

**INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING ON MORAL DECADENCE AMONG
SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN MUSHIN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA,
LAGOS STATE**

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Abstract

This study investigated the influence of social networking sites on moral decadence among secondary school students in Mushin Local Government Area, Lagos State. Four research questions were raised and answered. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire survey which contains close ended questions which were administered on a sample of 400 students randomly selected for the study. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation. The findings showed that social media has influence on moral decadence among the students. The implications of the findings were discussed and recommendations were made on careful use of social networking sites among students.

Introduction

Social Networking Sites is the relationships that exist between networks of people. In the last ten years, the online world has changed dramatically in relation to the intention of social media where young men and women exchange ideas, feelings, personal information, pictures and video at a truly astonished rate. Social media networks have created a phenomenon on the internet that has gained popularity over the last decade. People use Social Networking Sites such as Facebook, twitter, Skype, 2go What Sapp, Badoo, Hi5 and MySpace to create and sustain relationship with others (Boyd and Ellison, 2007). These social media site allows those who use them create personal profiles, while connecting with other users of the sites.

Reynold (2011) stated that research has shown that social networking sites can serve important educational purpose. Heiberger and Harper (2007) and Reynold and Timm (2008) have found a positive relationship between the use of social networking website and student engagement in higher education. For instance, frequent users of social networking website participated more often and spent more time in campus organization than less frequent users. Another study found that using twitter in educationally relevant ways increase students' engagement and improved grades (Junco, Heiberger and loken, 2010). Social networking sites can also help students in their transition and adjustment to college. Further, Facebook use was related to engagement with students' supportive social ties and subjective measure of psychological well- being (Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe, 2007).

Schill (2011) states that the social networking sites encourage negative behaviors for teen students such as procrastination (catch up with friend), and they are more likely to drink and drug. However, every day, many students are spending countless hours immersed in social networking sites. At first glance this may seem like a waste of time; however it also helps students to develop important knowledge and social skills, and be active citizens who create and share content. At present, whether social media is favorable or unfavorable, many

students utilize this site on a daily basis. As social media site continue to go in popularity, it hold with it many ills. Many researchers have focus on how social media influences students' learning. Many parents are worried that their children are spending too much time on Facebook and other social media sites and not enough time studying.

Social networking sites have created new and non-personal ways for people to interact with others and young adults have taken advantages of this technological trend. Despite the fact that social networking sites can promote technological advancement in education, it is believed that its use by students is accompanied by some negative influences such as moral decadence and anti-moral life- styles lying, stealing, rape, incest and so on.

Moral decadence means a decline in socially acceptable behaviors (Wikipedia, 2014). On the other hand moral decadence is the deterioration or decline of moral and ethical traditions. This happens when other things like vices are put before people, honesty integrity and moral values. Moral decadence includes drug abuse, premarital sex, cultism, stealing, violence, smoking, examination malpractice, truancy, and sexual immorality of any kinds, disobedience, and pornographic attachment (ask.com, 2014 and Paul, 2014).

This study examines sexual immorality, examination malpractice, and pornographic attachment and in decent dressing. On sexual immorality, Anise (2011) posits that at present, sexual immorality has taken over many students with thousands of destructive effect on students which includes unforeseen and unwanted pregnancies and infections through sexually transmitted diseases. Much of these, however, have been attributed to the negative influence of social networking sites which has also been linked with high rate of prevalence of sexual immorality among students at various levels of education in Nigeria. Also on the issue of examination malpractice, Obe (1998) posited that examination malpractice is a misconduct or improper practice before, during or after any examination by the examinees or others with a view, to obtaining good result, fraudulent means. He went further that one of the major causes of examination malpractice among students in Nigeria is attributed to moral decadence in Nigerian society which have a deplorable value system. This is because cheating, dishonesty including embezzlement and stealing of public funds and properties do not attract the condemnation and punishment they deserve and in fact are sometimes portrayed by social media as 'modern methods' of a way of life.

While pornography entails explicit materials on humans' nakedness, partial or full (mostly on women) which is mostly available online for people to view, pornographic attachment on the other hand is an addiction to pornography due to its use for a long period of time. In relationship to this, Malamuth, Addison and Koss (2000) found that the relationship

between frequent pornography consumption and sexually aggressive behavior is especially strong for those with the highest “predisposing” risk level for sexual aggression. Those who are at risk for sexual aggression and who frequently consume pornography frequently. Also, a study by Vanessa and Malamuth (2007) found that “high pornography consumption added significantly to the predication of sexual aggression in the users. To most, this is a huge problem of decadence among students in Nigeria today.

Finally, the study also examines indecent dressing. Every dress code that deviates from the one acceptable to the community especially as it affects the set moral standard or judgment of the community is termed indecent. Most dressing patterns in Nigeria and among the youths generally are morally offensive and reveal the high rate of decadence in the society

Unfortunately, most of this indecent dress code is learnt by adolescents online through social networking sites. The term ‘decency’ and ‘indecenty’ have much to do with the morality of the individual person and as judgment by others. A dressing therefore, is said to be indecent when it has provocation or stimulating influence on almost all those that happen to view it. Egwim (2010) refers to indecent dressing in a more specified term as the attitude of someone, male or female that dresses to show off part of the body such as the breasts, buttocks or even the underwear particularly those of the ladies that need to be covered. Any outfit that shows too much skin is indecent (source Magazine on line, 2011). This exposure is obviously a deliberate act to draw the attention of the opposite sex to oneself. This form of dressing is provocative, improper and unacceptable (Olori, 2003).

The Nigerian society as observed by Ekundayo and Oyeniya (2008) and Adebule (2012), is grappling with many behavioural problems of students of which many are sometimes learnt online and are prevalent in Nigeria secondary schools.

Past studies have focused on educational benefits of social networking sites while there is dearth of studies on its influence on moral decadence among the users. This study therefore examined the influence of social networking sites on moral decadence among secondary school students in Mushin local government area, Lagos State.

Statement of the Problem

There are so many platforms now known as social networking sites through which people, especially the younger generation meets to socialize, chat, share files among others. These social networking sites include twitter, MySpace, 2go, Badoo, Whatsapp, Facebook among others. These media were created in order to allow people of all ages stay closer to each other

and also to be able to share their interests. However, this platform is fast encouraging undesirable behavior among the younger generation with negative consequences.

In spite of several benefits derived from the use of these social networking sites less attention has been paid to its negative influence on the users. One of such influence includes increase in moral decadence among students. There is dearth of studies on influence of social networking sites on moral decadence among students. The study therefore examined the influence of social networking sites on moral decadence among secondary school students in Mushin local government area, Lagos state.

Objectives of the study

Generally, this study examined the influence of social networking sites on moral decadence among secondary school students. Specifically, the study the study examined the following:

- i. To examine how social media influence examination malpractice among students.
- ii. To examine how social media influence sexual immorality among students.
- iii. To examine how social media influence pornographic attachment among students.
- iv. To examine how social media influence indecent dressing among students.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised in the study;

1. Does social media has influence on examination malpractice among secondary school students?
2. Does social media has influence on sexual immorality on secondary school students?
3. Does social media has influence on pornographic attachment among secondary school students?
4. Does social media has influence on indecent dressing among secondary school students?

Research Design

The research design used for this study is ex-post facto research type with a survey design.

Population for the study

The population for this study covered secondary school students in Mushin Local Government Area, Lagos State.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

The sample consisted of 400 students randomly selected from eight schools. Fifty students were randomly selected from each of the eight secondary schools within the Local Government Area of the study.

Research Instruments

The instrument used to collect data for this study was a self-structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A contained information on demographic data, While Section B consisted of twenty- four questionnaire items. These items were based on four- point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). Items 1-6 captured influence of social media on examination malpractice, items 7-13 captured influence of social media on sexual immorality, items 14-19 captured influence on social media on pornographic attachment, and items 20-24 captured influence of social media on indecent dressing.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The instrument was validated for construct and content validity through peer and expert view. To ensure the reliability of the instrument, twenty (20) questionnaires were administered to a group of 20 students which were not part of the sample used. The data collected were subjected to Cronbach Alpha test with index of 0.81 which shows that the instrument is reliable for data collection.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation

Results

Research Question I: Does social media has influence on examination malpractice among secondary school students?

Table 1

Influence of Social Media on Examination Malpractice

Items	N	Mean	SD
Examination Malpractice	395	2.75	1.34

Table 4.1 shows that social media had influence on examination malpractice. ($x = 2.75$; $SD = 1.34$). Therefore, from the table above the majority of the respondents are influenced by social media to engage in examination malpractice.

Research Question II: Does social media has influence on sexual immorality among secondary school students?

Table 2

Influence of Social Media on Sexual Immorality

Items	N	Mean	SD
Sexual Immorality	395	2.68	1.14

Table 4.2 shows that social media had influence on sexual immorality ($x = 2.68$; $SD = 1.14$). Therefore, it shows that social media influenced sexual immorality among secondary school students.

Research Question III: Does social media has influence on pornographic attachment among secondary school students?

Table 3

Influence of Social Media on Pornographic Attachment

Items	N	Mean	SD
Pornographic attachment	395	2.75	2.00

Table 4.3 shows that social media had influence on pornographic attachment ($x = 2.7$; $SD = 2.00$). Therefore, it shows that social media influenced pornographic attachment among secondary school students.

Research Question IV: Does social media has influence on indecent dressing among secondary school students?

Table 4

Influence of Social Media on Indecent Dressing

Items	N	Mean	SD
Indecent dressing	395	2.87	1.82

Table 4.4 shows that social media had influence on indecent dressing ($x = 2.87$; $SD = 1.82$). Therefore, it shows that social media influence indecent dressing among secondary school students.

Discussion of Findings

This study found out that social networking sites has great influence on examination malpractice, the result of this study show that students are exposed to different methods of examination malpractice on the social media, they get examination “expo” and leakages on the social networking sites, each of them make use of social networking sites for help from teachers after examination. This finding supports Ajewole and Fasola (2011) whose study of 884 students from eight higher institutions in Oyo State showed that majority of them spend more time on social media at the detriment of their studies. This view is however rejected by some researchers who acknowledge that social networking sites not only re-engage learners with their studies but also enhance their academic performance. On the contrary, Onyeka, Sajoh & Bulus (2013) argue that the frequent use of social networking sites has no negative effect on the students’ studies. In the same vein, Ogedebe, Emmanuel & Musa (2012) posited that Facebook usage does not have adverse effect on the academic work of students. This can

be attributed to difference in research work because social networking sites have positive and negative influence, time span, as well as difference in geographical area.

This study found out that social networking sites have great influence on sexual immorality, students are open to the elements of sexual immorality on social networking sites, respondents are in love with many friends who are opposite sex on Facebook and respondents who chat on Facebook, twitter, 2go etc provides chance for them to approach any lady. This finding supports Ajayi (2006) and Adebule (2012), who reports that the incidence of sexual immorality among Nigerian youths has become sporadic, this is attributed to the negative influence of social networking sites especially the pornographic pictures, films and videos freely displayed, circulated and watched on daily basis, but the result is at variance with that of Dotonu (2011) that observed that sexual immorality was more prevalent among boys than girls.

This study found out that social networking sites have great influence on pornographic attachment, respondents are exposed to pornographic attachment on social networking sites; develop interest in pornographic attachment on the social networking sites. This finding supports one study funded by the US Congress through the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, the authors Barak and Fisher (2001) argued that sexually explicit material on the internet is “very intrusive “and can be inadvertently stumbled upon while searching for other material or when opening e-mail. On the contrary increasingly ubiquitous access to the Internet can be positive; for example, people of all ages are turning to this medium for information on sexual education and sexual health. This is attributed to the purpose and intention of students going to these sites.

This study found out that social networking sites have great influence on indecent dressing, respondents are exposed to indecent dressing on social networking sites, see nothing wrong in putting on tight fitting dresses that shows body contours as seen on social networking sites such as Facebook, twitter, Skype etc. Anadi, Egboka and Aniorobi (2011) opined that it is the overwhelmingly indecent dresses of the girls that attract much public concern and emphasis on the part of the girls and linkage between indecent dressing habit and the tragedy of body deformity especially on ‘sagging’ as a dress pattern. On the contrary Armer & Katsillis (2000) argued it is transformation from traditional values system to modern values system.

Conclusion

The study has shown that social networking sites have greatly influenced the society positively and negatively, but has had great negative influence on students which has led to examination malpractice, sexual immorality, pornographic attachment and indecent dressing.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made to make social networking sites have positive influence and make the society free from moral decadence;

Students need to be sensitized on the importance and relevance of using the social networking sites to enhance their academic performance as against using it to cheat in examinations. It is believed that this awareness will help to make a significant shift from wrong usage to positive use of social networking sites in their lives.

Sexual immorality has eaten deeply into the lives of many students lately; however, it is believed this menace can be controlled by the joint effort of teachers, parents, the government and non-governmental (NGOs). This they can do by using the social networking sites to propagate the dangers of sexual immorality, through counseling and proper home trainings.

Pornographic attachment has been wrecking the lives of many students who get used to them through the social networking sites. Hence, teachers, parents and relevant government and private agencies need to try as much as possible to sensitize students on the dangers of pornographic attachment and shun anything that can influence their lives negatively.

Also, students should be counseled both in schools and at home on the dignity in dressing smartly and decently as against dressing indecently. They should be made to understand that better lessons can be learnt through the proper use of the social networking sites than learning to learn indecently on it.

Parents and teachers should teach students about moral values and also ensure they live by the rules both in school and at home, also parents should counsel their children always especially girls and monitor the peer group they associate with.

Religious bodies should play their role of moral teaching, while Guidance Counselors should try new strategies to reduce the scourge of moral decadence among students. There is

need for all stake-holders (parents, education managers, community leaders and other relevant agencies), to come together to fashion out ways through which moral decadence can be effectively controlled among students.

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