Media and Psychosocial Behaviour Questionnaire (SMPBQ) was used for data collection. Data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The findings of the study showed that Facebook has significant relationship with aggressive rebellious tendency of Senior Secondary Schools Students. Based on the finding of this study the researchers recommended that a time-off software should be installed by website designers to control social media usage by students. Parents should place restrictions on some television programmes and channels by activating security settings. They should also avoid buying expensive mobile phones with social network facilities for their children.*

**Key words:** Psychosocial Behaviour, Social Media, mobile phones, social network facilities.

### **Introduction**

Social media is the integration of digital media including combination of electronic texts, graphics, moving images and sound into a structural computerized environment that allows people to interact with the data for appropriate purposes (Barbie, 2002). This digital environment includes the internet, telecoms and interactive digital television. The World Wide Web is becoming part of general business for communication, sales and services. It is changing business practices its technical limitations affect the amount of material and speed of access to material. The web primarily depends on phone line connections, so as to better the connections across a territory and it is more reliable a service (Njoroje, 2011).

Information and Communication Technology is present in different fields of social life; hence its usefulness and consequences would eventually become apparent. One result of this can be observed in the field of youth criminal activity. View in a violent scenes which



are mainly available to the youth for sale, and many of them could be obtained at the lowest cost such as Blue tooth, Compact Disc (CD), video games among others. This demonstrates the influence of these technologies. Today, satellites, Television Internet (Websites, Chat rooms, Dating groups) mobile phone (SMS, Blue tooth, multimedia capabilities) and other technologies are all time being used by adolescents. Social media include facebook, twitter, blackberry messenger, Whatsapp, Skype, 2go, Badoo, Instagram, LinkedIn, Youtube, Flickr, and Tumbir. In all the listed, Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter and Youtube are the most popular. Facebook is the focus of this research study.

Facebook is a social networking site that started in 2004 by a Harvard College Student, Mark Zuckerberg. It was originally a network that was only available to students with a Harvard e-mail address. Then in 2006 facebook became open to the public in general of age thirteen and above, but still maintained an emphasis on high school and college students (Johnson, 2008). Facebook provides individuals with easy access to view personal information about their friends, co-workers and even complete strangers (Muise, Christofides and Desmarais, 2009). Facebook has over 500 million active users and every month over 700 million minutes are spent on facebook (Facebook, 2011).

Facebook is beneficial to mental health and wellbeing because its use can help maintain contact with family and friends who might live far away. This allows people to receive emotional support in times of hardship through a quick and effective technology. It can also reduce feeling of isolation and being “cut off from the world”. Facebook can help some introverts in communicating with others since it provides a context in which they are more comfortable to talk and to convey their feelings without the much pressure as face-to-face contact (Kim and Davis, 2008).

Psychological behaviour is a mental behaviour caused or influenced by life experiences, as well as maladjusted cognitive and behavioural processes. The term psychosocial refers to the psychological and social factors that influenced mental health. Social influences such as peer pressure, parental support, cultural and religious background, socio-economic status and interpersonal relationship all help to shape personality and influence psychological makeup. Individuals with psychological disorders frequently have difficult in functioning in social situations and communicating with others.

Psychosocial behaviour of students describes how students develop, behave and react in a social environment when they themselves may not fully be aware of the way they react with their surroundings. Students are among the most prolific users of social network sites and they spend a considerable portion of their daily life, interacting through the social media. Teenage youth are a unique population of social network site users and they are among the first to have grown up entire surrounded by communication technologies. This is because they are in a period of rapid development, growth and maturation and their exposure to these global communities is both a frightening prospect for parents, teachers and intriguing area of sociology.



Psychological disorders including aggressive tendency, rebellious tendency and self-esteem is seen in students with strong Facebook presence. Also, some other negative side effects of social media (facebook) use are narcissism in students who are often use facebook, increased absence from school and likelihood of developing stomach ache, sleeping problems, anxiety and depression in students who “overdose” in the technology on a daily basis, especially facebook and video games.

Similarly, low grades are recorded for students who checked facebook at least once during 15 minutes study period. One interesting point about social media use and students psychological wellbeing is the development of “virtual empathy” which is thought to be an in-person activity where hugs facial expression and kind words help improve a loved one’s mood (Rosen, 2010).

Social behaviour exists among members of the same species and happens because of social communication. It is believed that social media site actually produce a remarkable effect on the user’s social behavioural patterns. Examples of such social behaviour include vulgarity of language, sexual deviance and cultural disintegration. Social media site can easily lead the users to negative social behaviours especially with the nude pictures posted online, copying bad slangs from friends online, causing riots or disorder, becoming addicted abandoning academic pursuits, dishonesty, online sexual crimes among others, which have led to the increase in students’ exposure to sexual harassment (Mitchell and Ybarra, 2008). Kord (2008) confirmed that students’ behaviours are easily influenced by social media sites because of distasteful comments posted to harass peers, internet bullying where harassing messages are sent to the various individuals usually leads to embarrassment, belittlement, suicide among other (Mesche and Cross, 2009).

Social behaviour can be either positive or negative in the sense that users are often times susceptible to the negative aspect of it especially when users (students) come in contact with a deviant. Social behaviour is an integral part of social psychology that comprises help with violent behaviour including some aspect of romantic association. Attitude, self-concept, collaboration or communication and conflict reduction are all determinants of social behaviours. It is a kind of response channeled to the society within the same group of species which can either be positive or negative (Alexander and Salas 2008).

Valkenburg and Peter (2009) opined that social networking sites and the internet is positively related to the time adolescents spend with friend, and the quality of existing adolescent friendship, and via this route, to social connectedness and wellbeing. Accordingly, Office of communication, (Ofcom, 2008) observed that those using networking sites use them to meet new people, seek out old friends, keep in touch with current friends, seek attention and keep up with their peers. Furthermore, Wolfradt and Doll (2001) suggested that online social networking may have benefits for those who find face-to-face contact difficult such as those who are shy or introverted.

Pickhardt (2009) explained that rebellion plays an important part in adolescent growth. It is the poster characteristics of the teenager years and it is one that causes many



conflicts with parents. Two common types of rebellion are against socially fitting in (Rebellion of non-conformity) and against adult authority (Rebellion of non-compliance). In both types, rebellion attracts adult's attention. The young person proudly asserts individually from what parents like or what parents want and in each case, the situation succeeds in provoking the parent approval or disapproval.

Rebellion is therefore a behaviour that deliberately opposes the ruling norms or powers or authority. Pickhardt (2009) opined that the reason parents usually dislike adolescent rebellion is not only that it creates more resistance to their job of providing structure, guidance and supervision, but because rebellion can lead to serious kinds of harm. Accordingly, rebellion can cause young people to rebel against their own self-interest, rejecting childhood interest, activities and relationship that often support self-esteem. It can cause adolescent to engage in self-defeating and self-destructive behaviour (refusing to do school work or even physically hurting themselves). It can cause them to experiment with high risk excitement. Furthermore it can cause them to reject safety rules and restraints.

Although the young person thinks rebellion is an act of independence, it actually never. It is really an act of dependency. Rebellion causes the young person to depend on self-definition and personal conduct on doing the opposite of what other people want. As part of their development into young adult, human must develop an identity independent from their parent and family and a capacity for independent decision-making. They may experiment with different rules, behaviours and ideologies as part of their process of developing an identity. Teenage rebellion has been recognized within psychology as a set of behavioural traits that supersede class, culture or race (Steinberg, 2007).

Steinberg (2007) suggested that "stopping system in the brain makes adolescents more susceptible to engaging in risky or dangerous behaviour". Steinberg argued that social programmes and measures discouraging youth from taking part in risky behaviour (such as drug and alcohol abuse, reckless driving and unsafe sex) have been largely ineffective. Steinberg further posited teenage risk taking is generated by competition between socio emotional and cognitive control networks both got through maturation processes during adolescence, but do so at different rates.

When some teenagers are ill-mannered, violent or degrading, it is not due to a clash with authorities. It is because other people are without relevance in their world. Morch (2012) opined that some youths can only relate to the relationship they have with their friends and that relationship is often a reproduction of themselves. Morch added that for these people, the fellowship can become an extremely inclusive Very Important People (VIP) club, while those who are on the quest list are excluded. Also, in some cases people who are outside their social network simply do not exist in their world. Metaphorically speaking, these other people sometimes tend to become mere props in a theatre performance. For some adolescents, there simply is no world outside of their own heads. The common denominator is a lack of manners. Whereas previous generations mishaved as a rebellion against



authorities, part of today's youth are so caught up in their own self-centeredness that no authorities exist in their minds.

The trend with people being reduced to mere props is not restricted to Nigerian youth. American researcher recently published a rather alarming result, having studied empathy in 14,000 college students over a 30 year period. The study indicated that since the year 2000, students have become 40 percent less empathic than 20 – 30 years ago. They no longer give frequent “yes” to such as “I sometime try to understand my friends better by putting myself in their situation and I often worry about people who are worse off than I am”. Depending on whether or not one trusts these findings, the study confirms that some youths do not acknowledge the existence of other people. Morch (2012) also stressed that when faced with today's complex choices and huge variety of opportunities, the young people need a reference point (and their reference point become their friends) young people do not choose friends who are different from themselves. This is why many of them tend to create virtual mirror images of their identity through their friends by forming extremely exclusive communities where everyone is highly similar.

Morch (2012) mentioned television as a highly influential frame of referent in the development of these young people's personalities. At this point, Morch argument is due to the illusory reality portrayed in Television (TV) shows, which show them how other youths appear to behave. Morch affirmed that adults must not under-estimate the role of media in young people development, after all they spend about six hours or more a day watching TV and surfing the internet; portray some extremely egocentric images in which the teenagers can mirror themselves. Since some youths define their world almost exclusively based on the values and norms of their inner circle of friends, the choice of people they grow up with can become a crucial factor in the shaping of their identity. It not hard therefore to understand why parents worry about which friends their children end up in school with, because they can be absolutely critical.

Given the popularity of online social networking sites, facebook in particular, this study is aimed at investigating the relationship between students' exposure to facebook and psychosocial behaviour (aggressive rebellious tendency) of Senior Secondary School Students in Uyo Local Government Area.

### **Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study was to find out whether exposure to facebook relates significantly with aggressive rebellious tendency of Senior Secondary School Students.

### **Research Question**

The research question for this study was: what relationship exists between exposure to facebook and aggressive rebellious tendency of Senior Secondary School Students?

**Null Hypothesis**

There is no significant relationship between exposure to facebook and aggressive rebellious tendency.

**Methodology:**

The researchers adopted a survey design to gather data relating to the relationship between facebook and students' psychosocial behaviour (aggressive rebellious tendency). Survey design aimed at gathering data from a sampled population concerning a phenomena which involves a large population. Survey design was considered appropriate for this study because, this work sought to uncover how social media relate to psychosocial behaviour (aggressive rebellious tendency) of Senior Secondary School Students.

The researchers chose Uyo Local Government Area because of the internet access prevalent through Global System for Mobile Communication (GSM) service providers. It is also based on the assumption that an average Nigerian student owns a mobile phone and participants in the social media networking. Population of the study consisted of all the 8,644 Senior Secondary School Two (SS II) students for 2015/2016 academic year in the thirteen (13) public secondary schools in the area (*Source: Akwa Ibom State Secondary School Board, Uyo 2016*). The choice of the Senior Secondary Two students as population for this study was based on their age (15 years and above). The students are at peak of adolescence (period for trying out things). They are predisposed in facebook and other social networking sites.

The sample size for this study comprised of 1,097 (511 males and 586 females) Senior Secondary Two students (SS II) selected from 9 public secondary schools in the area of the study. The hat and draw method was used in selecting the schools. The technique involves folding of pieces of papers with "yes" and "no" options and mixing them up in a basket before drawing, only those students that picked the "yes" option were used. By this process, all the students had equal chance of being selected for use. This method was used to give every student in all sampled schools equal opportunity to participate in the study and avoid bias.

The researchers–developed instrument titled "Social Media and Psychosocial Behaviour Questionnaire" (SMPBQ) was used for data collection. The questionnaire has two sections labeled A and B. Section A collected data on psychosocial behaviour of students – aggressive rebellious tendency with seven items, while section B collected data on facebook (10 items). The instrument had a total number of 17 items. The response to the items on questionnaire were on four options rating scale of strongly agree 4 points, Agree 3 points, Disagree 2 points, and strongly disagree 1 point.

The researchers employed Cronbach's Alpha Reliability method to analyze the data. A reliability coefficient of 0.70 was realized and found to be a very high reliability index. The instrument was therefore found fit to be used for this study. The researchers administered



1,097 copied of the instrument to the respondents at the different schools in the study area. The researchers met the respondents face to face and provided adequate information to the respondents which aided them to provide valid information as required. Completed copies were collected at the spot for analyze.

The data were analysed using descriptive statistics and Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

The data are represented in the Table 1:

Table 1: Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Analysis of facebook and Aggressive Rebellious Tendency of Senior Secondary School Students *n = 1,097*

| Variables                      | dx<br>dy | dx <sup>2</sup><br>dy <sup>2</sup> | dxy     | r = value | Remarks                    |
|--------------------------------|----------|------------------------------------|---------|-----------|----------------------------|
| Facebook                       | 38936    | 1417718                            | 1253969 | 0.66      | High Positive Relationship |
| Aggressive Rebellious Tendency | 81901    | 7544379                            |         |           |                            |

Result of data analysis as presented in the Table 1, shows that a calculated correlation coefficient of 0.66 which is a high positive relationship between facebook usage and aggressive rebellious tendency. The result shows that facebook usage has a high positive relationship with aggressive rebellious tendency of Senior Secondary School Students. The inference of the result shows that students who use most of the facebook pages do demonstrate aggressive rebellious tendencies.

Summary of Pearson’s Moment Correlation Analysis of Facebook and Aggressive Rebellious Tendency of Senior Secondary School Students *n = 1,097*

| Variables                      | dx<br>dy | dx <sup>2</sup><br>dy <sup>2</sup> | dxy     | df   | r - cal | r - cri |
|--------------------------------|----------|------------------------------------|---------|------|---------|---------|
| Facebook                       | 38936    | 1417718                            | 3969125 | 1095 | 0.66    | .062    |
| Aggressive Rebellious Tendency | 81901    | 7544379                            |         |      |         |         |

\*Significant

Date on the Table 2, shows the testing of the relationship between Facebook and aggressive rebellious tendency of Senior Secondary School Students with a calculated r – value of 0.66 and a critical r – value of 0.62 when compared at .05 significance level and 1095 degree of freedom. Since the calculated value is greater than the critical r – value, then the null hypothesis, which stated that Facebook usage hasno significant relationship with aggressive rebellious tendency of Senior Secondary School Students was rejected. The result



implies that the use of facebook by students is associated with aggressive rebellious tendency.

### **Findings of the study**

The result of the research study revealed that facebook usage has a high positive relationship with aggressive rebellious tendency of Senior Secondary School Students. There was also a significant relationship between facebook usage and aggressive rebellious tendency of Secondary School Students.

### **Discussion of Findings**

Findings revealed that facebook usage has a high positive relationship with aggressive rebellious tendency of Senior Secondary School Students. Hence the null hypothesis was rejected since the calculated  $r$ -value was found to be greater than the critical  $r$ -value. The findings showed that students who are exposed to facebook have aggressive rebellious tendency. This findings support the stand of Steinberg (2007) who suggests that stopping systems with the brain make the adolescents more susceptible to engaging in risky dangerous behaviour. Steinberg argues that social programmes and measures discouraging youth from taking part in risky behaviour (such as drug and alcohol abuse, reckless driving and unsafe sex) have been largely ineffective. This is because according to him teenage risk – taking is generated by competition between socio emotional and cognitive control networks both got through maturation processes during adolescence, but do so at different rate.

Steinberg's new perspective from brain and behavioural science state that "systematic research does not support the stereotypes of adolescents as irrational individuals who believe they are invulnerable and who are unaware, inattentive to, or unconcerned about the potential harms of risky behaviour. Steinberg maintained that when some teenagers are being ill mannered, violent or degrading, it is not due to clash with authorities, but it is because other people are without relevance in their world.

Morch (2012) opined that some youths can only relate to the relationship they have with their friends and that relationship is often a reproduction of themselves. Morch added that for these people, the fellowship can become an extremely inclusive VIP club, while those who are not on the guest list are excluded. Also, in some cases those who are outside their network simply do not exist in their world. Metaphorically speaking, these people sometimes tend to become mere props in a theater performance, Morch added. From the findings of the study the researchers noted that the parents should instruct and put control at the channels on what their children watch from the television especially when they parents are not around.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the finding of this study, the researchers concluded that Facebook usage has a significant relationship with aggressive rebellious tendency of Senior Secondary School Students in Uyo Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State.



## Recommendations

From the findings revealed by this research study, it is recommended that

1. Parents, guardians, and caregivers should place restrictions on some television programmes and channels by activating security settings.
2. Parents, guardians, and caregivers should avoid buying expensive phones with sophisticated social network facilities for their children/wards.

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