Social Networking Sites As Tools For Sexual Perversion Among Students Of University Of Nigeria, Nsukka

Asogwa Chika Euphemia (Ph.D) [1*]   Ojih Emmanuel .U. [2]

Department Of Mass Communication, Kogi State University, Anyigba, Nigeria

E-mail of the corresponding author: euchika@yahoo.com

Abstract

The use of online social networking tools like blackberry messenger, face book, 2go, Nimbuzz, yahoo messenger, etc, continues to increase rapidly among all age groups and segments of the society, presenting new opportunities for the exchange of sexual information as well as for potentially unsafe encounters. This study using the survey research design and hinged on questionnaires and personal interview as instruments, explored the influence of social networking sites as tools for sexual perversion among students of University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN). Anchored on the technological determinism and uses and gratifications theories, the study found out that social networking tools actually contribute to UNN students sexual perversion and that there is an increasing adoption of the use of these tools, especially black berry messenger, 2go and facebook in that order. The study also discovered that majority of the students do not consider contents on these sites as being offensive. The study recommended that the use of SNSs should be regulated and regulators should device ways of detecting, exposing and punishing anybody found exchanging sexually explicit or implicit content or engaging in online sex.

Keywords: Sexting, sexual perversion, social networking sites, Online- Offline contact, Nigeria.

1. Background of Study

Man is a social animal, and so had continued to explore possible means of interacting with his fellow beings and environment over the years. Today, the advancements in the field of communication technology created a world with no boundary or limitations. We have witnessed the immense power of the internet and now, with the launch of Web 2.0, social networking sites are redefining the field of communication, which according to Marshall McLuhan, had, in conjunction with other communication media and technology, turned the world into a global village, thereby, diffusing both time and space.

The Internet and the World Wide Web are initially designed to move data and information from one location to another in a reliable and most efficient manner. However, "after almost 20 years since Dr. Barnes-Lee created the web, the idea of sharing has taken on a whole new dimension. The success and popularity of social networking sites show that the idea of online sharing has been successfully taken to the social and personal level". (Embi & Hassan, 2012, P. 56)

Ojo and Fasubaa (2005), using focus group discussion in their study of Sexuality and Family Life Education in South-western Nigeria discovered that adolescents' sexuality behaviour in Nigeria and sub-Saharan Africa is seriously going through transformation from what it used to be in the past. They attributed this to the effect of the internet, which according to them, more than any other agent of social change has contributed in no small measure to the removal of guilt, fear and shame associated with unconventional sexual activities.

Having grown up with the Internet and digital technologies, today's youths are the most *wired and connected* generation in human history. In her study of Internet Infidelity, Katherine (2006) is of the opinion that people are using the Internet more frequently to form friendships and romances and to initiate inordinate affairs. Robert, Jason & Clifford, (2010) in their study of adolescent online social communication and behaviours found out that "members of this generation are constantly connected to each other—by cell phone, text messages, instant messaging (IM) and email—and continually plugged into the world of information on the Web" (P. 189).

The social networking sites are gaining a lot of popularity these days with almost all of the educated youths using one or more. These have played a crucial role in bridging boundaries and crossing the seas and enabling them to

communicate on a common platform. It has also become a popular and a potential means for them to make friends and to increase their social circle at least in terms of acquaintances.

Similarly, with the advent of numerous social networking sites, such as Myspace, facebook, 2go, Friendfinder, Nimbuzz, black berry messenger, yahoo messenger… available today, "the socialisation patterns of young people have changed dramatically as the internet and mobile devices are now used to mediate personal interactions and communications" (Cachia, 2008, P. 5). The majority of today's youth are using the internet as a medium for social interaction, research, sharing ideas, photography, artistic creation, schoolwork, journaling, or blogging. However, at the same time, they are being exposed through the Internet to a variety of sexual and violent materials, which is defining and redefining their social behaviours.

Indisputably, many university students have been caught in the social networking web world wide. They have not only fully integrated the social sites into their daily lives, which portends both negative and positive impacts and implications, but they have made it a necessary and almost indispensable part of them, without which, life comes to a halt!

In recent years, so many arguments have been raised questioning the impact of social networking sites on the sexual behaviour of the youths and the need to control their access to them. Youths face social risks on these sites just as they do in any other public space in which people congregate. These risks include sexual solicitation, exposure, bullying, harassment, perversion and lots more. Using chat rooms, instant messaging, e-mail, or discussion boards, predators establish a relationship with their victims, many of whom are using these formats as a place to work out their troubles. They listen to and sympathize with their problems and sometimes form a part of the solution. They also try to ease people's inhibitions by gradually introducing sexual content into their conversations or by showing them sexually explicit material (Microsoft, 2007). These risks however are somewhat different in nature or scope than the ones they face in real life-offline situation because of the unlimited number of persons involved.

Within the last few years, the rapid development of the internet and mobile devices has spawned an interest in the sexual behaviour of the generation who have grown up with these technologies as part of their everyday life. They have phenomenally gone beyond just the sharing of harmless information and ideas to a rather more threatening stage of engaging in *sexting*, that is, the sending of nude or near nude pictures (of especially themselves) and/or sexually suggestive text messages using their cell phones or online. They also transfer videos via youtube, black berry messenger and other enabling sites, in addition to chatting using the web cam often in a nude or semi nude postures.

Also, making connections online that lead to offline contact have become a worrying sight among social networkers. Worrying because a lot of discussions that have to do with love and sex are being conjugated and practicalized upon meeting; which most times leads to acts that results in unwanted pregnancies, abortion, loss of lives, etc. This study is an investigation into the impact of social networking sites on the sexual behaviour of students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, (UNN).

2. Aims and Objectives of Study

The research effort aims to achieve the following objectives:

2.1.To determine why UNN students visit and use social networking sites.

2.2. To ascertain the contribution of social networking sites to sexual perversion among students of UNN.

2.3. To findout the aspect of sexuality always portrayed on social networking sites.

2.4. To fathom the perception of UNN students of contents on social networking sites.

3. Research Questions

The following research questions were answered:

3.1. What do students of UNN do on the social networking sites?

3.2. Do social networking sites contribute to sexual perversion among UNN students?

3.3. What aspects of sexuality are portrayed on social networking sites?

3.4. How do UNN students perceive contents on social networking sites?

4. Conceptual/Theoretical Issues

4.1. Social Networking Sites

Scholars in many fields have begun to investigate the various aspects and impacts of social networking sites. Many studies have been conducted around the world to investigate how these sites may play into issues of identity, privacy, youth culture and education.

Since their introduction, social networking sites have attracted many followers among teenagers including university students. As such, it is not surprising to find Social Networking Sites (SNSs) making its way into the educational environments with many, according to Pence (2007), "claiming that these social applications have even more potential to further negative acts" (P. 12).

The first social networking site appeared about two decades ago. Early SNSs tended to focus on ties with former school friends, such as classmates and then dating. However, recent SNSs focus more on the networking aspect. They provide users a space whereby they can present themselves and network with their friends. Though SNSs can appear to be similar, many of them are, in fact, quite different in terms of their purpose and the types of users they attract.

When Friendster was launched, a lot of users explored the site to connect with old friends. In as much as it was touted to be innovative, for many young people, it was a networking site mainly for 'flirting' and 'dating'. The early success of *MySpace* lay mainly with teenagers, who used the site to share photos, communicate with friends and design their own profiles. Though, launched with the idea of connecting people, it rapidly evolved into more of a music platform.

The popularity of SNSs photo sharing prompted the launch of various photo sharing sites. "One of the pioneers in 2004 was Flickr, which became known for its dynamic platform for sharing photos, comments, tags and photo repositories for blogs". (Robert, Jason & Clifford, 2010, P. 132). The power of social networking sites is that they empower us to communicate rapidly, in a one to one and one to many format along the lines of our networks of value.

Notwithstanding, it has been established that social networking sites have created a lot of problem in today's society. According to wikipedia (2011), this is as a result of the fact that children and teenagers of today have involved themselves in the character or behaviour of committing sexual immoralities in the society. Social networking sites have given way for people, especially youths of these days, to engage in online dating where other things follow.

The research findings of Palfrey, Sacco, Boyd, DeBonis & Tatlock (2008) in their studies of social networking sites and how it influences the teenagers is summarised thus: (i) Sexual predation by adults, both online and offline remains a concern. (ii) The internet increases the availability of harmful, problematic and illegal content. (iii)Unwanted exposure to pornography does occur online, but those most likely to be exposed are those seeking it out, such as younger youths.

In a similar study conducted by Cachia (2008) on the use and impact of online social networking, shows that, "young people are both at the core of these emerging technologies (social networking sites) as they use them the most, which also places them at a high risk" (P. 112). As with any other social problem or threat to young people in society, banning access to these sites is not the best solution, he concluded, noting that young internet users are often intelligent enough to find new ways of accessing social networking sites.

As SNSs revolve around the usage of their members, understanding their role, how they are using SNSs as tools of communication and what they make of them is an important aspect for understanding the impact of these new technologies.

4.2. Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Technological Determinism and uses and gratifications Theory. Technological determinism theory clearly posits that technology shapes or influences the way people think, feel and act, and how societies organise themselves and operates.

According to Baran (2010), "the concept of technological determinism was widely acclaimed to have been expanded and interpreted by Marshall McLuhan in 1962, and thereby, taking the centre stage" (P. 44). According to Croteau and Heynes, as cited in Wikipedia (2011) "technological determinism is an appproach that identifies technologies, or technological advances, as the central causal element in processes of social change".

This theory is relevant to the study considering the fact that social networking sites are product of technology, and are increasingly changing the way people interact among themselves. The theory earmarks that with every new

technology, society will change and adapt to that technology. This exactly explains why people are gravitating towards social networking sites for different reasons based on their interest. The attitude and behaviour of university students on social networking sites also underscores the postulation inherent in the theory; that is, changes in communication technology inevitably produce profound changes in both culture and social order. This explains students use of SNSs along different lines, (positive and negative) to suit their different idiosyncracies.

Meanwhile, the Uses and Gratifications theory in the summation of Folarin, (1998) "perceives the receipient as actively influencing the effect process since he selectively chooses, attends to, perceives and retains the media messages on the basis of his/her needs, beliefs. (P. 65). At the core of this theory lies the assumption that audience members actively seek out the mass media to satisfy their individual needs.

The theory is therefore relevant to this study since it provides that people are actually responsible for the contents they generate and consume and also, why they would want to continually be exposed to a particular medium in an era of multiplicity of voices without necessarily being compelled. Added to this, is the fact that people only generate and consume contents already preconceived as against the 'bullet' age where media consumers were helpless and get easily 'bullied' by mass media messages.

5. Methodology

Since the central aim of this study is to ascertain the instrumentality of social networking sites for sexual pervasion among students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, the survey research method was adopted. The population for this study constitutes students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. However, because of its somewhat large scope in view of its operation from four different campuses, the focus was delimited to Nsukka, the main campus which has 24,904 students as the total population. The sample size was statistically determined using Yamane's (1967) sample size determination formula ($n = N/1 + N(e)^2$), where:

n = Sample size ; N = Total population ; e = Limit of tolerable error ; 1 = Unit (constant value) .

Thus, hinged on the above, a sample size of four hundred (400) students comprising of undergraduates and post graduates; males and females was arrived at. Random and Quota sampling techniques were used. This was done to give all members of the population an equal chance of being selected and also to allow the researchers include various classes of students to help achieve the goal of the study. It utilizes questionnaires and personal interview as its instruments for tapping primary data from the field.

The questionnaire is made up of two sections of A and B respectively. Section A contains structurally four questions intended for drawing demographic data about the population, while part B comprises fifteen questions with an open ended question tailored towards gleaning vital information. As a ploy to generate more genuine responses, the researchers and the four research assistants went about with a specially designed closed containers with little openings and staplers so that respondents can staple after filling and drop in them, creating more level of confidentiality and trust.

The four hundred (400) questionnaires were distributed in all the fourteen (14) faculties in the main campus, Nsukka, with each getting 28 except eight faculties that had one more (29) because of the eight remaining that couldn't go round. The eight was arrived at via simple random balloting. The questionnaires were randomly distributed within three days in the concerned faculties with the four research assistants spread around. This is to randomly create more room for wider and effective participation of disciplines and levels. In the resultant process, all levels- 100, 200, 300, 400, 500- and postgraduates from different departments and in respective faculties were all reflected.

On the other hand, the interview involved twelve (12) students of UNN. Again, simple random balloting was relied upon to arrive at the six faculties earmarked. Two volunteers were picked from each to arrive at the 12 and each interviewee was interviewed separately by the researchers. This is to allow them some level of freedom and privacy and also enable the researchers generate more genuine responses to reflect reality. However, the same questions, which made up the interview schedule, were predominantly thrown to all of them to allow room for reliability and simple generalization.

To ensure that the instruments are amply valid and reliable; the researchers conducted a pilot test on them by administering it to eight students to especially test their understanding of the questions and subjected to scrutiny by four scholars in the field to ensure its rationality and relevance to the focus of study. Various suggestions made were used to modify the instruments. Quantitative and qualitative methods were adopted in presenting and analysing the

data collected from the field. Meanwhile, descriptive instrument as well as frequency tables and percentages are used for the performance of this task.

6. Data Presentation and Analysis

The study which was conducted between March and June, 2012- sampled 400 students from both undergraduate and post graduate and all the levels were reflected. Out of the 400 questionnaires, 386 were returned and properly filled. Therefore, it became the basis for our analysis.

Table 1: *Respondents Demography (n=386)*

ITEMS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE %
Sex		
Male	168	44
Female	218	56
Total	386	100
Age		
20 and below	89	23
21-25	142	37
26-30	130	34
31-35	21	5
36 and above	2	1
Total	386	100
Educational level		
Undergraduate	302	78.2
Post graduate	84	21.8
Total	386	100
Levels		
100	92	24
200	81	21
300	64	17
400	47	12
500	18	4
Post Graduate	84	22
Total	386	100

Source: *Field work, 2012*

Table 1 shows the complete demographic information of the respondents. For their sex, 168 representing 44% were males while a majority of 218 representing 56% were females. 23% were between ages 20 and below; 21 to 25 years had the highest number of 142 respondents representing 37% closely followed by ages 26 to 30 with 34%. Ages between 31 and 35 was second to the lowest number of respondents with 5% while 36 and above was lowest with 2 respondents representing 1%.

As it regards the educational level of respondents, a majority of 302 respondents representing 78.2% were undergraduates while only 84 or 21.8% were post graduates. All the levels were reflected. 100 level has the highest respondents of 92 or 24% followed by 200 level with 81 respondents representing 21%. 64 respondents were in 300 level representing 17%; 400 level had 47 or 12% while 500 level had the smallest respondents of 18 representing 4%. Finally, postgraduates had 84 respondents or 22%.

Table 2: *Active use of any social networking site (n=386)*

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE %
Yes	386	100
No	0	0
Total	386	100

Source: *Field work, 2012*

Table 2 above shows that all the respondents, 386 representing 100% use at least one social networking site. This is a reflection of the overwhelming exposure of university students to social networking sites.

Table 3: *Total numbers of SNSs used actively (n=386)*

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE %
4 and above	99	25.4
3	231	60
2	50	13
1	6	1.6
Total	386	100

Source: *Field work, 2012*

Table 3 shows the number(s) of social networking sites the respondents use actively. 99 or 25.4% of respondents use 4 and above while the highest number of 231 respondents representing 60% actively uses 3. The number of respondents that uses 2 was second to the highest with 13% while those that actively use 1 were 6 representing 1.6%. This shows that the majority of students actively uses 2 and above social networking sites but disposed more predominantly to three.

Table 4: *Ranking of SNSs based on students preference (n=386)*

ITEMS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE %
2go	115	30
Face book	94	24
Black berry messenger	118	30.6
Nimbuzz	21	5.4
Yahoo messenger	38	10
Total	386	100

Source: *Field work, 2012*

Table 4 shows the ranking of social networking sites based on respondents most preferred. Although, black berry messenger is far the most preferably used with the confirmation of 118 respondents representing 30.6%, 2go and face book also enjoy a substantial preferred usage of 115 or 30% and 94 or 24% respectively. Meanwhile, yahoo messenger and Nimbuzz had 38 or 10% and 21 or 5.4% accordingly, making them second to the last and last in terms of most preferred usage. Black berry messenger apart from being the most common have the potentials of allowing the exchange of pictures, texts, videos, etc, perhaps, why it ranked first.

Table 5: *The frequency of use of SNSs (n=386)*

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE %
Very regularly	189	49
Regularly	156	40.4
Not regularly	30	7.8
Hardly	11	2.8
Total	386	100

Source: *Field work, 2012*

The table shows that out of the 386 respondents using social networking sites, majority of 189 representing 49% visits SNSs very regularly and 156 or 40.4% use same regularly. And while 30 or 7.8% of the respondents does not use SNSs regularly, 11 representing 2.8% hardly use it.

Table 6: *What SNSs is used more for (n=386)*

ITEMS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE %
Relationship/Dating	224	58
Information/Research	33	9
Escapism	96	25
Religion	16	4
Sexual satisfaction	17	4
Total	386	100

Source: *Field work, 2012*

Table 6 above shows that most of the respondents use social networking predominantly for relationship/dating as it's reflected in the response of an overwhelming majority of 224 respondents representing 58%. While a very small number of 33 or 9% respondents' use it for information and research purposes; the second highest number of 96 respondents representing 25% use SNSs majorly for escapism. The lowest number of 16 or 4% of the respondents uses it for religious purposes while 17 respondents representing 4% engages it for sexual satisfaction. It is deducible from the above table that students of UNN visit or use social networking sites for different reasons; ranging from relationship/dating, information/research, escapism, religion to sexual satisfaction. However, it is obviously pronounced that relationship/dating tops the motives.

Table 7: *Preferred sex for chatting on SNSs (n=386)*

ITEMS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE %
Opposite sex	290	73
Any	106	27
Total	386	100

Source: *Field work, 2012*

Table 7 shows that a higher number of 290 respondents representing 73% prefer to chat or discuss with the opposite sex on SNSs while only 106 respondents representing 27% wouldn't mind the sex category.

Table 8: *Online relationship with strangers (n=386)*

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE %
Yes	161	42
No	225	58
Total	386	100

Source: *Field work, 2012*

Table 8 try to ascertain if respondents have (or have had) any online relationship through SNSs with people they have not met in the real world. The table reveals that 161 or 42% of the respondents have been into online relationship with people they have not met in real life before. However, a majority of respondents representing 58% have not engaged in such before.

Table 9: *Meeting online friends in real world (n=386)*

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE %
Yes	188	49
No	198	51
Total	386	100

Source: *Field work, 2012*

Table 9 suggests that out of the 198 users who made friendship through social networking sites, 188 or 49% said they have met their online friends in real world while a more number of 114 or 51% are yet (or have not) to meet their online friends.

Table 10A: *If aware that people indulge in online sex (n=386)*

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE %
Yes	292	76
No	94	24
Total	386	100

Source: *Field work, 2012*

In a bid to find out if the respondents are aware that people indulge in online sex, table 10A reveals that an amazing number of 292 or 76% of the respondents are aware while 94 or 24% of the respondents said they are not aware.

Table 10B: *If indulged in online sex directly or indirectly before (n=292)*

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE %
Yes	79	27
No	153	52
Not sure	60	21
Total	292	100

Source: *Field work, 2012*

Table 10B shows that out of the 292 respondents, 79 or 27% have directly or indirectly engaged in online sex before while a greater number of 153 or 52% have not. 60 or 21% said they are not sure.

Table 11: *Aspects of sexuality portrayed more on SNSs (n=386)*

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE %
Pornography	48	12
Nude pictures of self	42	11
Semi nude pictures of self	158	41
Sexual/sexually suggestive words	138	36
None	0	0
Total	386	100

Source: *Field work, 2012*

Semi nude pictures of self representing 41% dominate the ways by which sexuality is portrayed on social networking sites as seen in table 11 above. 138 or 36% of the respondents said sexually and/or sexually suggestive words is very common while 48 or 12% said it is pornography. 42 or 11%, capturing the smallest number of respondents went for pornography. However, no respondent agreed to none.

Table 12: *Negative impacts of SNSs on personal life (n=386)*

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE %
Loss of privacy	86	22
Having more than one relationship	185	48
Distraction of other activities	101	26
Others	14	4
Total	386	100

Source: *Field work, 2012*

The table reveals that 86 or 22% went for loss of privacy while the majority of 185 or 48% of respondents said it is making them engage in more than one relationship. Distraction of other activities as a negative impact had a higher number of 101 respondents, representing 26%. However, 14 or 4% ticked others to mean options that were not included.

Table 13: *Perception of contents on SNSs (n=386)*

ITEMS	FREQUENCY	PPERCENTAGE %
Very Decent	24	6
Decent	67	17
Normal	121	31
Obscene/offensive	99	26
Very Obscene	75	19
Total	386	100

Source: *Field work, 2012*

Although, majority admitted to have been exposed directly or indirectly to sexual contents on social networking sites in especially tables 10 and 11, but only 99 or 26% of the respondents consider the content offensive while the highest number of 121 or 31% of respondents sees it as a normal thing. 17% sees it as a decent sight while 6% sees it as being very decent. However, 75 of the respondents representing 19% believe the contents are very obscene. This demonstrates the various opinions people have concerning the social networking sites content and variation in the reasons for using them.

In the last part of the questionnaire, the researchers gave a chance for the respondents to give other insights about social networking sites, especially not reflected in the initial questions. Most of the respondents opined that the social networking sites help them to stay connected with their friends and family, around the clock, wherever they are, where ever they go. They find it as a virtual place to hang around with friends and have fun by commenting, chatting and sharing photos/videos. Perhaps, this might be the significant aspect of social networking sites, which triggered the boom of online social networking and by consequence, its ills like sexual perversion.

On the other hand, they also opined that the continuous use of such sites made them feel addicted to it, with most of them putting it into a very wrong use. According to them, some unwanted pregnancies now arise out of relationships generated from SNSs and since the rate of fake profile is high, it is most times very difficult to trace the persons responsible. *They added that a lot of people now 'make love' online, making it un-surprising why one hears some questionable 'sounds' even when the person appears to be alone*. These perhaps made few of the respondents (though) to comment that online social networking is simply a weapon of mass erosion of culture and moral values.

6.1. Presentation and Analysis of Interview-Generated Data

This interview was conducted on 30th and 31st March, 2012 respectively.   The first question in the schedule was slated to elicit responses bordering on the major things they do on social networking sites. In response, all the persons interviewed described what they do differently to include: looking to initiate relationships/dating, while away time, to keep in touch with friends, to avoid being lonely, to link up with old friends, and to avoid missing their partners via exchange of pictures and videos which at times gives them satisfaction sexually and otherwise.

When asked if social networking sites contribute to sexual pervasion among students, the whole respondents were unanimous in saying yes. According to them, the level of growing addiction in the use of these SNSs is alarming so much so that even in lecture halls, they are seen on these sites, when crossing the road, they are on it, and some even some with it in it (the SNS). They added that the too much time spent on these sites is enough to want to explore the most devilish and evil things. In their views, they are in the process exposed to pornography, nude pictures and use of vulgar words which they are often inclined to practice in the real world. According to one of the interviewee, "the madness have become so common and acceptable that even our parents/guardians now see it as normal; they even help us to replace our communication gadgets with more expensive and sophisticated ones".

Similarly, when the researchers asked the interviewees what their assessment of contents usually shared on social networking sites are, they were slightly divided. While some say the contents are very okay, stressing that it is relative depending on what you have gone there to do and what you are ready to be exposed to, six of the interviewees believe the contents usually shared, especially between the opposite sex and even more with those that are dating are negative. Few others however perceive the contents as simply normal. According to one of the interviewees, "If it gives me pleasure, why should I say it is bad". All the interviewees however agreed that there should be some form of regulation in checkmating the excesses.

In responding to the final question; if they have by chance witnessed any sexually explicit or implicit content while on SNS, ten out of the 12 interviewees agreed to it but declined more comment when probed to know further. However, three out of the ten said they were 'accidental'. The remaining two interviewees denied ever seeing such.

6.2. Findings

To materialize the broad objectives of the study, the researchers had earlier raised four research questions. Here, they will be discussed in line with the results successfully collected from our respondents.

6.2.1   RQ.1: What do UNN students do on social networking sites?

From the various data generated, the study reveals some interesting facts about the use of social networking sites. It was gathered that the students use these sites to network and interact with their families and connect with old and new friends, for sexual satisfaction, to interact about what is going on around them, for escapism, religion and most especially, relationship/dating as is reflected in *table 6* with 58%, becoming the main reason amongst others behind the users' motivation to use SNSs. They often do this either regularly or very regularly as depicted in *table 5* with 40.4% and 49% respectively, even to the extent of keeping online relationships with strangers as is reflected in table 8 with 42% nodding to it and taking same further by meeting the same online friends in real world as *table 9* (49%) reflects. However, only very few use it for religious and research purposes. This attests to the fact that the majority of students are attracted to these sites mainly on the grounds of initiating and maintaining relationships cum sexual indulgence/promiscuity.

6.2.2   RQ. 2: Do SNSs contribute to sexual pervasion among UNN students?

It is unambiguously deducible from the instruments especially, from responses on the last question on the questionnaire which seeks to know other insights of the respondents and also from the interviewees overwhelming response of 'yes' to the above, it is obvious that the usages of social networking sites contribute to sexual perversion among students of UNN. It was realised that via these sites, they are exposed to pornography, nude and semi nude pictures and use of vulgar words (table 11) which they are often inclined to practice in the real world in the form of perversion. Perhaps, apart from rehearsing this online with gullible peers, they also create avenues of seeing in real life times as shown in *table 9* (49%), thereby heightening their chances of exhibiting same.

To also buttress this further, respondents agree that they are aware that people indulge in online sex as is explicit in *table 10A* (76%) with 27% in *table 10B* consenting that they have indulged in same before. Though, a great majority representing 52% say they have not, *table 11* shows that all the 386 respondents have the knowledge of the type of

sexuality frequently portrayed on SNSs- pornographic, nude pictures of self, semi nude pictures of self and sexually suggestive words. Similarly, chances are high that many out of the 21% that say they are not sure in *table 10B* may have equally experienced it but shy to express it. The two latter instances suggests some level of incongruence which may as well mean that some of the respondents are either too shy to say the whole truth or just with-holding it.

However, it is explicitly or implicitly obvious from the above that SNSs contributes to sexual perversion among university students.

6.2.3. RQ. 3: What aspects of sexuality are portrayed on social networking sites?

That sexuality of students is promoted through their use of social networking sites have been established especially in research question two (2) above. In analysing the aspects of sexuality portrayed on SNS, *table 11* comes handy. Here, all the 386 respondents agree to the forms of sexuality reflected to include; pornography (12%), nude pictures of self (11%), semi nude pictures of self (41%) and sexual or sexually suggestive words (36%). Nobody went for the last option, 'none of the above', meaning the students are not only aware that there are sexually related practices undertaken in SNS, but they also have good knowledge of how it is done. These aspects mentioned above reflect the most utilized aspects of sexuality on SNSs.

6.2.4. RQ. 4: How do UNN students perceive contents on SNSs?

Despite the 386 respondents selecting and thereby agreeing to the dominant aspects of sexuality portrayed via SNSs in *table 11* (pornography, nude and semi nude pictures of self and sexually suggestive words), and also consenting in *table 10A* (76%) that they are aware that people indulge in online sex and with a sizeable number in *table 10B* confirming they have indulged in online sex before; it becomes only appalling to discover as shown in *table 13* with 212 out of the 386 representing 55% saying their perception of contents on SNSs is very decent, decent or normal with only 45% believing it is obscene or very obscene. The above discovery only underscores respondents' opinion in the open ended question. Citing this statement by one as an example: "I wonder why they think of something as being *offensive* when it gives them pleasure"!

It can therefore be concluded that most students of UNN do not see anything wrong with contents on SNSs as long as they derive unhindered satisfaction from using them, irrespective of the line of satisfaction; it's more of a matter of gratification!

7. Conclusion

Although social networks may encourage positive relationships and the sharing of content, we have also come to recognize that the technology revolution has opened up a seemingly limitless world of unmediated information that can be a powerful tool for the commission of crime. The various literatures suggest sexual predators are increasingly using the Internet to lure, solicit, and sexually exploit people. "Self-exploitation," the creation and distribution of explicit or inappropriate pictures of oneself or one's peers, has become a gradually stabilising high-risk behaviour. The trend however, has to be curtailed, lest we are in for a worst society; a society where its leaders of tomorrow are on the brink of cultural and/or moral summersault!

8. Recommendations

A way should be devised to monitor and regulate contents being shared on SNSs. Regulators should expose, punish or block anybody found exchanging any sexually explicit or implicit content or engaging in online sex.

Various counselling session in the form of seminars, symposium and lectures should be designed for the youths/students on the ways of using SNSs with emphasis also on the dangers, in schools especially in universities.

Also, the traditional mass media of television, radio, newspaper, film etc should endeavour to cultivate programs that will discourage wayward use of social networking tools and set agenda on such.

Parents/guardians should monitor their wards and at times checkmate their activities. Allowing them to spend excessive time on line is totally uncalled for. This creates addiction even to adulthood. They should also avoid getting their wards phones that are extremely sophisticated way beyond their age. Sure, it is easier taming their actions at a much tender age.

References

Bittner, J. (1989). *Mass communication: an introduction (5th Edition)*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Baran, S. (2010). *Introduction to Mass Communication: Media Literacy and Culture* (6th Edition). Boston: McGraw-Hill

Brogan, C. (2010). *Social Media: Tactics and Tips to Develop Your Business Online*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Cachia, R. (2008). *Social Computing: Study on the use and impact of online social networking*. Spain: European Commission.

Danah, B. (2007). Social networking sites history and scholarship. *Journal of computer mediated communication*, *10*, 262-274. DOI: 10.1111/j.1369-7625.2009.00560.x.

Embi, M. & Hassan, H. (2012)**.** The use of social networking sites among Malaysian university students. *International Education Studies*, 1913-9020. DOI: doi:10.5539/ies.v5n3p56.

Folarin, B. (1998). *Theories of Mass Communication: An Introductory Test*. Ibadan: Stirling Horden Publishers.

Gane, N. & Beer, D. (2008). *New Media: The Key Concepts*. New York: Banta Press

Ojo, O., & Fasubaa, O. (2005). Adolescent Sexuality and Family Life Education in South-Western Nigeria: Responses from Focus Group Discussion. *Journal of Social Science, 10*(2), 111-118.

Okunna C. (2002) Teaching Mass Communication: A Multi-Dimensional Approach. Enugu: New Age Press.

Microsoft (Jan. 2007). "Online predators: Help minimize the risk". Retrieved July 29, 2008from http://www.microsoft.com/protect/family/guidelines/predators.mspx

Palfrey, J., Sacco, D., Boyd, D., DeBonis, L., Tatlock, J. (2008). *Enhancing child safety and online technologies*. New York: Harvard University Press

Pence, H. (2007). Preparing for the real web generation. *Journal of educational technology systems*, 35(3), 347-356. http://dx.doi.org/10.2190/7116-G776-7P42-V110

Robert, Z., Jason B., & Clifford, D. (2010). *Adolescent online social communication and behavior*. USA: Information Science Reference

Yamane, T. (1967). *Statistics, An Introductory Analysis,* 2nd Ed.. New York: Harper and Row.

Wikipedia Contributors (2011): *Technological Determinism Theory.* Retrieved from http//www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technological-determinism.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The IISTE is currently hosting more than 30 peer-reviewed academic journals and collaborating with academic institutions around the world. There's no deadline for submission. **Prospective authors of IISTE journals can find the submission instruction on the following page:** http://www.iiste.org/Journals/

The IISTE editorial team promises to the review and publish all the qualified submissions in a **fast** manner. All the journals articles are available online to the readers all over the world without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself. Printed version of the journals is also available upon request of readers and authors.

IISTE Knowledge Sharing Partners

EBSCO, Index Copernicus, Ulrich's Periodicals Directory, JournalTOCS, PKP Open Archives Harvester, Bielefeld Academic Search Engine, Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek EZB, Open J-Gate, OCLC WorldCat, Universe Digtial Library , NewJour, Google Scholar