

**SOCIAL NETWORKING AND HIV/AIDS ASSOCIATED
RISK BEHAVIOUR AMONG STUDENTS IN SELECTED
NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES**

BY

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DECLARATION

I Chiedu Chike IFEKANDU hereby declare that this Thesis entitled “Social Networking and HIV/AIDS Associated Risk Behaviour among Students in selected Nigerian Universities” has been written by me in the Department of Theatre and Performing Arts under the supervision of Dr. Emmanuel Jegede and Professor Oga Steve Abah. The information derived from other literature has been duly acknowledged in the text and a list of reference provided. There is no part of this Thesis that was previously presented for another degree

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CERTIFICATION

The thesis titled “Social Networking and HIV/AIDS Associated Risk Behaviour among Students in selected Nigerian Universities” written by Chiedu Chike IFEKANDU in the Department of Theatre and Performing Arts, meets the regulations governing the award of M.A Development Communication of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and it is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

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DEDICATION

To the fondest and loving memories of :

My Paternal and Maternal grandmothers: Joy Adaeze Egbunike and J.C. Nwammadu

Enweonwu; I still keep the pact we made. I am not letting go till it is achieved.

My vintage Professor Sam Kafewo and quintessential Professor JenkeriOkwori: thanks for being my support group while I was battling Leukemia. Your loss is Heaven's gain and earth yet to recover from the shock.

Rest in Peace

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ABSTRACT

The study “Social Networking and HIV/AIDS Associated Risk Behaviour among Students in selected Nigerian Universities” was carried out to explore how social networking is associated with higher HIV prevalence and HIV-new infections among young people in Nigeria. Social networking platforms have features/chat rooms for flirting, adult-hook ups and sex chat. Young adults are constantly glued to these chat-rooms via the social networking sites. These virtual spaces are now preferred by them for lewd conversations which they are not comfortable to engage in physical spaces. Social networking sites enhance their chances of meeting multiple casual partners depending on their sexual preference and practices and in most cases; engage in unprotected sexual intercourse. Moreover, pornographic images shared and accessed via the social media increase their sexual desire and in their quest to quench their sexual desire, increases their HIV vulnerability. The major objectives of this study are to: to assess the extent of the use of social media by young people in the two selected universities in Northern Nigeria, examine the link between social networking, young people and HIV-vulnerabilities, establish how social networking impacts on Nigeria’s efforts in getting to zero new-HIV infection and explore how social networking can be effectively used to communicate health effectively to young adults. The findings of this study imply that social networking is becoming part of young people’s everyday life and if not properly utilized could lead to risky behaviours including HIV. The study recommends that: Universities and colleges should also encourage students’ (especially undergraduate students) positive usage of Social Network Sites by creating study groups online on particular courses for students to engage in scholarly discourse since majority of users on these platforms are youths. Further research into the potentials of the usage of Social Network Sites should be encouraged as this will further help determine the extent of its capabilities to bring about development through effective communication and finally HIV/AIDS campaigns should be repackaged and taken to the social networking sites to educate the youths and engage their attention.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Background to the Study

In recent years, there has been an upsurge in the number of online social networking sites and traffic to these sites from Nigeria. Despite the large number of adults and children alike embracing these online sites, few research has been done in Nigeria, to date, to examine the potential adverse outcomes of such sites. The considerable increase over the past few years in the use of mobile phones, text messaging, emails, chat rooms and social networks has altered our social environments and has in many ways affected our social interactions. Comparative data from the Nigerian Communication Commission (2012) suggests that Nigerians are the highest users of mobile technology and mobile social networking on the continent' compared to other countries such as South Africa, Egypt, Kenya, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Namibia, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. Young people, who are known to acquire technological skills more rapidly than adults, lead the way in the daily use of information and communication technologies (ICTs).

In Nigeria, young people are generally reluctant to seek sexual health information for a variety of reasons, including stigma, lack of interest, lack of services, cost, and denial of risk (Janssen & Davis, 2009; Pitts, Dowsett, Couch, Keys, & Dutertre, 2003; Sorenson & Brown, 2007). However, as young people in Nigeria use social networking sites, health professionals are yet to explore and create ways to listen to and engage with young people about sexual health issues via these media in ways that may challenge these barriers. Young people live in virtual online and offline social worlds (Collin, Rahilly, Third, & Richardson, 2010; Pascoe, 2011). By way of Social networking sites (SNS), young people connect and disconnect with others, debate, download, upload, and create. They use social networking

for self-expression, to belong and not to belong, and to experiment with their identities (ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, race, bodies, etc.) (Davies, 2007). Young people negotiate intimate relationships online, including flirting, breaking up, and sexual encounters (Pascoe, 2011).

Social networking enable users to create a profile; define online personal network; make visible their online connections to other people, communities, and organizations; engage in dialogue; and share, remix, and create media. Some popular social networking brands in Nigeria are Facebook, Badoo, 2go and WhatsApp , Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, blackberry messenger, Google+, and Yahoo messenger. (Internet.com 2013)

In Nigeria, the vast majority of health organizations are not yet using social networking platform effectively for health promotion targeted at young people. When health organizations do use these platforms, they do so in a way that remains unidirectional and that does not effectively make use of the media-youth friendly's characteristics, such as interactivity and peer sharing. When young people in Nigeria seek sexual health information, it is usually post facto—after already engaging in risky sexual behavior. Young people's sexual cultures involve negotiating a mixture of biological changes, peer pressure, conflicting parental messages, and the power of broader cultural messages that shape expectations about sexual health in combination with the rest of their sexual culture (pleasure, stigma, behaviors, ethics). However, despite sexual health being tied into these cultures, on its own it ranks low on young people's interest scale when it comes to sexual knowledge. Sexual health information for young people in Nigeria is currently available through sources such as friends, family, Non-Governmental Organizations, government, and mass media campaigns that have employed television, radio, posters, newspapers and

magazines, websites, short message service (SMS), wallet cards, pamphlets, posters, billboards, and the like. Young people in Nigeria prefer to access sexual health information through their preferred social networking platform (Obianwu 2013). Sexual health communication involving social networking has the potential to connect into the broader sexual cultures of young people – be it the experience of courtship, ethics, family, morals, practices, fears, dangers, hopes, intimacy, sexual tastes, cultural expectations, and so on (Collins et al. 2011). Some same-sex-attracted young people prefer to explore personal issues such as sexual health, practices, and identity in digital spaces due to the anonymity and confidentiality these spaces can provide

New media technologies are central parts of young people’s social, romantic, and sexual lives. These communications are important in their practices of meeting, dating, and breaking up. New media technologies also provide important resources about sexual health and identities. In the few instances where social networking are being used for sexual health communication in Nigeria, there is little documentation and evaluation of their use.

1.1.1 New Media, Social Media and Social Networking: A Fronded Circle

Social media and social networking do have some overlap, but they really are not the same thing. The differences between social media and social networking are just about as vast as night and day. Knowing what they are can help us gain a better understanding of the scope of this study. The best way to explain the difference between the terms is this: social media is a noun and social networking is a verb. Social media is a way to transmit, or share information with a broad audience. Everyone has the opportunity to create and distribute, while social networking is an act of engagement. Groups of people with common interests,

or like-minds, associate together on social networking sites and build relationships through community. They differ basically in their communication style and timely response.

Social media is more akin to a communication channel. It's a format that delivers a message. Like television, radio or newspaper, social media isn't a location that you visit. Social media is simply a system that disseminates information 'to' others. With social networking, communication is two-way. Depending on the topic, subject matter or atmosphere, people congregate to join others with similar experiences and backgrounds. Conversations are at the core of social networking and through them. Social media is hard work and it takes time. You can't automate individual conversations and unless you're a well-known and established brand, building a following doesn't happen overnight. Social media is definitely a marathon and not a sprint.

The terms 'new media' 'social media' and 'social networking' are often used interchangeably, and it is usually assumed that what is meant by these concepts is clear. However, a (somewhat blurred) distinction can be made between the two and this distinction is important for corporate practices. This is perhaps most true for marketing practices, but the notion of new media should not always be seen as an equivalent for social media, especially as the tools and techniques of new media and social media differ somewhat. Descriptions about new media are often contrasted against what is seen as 'old media', including media such as newspapers, TV, radio, magazines, hardcopy books, landline, phones and movies in the cinema (Pridmore 2013). The hype around new media suggests that old media is becoming increasingly less relevant, as users have begun to ignore or change what were seen as everyday practices reading the daily paper in paper form, watching commercial television, using the family phone to call a friend. It is with

advertising that these changes articulated particularly poignant as people ignore commercials on TV, advertisements in newspapers; use Google to search instead of seeing advertisements in the phonebook, etc. by those that hype the importance of new media.

Social media are forms of new media, but not all forms of new media are social media. Social networking is the act of interacting with other users in real time and with instant response. New media can be seen to cover everything that has been changed in the now digitized sharing of information. Of course, social media is a part of that. It is perhaps the biggest and most influential part in many ways, but still just a part. While new media allows for sharing, the development of social media via social networking and its interactive components has made the ability to comment, respond, share, critique, change and add to information possible on a broad scale. Social networking is the increased visibility of interaction, with largely unfiltered peer-to-peer communication that cannot be easily controlled.

Social media is the noun, the platform, social networking is the doing; it is necessarily interactive, focused on social connections, and is designed with social connections in mind. A static website that only sends information out and does not allow for responses may be a form of new media, but is not a form of social media. A blog on the other hand, specifically one that can be commented on and shared with others, is a form of social media and not a social networking site.

The distinction between new media, social media and social networking is not always very sharp. The fact that someone can take a picture with a camera on their mobile, and this photo can be edited and put on a website is a clear form of using new media. When the photo is put on WhatsApp or Facebook, it is now a part of social media, when people comment on the

picture post on the user's wall is social networking. The three are clearly interlinked, and more and more new media devices and programmes have a more social character. Though it may matter less in other contexts if the term new media, social media and social networking are used interchangeably, the importance of the medium, the message and the feedback are very much connected with how forms of communication are understood. Most specifically, it matters whether these are seen as one-way or direct forms of communication or more interactive and dynamic.

1.1.2 Social Networking, Sex and Influence

The abuse of social networking is a worldwide phenomenon and as such Nigeria is not an exception. Since the advent of the social media in our country, the loss of the sense of dignity is on the increase.

Young people in the name of being the first to know forget the sacredness of the human life that we were known with. This is evident in the attitude of our young men and women towards life. During adolescence, young people experience a vast amount of changes in their physical, emotional, and social maturity. During this stage, outside influences are particularly capable of affecting teenagers' thoughts and behaviors. One influence that has proven to have a considerable effect on teenagers is the social network. The social networking can influence adolescent health in a variety of ways. Media images frequently have an impact on body image, alcohol, tobacco, and drug use, and potential violent behavior. In Nigeria, it is almost a taboo for most parents to talk to their children about sex. Not very many people enjoy talking about such a sensitive topic at all, so many young people turn to less uncomfortable sources for information. With the overwhelming amount of sexual content in the social networking platforms today, they seem like a worthy source

of information on this topic to many adolescents. However, the media's portrayal of sex is very unrealistic, it is glamorized and dangerous and can lead one to believe that sex is always casual and consequence free.

It is a commonly accepted belief that adolescents are very impressionable. It is easy to see that they imitate their favorite celebrities, or other role models, in their dress, actions, and speech. Adolescents mimic the behavior they see in media and their social networking peers. They want to be loved and accepted as their favorite Hollywood/Nollywood stars, so they copy their behavior. This can be very dangerous when it comes to the make believe sexual fantasies seen in movies, television, and even magazine and most intimately to them; the social networking platforms. In their own personal dating relationships, teens may feel that they are expected to behave like the acting they see in the media. Social networking presents them their dying rare opportunity to vent out the feelings and explore those dreams by sexting and unprotected sex. The results of this kind of thinking are dangerous: it may build false expectations about sex, and it may cause them to become sexually active at earlier ages which may be influencing the high rates of teen pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases

1.1.3 Are the Measures to Social Networking Activities in Nigeria Working?

Young people's online activities unbeknownst to parents

Despite their awareness of online dangers, teens continue to take risks by posting personal information and risky photos online, unbeknownst to parents. Nearly half of parents believe their teens tell them everything they do online and insist they are in control when it comes to monitoring their teen's online behaviors (The Punch 2012). However, the teens deceiving

their parents are on the rise, as most of them have found ways to avoid parental monitoring. This is a generation that is so comfortable with technology that they are surpassing their parents in understanding and getting away with behaviors that are putting their safety at risk. Young people spend more time online than their parents can ever imagine. Despite the rise of smart phones, parents who belong to the old generation in Nigeria do not know how to access the Internet. In most cases where they do, they access at their work place via laptops and desktops (Internet 2013)

Nigeria Communications Commission, Telecom Providers and the challenges of regulating online dangers

After the advent of the Global System of Mobile Communication (GSM) and robust Internet usage in the country, the efforts to protect children from internet abuse have become a recurring topical issue before the regulatory agencies. From the foregoing, the Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC) and other law enforcement agencies are caught in the web of controversies of cases of child delinquencies brought about by online activities. Little attempt has been made to address the crisis, identifying key risks and vulnerabilities associated with young people using the Internet in Nigeria. While Internet has the potentials of educating people, it can also be used to set online traps to exploit users for criminal purposes, among those who are most vulnerable to such traps are children.

1.1.4 HIV Situation in Nigeria and Media Representation

Nigeria is the most populous nation in Africa with an estimated population of over 167 million people (National population Commission NPC 2011). The World Health Organization reported that Over 1.5 million children are said to be orphaned annually.

Official figures put them in HIV prevalence rate from 4.4% in 2005 and 3.4 in 2012 (National HIV/AIDS and Reproductive Health Survey (NARHS) 2012).

The epidemic is said to be fuelled in the country largely by poverty, lack of awareness, dense commercial sex networks, early age of sexual debut, poor gender empowerment, with religion and culture obstructing open debate about sexuality (MOT study 2011). It is alarming, but HIV/AIDS has become a localized epidemic in many states of Nigeria. For instance, if we look at the HIV prevalence rate even with the 2005 figure, Benue State has a 10% prevalence rate, with AkwaIbom following in line with 8% and Nassarawa, Enugu, Rivers, and Taraba all in the 6% range (NARHS PLUS II 2012).

Questions to put forward to assess the impact of intervention on the life of an average person who is HIV positive include: Do people have enough information necessary to take informed decisions? Does Nigeria as a country has a comprehensive intervention package for adolescents and young adults who are at the epicenter of the Epidemic? Are women and young people now more empowered to negotiate safer sex and have a decisive say on issues that affect their sexuality? Do people still stigmatize and discriminate based on HIV status? How easy has it become for someone who is HIV positive to hold on to his/her job, and how easy is it to secure paid employment with one's positive status?

When HIV/AIDS was first discovered, real knowledge about HIV/AIDS among Nigerians was at its lowest. The media have created appreciable awareness about HIV/AIDS but failed to match that with AIDS education. In Nigeria, HIV/AIDS is often portrayed as punishment for immoral behavior, as a crime in relation to innocent and guilty victims, as war against a virus that must be fought, as horror with which infected people are demonized, thus fuelling the widespread belief that HIV/AIDS is shameful. Following examples often set by the

West, the media here use images of death, depravity and despair to depict people living with HIV/AIDS. At the same time, rarely are the voices of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHAs) included in reports, just as depictions of healthy individuals engaging in productive lives are equally absent

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

Social networking platforms have features/chat rooms for flirting, adult-hook ups and sex chat. Young adults are constantly glued to these chat-rooms via the social networking sites. These virtual spaces are now preferred by them for lewd conversations which they are not comfortable to engage in physical spaces. Virtual communities are being formed everyday on the social networking sites and most young adults are part of these communities and as a result, new sexual behaviours are formed. There are changes in the way young adult seek for sexual partners because in chatting and pingping, they have found a new way of communicating their sexual needs faster which brings about sexual and reproductive health misinformation. Social networking sites enhance their chances of meeting multiple casual partners depending on their sexual preference and practices and in most cases; engage in unprotected sexual intercourse.

Moreover, pornographic images shared and accessed via the social media increases their sexual desire and in their quest to quench their sexual desire, increases their HIV vulnerability. Furthermore, Youths aged between 15 and 24 constitute Nigeria's heaviest users of social networking and highest prevalent rate of new-HIV infections (NACA 2012, NARHS PLUS II 2012). There is inadequate comprehensive knowledge and data on the consequences of social networking in Nigeria.

This thesis examines the social networking as a vital communication tool among young people in Nigeria and its HIV-associated risk behaviour on young people in Nigeria. The study specifically focuses on the usage habit among young people in Nigeria and how social networking increases their HIV-vulnerabilities.

1.3 Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine the possible correlation between social networking and Nigerian university students-HIV vulnerabilities. The objectives are as follows:

1.4 Objectives of the Study

- To assess the extent of the use of social media by young people in the two selected universities in Northern Nigeria.
- To examine the link between social networking, young people and HIV-vulnerabilities
- To establish how social networking impacts on Nigeria's efforts in getting to zero new-HIV infection
- To explore how social networking can be effectively used to communicate health effectively to young adults.
- To examine other factors contributing to HIV vulnerability of the youths in Nigeria

1.5 Justification for the Study

This thesis is justified on the grounds that it aims to highlight the communication gaps in current HIV-Behaviour Change communications (BCC) efforts by providing insight into social networking as an effective communication patterns of young adults' behaviour and sexual partnerships, and the specific cultural and psychological context in which risk is

occurring. Understanding the distinct social forces that shape the risk environment could maximize the effectiveness of designing and implementing communication approaches and strategies for prevention interventions and heighten the acceptability of these programmes by young people in Nigeria.

This study with the aid of questionnaire, Focus Group Discussions, interviews and observation, will help in the collection and analysis of data gotten from the responses of students which will constitute my case study. This will go a long way in ascertaining the level of impact of social networking on the study of HIV vulnerability among young adults in Nassarawa State University; Keffi and University of Abuja; Gwagwalada campus.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This research deals with social networking and HIV-associated risk among students in Nassarawa State University Keffi and University of Abuja, Gwagwalada campus. Thus, the scope of the work will be basically limited to just two departments of the faculty of engineering students in University of Abuja and Faculty of Natural Science of the Nasarawa State University and as such inferences will be drawn from the 2013/14 session of the academic calendar of undergraduate students.

The reason for this choice is to provide an intensive and close study of small unit that can be studied in-depth and for a more nuanced analysis which will be impossible with large study populations. Other factors considered in choosing the two institutions were the HIV prevalence rate in Federal Capital Tertiary (FCT) and Nassarawa state which is placed at 8.6% and 7.5% respectively; alarming figures when compared with the national prevalence of 3.4% (National Reproductive Health Survey, NARHS 2012); the students largely

constitute young adult populations in these two States, it is appropriate to conduct the study in the two institutions.

The internal factors that limit this study are; time constraint which will be as a result of the research being based on the 2013/14 academic session. Thus, time poses a challenge. Money and resources are also contributing factors for the study and it is therefore necessary to collect data from only the subset of the population. In essence, samples are therefore used as a representation of the population. Also, respondent answers forms basis of the study because it is a research about them and inferences will thus be drawn from their opinions, perceptions, behavioural patterns, choices, etc.

The external factors will constitute factors that are beyond my control. Foremost, is my inability to fully monitor students utilization of social networking during examinations and secondly, there is a limit to observant participation method in the collection of data of the case study because some answers to research questions may not be straight forward as they might feel it could be used against them in terms of enforcing disciplinary actions hence answers may be manipulated by the study team.

1.7 Definition of Terms

Adolescents: a young person who is growing into through emotional and physical transformation into adulthood

Media: a collective noun for agencies of mass communication

Social Networking: an interactive online service that connects individuals or organizations with mutual interest

Social Media: any form of media that makes use of the online services; which can be interactive or otherwise.

Young Adults: this refers to grownups within the ages of 15-24

HIV-Vulnerability: one who is open to risky sexual exploitations and attacks

Virtual Space: a hotspot for online community of social networks

Youth-friendly: a device or an activity that is capable of appealing to the interest of the young audience

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Overview of Social Networking

Social networking is an online service focusing on reflecting and building of social networks or relations among people sharing same interests, activities or backgrounds. These services or sites allow the user to create a virtual representation or profile showcasing one's likes, dislikes, interests, activities etc and also providing some additional services. Most of these services are internet based thus providing the users to interact with other fellow users easily. Wikipedia (2012) states that In 1994 the first social networking site was developed and the AOL messenger service was amongst the first popular instant messaging services evolved in 1997. These social networking sites have evolved and now have become extremely popular worldwide. Some of the popular networking sites are: Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Friendster, Hi5, Orkut, Hyves etc. Geocities was the first web-based social networking site developed in 1994.

In 2004 FACEBOOK was launched at Harvard University as a way of connecting all the U.S. college students. In 2006 Twitter was launched which has been a huge success with 300 million users presently. In 2008 Facebook overtook MySpace to become the leader among the social networking sites. Presently Facebook has a user-base of more than 845 million.

These social networking sites are being developed ever since and have now exploded to become one of the biggest industries. These sites in order to remain at the top of social

networking continuously add new features and applications to make it more user-friendly.

Dewitt (2012) believes that:

Chatting and video calling has made it easier for the users to keep in contact with their friends. Sites like Facebook have added many games and applications thus attracting users making it a means of killing their free time. While Twitter, a micro-blogging site allows the users to constantly update their daily activities. Facebook, Twitter, MySpace etc are the sites currently dominating the field of social networking but it requires implementation of new concept to create the gravity around these sites else its user-base can fall drastically and their market share can dwindle in no time as it happened in case of Orkut.

Nevertheless social networking sites have been a great boon in our lives helping people to remain connected. From its birth as a way of linking a few university and defense laboratories in the late 1960s, the Internet has grown into a global network connecting over two billion people (Elmer-Dewitt,2012). Social linkages in the form of E-mail and discussion groups appeared in the first days of the Internet and have grown explosively ever since, today there are over a million Internet discussion groups (Hahn & Stout, 1994). Aside from its sheer size, this new social milieu commands scholarly attention because it is one of the new “collaborative mass media forms” in which messages come from a wide variety of participants with little or no centralized control (Rafaeli & LaRose, 1993). It therefore blurs the traditional boundaries between interpersonal and mass communication phenomena and raises new opportunities and risks for the way individuals relate to one another (Lea & Spears, 1995; Williams & Rice, 1983).

They further posited that In most high schools, colleges, or workplaces, the internet is filled with billions of individuals who are looking to meet other people, to gather and share first-hand information and experiences about their holiday experience, visit to the village, developing friendships professional alliances, finding employment, business-to-business

marketing and even groups sharing information about finding a new date. The topics and interests are as varied and rich as the story of our universe.

When it comes to online social networking, websites are commonly used. These websites are known as social sites. Social networking websites function like an online community of internet users. Depending on the website in question, many of these online community members share common interests in hobbies, religion, politics and alternative lifestyles. Once you are granted access to a social networking website you can begin to socialize. This socialization may include reading the profile pages of other members and possibly even contacting them.

The friends that you can make are just one of the many benefits to social networking online. Another one of those benefits includes diversity because the internet gives individuals from all around the world access to social networking sites. This means that although you are in the United States, you could develop an online friendship with someone in Denmark or Nigeria. Not only will you make new friends, but you just might learn a thing or two about new cultures or new languages and learning is always a good thing.

Nowadays, news and any information that would usually take days or even weeks to go from one location to another can now occur in seconds. The spreading of an idea, or of news occurring somewhere in the world can no longer be completely blocked by any organization. As long as one person is able to connect to the internet and express their view about a situation or simply about an idea, then the information that individual want to share, will get out into the world. A good instance is the use of YouTube by the Boko Haram leader Imam Shekau to make a statement to the government and people of Nigeria. In another example,

#bringbackourgirls went viral over the various social networking sites and subsequently aided in identifying and the arrest of those who committed the ugly act.

2.2 Types of Social Networking Sites

Boyd (2012) categorized the social networking platforms as follows:

Instant messaging

Instant messaging is one of the most popular forms of online communication amongst the youth. It consists of sending real-time (instant) messages to another internet user. This is basically a form of online texting. The most popular ones in Nigeria are: Blackberry Messenger, WhatsApp and 2go. These three instant messaging Applications has over 50 million subscribers; with over 80% within the ages of 15-39.

Websites

These websites allow users to create a personal profile that can contain personal information, photographs, videos and sound clips. Currently, the top five most visited social networking sites are Facebook, Badoo, Naijapals, Twitter and LinkedIn. Facebook alone has over 20 million users in Nigeria. Individuals must be at least thirteen years of age to create a Facebook profile and if a teen is less than sixteen years old, the profile must be set to private.

Blogging

This is an increasingly popular teen activity, with the percentage of online teens that have created a blog or online diaries. A blog is a discussion or informational site published on the World Wide Web and consisting of discrete entries ("posts") typically displayed in reverse

chronological order (the most recent post appears first). The most popular bloggers in Nigeria are: Linda Ikeji and Bellanaija

Internet dating sites

These dating sites are usually patronized by adult internet users who identified themselves as single and actively looking for a romantic partner. There are very few online dating sites exclusively patronized by Nigerians, two of these are Badoo and dating.com. Badoo is a freemium service where the basic service is free for everyone but users have an option to pay for premium features. As soon as members sign up they can chat, upload photos and videos. Users can see and contact people who live in their area using the 'People Nearby' feature or in a different city or part of the world using the 'Search' feature

2.3 Social Networking: Influences and Impact on Our Daily Routine

Sahara Reporters (2011) asserts that MrGoodluck Jonathan's earliest announcement of his desire to run for Nigeria Presidency appeared on Facebook. It was timed to coincide with the widely advertised declaration by another prominent candidate. All of this was in the lead-up to the Nigeria's Presidential elections in April 2011. As the first general elections since Barack Obama came to office in Washington DC USA, everyone knew this was going to be different. This was going to be Nigeria's opportunity to replicate, to the extent to which our circumstances allowed us, the magic of Obama.

Oyeleke (2012) highlighted that:

Anecdotal evidence suggests that many young people voted for the first time in their lives in the 2011 elections. That's in part because social media made it cool. The Nigerian celebrities encouraging newly registered

Following the GoodLuck Jonathan example, other politicians took to Facebook and Twitter, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, and success. Social networking would go on to feature prominently in the elections proper.

Punch (2011) emphasized that:

The Electoral Commission collaborated with a number of civil society groups to set up a Social Media Tracking Center that monitored online activity relating to the elections – the distribution of voting materials, polling booth incidents, and results (armed with mobile phones, citizens were tweeting and Facebooking results as soon as they were announced at polling booths). Tools like Revoda and ReclaimNaija allowed users to send reports via text message to the Electoral Commission.

Social networking usage in Nigeria cannot be understood outside of the mobile phone revolution. At the turn of the century the total number of mobile phone lines in Nigeria was less than 300 000. Today there are over 149 million mobile lines, 112 million of which are in use, making Nigeria one of the fastest growing mobile phone markets in the world. Meanwhile landline usage has been dropping steadily; the number of landlines in use today is only a third of what it was in 2009 (Nigerian Communications Commissions 2011). Increasingly, internet-enabled mobile phones have become cheaper, allowing more people to go online via their mobile phones. In a city like Lagos where commuters spend several hours daily in traffic jams, mobile phones have come in handy to while away the time. According to the mobile social media network Eskimi, mobile internet usage in Nigeria is ten times more than desktop usage. When Nigeria's President Jonathan says he believes he is "the most criticised President in the whole world", it is in large part due to social media and the way it has allowed frustrated Nigerians to express their opinions without censorship.

Kazeem 2012 decries that:

The Federal Government of Nigeria in January 2012 had removed the subsidy on petrol, causing prices to jump from 65 naira to 140 naira, days later public protests started in parts of the country. Expectedly young people turned to social media. The President's Page, the same one that inspired the My Friends & I book, was a prime target. Thousands of angry messages appeared on it, from citizens who now had a chance to communicate their feelings 'directly' to the man in charge.

Social media also played active roles in the uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya. Social media allowed many of us to vicariously participate in the Egyptian revolution, it also aided the fuel subsidy protests started in Nigeria to have a model to copy from.

Mr Jonathan's complaints can also be seen in the same light as the comments by Nigeria's Senate President that "social media has become a threat to the ethics of media practice and good governance because of its accessibility and absolute freedom" (Vanguard, August 2012); and the outburst by Turkish Prime Minister RecepTayyip Erdogan in which he described social media as "the worst menace to society" (Associated Press, June 2013). Long before them, the former Philippine President Joseph Estrada reportedly blamed "the text-messaging generation" (this was in 2001, the pre-Twitter, pre-Facebook age) for the protests that led to his impeachment. Even the United States of America were not left out, the WikiLeaks saga by Julian Asange and Edward Snowden is a global topical issue.

In the same speech in which he expressed reservations about social media the Nigerian Senate President acknowledged that "the emergence of the social media like Facebook, twitter, BlackBerry Messenger, YouTube etc have changed the face of the media practice by making information sharing easier, faster and quicker."

Like young people across the world, young Nigerians, who form the bulk of social networkers –the FactBound (2012) survey found that:

70 percent of social networkers in Nigeria were between 18 and 33 – are fast realizing the extent to which social media has altered the dynamics of the world. The extent to which social media has resulted in the democratization of access to information, and expression of opinion, and a shift in the balance of power between the leaders and the led.

The Twitter and Facebook has become the new village square for the new generation of Nigerian youths, on everything from the size of the Nigerian President’s feeding budget, to the missing 20 billion dollars, and the English Premier League. According to a 2011 survey by FactBound, a research consultancy, “networking” and “communication” are the two most popular uses of social media in Nigeria, and Facebook was by far the most popular and widely- used social media platform in the country (45 percent of Facebook users were spending between one and three hours daily on the site; 18 percent spent between five and seven hours daily). Only one in every three respondents claimed social media had influenced their political beliefs, compared to 86 percent who said it had influenced their social lives.

Nigeria’s most popular blogger is a young woman called Linda Ikeji, who describes her blog as covering “News, Events, Entertainment, Lifestyle, Fashion, Beauty, Inspiration and yes... Gossip!” Politics shows up only occasionally; and it’s certainly not the reason why the blog is the most popular in Nigeria. Linda has got her own BlackBerry App, and hers is the only blog featured on the MTN Mobile Newspaper service, which provides breaking news to subscribers on their phones.

2.4 Challenges in Communicating Health Information to Young People

Parent-young people communication about sexual health is occurring rarely in the family and bounded by certain barriers. Programmes/policies related to young people’s

reproductive health should address not only individual or behavioral factors but also cultural and social factors that negatively influence parent-communication about reproductive health.

Ahonsi (2013) laments that:

An increased incidence of HIV infection in adolescents has led researchers to examine factors that influence young people's sexual behaviors. One of these factors is parent-adolescent communication about sexuality. Although sexual communication is a principal means of transmitting sexual values, beliefs, expectations, and knowledge between parents and children, discussions on sex-related matters are a taboo in Africa and believed that informing adolescents about sex and teaching them how to protect themselves would make them sexually active.

In the same way, parent-youth communication on Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) issues, in Nigeria, is believed to be culturally shameful. Socio-cultural taboos attached to it and lack of proper knowledge makes open discussions about sexual and reproductive health topics difficult. However, it is believed that, home, as the initial focal point for investing in young people, is one of the many layers of environments for socialization. Providing avenues for child/parent connectedness, communication, and monitoring, the home is expected to serve as a stabilizing factor in the lives of young people.

Although, young people in Nigeria constitute over one-third of the total population, most youth do not have access to the right information on issues that have great impact on their SRH (Population Council 2013). The health seeking behavior of these people particularly in relation to their sexual and reproductive health in Nigeria is very low (Ahonsi 2013). In addition to these, Ayanti (2008) affirms that the existing reproductive health (RH) services are adult-centered and the medium utilize unfriendly to young people; thus making less accessible to these population. Furthermore, health care providers in Nigeria are often ill equipped to address adolescent-specific needs. In such cases, the participation of parents, community members and other stakeholders is crucial to improve health status of the youth.

However, not much support is offered for parent communication, and parents often do not talk to their children because they feel confused, ill-informed, or embarrassed about these topics. Young people on the other hand seek for the information through the wrong channels; which is usually their social networks.

Although the Nigerian government has identified reproductive health (RH) of young people as one of the priority areas in The National RH Strategy, taking the social networking platforms as vehicles for change it is not yet put in practice. The role of parent-young people communication and social media about youth reproductive health and its current status is not well addressed while it is important to have a comprehensive social networking, community-based data on parent communication to help putting this strategy in to practice.

2.5 Sexting Associated Risk Behaviour and Young People

Young people's sexting as defined by the Macquarie Dictionary Online (2010) is the sending and receiving of sexually explicit images via mobile phones – has become a focus of much media reporting; however, research regarding the phenomenon is in its infancy. Boyd concurs with the statement that, adolescents globally are engaging in sexual activity at early ages and with multiple partners. The social networking has been shown to affect a broad range of adolescent health-related attitudes and behaviors including violence, eating disorders, and tobacco and alcohol use. One largely unexplored factor that may contribute to adolescents' sexual activity is their exposure to social networking

The digital culture is becoming increasingly pervasive and embedded in young people's everyday experiences, young people's Relationships with each other, in terms of how they interact and socialize, are being transformed (Webber and Dixon 2010).Advances in

technology offer many opportunities to improve youth health; however, this progress also brings potential risks. The introduction of text, Bluetooth and webcam; and the mother of them all, social networking has been instrumental in this transformation process.

Despite the growing attention to prevention and health education, recent data indicate that the rates of unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STI) remain higher for young adults than older adults and higher than the rates in most developed nations (UNICEF 2013).

Years of prior research on adolescents showed that their perception of the norms and values of their peers influences their tendencies toward risk-taking. As sexting continues to be a factor in the social life of teens, it is important to focus on how this phenomenon affects their developing sense of sexual behavior and social norms. Boyd (2013) found that while some teens perceived sexting as a “safer substitute” for sex, others viewed it as an activity that would eventually lead to sexual intercourse.

Sexting, rather than functioning as an alternative to real world sexual risk behavior, appears to be part of a cluster of risky sexual behaviors among adolescents, particularly problematic is the ability of persons under the age of consent to create and receive such materials.

Nnakwe (2012) affirms that:

unlike other explicit sexual materials, sexting is extremely difficult to monitor or block. Anyone with a cell phone can sext with a friend or a stranger. Anyone with a camera phone can take nude photos of themselves and send them to their friends, who in turn can distribute such pictures to a broader network of people. Even individuals who are not interested in sexting can receive messages and photos on their mobile devices from their circle of friends as well as people they don't know.

McGuire (2012) opines that sexting is a form of adolescent exploration of their sexuality and a way to engage in sexual experimentation and self-development, He also warn that sexting is associated with physical sexual behavior that may put young people at risk for unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, such as HIV. The University of Zulu-Natal research team (2013) found that participants who engaged in sexting and had sent explicit messages or photos were more likely to have engaged in sexual intercourse. More importantly, they also demonstrated a trend toward unprotected sex, based on what they reported about their most recent sexual encounters.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

The study will use the Technological Determinism and Uses and Gratification Theories as the main thrust for the work.

2.6.1 Technological Determinism

Technological determinism is a reductionist theory that presumes that a society's technology drives the development of its social structure and cultural values. The term is believed to have been coined by Thorstein Veblen (1857–1929), an American sociologist and economist.

The first major elaboration of a technological determinist view of socioeconomic development came from the German philosopher and economist Karl Marx. Marx's theoretical framework was grounded in the perspective that changes in technology, and specifically productive technology, is the primary influence on human social relations and organizational structure, and that social relations and cultural practices ultimately revolve around the technological and economic base of a given society. Marx's position has become

embedded in contemporary society, where the idea that fast-changing technologies alter human lives is all-pervasive.

The technological determinist view is a technology-led theory of social change: technology is seen as 'the prime mover' in history. In economics, this is known as a 'technology-push' theory rather than a 'demand-pull' theory. According to Chandler (2006),

particular technical developments, communications technologies or media, or, most broadly, technology in general are the sole or prime antecedent causes of changes in society, and technology is seen as the fundamental condition underlying the pattern of social organization.

Technological determinists interpret technology in general and communications technologies in particular as the basis of society in the past, present and even the future. In its most extreme form, the entire form of society is seen as being determined by technology: new technologies transform society at every level, including institutions, social interaction and individuals. At the least a wide range of social and cultural phenomena are seen as shaped by technology. 'Human factors' and social arrangements are seen as secondary.

Karl Marx is often interpreted as a technological determinist on the basis of such isolated quotations as: 'the windmill gives you society with the feudal lord: the steam-mill, society with the industrial capitalist' ('The Poverty of Philosophy', 1847), and determinism certainly features in orthodox Marxism. But several apologists have insisted that Marx was not a technological determinist.

Various non-Marxist theorists such as Sigfried Giedion, Leslie White, Lynn White Jr, Harold Innis and Marshall McLuhan have adopted the stance of technological determinism. In a *reductio ad absurdum*, Marshall McLuhan interprets Lynn White's book, *Medieval*

Technology and Social Change as suggesting, in McLuhan's words, 'such inventions as the horse collar quickly led to the development of the modern world' (McLuhan & Watson 1970, p. 121). He posited that media technology shapes how we as individuals in a society think, feel, act, and how society are operates as we move from one technological age to another. He foresaw the world becoming a 'global village' which is now been catapulted by the Internet and World Wide Web.

McLuhan (1970) further explains that:

as an individual; we learn and feel and think the way we do because of the messages we receive through the current technology that is available. Technological determinism is also commonly associated with futuristic commentators regarding what they refer to as 'the microelectronic revolution'

His view points that shaped the theory are inventions in communication technology caused cultural change; changes in mode of communication shape human life; and we shape our tools, and they in turn shape us. He outlined and categorized communication inventions into four periods in which we are:

namely the tribal age which is associated with the oral culture based on hearing; the literate age associated with sight; the print age which he called the 'forerunner' of the industrial revolution; and the electronic age which is the rise of the global village is the stage where we are now. He concentrated more on the medium rather than the contents of a communication for the message

The radio required us to only listen and develop our sense of hearing. On the other hand, social networking engages both our immediate comment, hearing and visual senses. We then transfer those developed senses into our everyday lives and we want to use them again. The medium is then our message. Humans do not have much free will at all. Whatever society as a whole is using to communicate, they too will use to communicate. Therefore they will adapt to the medium they are using so that they can send and receive messages like everyone

else. We know that there is one truth by observing what has happened over time. As the medium changes so does society's way of communicating. People can only use the medium for which it was created (phone for talking and chatting over lines or electronic mail for talking via computer).

Smith (1972) summarized Technological determinism as 'The belief in technology as a key governing force in society. ' to him, technological development determines social change, It changes the way people think and how they interact with others and can be described as a three-word logical proposition: "Technology determines history" McLuhan (1962) opines the belief that social progress is driven by technological innovation, which in turn follows an inevitable course. To Green (1987), this 'idea of progress' or 'doctrine of progress' is centralized around the idea that social problems can be solved by technological advancement, and this is the way that society moves forward. Technological determinists believe that one cannot stop progress, implying that we are unable to control technology. This suggests that we are somewhat powerless and society allows technology to drive social changes because, societies fail to be aware of the alternatives to the values embedded in technology.

Fisher (1992) defined Technological determinism as an approach that identifies technology, or technological advances, as the central causal element in processes of social change. As a technology is stabilized, its design tends to dictate users' behaviors, consequently diminishing human agency. This stance however ignores the social and cultural circumstances in which the technology was developed

Technological determinists often seem to be trying to account for almost everything in terms of technology: a perspective which we may call technocentrism. To such writers we are first and foremost Homo faber - tool-makers and tool-users. The American Benjamin Franklin apparently first coined the phrase that 'man is a tool-using animal'. Thomas Carlyle echoed this in 1841, adding that 'without tools he is nothing; with them he is all.'

Medawar (1980) argued that technological evolution has contributed more to our biological success than our biological evolution (ibid., p. 33). In other words, he too suggests that in developing technologies, we shape ourselves. Any perspective which puts technology first involves what has been called the 'doctrine of technological primacy' (W. E. Moore in Potter & Sarre 1974, p. 484).

White (1949) declares that:

We may view a cultural system as a series of three horizontal strata: the technological layer on the bottom, the philosophical on the top, the sociological stratum in between... The technological system is basic and primary. Social systems are functions of technologies; and philosophies express technological forces and reflect social systems. The technological factor is therefore the determinant of a cultural system as a whole. It determines the form of social systems, and technology and society together determine the content and orientation of philosophy.

Technological Determinism Relevance to Social Networking

Tyler (2013) explains that If one were to look back over the last decade and try to find some element that affected society as a whole from a technical standpoint, there would be a couple of possible contenders. The advancement of smart phone technology in such a short time is certainly impressive, for example. However, the impact of social media, while intertwined with the smart phone is something that made even more of an impression. Consider just how easy it is to see what is happening on the other side of the world, through the accounts of

real people rather than filtered news channels. Twitter and Facebook were huge parts of the Arab Spring, and they are important to help people keep in contact and updated during disasters.

Tyler (2013) insinuated that:

A decade ago, it was very difficult to find and connect with people that you once knew in high school or college, even with the power of the web. When you moved away, most people lost touch permanently. The social media sites, such as Facebook and Google+, are making it much easier for people to find one another and reconnect, even after decades of being apart. The sites are a great way to see what is happening in the lives of friends and family, and to meet new people who have similar interests and thoughts to yours.

The youth of the world is often the most ready to adapt to and learn to use new technologies, and they are certainly at the forefront of social media of all types. They have more technological know-how than many of older generations as well. Social media, therefore, is certainly having a rather large impact on their daily lives for good and for bad.

O’Keffe (2011) asserts that:

Those who spend too much time on social sites, or who take the abuses of online bullies seriously on the sites could have some issues. Engaging in various forms of social media is a routine activity that research has shown to benefit children and adolescents by enhancing communication, social connection, and even technical skills. Social media sites such as Facebook and MySpace offer multiple daily opportunities for connecting with friends, classmates, and people with shared interests. During the last 5 years, the number of preadolescents and adolescents using such sites has increased dramatically.

2.6.1.2 Critique

McLuhan has so much to say about various technologies and their intimate interplay with human and social senses, yet, he does not say anything about how various technologies are constructed. While McLuhan does not necessarily fit the profile of a technological

determinist, he appears to be supporting the view that the human society is helpless and must, or eventually ought to succumb to the technological forces: “The computer thus holds out the promise of technologically engendered state of universal understanding and unity, a state of absorption in the logos that could knit mankind into one family and create a perpetuity of collective harmony and peace” (McLuhan, 1969, p.72). The shortcoming of this argument is that McLuhan does not address the process of technological innovation, despite the fact that this very process of innovation provides the explanation of how various technologies come to be constructed via and through the complex process of interplay of various social, human, and non-human entities in our society.

The process of technological innovation is constantly in flux, including here various media and communication technologies. Therefore, the lack of the innovation and the social constructionism argument presents a shortcoming in McLuhan’s overall argument that the human society must succumb to technological forces. Media are not isolated entities that spur by and in themselves. Media technologies are invented, created, and deployed by man. Thus, there is a control factor that determines to a certain degree their use and their potential effect. Even if it can be assumed that the social forces and factors in the process of social constructionism of media technologies can totally imbed and manifest themselves through the technologies that they help create, it wouldn’t be the technology that is the instigator. Certainly, in McLuhan’s arguments this seems to be the case and this is precisely the underlying problem that I see with his argument: while media technologies can and do manifest certain socio-economic and political power structures, media technologies do not create those; media technologies merely mediate and/or reinforce the power of the social structures within which they are imbedded and utilized.

Next, how obvious is McLuhan's statement that “the medium is also the message”? The medium is independent of the content to the extent that the new technologies have tremendous impact in shaping the society by bringing new concepts of understanding of what it means to be 'here' and 'there', both spatially and in time; thus, it is more appropriate to say that 'the medium is also a message' in a sense that the nature of the medium by itself is informative about the broader understanding of the new technology and its place in the appropriate social structures.

However, the content comes to play a role once the technology somewhat establishes itself in the society (or the relevant structures), intertwined with the medium via which it is transmitted. Is there a fine line where it can be claimed that the content is independent from the medium? While the medium can be considered independent of the message/content, it is not as easy to consider the content independently of the medium within which it is exchanged. It appears that the content is shaped extensively by the medium for which it is intended.

The content communicated by the new technology—language, alphabet, print, TV, Internet—justifies its usability and at times it is the content that fuels new technological innovations. Thus, even if one is to agree with McLuhan that all technology is extension of our sensory and nervous systems, especially relevant to communications, the technology will be meaningless without the content and information it processes.

2.6.2. Uses and Gratification Theory

Uses and Gratification theory relevance to Social networking: The uses and gratifications (U&G) approach has a long standing history in communication research and mass

communication (Katz and Lazarsfeld 1955). At the core of the theory is the aim to understand how, why, and with what purpose people use media in their everyday lives. The theory has provided numerous insights into how television, the radio, and print resources (e.g., newspapers, magazines, and books) have been adopted by mass audiences.

While some scholars have dismissed the value of the U&G approach, Ruggiero (2000) has argued that “any attempt to speculate on the future direction of mass communication theory must seriously include the U&G approach” (p.3). With the large proliferation of social media—in particular among young people—the approach seems to regain interest among scholars, as it can provide valuable insights into (1) what social media are adopted, (2) the uses of social media, and (3) what motivates adoption of different sites and services. Also of great relevance is to investigate what factors of these social media sites and services keep users engaged and encourage them to devote large amounts of time and effort to writing themselves and their communities into digital space (Boyd and Heer 2006; Sundén 2003).

Understanding these research questions is not irrelevant as 64% of adults (Rainie, Lenhart, and Smith 2011) and 80% of youth use a social network site (SNS) (Lenhart et al. 2011). In the 12-17 age group, 40% of users log on to a SNS several times a day and 24% about once a day (Lenhart et al. 2011). Taking into account the widespread diffusion of social media and its ubiquity, it is important to grasp the role that these tools play in our society and what social, economic, and political impact they have on individuals, family ties, communities, and organization. One of the successful theoretical frameworks to examine questions of “how” and “why” individuals use media to satisfy particular needs has been the Uses and Gratifications (U&G) Theory. Herzog (1944) and McGuire (1974) suggested that the U&G theory has been quite successful in understanding consumers' motivations and behaviors in

the context of traditional media such as radio and TV (cited in Eighmey & McCord, 1998). Recent studies have applied the framework to new media (Flanagin, 2005; LaRose, Mastro, & Eastin, 2001; Leung, 2001).

The extensive distribution and growth of SNSs, has drawn the attention of researchers, leading to a wide range of studies focusing on uses and social implications of SNSs. In this regard, researchers are using the U&G theory to provide an explanation on what makes this new form of media to be so enticing, what motivated users to join in SNSs and the gratifications received from ongoing use. Applying the U&G theory to SNSs is of vital importance in today's mass communication research because this form of mass media is relatively new in relation to radio, television, and film (Gallion, 2010). A basic assumption of the U&G theory is that people are actively involved in media usage and interact highly with the communication media by building profile groupings of related uses and theoretically associated gratifications (Luo, 2002).

The theory describes why consumers use a particular medium and what functions the medium serves for them (Katerattanakul, 2002). Ruggiero (2000) claimed that the U&G theory has provided "a cutting edge approach in the initial stages of each new communication medium: newspaper, radio, television, and now the Internet" (p. 27). The theory was first developed in research on the effectiveness of the radio in the 1940s. Mainly, it focuses on the explanations for audience members' motivations and associated behaviors.

Nowadays, the appearance of computer-mediated communication has brought about the significance of uses and gratifications. With the widespread adoption of new media, such as virtual worlds and SNSs, important new research from the U&G perspective is emerging

(Ruggiero, 2000). Kaye and Johnson (2002) indicate that findings from the U&G television studies have already been applied in Internet research. Scholars' strengthened society understands of the U&G theory by making distinction between gratifications obtained and gratifications sought when they expanded the concept of gratifications (Kink & Hess, 2008). Gratifications obtained refer to those gratifications that audience members actually experience through the use of a particular medium.

By contrast, gratifications sought (also often referred to as "needs" or "motives") refer to those gratifications that audience members expect to obtain from a medium before they have actually come into contact with it. Research shows that gratifications obtained are a better predictor of media use than gratifications sought and that if a medium meets or exceeds the gratifications sought by a user, recurrent use will occur (Palmgreen & Rayburn, 1979). Researchers indicated that understanding the gap between these two types of gratifications is important for analyzing how different audience members use various kinds of media, the expectations that they bring to their media habits, and the gratifications they actually obtain from their exposure to a diverse array of media products.

When it comes to user behavior and motivation, the U&G theory has been the most common approach, explaining "why" certain media behavior occurs. Users are seen as goal-oriented, with rationales for their use (and non-use) of various media (Brandtzæg & Heim, 2009). Katz and other scholars believed that the U&G is grounded in the idea that users have certain reasons and motivations for selecting media and intentionally choose a certain message source that best fits their own personal needs. The theory suggests that users have numerous media options to choose from and suggests that the reasons and motivations for

selecting a specific media will vary from user to user (Katz, Blumer, & Gurevitch, 1974).

McQuail (1984) proposed:

the idea of “user taste” when examining the selection of media, which suggested that users choose the media based on personal preferences and motivations and that media are simply a means to achieve an end goal. In order to understand audiences’ motivations and behaviors, the U&G theory has been divided into two major parts. The first part, researchers have argued the factors that can predict motivations for media usage. Several researchers have addressed motivations for using media by applying demographic factors such as income, education, and psychological context

The Relevance of Uses and Gratification Theory on Social Networking

Uses and Gratifications theory is relevant to social media because of its origins in the communications literature. Social media is a communication mechanism that allows users to communicate with thousands, and perhaps billions, of individuals all over the world (Williams et al., 2012). The basic premise of Uses and Gratifications theory is that individuals will seek out media among competitors that fulfills their needs and leads to ultimate gratifications (Lariscy et al., 2011). Studies have shown that gratifications received are good predictors of media use and recurring media use (Kaye and Johnson, 2002; Palmgreen and Rayburn, 1979). Uses and Gratifications theory has also been used extensively within the study of politics and the dissemination of political messages (Blumler and McQuail, 1969; McLeod and Becker, 1974). While widely used in other disciplines, Uses and Gratifications theory can also be relevant in helping to explain social media uses.

SNSs are a form of virtual community, with sites such as Bebo, Facebook and MySpace attracting millions of users worldwide, many of whom have integrated the uses of these sites into their daily routines. These sites are based on the premise of relationship creation and maintenance, either with existing members of a social circle or connecting people with

similar or shared interests (Boyd and Ellison, 2008). Finin et al.(2005,p. 419) define a social network as an “explicit representation of the relationship between individuals and groups in the community”. Elsewhere, Raacke and Bonds-Raacke (2008) indicate that social networks provide a virtual platform where people of similar interests may gather to communicate, share and discuss ideas. From a marketing communications perspective, popular SNS such as Bebo and Facebook constitute brands in their own right and offer marketers access to substantial information about site members. Furthermore, SNS offer marketers the facility for engaging in two-way communication with members in terms of personalized messages and content. However, it is argued that an effective business model in terms of the commercial leveraging of SNS continues to elude marketers.

The social network profile is the focal point of one’s social networking existence. Each profile page is unique to the owner and allows its purveyor to literally “type oneself into being” (Sunden, 2003, p. 3). Each member is encouraged to upload his or her personal profile photograph and share a range of personal information such as where they go to school and details about their personal tastes, such as favourite movies and music (Boyd, 2007). As users have total control over the content that they choose to share and the applications they place on their pages, they can, and usually do, opt to portray themselves in the most positive light. In essence, this means that a user can aspire to an ideal-self through his/her SNS profile. Aside from the inclusion of personal details and photographs, there are two further main components of the social networking profile – friends and comments (Boyd, 2007). Profiles offer a facility for communication and interaction between members, usually in the form of a comments section.

Friends also play a fundamental role in the composition of SNSs. On joining a SNS, users are encouraged to identify others with whom they wish to form relationships.

Boyd (2007) asserts that:

Once the connection is made, the relationship will be visually represented on each user's profile page, under the friends section, within which there is a facility to nominate one's top or best 8, 12, 16 or 20 friends, to be listed as such on the user's main profile page (Boyd, 2007). The practice of selecting and displaying one's top friends is referred to by Boyd and Ellison (2008, p. 213) as "public displays of connection" and is often used to provide a real statement about who the person is and the company they keep (Tong et al., 2008; Liu, 2008; Boyd, 2007).

Research to date in this area has focused overwhelmingly on one's profile page, primarily regarding how people portray themselves through their profile page and how they connect with friends and acquaintances via the network.

2.6.2.1 Critique

The U&G approach has made an important contribution to addressing questions about what choices individuals make about media use, historical changes in how individuals use media and what gratifications individuals seek and obtain from different media. Despite its unique contribution to the field of communication, Internet studies, and sociology, it is also important to realize the limitations of and challenges in employing the theory to the study of social media. These limitations and challenges need to be carefully considered in evaluating research in this area and before embarking on further research that relies on this theoretical lens. What complicates the study of the U&G of using social media are the constant changes that occur in how individuals use social media and integrate it into their everyday lives. This is directly linked to changes that occur in the types of social media available and what needs these fulfill. New social media sites and services are introduced at a rapid pace and existing

ones are frequently updated with additional features, new policies, and interfaces. Users tend to migrate to new social media sites and services and also tend to adopt several tools at the same time (Quan-Haase 2008; Hogan and Quan-Haase 2010). For instance, instant messaging was the preferred tool of choice between 1998 and 2004 (Quan-Haase 2007, 2008). With the introduction of Facebook, the use of instant messaging dropped and the service was largely re-integrated into Facebook and Skype. Since 2006, Twitter has taken off, with many people owning both a Twitter and Facebook account.

Another important consideration when examining research in the area of U&G is its sole reliance on self-reported data. To examine the uses of social media, participants are usually asked to report what media they employ, how often they use these media, and what role it plays in their everyday life. It is, however, difficult to assess the accuracy of these reports as few studies validate the findings using behavioral or observational measures. This is a clear limitation as reliance on behavioral or observational data is more precise than reliance on self-reports. This limitation is less applicable to the study of gratifications than it is to the study of the use of social media because gratifications are, to a large extent, “perceived” by the user.

A third area of criticism is with respect to the population under investigation. Consistently, the study of U&G of using social media employs undergraduate students as its population. This creates problems of generalization, as this population tends to be between 17-24 years of age, more educated, and from families with higher socioeconomic status. In addition, Quan-Haase (2007) argued that university students are a unique population to study social media because of five factors. First, university students can be considered digital natives (Palfrey and Gasser 2008; Prensky 2001) because “they are less aware of a pre-Internet

world as they are of one in which the Net is central to their communication” (Jones and Madden 2002, p.6). Second, university students use the Internet frequently in comparison to the average Internet user (Jones and Madden 2002). Third, university students engage in a diverse set of activities online: they email, IM, surf the Web, play online games, and participate in e-commerce. Not only do they engage in a wider range of activities, but they perform any one of these online activities more frequently than the general population (Jones and Madden 2002).

Fourth, university students have also been described as heavy users of social media (Quan-Haase and Young, 2010). Fifth, university students have variable schedules with considerable periods of unstructured time providing them with greater flexibility to be socially accessible to peers and family than high-school students and people in the workforce (Baron, Squires, Tench, and Thompson 2005; Quan-Haase and Collins 2008). All these factors together influence both how social media are used, but also the kinds of gratifications sought and obtained. As a result it is difficult to generalize from university students to the general population, who may use social media less and may also use it for obtaining different kinds gratifications.

Beyond the Social Networking: Economic and Cultural impact on HIV Vulnerability

Factors contributing to the vulnerabilities of Nigerian youth to HIV/AIDS and other SRH related problems are early age at sexual initiation, early age at first birth, multiple and concurrent partnerships, intergenerational sex, low risk perception, and limited comprehensive knowledge about HIV/STIs and reproductive health. Besides the social networking, other factors linked to increased Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH)

morbidity are socioeconomic factors such as exposure to sexual coercion, gender inequity, poverty, substance abuse and cultural/religious factors like child marriage and female genital mutilation that exacerbate the vulnerability of youth, specifically young girls and women.

Poverty

The 2008 NDHS reveals that unemployment rises with age with the proportions of respondents who have been unemployed in the past year highest in those aged 15-24. For women, almost three quarters (71.6%) of 15-19 year olds and half (48.3%) of 20-24 year olds reported being unemployed in the 12 months preceding the survey. For men, 51.6% of 15-19 year olds and 31.6% of 20 -24 year olds reported unemployment in the past year.

Economic deprivation, particularly of females, can lead youth to engage in activities like transactional and commercial sex that undermines their ability to negotiate and adopt safer sex practices for fear of losing the economic benefits from such activities or relationships. According to the 2007 NARHS, 6.9% of females aged 15- 19 and 6.1% of females aged 20-24 had ever engaged in transactional sex. The HIV prevalence among young women who reported having engaged in transactional sex was higher than their counterparts who did not (3.2% vs 2.1% for age 15-19 and 10.4% to 4.5 percent for ages 20-24).

Mberu & White's secondary data analysis of the 2008 NDHS focusing on never married youth aged 15-24 found an association between household wealth and premarital sexual initiation (2011). Additionally, the propensity for sexual debut decreased with wealth with young people from richer backgrounds the least likely to initiate premarital intercourse.

Oyefara's 2007 study of brothel based commercial sex workers in Lagos (mean age 23.8) revealed that:

35% of the respondents joined the sex industry because of poverty and food insecurity. These same factors also hindered consistent condom use and the practice of safe sex. Adolescents participating in FGDs conducted by Owolabi et al suggested monetary gain as a contributing factor to the prevalent adolescent sexuality activity in their community.

Poverty can also induce youth especially females to engage in intergenerational sex which is often interwoven with transactional sex further increasing their SRH vulnerabilities. In the situation of female youths, economic pressures, inequitable gender norms and the increased likelihood of exposure to HIV/STIs (their older partners are more likely to have been exposed to these infections as they are more sexually experienced) is a potent mixture for increased SRH vulnerability. In the 2008 NDHS, 11% of women aged 15-19 who engaged in higher-risk sexual intercourse (with a non-marital, non-cohabitating partner) in the 12 months preceding the survey, endorsed having had higher risk sexual intercourse with a man ten or more years older than them. In a survey by Odu et al, 39.3% of tertiary institution students revealed having had significantly older (“sugar daddy/mummy”) sexual partners and over three-quarters (77.4%) of those respondents expected some financial or material rewards from those relationships (2008).

Gender Inequality

Beyond the economic and biological realities, the increased vulnerability of girls and young women to HIV/AIDS also stems from the patriarchal social constructs of female and male sexuality that create the steep inequalities often found in heterosexual relationships in Nigeria (Aniekwu 2002).

Okonofua (2011) highlights that:

Cultural expectations of the virginal, faithful and submissive woman and the sexually virile, aggressive and dominant man limits the ability of girls and women to seek SRH information/services, fend off or avoid sexual coercion, articulate their

sexual needs and desires, negotiate safer sex and demand mutual fidelity from their male partners while on the other hand contributes to men/boys' indulgence in high risk sexual behaviours such as multiple sexual partnerships, sexual violence and substance abuse.

Gender based cultural practices such as child marriage, FGM, wife hospitality and widow inheritance also place women at increased risk of HIV/STI infection and reproductive health morbidity. As discussed previously, forced sex is another vulnerability of female youths that stems from gender inequity in socio-cultural norms.

Ahonsi (2013) affirms few well-defined dimensions and manifestations of this phenomenon for which there are substantial bodies of supportive empirical data are particularly noteworthy:

- a) A high social tolerance for and frequent resort to non-consensual sex (including rape) with girls by older men in communities, educational institutions, work settings and so on (Orubuloye, et al, 1992; Omoregie, et al, 2003; Ajuwon et al, 2001; Ajuwon, 2007). Indeed, for the majority of girls in Nigeria, as in much of Africa, sexual debut is often unplanned and unwanted (Luke & Kurz, 2002).
- b) Frequent resort to and a generalised expectation of extra-marital sex by married men including exchange of money or material goods for such sex (Smith, 2007; Isiugo-Abanihe, 2003; Ladipo et al, 2001; Ankomah et al, 2004). In fact, a prominent feature of the social landscape of Nigeria's towns and cities is formal and informal or disguised commercial sex on offer by female youth to a large population of generally older men.
- c) High levels of formal and informal polygamy (NPC, 2009; Smith 2007; WaKaranja, 1987).

- d) The social construction of sexual virility, sexual dominance and broad experience as part and parcel of masculinity right from adolescence in contrast to passivity and acquiescence as defining features of femininity (Fatusi and Wang, 2009; IWHC, 2003; SSRHRN, 1999; CLP, 1997; Isugo-Abanihe 2003; Izugbara and Nwabuawele, 2007).
- e) Poor child-parent/guardian/teacher communication and a culture of silence around youth sexuality with heavy reliance by youth for sexuality information and counsel on often unreliable sources like their peers and the mass media (Esiet and Whitaker, 2002; AHI, 2010; Huaynoca et al, 2013). Indeed, data from the 2008 NDHS shows that only half of Nigerian men and one-third of Nigerian women agree that adolescents aged 12-14 years should be taught about condom use for HIV prevention (NPC and ICF Macro, 2009).

It seems pretty clear then that underpinning and sustaining the momentum of Nigeria's HIV epidemic is gender and intergenerational inequalities. Put simply, it is a case of older, better resourced men (with much longer and more disease-filled sexual histories) preying upon or enticing less resourced and often less educated girls as well as willing but economically desperate young women who demand money or goods in exchange for largely unsafe sex. The HIV transmitting network is then completed with sexually restless young men eager to express their masculinity entering into also often unprotected sexual relations with typically more sexually experienced girls, and women desirous of becoming or staying married (as an expression of their femininity) remaining sexually active with philandering male partners.

. In addition, the persistent gender gap in condom use may be associated with prevailing gender norms that prescribe female sexual passivity, hindering young women's access to

essential SRH information and limiting their sexual negotiating power. Thus, the low condom use rate among Nigerian youth should be a central preoccupation of the national response to HIV given the high levels of high-risk sexual behavior. Increased condom messaging and distribution, and the inclusion of condom use, sexual negotiation skills, and gender awareness in youth sexuality education and HIV prevention programs, are clearly an imperative.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This section discusses the methods and procedures that were adopted in carrying out the study. This study investigated how social networking increases the vulnerability of young people in Nigeria. Mixed method was used in gathering information from the field (questionnaire, Focus group discussion and In-depth interview) Specific objectives were achieved using a mixed-method cross-sectional study design. Elements of qualitative and quantitative design are combined for revealing the empirical data which will be interpreted to draw conclusions. Mixed method data collection techniques are useful in that they afford the opportunity to use multiple sources of information to verify and gain insight into the social world. The ability to interpret findings can be increased in a mixed method design as the merits of one method are used to strengthen the weakness of the other method. Mixed method designs are essential in providing interrogated results (Meermaind 1998).

In this study, we anticipate the mix method will yield comprehensive empirical evidence for the set objectives for this research. The quantitative data should provide unbiased, objective empirical data which will be supported by a qualitative analysis of the usage online.

Although there are many social networking sites availability at the disposals of the young people in Nigeria, the focus of this study was based on users of 'Badoo.com', 'WhatsApp', '2go' and 'Blackberry messenger'.

3.1 Data Gathering Process

Data was collected using both primary and secondary sources;

3.1.1 Primary Data Sources

The primary data sources were questionnaire administration, Focus group discussion (FGD) and Key In-depth Interview (KII).

3.1.2 Qualitative and Quantitative Methodological Approach:

A methodology is a strategy, which researchers follow in order to gain knowledge of study phenomena, and it usually broadly consists of the quantitative and qualitative approaches McNabb (2004).

Quantitative research has to do with numbers, figures being quantified in terms of statistical analysis. It is usually driven by the researcher's concerns. It deals with measurable and quantifiable aspects of the phenomena under study and it focuses on the questions to what extent? By how much? What relationships exist between factors? What causes particular processes or situations? Silverman and Marivasti (2008). It is also an inquiry into an identified problem, based on testing a theory composed of variables, measured with numbers, and analyzed using statistical techniques; the goal is to determine whether the predictive generalizations of a theory hold true. Creswell (1994).

Qualitative research focuses on investigating the behavior, motivations, desires, attitudes, beliefs, choices and opinions of persons or group of persons. It seeks to understand the phenomena from 'why' and 'how' perspectives, in order to describe and characterize the phenomenon. Silverman and Marvasti (2008). It could also be described as a set of non-

statistical inquiry techniques and processes used to gather the data about social phenomenon. Qualitative data refers to some collection of words, symbols, pictures, or other non-numerical records, materials, or artifacts that are collected by a researcher and is data that has relevance to the social group under study. The uses for these data go beyond simple description of events and phenomena; rather, they are used for creating understanding, for subjective interpretation, and for critical analysis as well. McNabb (2004).

Qualitative research methodology was used in investigating the phenomena under study which will constitute the students of the Faculty of engineering students of Nassarawa State University Keffi and university of Abuja. It is important to the project topic being researched on because it seeks to understand the effect of social networking on HIV associated risk of students in the Faculty of Engineering on the two institutions based on the opinions, attitudes gotten from social networking use by students and from participant observations of such behaviours in drawing inferences for the study.

Quantitative method was used because it is important to know the number and percentages of the sample population disaggregated by sex and level that are social networking active users. The divide between the qualitative and quantitative research can be stated in terms of their contextuality, that is, the degree to which they attempt to understand human behavior in the social, cultural, economic and political environment of a locality. There are instances whereby qualitative research involves quantification, that is, non-numeric data which is collected by qualitative method and thus categorized and characterized in numeric fashion and analyzed quantitatively. Also, qualitative research may need some quantitative investigation to bridge some gaps in the qualitative method. Silverman and Marvasti (2008).

Therefore, this research used qualitative and quantitative methods for the two are needed to address the research topic in accordance with the research objectives. According to Silverman and Marvasti (2008:147), “there is no right or wrong methods. There are only methods that are appropriate to your research topic and model with which you are working”.

Secondly, the study used the two methods because of their determinant, flexible and iterative nature that will assist in the collection of data on the phenomenon under study. These methods enable the collation of the extent of digital media penetration and in depth analysis of the behavior, motivations, desires, attitudes, beliefs, choices and opinions of the subject which are the students being studied. They answered the questions ‘what’, ‘when’ ‘how’ and ‘why’ so as to describe and characterize the individual(s) being studied.

Furthermore, the research integrated multiple methods whereby the quantitative implored the use of survey encompassing the questionnaire and the in-depth interview in data collection while the qualitative utilizing explanatory responses to some of the questions provided answers to the ‘why’, the participant observation helped in collecting detailed information about the social networking and the HIV-associated risk behaviour among students of the two institutions.

Hence, the key questions that these tools generated are:

1. What are young people’s preferred medium for socialization?
2. How do they exchange photos and videos (sexting) with their virtual friends/partners?
3. How do they source/negotiate for sexual partners?
4. Have they ever had sex with a social networking peer and what led to that?

5. How many of students' social networking (sexting) partners were met in the physical space.
6. How many hours do students spend on social networking daily?
7. Do students get HIV information through the social networking sites compared to other media forms?
8. In what ways can social networking be utilized for health promotion that is youth-friendly?
9. Are social networking sites (Facebook, 2go, WhatsApp, Badoo) are addictive and distractive?
10. Has the social networking helped in improving young people's basic knowledge about HIV/AIDS?

3.2 Justification of the Study Instruments

Questionnaire

The rationales behind the use of questionnaire for this study were:

- Our sample size for this study (539) were contacted at a relatively low cost
- Information would be collected in a standardized format.
- They are simple to administer, quicker for the respondents to complete and easy to analyze
- Issues of sexual health are very sensitive topics that student may feel uncomfortable speaking to an interview

Focus Group Discussions (FGD):

The main advantages of focus groups in this study are:

- They were used to obtain detailed information about personal and group feelings, HIV-perceptions and student-opinions on social networking
- Unlike the questionnaires, they provided a broader range of information and offer the opportunity to seek clarification
- They provide useful material eg quotes for public relations publication and presentations

In-depth Interview (IDI):

The reasons for using In-depth interview in this study were:

- They are useful to obtain detailed information about personal feelings, perceptions and opinions
- They allow more detailed questions to be asked and usually achieve a high response rate
- Ambiguities can be clarified and incomplete answers followed up
- Precise wording can be tailored to respondent and precise meaning of questions clarified
- Interviewees are not influenced by others in the group
- Some interviewees may be less self-conscious in a one-to-one situation.

3.3 Secondary Data Source

Studies conducted by others on similar subjects will be used; also books, journals, articles that cover the scope of our study will be consulted. The scope of this study is the active social networkers in the selected Universities belonging to either of Blackberry messenger, Badoo, 2go and WhatsApp. These social networking platforms were selected because they are the popular platforms among students of Nigerian Universities.

3.4 Sampling and Techniques

The concept of sampling were utilized in this study and the probability sampling technique comprising of simple random and stratified random sampling method will be used in taking sample from the subset of the population to represent the entire population of students in the in the two institutions.

For clarification purposes, sampling is the selection of a number of study units from a predefined study population. The simple random sampling technique ensures that every unit in the study population has a known and equal chance of being included in the sample while stratified random sampling means dividing the study population into mutually exclusive subpopulations called strata and drawing a sample in a random manner Eboh (2009:67-78). The methods and how they were used in the study is thus explained below.

The unit of sampling for this study is students from the Faculty of Natural Science and Engineering of Nassarawa State University and University of Abuja respectively and the units were the study population from which the sample were drawn from the two departments in the Faculty of Engineering which are Electrical/electronic Engineering and computer Engineering and Department of Computer Science and Industrial Physics of

Nasarawa State University. The entire population of registered students in the Faculty of Engineering for the study period is three thousand eight hundred and fifteen (3,815 :2594 from Nassarawa state University,1221 from University of Abuja) Out of this, the sample size for the study was determined. The sample size was drawn from the two departments with an equal representation between male and female. This helped draw the study's conclusions on the entire population about the topic being researched about.

According to Yamane (1967), sample size was determined by the following formula:

$$n=N$$

$$1+N (e)^2$$

Where:

N=Total Population

E=error or level of precision =5% or 0,05

n=Sample size

$$N= 3,815$$

$$1+ (3,815 \times 0.05 \times 0.05)$$

$$= 3815$$

6.7725

$$n = 563.30775$$

$$n=563$$

Creating room for inaccurate filling of questionnaire and drop outs (5%):

$$5 \times 563 = 2815$$

$$100 - 100 = 0$$

$$563 + 28 = 591$$

Sample Size for 3815 students = 591

The 591 distributed among the two departments of the two institutions making 148 respondents per department. The 148 was further disaggregated into male –female at 37 females, 111 males because they have more male students (in the ratio of 3:1)

The stratified random sampling technique helped bridge any gap left in the simple random sampling technique. Data collection was done through questionnaires administration, Focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with students who are my primary target and also healthcare providers who helped provide insight to observable traits HIV-associated risk behaviour among young people. Secondary data will be generated through Internet sourcing, library sourcing of materials, etc. Thus, the research used survey against the backdrop of the close and open questionnaire format, unstructured interview and the participant-as-observer role in carrying out the research.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter starts with the socio-demographical analysis of the respondents, their social networking-use behavior, and their associated risk behaviour. In order to simplify the discussions, the researcher provided tables and graphs where necessary to summarize the collective reactions of the respondents. This seminar is primarily concerned with the analysis and discussion of the results collected through the use of questionnaire, Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and In-depth Interviews (IDI). To recapitulate, the questionnaires were administered to the students who are active users of Social Networking sites; a total of 368 responses were received 300 of them were valid. Next to the questionnaire, FGD and IDI interviews were conducted.

4.1 The Study Locations: Faculty of Natural Science, Nassarawa State University and Faculty of Engineering, University of Abuja

Faculty of Natural Science, Nassarawa State University: was established in 2006 to produce graduates who are knowledgeable in nature's dynamism, emerging trends in science and also equip them to contribute towards national science and technology development. In 2013/2014 academic sessions the faculty has over two thousand undergraduate students from the departments of: Biochemistry and Molecular Biological science, Mathematics, Computer Science, Chemistry, Physics, Geology and Mining. The main campus is situated at Keffi-which is about 45 km away from Nigeria's capital, Abuja.

4.1.1 Faculty of Engineering, University of Abuja

The Senate of the University of Abuja at the 92nd regular meeting held on the 27th October 2004 approved the establishment of the new Faculty of Engineering with effect from 2005/2006 session. The programmes were established to produce qualified and competent engineers who will be able to face challenges concomitant with the aspiration of the country to be technologically developed. The approved academic programmes in the Faculty of Engineering for award of B.Eng. Degree are: Agricultural Engineering, Chemical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Electrical/Electronic Engineering, Computer Engineering and Mechanical Engineering (www.uniabuja.edu.ng)

Thus, the study locations of the work were basically limited to just the faculty of engineering and Natural Science students of the two institutions and as such inferences will be drawn from the 2013/14 session of the academic calendar of undergraduate students. The reason for this choice is to provide an intensive and close study of small unit that can be studied in-depth and for a more nuanced analysis which will be impossible with large study populations. Other factors considered in choosing the two institutions were the engineering students are more likely to be involved in electronic appliances in the course of their study. Most importantly, the HIV prevalence rate in Federal Capital Tertiary (FCT) and Nassarawa state which is placed at 8.6% and 7.5% respectively; alarming figures when compared with the national prevalence of 3.4% (National Reproductive Health Survey, NARHS 2012); since the students largely constitute young adult populations in these two States, it is appropriate to conduct the study in the two institutions.

The first section will discuss the findings of the questionnaires. The findings are displayed accordingly and are correlated where found necessary. Tables and diagrams have been used to facilitate the descriptive analysis of the findings from the field. The second section will discuss the findings retrieved from the FGD and IDI. The responses of the experts will be examined and compared to the literature review and the findings of the primary research.

4.2 Questionnaire

This section presents the findings from the questionnaire. A total of 300 respondents; consisting of undergraduate students of faculty of Natural Science in Nassarawa State University, Keffi and faculty of Engineering in University of Abuja. The questionnaire results are presented in the following sub-sections:

- A. Characteristics of respondents
- B. Factors that determine the young people's usage of Social networking sites
- C. Link between social networking and HIV/STI-risk behaviour
- D. communication approaches to HIV prevention intervention

The data from the two study locations were merged into one since the two study location are 60km apart and there was no significant differences identified during the data analysis for this research work.

4.2.1 Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1: Socio-demographical information of the Natural Science students of Nassarawa State University and University of Abuja

Characteristics	Male (%)	Female (%)	General (%)
Sex	62	38	100
Age			
16-20	15	18	33
21-25	32	21	53
26-30	7	3	10
31-35	3	1	4
Marital Status			
Single	63	51	57
Engaged	16	34	25
Married	15	12	13.5
Separated	6	3	4.5
Level in the University			
100	9	5	14
200	11	8	19
300	21	12	33
400	7	4	11
500	10	6	16
Post-graduate	4	2	6
Location during Holiday			
Rural	14	8	22
Semi-urban	17	12	29
Urban	31	18	49

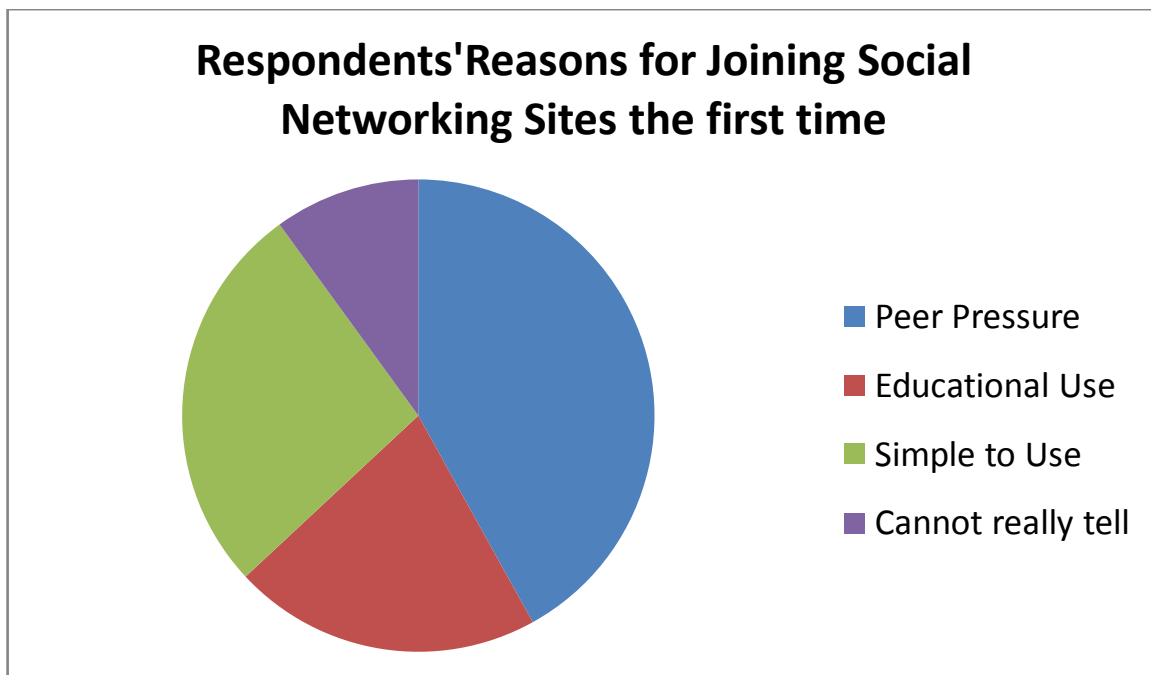
Source: Field Survey 2014: University of Abuja and Nassarawa State University.

Sex: the male respondents in the faculty of engineering in the two institutions are almost twice higher than the female respondents. This goes to show that the field of engineering and Natural Science in Nigerian Universities are male-dominated sector with the male population at 62% and female respondents at 38%

Age: the percentage of respondents below the age of 25 is 86%. With half of the total population within the ages of 21-25; this shows that a significant percent of our respondents are at the peak of their active sexual age.

Most of them are single; while 36% of the females are engaged. One-third of them are in their 300Level and almost half of the study participants reside in the urban areas where general system of mobile communication (GSM) is accessible.

Chart 1 showing factors that determine young people’s usage of social networking sites



Source: Field Survey 2014: University of Abuja and Nassarawa State University

Peer pressure was the major factor responsible for students signing up for social networking sites accounts. Other reasons indicated by the study participants include the use of social networking for educational purpose.

Table 3 Frequency table showing the most preferred device used in accessing the Social networking sites for a summary description

Devices:	Android-enabled Phones/Tablets	I-phones (IOS)	BLACKBERRY	Laptops and Desktops	Others
Frequency (%)	41%	5%	34%	17%	3%

The findings show that university of Abuja and Nassarawa State University students prefer the portable handheld devices to laptops and desktops. These devices are preferred because of their battery-life and they are multi-functional (as camera, game accessories, storage devices etc) when compared with laptops and desktops. Moreover android-enabled phones are more affordable to acquire and their adaptability to emerging technological trends makes them more youth-friendly than others.

Table 4 Percentage distribution of the most preferred social networking sites by young people for chatting

SNS	Facebook	What Asap	Badoo	2go	Blackberry messenger	Twitter	Others
Frequency	14%	38%	7%	12%	23%	3%	3%

Facebook may be the most popular social networking sites in the world, but not among young adults. WhatsApp and Blackberry are the most popular platforms. Although almost all the study participants reported having a Facebook account, they are passive members compared to how they utilize the WhatsApp, Blackberry and their reasons for choosing these social networking sites were because they are: youth-friendly and used for social

satisfaction and for seeking new peers. Almost all the respondents spend an average of two hours or more on the social networking sites daily

4.3 The HIV/STI Associated Risk Behaviour in Social Networking

Social networking triggers the urge to engage in sexual activity based on the pornographic images exchanged via the platforms or through the chat. There are changes in the way young adult seek sexual partners because in chatting and pinging, they have found a new way of communicating their sexual needs faster which brings about sexual and reproductive health misinformation.

Table 5 Showing: Ever felt like having sex after having Social Networking Sites (SNS) chat:

Gender	Yes (%)	No (%)	Cannot disclose (%)
Male	45	38	7
Female	13	71	16

Social networking is usually utilized to start up the difficult sex discussions. In some cases, erotic pictures or videos; not words are employed to stimulate the chat partner. There are over a million pornographic images on the internet which are uncensored and are exposed to people so as long as they can afford the recharge card to buy the data bundle to download and share these images.

Percentage distribution showing: Ever met with a chat friend from the Social networking Sites for the very first time:

Gender	Yes	No	Can not disclose
Male	67%	23%	10%
Female	8%	76%	14%

Source: Field Survey 2014: University of Abuja and Nassarawa State University

Among the male respondents, 67% admitted that they ever met a social networking site friend in the physical for the first time compared to the 8% of the females who said the contrary.

Most of the Young adults gain admission into the university before they are eighteen. This marks the beginning of their freedom from the protective hands of their parents and guardians. Once in the universities, they get influenced by their peers and their media environment.

Table 7 showing age at sexual experience:

Gender	Below age 18 (%)	Above age 18 (%)	Never (%)
Male	56	39	5
Female	9	26	65

Source: Field Survey 2014: University of Abuja and Nassarawa State University

The above table also shows that the male respondents are more likely to have their first sexual experience before their eighteenth birthday or being more open to talk about their sexual experience than their female counterparts. The evidence is indisputable that high

proportions of female and male youth in Nigeria are sexually active at a younger age in largely unsafe ways.

Table 8 showing Preferred Network for seeking sexual partners:

SNS	Facebook	What Asap	Badoo	2go	Blackberry messenger	Twitter	Others
Frequency	10%	12%	35%	27%	13%	0%	3%

Source: Field survey: University of Abuja and Nassarawa State University

The respondents were asked the network they found most comfortable and reliable if they would like to seek potential sex partners. Over one third of the study participants reported Badoo, followed by 2go and Blackberry messenger. From the study, it clearly shows that Badoo and 2go are more preferable to Facebook when it comes to seeking online date.

Table 9 showing frequency of condom usage among the study respondents

condom usage	Frequency
Always	12%
Sometimes	77%
Never	11%

Source: Field survey 2014: University of Abuja and Nassarawa State University

Inconsistent use of condom was reported among the male study population despite all the condom campaigns in Nigeria. A combined percentage of 88% (77% sometimes, 11% never) practicing inconsistency in condom usage which is a key indicator to susceptible HIV risk behaviour.

4.4 Qualitative Analysis and Discussions

This discussions would be under the following themes; the factors that motivate students to join the social networking sites, associated risk behaviour and HIV knowledge and information.

4.4.1 The Factors that motivate Students to sign up for Social networking Sites:

Of great relevance is to investigate what factors keep users engaged and encouraged them to devote large amounts of time and effort to writing themselves and their communities into digital space This can be seen from extract of the Focus Group Discussion(FGD) and In-depth Interview (IDI) on The main reason for joining the Social Networking site(SNS).

When we arrived here in university of Abuja, we found out that everyone in my hostel prefers to chat in the evening after classes. Even in the class, when the lecture is boring, you will notice some of my course mates are busy with their phones chatting, so I had to join and buy a Nokia smart phone and then open a Facebook and 2go account. (FGD, University of Abuja)

In the above extract, peer pressure and loneliness were the motivations behind the respondents' decision to join the social networking. The purpose was to be accepted by his peers within the school setting and also to avoid the boredom during lectures. The same goes for the respondent below. He feels alienated from his peers for not having a Badoo account. Young people are easily motivated by what is in vogue among their peers or someone they consider a role model.

I joined Badoo because my roommate kept bringing different babes (ladies) back to our room. He brags about it all the time. He changes ladies just like buying recharge cards. I became jealous, so I saved my pocket money to buy a blackberry phone, and then download the Badoo application. Now, I am losing counts of girls I have met on the net. For any correct guy in the campus who is not on Badoo or 2go... he is a slacker! (FGD, second year, Nassarawa State University)

As for me, Facebook is not ideal; Badoo, 2go and Blackberry messenger are the real deal. You can chat with someone on 2go without revealing your real name nor phone number. It's your personal decision to do so. Where as in Facebook, your name, address, pictures, even relatives are part of your profile (R1 FGD1)

From the extracts above; these evidences lend credence to the degree of shared knowledge among young people. It shows that young people are usually motivated by peer pressure and the dominant culture. Internet Vis a Vis Social networking is becoming the medium of socialization for young people in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. This goes to show what motivates young people to joining the Social networking Sites.

4.4.2 Students experience more freedom in school than at home:

In school, because I stay off campus, I live alone and my girl feels comfortable coming over to spend the whole weekend. Whenever I am back at home, I can't try that rubbish because my parents do give me close-marking. Besides, my father is an elder in the church. So at home I pretend to be a saint. (FGD3, Nassarawa State University)

In school, I feel like a bird, I can stay outside with my girl for as long as I like. In my father's house, the rule is seven o'clock. I have only had sex once when I was on holiday because my parents travelled to the village and my younger ones went to school. Here in school, it has been more than twenty times. (IDI 8)

4.4.3 Parenting in the twenty-first century goes beyond the physical platforms:

Poor child-parent/guardian/teacher communication and a culture of silence around youth sexuality also have to be blamed. Youths rely heavily on unreliable sources like their peers and the social media for sexuality information and counsel and these in returns are HIV associated risk behaviours due to misinformation. (Esiet and Whitaker, 2002; AHI, 2010; Huaynoca et al, 2013).

Not at all, there was this day I was sitting with my mom in the church and I was busy browsing and chatting on Badoo... and screaming Hallelujah/Amen at the same time. my mom thought I was there with her; physically yes!, emotionally; elsewhere!

When I am on holiday, with my phone I can never be bored. My parents are very strict and would never allow most of my friends to visit our house. Even when they come around, they are not usually comfortable; so we prefer to keep in touch via blackberry messenger, Facebook chat and WhatsApp.

My phone is always locked. Not just because of my parents; but for my other intruders. If they get to see what's on my gallery, that's suicidal. It's my phone and not anyone's else business.

If my dad gets to see the sites I belong to and what I do online, he will disown me. He doesn't know what's in it and will never get to know. I have my way of keeping it away from him and he is so laid-back when it comes to the smartphone applications partners.

4.5 Social Networking-associated Risk Behaviour

4.5.1 Age at first sexual experience:

The Comprehensive Response Plan for HIV/AIDS in Nigeria which identifies high risk youth as women aged 20-24 years and males aged 24-29 years and this needs to be updated to better respond to the unambiguous evidence that median age of sexual debut and of first engagement in high-risk sex is less than 18 years for both males and females. Moreover, since majority of young people in Nigeria tend to acquire during their adolescent years the attitudes, beliefs and habits that subsequently make them susceptible to HIV infection, it makes more programming sense to target interventions at ages 15-19 and even earlier. Interviews with the students in the both institutions reveal that young people's first sexual experiences are below the national plan:

I had my first sexual intercourse when I was sixteen; it was when I was waiting for my JAMB and WAEC result. She was also someone of my age. We met on 2go. My parent had gone to work so we had earlier arranged the visit the day before via chatting. She came over; I was alone in the house. She was much more sexually experienced than me. So we had fun. (R9 IDI3)

My very first time was with one bad girl from neighborhood. We exchanged Blackberry Messenger (BBM) contact. I was feeling cool and I did not want to show

her that I am a JJC (novice) so I played along. We exchanged pictures, she asked me to send her my “birthday” picture (nude) so she can evaluate If I am endowed. When she saw it, she sent her own... and I noticed from our chat she cannot wait to have it. In the evening on the same day, we met at an uncompleted building as we had agreed and we had sex, condom was not used and I was just seventeen plus. (IDI2)

The most obvious inferences to draw from these extracts are that most young Nigerians become sexually active in their teen; in the quotations above, their first sexual contacts were at younger ages than anticipated and the social networking played a big role in aiding their first sexual experience to occur. The discussions around sex which young people may not be comfortable to explore in the physical hotspots are made easier by chatting within the virtual hotspots.

4.5.2 Multiple sex partnering:

Social networking has created enabling environment for people to socialize at the comfort of their homes. Most students who are introverts utilize the virtual networks to express their innate feelings. What would not have been said in physical hotspot meetings could be possible on the social networks. Students use the social networks to seek for people of mutual interest. It also provides room for a student to engage as much as he desires potential sex partners simultaneously. Social networking sites have made it possible for students to have multiple casual sex partners within and outside the university environment. Social networking provides them with enabling environment to explore lewd intentions without strings:

My brother I have been here for three years. So you fit count me as an old horse in this campus. The easiest fishes to catch are the “October-rush” (fresh students). I consider myself a player. I hardly stay with one girl for more than three months. The girls in this school are too demanding, they see you as their ATM machine... once they start these their nasty demand, I back out. Let’s just say about 7 of them so far. (*IDI with third year student of Engineering: University of Abuja*)

In my first year, I put all my trust in one lady. I was willing to catch a grenade for her, only for me to discover that she has other lovers in Abuja town. When I confronted her, she dumped me because she feels that I can only satisfy her in bed but cannot replicate the same effort financially. Ever since then, I stopped trusting women. They are all the same. Solder go, soldier come! I have thrown all cautions to the wind. I have sex when I want. I just have to pick from my fleet of ladies. They are always a call, text or ping away from me. (*IDI 2: Second year student, University of Abuja*)

In the two quotations above, another issue that came up strongly was sex for financial benefit versus trust. The two respondents claimed to have been compelled into multiple sex partnering because as students they could not live up to financial demands of their girlfriends. They ended up losing them to big men in the city of Abuja, thus they never trust their girlfriends to be faithful to them. Moreover, the male respondents who fall within the ages of 20-24 are at the peak of their sexual activeness, their primary usage of the social networking is to fulfil sexual gratification. Campus-life provides them with the liberty to explore their sexual desires while social networking facilitates the easy access to sexual partners. Social networking may make it easier for students to open up on their sexual needs via chatting and sexting without any strings attached. This can be seen with the respondents' statements based on their activities with their online chat friend in the physical space. The quotations below suggest that students are comfortable to explore their sexual desires on social networking platforms than in the physical space:

Yes, about 3 of them in the last one year. The two of them were here in Keffi, while the other one was a girl I have sexting with. She lives in Lagos. During our departmental field trip to Lagos, we eventually met and we hit it off right away. She rarely picks my call since then. (*IDI 12, 2014: Nassarawa State University*)

I met this gentle guy online via Facebook. We kept chatting and I was all over him. He stays at Port Harcourt. Some day he came to Abuja for a workshop and asked me to come over to his hotel. I spent the night with him. One thing leading to the other and we had sex. It was in the morning I went through his phone and I discovered he is married with two kids... he never mentioned this all through our

eight-month relationship on Facebook and that was the end of our relationship (IDI 10, 2014: University of Abuja)

Thank God for those who invented chat rooms. If not for them, “conji for don kill me” (sexually starved). Sometimes, I go there to chat dirty and then help myself and jerk off. Sometimes I download mojo (porn videos) and quench the feeling. I do this like every other night before I go to sleep. (IDI 4,2014: University of Abuja)

Moreover, with social networking providing students a large pool of potential sexual partners, there are significant numbers of the respondents who are engaging in sexual intercourse for money or other benefits. The paying partner in the transactional sex; whom they mostly meet via the social networking chat rooms usually determines condom use depending on his desires and purchasing power (Ifekandu 2013). Studies in Nigeria (Mode of Transmission Study 2010, IBSS 2010) indicate that students in Nigeria’s tertiary institutions form a large crop of non-brothel Sex workers in the major cities of Nigeria. HIV prevalence (IBSS 2010) among non-brothel based sex workers in Nigeria is at 27.4% (about ten times higher than the national prevalence).

Young people receive sexual advances on social networking more than in the physical space. In the physical space, Nigerian youth are shy when relating with the opposite sex, social networking offers them a safer space of expressing themselves without the face-to face contact and also offers them a better option of avoiding the shame of being turned down.

Several times, most especially those from my Facebook page, They keep disturbing me for sex. Some will go at any length by asking me to say my price. I keep telling them I am not a sex worker yet they will not have that as an excuse. On a daily basis, I receive more than 2 friend request from people I don’t know. (IDI 10, 2014 University of Abuja)

I have received such request from some gay guys... he told me that he loves my profile pictures and would love to go down with me. I was shocked at his request but he tempted me with a blackberry z10 but I stood my ground. He still disturbs me till date (FGD 2: Nassarawa State University)

From a purely public health angle, young people's vulnerabilities to sexual transmission of HIV would be significantly moderated if the levels of condom use were much higher especially in the context of higher-risk sex. But even as recent as 2013, data from the District Health System(DHS) show that only 40.6% and 50.5% respectively of young Nigerian women and men aged 15-24 who had two or more sexual partners in the past 12 months reported using a condom during their last sexual intercourse (NPC and ICF International, 2013).

Sometimes, it is hard to buy condoms within the campus. You walked into a chemist store in Keffi campus, and intend to ask for gold circle; only for you to see your Lecturer at your back. You end up asking for Paracetamol out of shame. I use condom when it is available and the show goes on when it is not. However I use Ampiclox after sex since it is antibiotics to kill the possible HIV... (FGD 3: University of Abuja)

I use condoms with those flings I usually meet online because these chicks you no dey too sure. But as for my correct girlfriend, I don't use condom because both of us trust each other. If I ever even suggest using condom with her, she will suspect that I am cheating on her. (IDI 4: Nassarawa State University)

I don't like using condom, it makes sex boring. I take antibiotics before and after sex to kill off the virus. Moreover, some of my ladies complained to me that condom do give me rashes after sex; most especially when used with the lubricants (IDI 9, 2014: Nassarawa State University)

I wasn't using condoms all the time till I got gonorrhoea. I went to hospital for treatment and since then I trust no one when it comes to that. If I must play game, I must wear 'boot'. (IDI 3, 2014: University of Abuja)

The use of social networking sites to promote increased condom messaging and distribution, and the inclusion of condom use, sexual negotiation skills, and gender awareness in youth sexuality education and HIV prevention programs, are clearly an imperative:

They look healthy to me, although they say AIDS no dey show for face... you can tell if you met the person one on one. I don't get myself over-bothered about their HIV status, just the same way I don't expect them to not to do the same. After all something must kill a man. If it is not bomb, it may be road accident or any other disease other than AIDS. (IDI 14: Nassarawa State University)

I can only speak for myself. I jokingly ask them if I meet them in real life but I always get the response that they are HIV negative... (IDI 2: University of Abuja)

HIV risk perceptions among the respondents were low despite engaging in high risk behaviours:

4.6 HIV Knowledge and Information

Contributory to and exacerbating the youth HIV vulnerabilities are structural issues of media of passing the message, inhibitive social constructs, perceptions, and beliefs around youth sexuality, and critical policy, programming, and service delivery deficits. Within space of ten years (2004-2014), the level of information technological advancement recorded in Nigeria is unprecedented. We have transformed from long queues in the bank for transactions into internet banking and ATM machines, from hardcopy examination registrations to online registration, and so, the dependency on socialization and information has been changing. Students in the both institutions are not left out in these emerging trends.

From Keffi to Gwagwalada; the experience seems the same:

I would say through the radio stations most at times. Also in the church, but it's just that in the church, they only tell us to abstain...you check am na? It's not possible... it's almost impossible to find any virgin in this campus. (FGD1, 2014: Nassarawa State University)

Through the NGO workers, radio and TV stations. It's rare to discuss HIV on Facebook. It's not an interesting post people would like to comment on social media. So everyone go for interesting post on love, romance, celebrities etc. (FGD, 2014: University of Abuja)

Since young people spend more time surfing the internet; and not listening to the radio nor watching the local television stations. They are more concerned about the battery life of their smart phones. The social networking however, has not been properly engaged by HIV interventionist in Nigeria for basic HIV-knowledge generation and accurate information. The large chunk of HIV information found on the social networking platforms were designed by interventionist outside sub-Saharan Africa and designed to suite their own environment it was meant for. Since young people heavily rely on the internet for their every day's information and socialization, it is wise to take HIV interventions to those platforms. Smartphones are multi-functional and Young people nowadays are unlikely to depend on television and print media for information which they consider outdated.

Since young people's interest can be sustained using the social media, HIV interventions targeting young people should be to mount HIV campaign for them. While young people depend on social media to access their every day's needs; HIV campaign strategist in Nigeria are yet to fully explore social networking as viable options in reaching young people. As for the students from the both institutions, social networking comes first before the print media and the physical space:

My blackberry for sure! I only watch football on TV. With my blackberry I can virtually read the news, download songs and musical videos, chat with my friends and even read my book. TV, newspaper and radio are becoming outdated. (IDI 5, 2014: Nassarawa State University)

I cannot spend a day without my phone. I even come to the class with my phone charger. My world revolves round it. TVs are boring and a waste of time and energy. With my android, I can have fun as much as I want. (FGD, 2014: University of Abuja)

It's difficult to maintain a TV without a pay-decoder like DSTV as a student. My phone and my laptop are more important to me rather. It's the big deal here in the campus to have a blackberry. Some girls will not even go on a date with you if you don't have a ping. (FGD, 2014: University of Abuja)

Other Factors Contributing to HIV Vulnerability

There are couples of factors that pre-expose young persons in Nigeria to increased HIV vulnerabilities. These factors are rooted in the economic and cultural environment these young people found themselves such as, sexual coercion, poverty and cultural-religious factors. They are the primary factors responsible for youth vulnerability long social networking was invented:

Low Standard of Living

This study reveals that most of the female students who engage in transactional sex come from low-income homes. The responses of some of the study respondents suggest that poverty is a greater index that put them at increased HIV vulnerability:

I got to hustle to survive here in school. Anyhow man must survive. For instance I need a laptop to do my assignments. My parents cannot afford it. So I need to hustle to get on. If not, my studies go suffer (IDI 15, University of Abuja).

I pimp for some big guys in town. Babes love me and always coming around to connect them with big guys I roll with. So if I connect you with a top-shot, you must bring my cut, the same goes for the big guy. I am doing this because I am the one paying for my school fees and that of my younger brother (IDI11, University of Abuja)

Due to the economic deprivations, these students were led to commercial sex thereby undermining their ability to negotiate and adopt safer sex practices for the fear of losing the economic benefits from such activities or relationships.

4.7 The Positive gains Students Derive from Social Networking

It is not all sad stories when it comes to social networking and youths. Just as in every aspect of our existence. There is always a merit and demerit of it. Social networking is not harmful; it is how people use it that makes it harmful. It has proven to be effective in developed countries such as : China, Japan, Germany and Canada. Books and other academic materials that may be millions of miles away can now be accessed by a click. Intellectual works that

are almost extinct are becoming relevant. Social media have educational benefits for students as well. They learn practical skills that are necessary for success in today's wired world. Specifically, students learn how to use and become proficient with technology, developing their creative abilities, appreciating new and different perspectives, and enhancing their communication skills:

I occasionally chat with my cliques.... I love to browse for my term paper or assignments, I once watched on YouTube how to carry out neutralization reaction and it worked perfectly when I followed their procedures... better than what my lecturer taught us (*R14, IDI second year Computer science student Nassarawa State University, Keffi*)

I have my bible on my tab... I also have a Webster dictionary. I use the google map to find my way round town and also to get other useful information. I love newspapers a lot... I don't have to visit the stands, I only have to surf the net and I will go through all the papers... (*RIIDI Final year, University of Abuja*)

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary

Thus far we have explored in this study the associated risk behaviour in social networking that leaves young adults at increased risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STI). Social networking as a platform for interaction leaves young people with several alternatives to express their innate emotional desires beyond the confines of their physical location. Through the exchange of pornographic images and chats that go with it, the hunger for a sexual activity is activated; and in desperate need to quench them, leads to unprotected sexual intercourse.

Social networking can intensify sexual vulnerabilities of a young person and can also be utilized in improving their HIV-comprehensive knowledge. If young adults are sexually educated and well-informed on risk behaviour and a wide range of protective measures; through the social networking platforms that have become the dominant culture of the twenty-first century youths, they are better informed to make decisions. Thus, there is nothing wrong with social networking sites, the way they are being utilized by young adults mostly for lewd purposes is what makes it a high risk. If this trend we have on ground continues unabated, it would lead to an increase in new dimension of HIV infections among young adults and the general population in Nigeria.

This research has looked at social networking as a vital tool for communication among young adults. It is an important platform for effective STI/HIV information-education however, this is lacking in most HIV intervention programs for young people and as a result,

most HIV/AIDS campaigns intended for young adults fail to achieve their desired goals. Gana (2012) affirms that social networking exudes a promising potential for people to participate and take control of their situations and cause change through information sharing and deliberation. Participation in this sense is crystallized not in terms of numbers but in terms of the capacity of the platform to enable individuals express themselves freely by sharing information with one another

People can easily share information unrestricted and unhindered amongst themselves in online groups and communities to seek attraction for casual sex partner that will lead to taking action towards engaging in risky behaviour.

As young adults exchange pictures and chat with their peers on the social networking platform, they take various actions through chats, sexts and go through a process of decision-making that leads to various changes in opinions to arrive at a point of common understanding as revealed in this study. These chatting and sexting that take effect on social networking platforms are therefore what is capable of leading to risky behaviour. As such social networking becomes the basis for initiating sexual encounters. The various associated-risk behaviours analyzed in this study reveals the extent of the respondents sharing of private information and images in a bid to attract or seek sexual partners thus exposing them to increased HIV and other STI vulnerabilities.

In relations to the objectives of this research work, the study findings are shown as follows:

1. Through the descriptive analysis of the questionnaire administered in the field, the findings show that a majority of young people primarily use the social networking sites to communicate with the opposite sex, seek new peers and download/upload images/videos.

2. A significant number of the study participants reported ever having sex with one or more partner met via the social networking sites with the space of three months.
3. The focus group discussions gave a detail account of how social networking provides the enabling platform for young adults to seek potential casual sexual partners. Through the in-depth interviews, we came to the understanding of the study participants' unlimited access to associated sexual risk materials; which is contrast to comprehensive HIV information education-materials that are available.
4. Nigerian youths just like their counterparts globally, are trapped in the emerging culture of social networking sites. Platforms such as; Facebook, WhatsApp, blackberry, 2go and Badoo from our research findings show that these platforms were preferred by young adults because they are youth-friendly.
5. Despite the billions of dollars being injected into HIV intervention by the Nigerian Government and international donors, new HIV-infections among young people within the ages of 15-39 have been on the steady rise (NARHS 2012).
6. Young people just as the study findings revealed are unlikely to seek care and treatment in health facilities due to fear of stigma and the attitudes at the various facilities within their reach, thus indulging in self-medication, when the infections are not properly treated, leaves them porous to opportunistic infections. Individuals, NGOs, development agencies and Civil Society Organizations especially in Nigeria do not do enough in using the platform available on Social Network Sites for developmental purposes.

7. Significantly, what comes out glaringly from this study is the capacity of Social Network Sites as a communication platform to facilitate the manipulating individuals and likewise share these opinions freely with one another.
8. Unfortunately HIV Behavior Change Communication experts are yet to effectively utilize the power of social networking as a viable communication platform in addressing sexual and reproductive health issues that were of concern to young people in Nigeria
9. Conventional approaches such as the use of flyers, handbills, posters as well as radio/television jingles; which may appeal to the older audience but not to the young adult population who spend on the average three or more hours on their social networking page are what constitute the HIV/AIDS prevention communication in our society. The HIV campaign should be re-packaged and taken to the social networking in order to sustain the interest of the young adults.

5.2 Recommendations

In view of the findings of the study stated above, we therefore offer the following recommendations:

- I. NGOs and development agencies as well as civil society organization should as a matter of urgency critically pay attention to Social Network Sites in an attempt at exploring its potential for effective health communication and mobilization.
- II. Donor agencies should fund projects/programmes that aim at empowering people to be Internet savvy.
- III. Universities and colleges should also encourage student's (especially undergraduate students) positive usage of Social Network Sites by creating study groups online on

particular courses for students to engage in scholarly discourse since majority of users on these platforms are youths.

- IV. Further research into the potentials of the usage of Social Network Sites should be encouraged as this will further help determine the extent of its capabilities to bring about development through effective communication.
- V. HIV/AIDS campaigns should be repackaged and taken to the social networking sites to educate the youths and engage their attention

5.3 Conclusion

This research work provided insight on social networking and HIV/AIDS associated risk behaviour among students through the findings obtained from the field. The findings imply that social networking is becoming part of young people's everyday life and if not properly utilized could lead to risky behaviours including HIV. This study suggests also that further researches should explore the use of social networking for HIV interventions with young people.

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Appendix 1

Focus Group Discussion / In-Depth Interview Guide

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE ON SOCIAL NETWORKING AND HIV ASSOCIATED RISK BEHAVIOUR AMONG STUDENTS

INFORMED CONSENT

Hello, I am _____, conducting a research for post graduate degree thesis. You were identified for interview through consultations with one of your course mates as a key stakeholder that is an active social networking site user in this campus. Before you decide whether to grant me an interview, you need to understand why the interview is being held and what it would involve. Please take the time to read or to listen as I read the following information. You may talk to others about the interview if you wish. Please ask me if there is anything that is not clear, or if you would like more information. When all of your questions have been answered and you feel that you understand why this interview is being conducted, you will be asked if you wish to continue with it, and if yes I will sign this Informed Consent form to indicate that you have agreed to be interviewed.

Purpose of the Interview and Interview Requirements

What is the interview about? The purpose of the interview is to find out about matters concerning how young people utilize social networking sites in exploring their sexual needs _____. You may become embarrassed by questions related to student involvement with their other social networking peers But we would make every effort to protect your privacy and confidentiality. There is no cost to you from participating in this study. Rather you may receive new insights on comprehensive knowledge of HIV and how social media can help in harnessing HIV/STI care, treatment supports.

What will happen if I take part? If you agree to take part in the interview, we will ask you to sign this form. For purposes of accuracy of the information we will record the information using an audio tape which would be destroyed after the transcription of the recording for digital capture and analysis. In order to maintain anonymity your name will not be indicated in the notes from this interview or linked to the transcription of the interview. The purpose of this interview is to learn from your experience, views and perspectives and so there is no right or wrong answers. Please feel free to give your opinion in response to any of the questions and to refuse to answer any question that you may wish not to answer. If you have any questions or concerns about this study, you should contact Chiedu Ifekandu (E-mail: edukandu@yahoo.com and Tel: 08033248425)

How long will the interview last? This will take between on hour.

Consent statement for signature

I have read this entire consent form or that the interviewer has read it to me, and has answered any questions. I certify that I give my informed consent to take part in the inquiry.

Signature of the respondent _____ **Date** _____

Person who conducted Informed Consent discussion: I confirm that I have personally explained the nature and extent of the planned interview, procedures, and confidentiality of personal information.

Name of person obtaining consent: _____

Signature of person obtaining consent: _____ **Date:** _____

Section A: Demographic Characteristics

- I. At what age did you join social networking site?
- II. What was the first social networking site you subscribed?
- III. What's your most preferred social networking sites and why?
- IV. How many social networking sites do you belong to?
- V. On the average, how many friends do you on your most preferred social network?
- VI. Have you ever met any of your social networking friends in real life?

Section B: Social Networking risk behaviour

- I. At what age was your first sexual experience?
- II. Was it before you gained admission? With someone younger or older
- III. How many sexual partners have had since admission into the university?
- IV. Have you ever sext with any of your social networking sites?
- V. Have you ever had sex with any of your SNS friends (if yes) how many of them, what led to that?
- VI. Have you ever paid or been paid for sex?
- VII. How often do you use condoms?
- VIII. Who asked for the condom use (you or the other person or both of you) if no, what has been the reason for not using condoms.
- IX. I don't want to know the results, but have ever gone for HIV test?
- X. Have you ever had any of the following symptoms (itching of the genitals, painful/colourful discharge) if yes, where did you seek for treatment?

Section C: HIV knowledge and information

- I. Where do you normally receive HIV messages more often?
- II. Which platforms do you think will grab your attention the most (radio, TV or Social media)?
- III. How often do you receive HIV messages on your social networking apps?
- IV. Do you think the messages are youth friendly?
- V. Has your parents ever spoken to you about sex or HIV?
- VI. Are your parents aware of your activities on social networking sites

We have come to the end of this interview, thanks for your time!

Appendix 2

Please may I have some minutes of your time in attending to some of the few questions?

Time started interview.....

	Unique Identifier number:	Age: Level:	Sex:
1	Outside the university environment, do you consider your permanent resident as	1. Urban 2. Semi-urban 3. Rural	
2	Do you have a smart phone (if yes, next question, if No, end the interview)	1. Yes 2. No	
3	How many smart phones do you have presently	1. One 2. Two or more	
4	Do you have any social network account?	1. Yes 2. No	
5.	How many social networking platforms are you an active user?	1. One 2. Two 3. Three or more	
6.	Which are your most preferred platforms?	1. Blackberry messenger 2. WhatsApp 3. Badoo 4. Twitter 5. 2go 6. Facebook 7. Others 8. MORETHAN TWO LISTED ABOVE 9.	

7.	What are your reasons for the preferred platform (s) (circle two most appropriate)	Simple to use Youth-friendly Social satisfaction and seeking new peers Educative
	Uses and purpose	
8	On the average, how many online friends do you have	1. 10-50 2. 50-100 3. 100-200 4. 300-500 5. >500
9	On the average, how long do you spend on the social networking sites in a day?	1. Less than one hour 2. 2hours or more
10	How long have you been using social networking (when did you open you first social networking account)	1. Less than a year 2. One to two years 3. More than two years
11.	What was the main reason for joining the social networking the very first time?	1. Peer pressure 2. Loneliness 3. Personal decision 4. Can't tell 5. Others
12	Have you ever met someone from any of your SNS contact in real life?	1. Yes 2. No
13.	Who are you most likely to spend more time chatting with on social network?	1. Friends from the same sex 2. Opposite sex 3. New friends that never met before 4. Long lost friends reunited on social network 5. others
14.	Have ever exchange adult pictures with a chat friend? (receive or sent)	1. Yes 2. No
15.	Have you ever view or downloaded adult video/images from the internet?	1. Yes 2. No
16.	Have you ever met with the sexting friends in the physical space?	1. Yes 2. No
17.	Have you ever "go down" with any of the online friends? (if no skip question 18)	1. Yes 2. No If yes, how many in the last 12months.....
18	How often do you use condom for sex?	1. Always 2. Sometimes 3. Never 4.

19	Which one of these can you ‘not do without’?”	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Television 2. Smartphones 3. books
20	Where do you receive HIV messages the more?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Posters, Flyers and handbills 2. Radio and television 3. Social media 4. Place of worship
21	I do not want to know the result, but have you gone for HIV test in the last 12 months?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes 2. No
22	Do you consider yourself at risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes 2. No 3. I don’t know
23	How would you like social networking be utilized for HIV campaign for young people?	

Thank you for your time

Time of ending the interview.....

Signature of the respondents.....