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Predictors of Risky Sexual Practice among Undergraduates Using Social Media in Osun State University, Osogbo

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Abstract

Social media has become part of students' lives with most undergraduates spending at least more than an hour on social media with various kinds of misuse including accessing adult materials. This study sought to determine the predictive powers of students' socio-demographic characteristics on involvement in risky sexual practices when using social media. The study was a cross-sectional descriptive survey including 400 undergraduates selected from the Departments of English Language and Education & History in the Ikire Campus; Community Medicine and Physiology in the Osogbo campus; and Animal Science and Agricultural Economics in the Ejigbo Campus through a multi-stage sampling procedure. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of five sections with both univariate and bivariate analyses conducted using the SPSS software version 20.0. The mean age of the respondents was 16.4 ± 3.7 years, 65.2% were female, 26.5% were 100L students, 95.5% were single, 93.5% belonged to the Yoruba ethnic group, and 67.0% were Christians. Similarly, 97.2% of the respondents had access to social media, and 87.8% accessed social media frequently. Facebook (82.5%), WhatsApp (79.9%), and Twitter (73.3%) were the most used social media platforms. The majority (60%) were exposed to sexual risks, and 59% had a poor attitude towards risky sexual behaviour. Online dating without prior knowledge of the partner (58.8%) and viewing porn (37.3%) were the major risky sexual practices among the students. While the socio-demographic variables were associated with sexual practice, attitude, and sexual exposure since using social media, only age and gender were significantly associated with sexual practice and attitude respectively at $P < 0.05$. With the consequences of unhindered access to social media among undergraduates especially on sexuality, the study therefore recommends a health education intervention to include a comprehensive sexual health education to all stakeholders in the parenting journey to produce morally upright youths in the society.

Keywords: Social Media, Risky Sexual Practices, Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp, Undergraduate students.

Introduction

One of the defining forces of the human race is the advent of technology. Each generation is virtually defined by the dimensions of its technological achievement. The Information

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and Technology (ICT) has transformed the way human beings communicate, how they work, live, behave and interact (Mario, 2013).

Social media use is currently one of the most popular leisure activities among youths and its use by the youths has increased tremendously in recent years (Bozzola *et al.*, 2022). According to studies, a lot of social media-friendly youths have been negatively influenced to indulge in premarital sex and early sexual debut arising from no parental moral training and discipline (Lin *et al.* 2020). This lack of moral uprightness led to the negative influence social media has on the youth making their expectations of becoming potential future leaders with practicing healthy behaviours unrealistic. (Adegboyega & Jacob, 2017; Fransiska *et al.*, 2021)..

Regrettably, it is observed that social media-friendly youths in Osogbo, Osun State indulge in risky sexual behaviour especially early sexual initiation (sexual debut), unprotected vaginal sex, possession of multiple sexual partners, sex in exchange for materials/money, oral and anal sex, which the resultant consequences are detrimental to their health (Asekun-Olarinmoye *et al.* 2014) and these are influenced by several factors including socio-demographic characteristics (Upchurch *et al.*, 1999; Kabiru & Orpinas, 2008; Lenhart *et al.*, 2010;).

Since social media has come to stay with more sophisticated applications development springing up each day to promote secrecy and independence among the youths who are the highest users of this space, its continuous use by these vibrant youths without addressing the root cause of the identified risky sexual behaviour will make the world unsafe with far-reaching implications for individual youth's health, families, communities, and government (Landry *et al.*, 2017). To protect the youths' health and achieve SDG3 without leaving them behind in line with the theme of the SDG, the study therefore aims to identify the Predictors of Risky Sexual Practice among Undergraduates Using Social Media in Osun State University, Osogbo.

Methodology

Study Area: Osun State University is a multi-campus university established by the Osun State Government under the administration of Prince Olagunsoye Oyinlola. The university currently operates six campuses distributed across six administrative/geopolitical zones of the states. Nigeria's National Universities Commission approved Osun State University on December 21st, 2006, as the 30th State University and the 80th in the Nigerian University system. It has campuses in Osogbo, Ikire, Okuku, Ifetedo, Ipetu-Ijesa and Ejigbo which serve as campuses of Health sciences, Humanities and Culture, Social science and Management, Law, Education and Agriculture respectively. The study took place at the Osun State University, Main campus (Osogbo), Ikire and Ejigbo.

Study Design: An institution-based cross-sectional descriptive survey was used in this study.

Study Population: The population for the study consisted of all social media-friendly youths (youths having a browsing phone) between the age of (15-24 years) in Osun State University (UNIOSUN), Osogbo, Osun State, Nigeria.

Sample Size Calculation:

The sample size of the student that was willing to participate is calculated by using the Leslie Kish formula of

$$n = \frac{Z^2 pq}{d^2} \quad (\text{Araoye, 2004})$$

where n = Sample size; Z = Standard Normal Deviation (constant 1.96); P = Prevalence Rate (0.314%) (Sokobo & Kejala, 2015); Q = 1-P and D = Degree of precision (0.05). A sample size of 331 was obtained but was approximated to 400.

Sampling Procedure: The multi-stage sampling procedure was employed to draw the sample for the study. The procedure for the sample selection involved four stages. In the first stage, with the use of simple random sampling (SRS) and simple balloting, three campuses of the Osun State University were selected. The campuses were Osogbo, Ikire and Ejigbo. In the second stage, also through simple random sampling, two departments were selected from each of the campuses and these include the English language and Education &

History Department in the Ikire Campus; In the Osogbo campus: The Department of Community Medicine and Physiology were selected, and Lastly, In the Ejigbo Campus; the department of Animal Science and Agricultural Economics were selected using simple balloting. In the third stage, all levels were purposively selected to have a representation of students across 100-500 levels and in stage four, which is the last stage, a systematic sampling of 1 in 3 students as they were seated in a class on the day of data collection across all levels was used, and the leftovers questionnaire were taken to another department and sampling was repeated till the required sample size was reached.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria: Only students with browsing phones, fall within the age of 15-24 and are willing to participate in the study were recruited while those without these characteristics were not selected for the study

Data Collection Instrument: A semi-structured, self-administered pretested questionnaire consisting of five sections was used to collect data from the respondents.

Method of Data Collection: The data was collected among the respondents by the researcher alongside four research assistants who were briefed on the procedures for the administration of questionnaire copies and collection of the data from the respondents. Since information elicited from the respondents is sensitive, confidentiality was highly ensured

Instrument Pretesting: The questionnaire was pretested among 40 students at the Obafemi Awolowo University with a reliability coefficient of 0.78.

Method of Data Analysis: The completed copies of the questionnaire were examined for completeness of responses. The completed data were analyzed using Statistical Products for Service Solutions (SPSS) batch system version 20.0. Frequencies and percentages were used to present the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents while chi-square was used to test association and Logistic regression was used to test

the null hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. Respondents' exposure was scored based on the fourteen-item questions under the pattern of social media section and their overall score was divided into two, the score lower than the mean score was categorized as low exposure while the score greater than the mean score was categorized as highly exposed. Similarly, with the ten-item questions under the attitudinal disposition section, the overall score was divided into two with the score lesser than the mean score categorized as poor attitude while the score greater than the mean score was categorized as good attitude.

Ethical Approval: Ethical clearance was obtained from the Health Research Ethical Committee (HREC), College of Health Sciences (CHS), Osun State University. Privacy and Confidentiality of the questionnaire were guaranteed as information obtained was used for academic performance only while names were not taken during the process.

Study limitation: Reporting sexual activities is sensitive and most often shrouded in secrecy. We were able to circumvent this by delivering a health talk session and de-identifying all questionnaires with an assurance of the student's confidentiality and safety of the information volunteered.

Results

Socio-Demographic Characteristics

Table 1 presents results on respondents' socio-demographic characteristics. The mean age was 16.4 ± 3.7 years. 261(65.2%) were female while 106(26.5%) of them were one hundred level students. 382(95.5%) of them were single and 374(93.5%) belongs to Yoruba ethnic group while 268(67.0%) were Christians.

Socio Media Pattern of Use

In Table 2, the pattern of usage of socio media among the respondents was presented. It reveals that the Facebook app has the highest usage frequency of 82.5% while Snapchat has the lowest frequency usage with 62.8%

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents (N=400)

Variables	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age(years)		
<15	4	1.0
16-20	204	51.0
>20	192	48.0
Gender		
Female	261	65.3
Male	139	34.8
Level		
100	106	26.5
200	91	22.8
300	80	20.0
400	84	21.0
500	39	9.8
Marital status		
Single	382	95.5
Married	14	3.5
Separated	4	1.0
Ethnicity		
Yoruba	374	93.5
Hausa	4	1.0
Igbo	17	4.3
Others	5	1.3
Religion		
Christianity	268	67.0
Islam	129	32.3
Traditional	3	0.8

Mean age = 16.4±3.7years

Table 2: Respondents Pattern of Socio-Media Usage (N=400)

S/N	SOCIAL MEDIA FREQUENTLY VISIT	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
1	Facebook	330	82.5
2	Whatsapp	320	79.9
3	Telegram	293	73.4
4	Twitter	287	71.8
5	Instagram	272	68.0
6	Snapchat	251	62.8

Multiple responses allowed

Respondents Practice Risky Sexual Behaviour

Table 3 shows respondents' sexual behaviour since using social media. 312(78.0%) do not have multiple sex partners and 346(86.5%) have not had abortion. 338(84.5%) were not treating STI

(sexually transmitted disease). 254(63.5%) of the respondents, do not masturbate. Furthermore, 332(83.0%) do not look forward to having gay/lesbian partners. 303(75.8%) shared nude pictures while 227(56.8%) do not share romantic

pictures. 273(68.3%) do not share romantic/nude audio message and 256(64.0%) have been in a relationship while 271(67.8%) went on a physical dating. 218(54.5%) do watch porn, 288(72.0%) did not receive nude or romantic pictures of a third person and 247(61.8%) did not find their pictures on a phone of a third party without their knowledge and 354(88.5%) did not send a nude video of a third person.

Figure 1 presents the respondents' Pattern of sexual risk exposure among respondents. It showed that 239(60%) of the respondents were highly exposed to sexual risk while 161(40%) had low exposure

Respondents' Attitudinal Disposition Towards Risky Sexual Behaviour

Table 4 reveals the Respondents' attitudinal disposition towards risky sexual behaviour. It shows that 195(58.8%) agreed that dating people they met online is not a bad idea. 150(37.5%) disagreed they don't enjoy going out on a date with

someone they met online and 185(46.3%) strongly disagreed that they don't mind having sexual intercourse on their first date with someone they met online while 168(42.0%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that using protection with a stranger met on social media is a bad idea. 204(51.0%) strongly disagreed that they don't mind sending their nude pictures to their social media friends and 193(48.3%) strongly disagreed that sexting with someone met online is not a bad idea. 149(37.3%) agreed that watching porn can affect them psychologically. Findings, however, showed that 170(42.5%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that it is fun to sexually experiment with strangers. 161(40.3%) disagreed that having sex chats with their social media friends is good while 145(36.3%) agreed that social media has made them sexually inclined/conscious. Findings from Figure 2 also showed that 238 (59%) of the respondents have a good attitude towards risky sexual behaviour while 162 (41%) have a poor attitude towards risky sexual behaviour.

Table 3: Respondents' practice of risky sexual behaviour since using social media

Sexual Risk	Yes (%)	No (%)
Had Multiple sex partners	88(22.0)	312(78.0)
Abortion	54(13.5)	346(86.5)
	62(15.5)	338(84.5)
Treating STI (sexually transmitted disease)		
Masturbate	146(36.5)	254(63.5)
Looking forward to gay/lesbian partners	68(17.0)	332(83.0)
Shared nude pictures	97(24.3)	303(75.8)
Shared romantic pictures	171(42.8)	227(56.8)
Shared romantic/nude audio messages	124(31.0)	273(68.3)
Go on a relationship	256(64.0)	140(35.0)
Go on physical dating	271(67.8)	128(32.0)
Watch porn	218(54.5)	177(44.3)
Received nude or romantic pictures of a third person	106(26.5)	288(72.0)
Found your picture on a phone of a third party without your knowledge	151(37.8)	247(61.8)
Send nude video of a third person	44(11.0)	354(88.5)

Multiple responses allowed

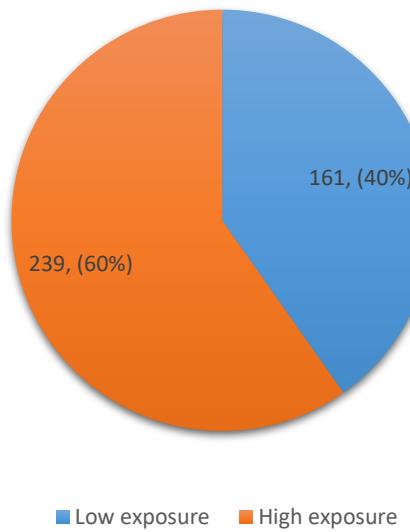


Figure 1: Pattern of sexual risk exposure among respondents

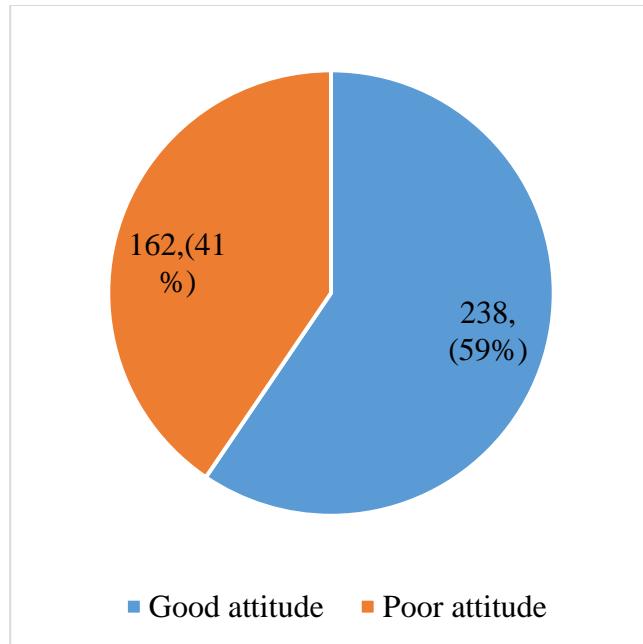


Figure 2: Overall respondents' attitude towards risky sexual behaviour (N=400)

Table 4: Respondents' attitude towards risky sexual behaviour

Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Dating people I meet online is not a bad idea	73(18.3)	89(22.3)	195(58.8)	43(10.8)
I enjoy going out on a date with someone I met online	85(21.3)	150(37.5)	145(36.3)	20(5.0)
I don't mind having sexual intercourse on my first date with someone I met online	185(46.3)	121(30.3)	76(19.0)	18(4.5)
Using protection with a stranger I met on social media is a bad idea	168(42.0)	163(40.8)	40(10.0)	29(7.3)
I don't mind sending my nude pictures to my social media friends	204(51.0)	143(35.8)	37(9.3)	13(3.3)
Having a phone sex with someone I met online is not a bad idea	193(48.3)	139(34.8)	52(13.0)	15(3.8)
Watching porn can affect me psychologically	65(16.3)	89(22.3)	149(37.3)	92(23.0)
It is fun to sexually experiment with strangers	170(42.5)	154(38.5)	62(15.5)	13(3.3)
Having sex chats with my social media friends is good	160(40.0)	161(40.3)	59(14.8)	15(3.8)
Would you say social media has made you sexually inclined/conscious	91(22.8)	105(26.3)	145(36.3)	56(14.0)

Hypothesis 1: Students' Age and Level of Study Will not Jointly Predict their Sexual Practice Using Social Media.

Table 5 shows the predictors of respondents' sexual Practices and attitudes since using social media by logistic regression analysis. It showed that only the age of the respondents was significantly associated with sexual practice at the regression level with more than 1.949 of respondents with age > 20 years likely to practice sex with P-Value <0.05.

Hypothesis 2: Students' Age, Gender, Level, and Ethnicity will not Jointly Predict their Attitude Towards Social Media

In a similar vein, only the gender of the respondents was significantly associated with attitude at the regression level with more than 1.871

of respondents that are male more likely to have good attitude towards social media with a P-Value <0.05.

Discussion

The analysis of the socio-demographic characteristics showed that the majority of the respondents who were teenagers agreed with the study carried out in the year 2011 by Lenhart that according to the Pew Internet and American Life Project, the majority of teens (two-thirds) aged between 12-17 access the internet daily. The study also conforms to Landry *et al.* (2015) where youths between 12 and 24 years of age have been reported to be the most extensive users of new technology and are more

Table 5a: Predictors of respondents' sexual Practice since using social media by logistic regression analysis

5a.Variables	Non-practicing	Practicing	OR(CI)	B	Df	P value
Age (years)						
<20	90(43.3)	118(56.7)	1.949 (1.284 – 2.958)	1.534	1	*0.001
>20	54(28.1)	138(71.9)				
Level			1.544 (0.977 – 2.439)	1.332	1	0.061
<300	108(38.9%)	169(69.1)				
>400	36(29.3%)	87(70.7%)				

Table 5b: Predictors of respondents' sexual attitudinal disposition since using social media by logistic regression analysis

5b. Variables	Poor attitude	Good attitude	OR(CI)	B	df	P-Value
Age (years)						
<20	86(41.3%)	122(58.7%)	1.076(0.721 – 1.605)	1.763	1	0.719
>20	76(39.6%)	116(60.4%)				
Gender						
Female	119(45.6%)	142(54.4%)	1.871(1.212 – 2.888)	1.473	1	*0.004
Male	43(30.9%)	96(69.1%)				
Level						
<300	120(43.3%)	157(56.7%)	1.474(0.947 – 2.293)	1.269	1	0.084
>400	42(34.1%)	81(65.9%)				
Ethnicity						
Yoruba	155(41.4%)	219(58.6%)	1.921(0.788 – 4.681)	1.539	1	0.144
Others	7(26.9)	19(73.1)				

likely to be connected to the virtual world, irrespective of socioeconomic status (SES), race, or ethnicity. Two-thirds of the respondents were females, and a few of the respondents were males. The majority were single and belonged to the Yoruba ethnic group and two-thirds were Christians. Facebook has the highest number of visits in this study and this is similar to the research study carried out by Madden *et al.* (2013) where 77% of the youths used Facebook.

Analysing the respondents' risky sexual practices since using social media, three-quarters of the respondents who were age 20 and above and were in 300L were involved in risky sexual practices. Although, this result was in contrast with the study conducted by Nnebue *et al.* (2020) where two-thirds of the respondents (64.1%) and Emmanuel *et al.*, (2013) were below the age of 20 at sexual debut as against only one-sixth who were above twenty years. Few of the respondents had multiple sex partners and close to this proportion had abortions while the majority were treating STIs and more than one-third masturbated. This may be because many adolescents want to partake in sexual experiences before marriage and some are often involved with multiple sexual partners because of the fear of heartbreaks, in semblance to the result of the study by Chama & Pranitha (2009).

Furthermore, the study shows that two third of our respondents go on a relationship and on physical dating, half of the respondents watch porn. Exposure to pornography has been linked to a more permissive attitude towards unprotected sex and high-risk sexual behaviours, including having multiple partners, anal sex and using alcohol and drugs during sex (Oladeji & Ayangunna, (2017)). In answering the first hypothesis, students' age and level of study will not jointly predict their sexual practice using social media. This hypothesis is accepted as only the age of the respondents was found to be significantly associated with sexual practice at the regression level with more than 1.949 of respondents with age > 20 years likely to practice sex with P-Value <0.05 . Although most studies have reported that risky sexual behaviour is higher among adolescents aged of between 10-19, the age of social media users is however been

reported as one of the predictors of risky sexual practice (Asrese & Mekonnen, 2018; Onasoga *et al.* 2020; Uzobo *et al.*, 2020).

In the second hypothesis, Students' age, gender, level, and ethnicity will not jointly predict their attitude towards social media. This hypothesis is accepted since only the gender of the students was significant at $P<0.05$ as against all other predictors. This is similar to Ramesh (2021) study on the attitude of college students towards social networking sites which rejected a hypothesis testing that there will be a significant mean score difference in attitude towards social networking sites among college students concerning gender and concluded both male and female college students are homogeneous in attitude towards social networking. This finding is also buttressed by Natrayan *et al.* (2019) whose findings also revealed that gender and age are not joint predictors of social media attitude with no significant difference with social media usage.

Conclusion

Undergraduate students have easy access to social media through their browsing phones. These gadgets are being used for various purposes on social media including sexting and other risky sexual behaviours without little or no hindrance. The consequences of this unhindered access to the use and manipulation of social media have implications for sexuality among undergraduates. Therefore, all stakeholders must rise up in their responsibilities of instilling good morals and positive values in the lives of the youths so that they can live virtuous lives and learn to take responsibility for their actions. This behavioural change can be achieved through health and sexual education using different health promotion settings.

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