

**KNOWLEDGE OF RESPONSIBLE USE AMONG UNDERGRADUATES
OF UNIVERSITIES OF SOUTH EAST, NIGERIA: IMPERATIVE OF
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION**

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Background to the Study

There is no doubt that the 21st century has recorded unprecedented breakthrough in the area of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). Consequently, we are now in a brand new world which is characterized by a radical redefinition of the means and process by which people interact, share and exchange ideas, opinions, belief, messages, knowledge and experiences, through the use of text messages, pictures, videos, drawing, among others. This revolution has been facilitated by the advent of the internet-oriented social networking sites commonly referred to as the social media.

The popularity of the social media has been greatly enhanced by the fact that it offers one the opportunity to be both consumer and producer of wide range of communications at the same time. This is unlike the mainstream media that provide little, rigorous and delayed chances for feedback mechanism. Abott (2012), refers to the 21st Century global communication industry as the “prosumer era”. In a similar view, Nwabueze, Obasi and Obi, (2013), posit that the social media ushered the world into the “attention age”. An era which according to them, developed after the information age; and it is characterized by the ability of the individuals to create and consume information instantly and freely and as well, share it on the internet via the social media. Ufuophu-Biri and Iwu (2014), cite

Ekeanyanwu and Kalyango (2014), as describing the social media as the ninth wonder of the contemporary world. They note that these social networking sites are becoming much more connected, interactive, participatory, integrative, community-based, ubiquitous and digital.

In the words of Okoro, Nwafor and Chibuwe (2013, p. 49), “social media platforms are interactive, web-based media sites which belong to the new genre of media that focus on social networking allowing user to express themselves, interact with friends, share personal information, as well as, publish their own views on the internet”. The implication of the advent of the social media is that it has brought back the era of libertarianism in the global information and communication industry. This means that, social media users have almost absolute freedom on how to idiosyncratically use the social media to achieve the desired gratification(s).

Unfortunately, the freedom inherent in the use the social media for communication and information sharing and exchange is now witnessing increasing abuses, reminiscing the event that led to the emergence of the social responsibility theory. Nwabueze, (2012, p. 93), paints the picture more vividly as follows:

The social responsibility theory was developed to check the excesses of a free press. When the libertarian theory came under attack for giving the press too much freedom without explaining obligations attached to such freedom, the Hutchins Commission on Freedom of the Press was set up in the United States of America in 1942. The Commission produced its report in 1947, from which, the social responsibility theory emerged.

Commenting on the unfolding ugly side of the African social media industry, Okoro, Nwafor, and Chibuwe (2013, p. 48), argue that “there is no doubt that the social media are unfettered, uncensored and unregulated in most African countries”. Ufuophu-Biri and Iwu (2014), investigated the negative side of the

social media and found that there was a significant relationship between the students' use of the social media and their involvement in prostitution. They also found that there was a significant relationship between the student's gender and their use of the social media for prostitution. As a result, they called on the authorities of the selected institutions of learning and other relevant governmental and non-governmental agencies to mount orientation programmes and formulate policies to discourage the students from using social media for negative purposes. Akindehin and Akindehin, (2011, p. 68), after their own study draw their conclusion thus:

To make classroom instructional events relevant to the real world of the students therefore, counselors need to establish helping relationship with students as online social network practices is appropriately utilized, to complement classroom learning activities.

Besides, our interest in this study was further heightened by the revelations that some employers, schools, scholarship administrators and sports coaches in some developed countries like America, Britain and France now investigate and judge online activities and reputations of candidates before the final selection of beneficiaries. Gail Hand in his "10 smart social media tips for students published in the CollegeXpress , retrieved on January 24, 2015 says:

I want all of you to avoid losing scholarship, being kicked off great sports team, or damaging your reputations forever online. You will save yourself a lot of headaches if you do one small thing: think before you post ... Students ask me all the time, "how can employers judge me by my college events postings and who my friends are?" With a tough job market, employers do judge easily and readily. This also means that if you have your social media accounts so locked down that no one can see what you are doing, it can look a little suspicious when going in for an interview. They want to be able to google you and not just see you postings from last month-they want to see something positive about you.
(CollegeXpress:com/article-and-advice/student-life/article/)

Against this backdrop, our worry becomes the fact that the world has really become a global village, such that, the above painted scenario may eventually become part of the system in many more countries of the world, including Nigeria.

Moreover, graduates of Nigerian Universities as exemplified by those from South East Zone seek job, postgraduate admissions and other favours across the countries of the world and will surely meet situation that involve probing their level of responsibility in social media use. Consequently, this research is geared towards answering two major questions: are the undergraduates of Universities of South East, Nigeria aware of the negative implications of irresponsible use of the social media? Do Universities of South East, Nigeria have any mechanism in place for educating and orientating their undergraduates on responsible use of the social media?

Statement of the Problem

Today, Social media use has become an integral part of the teaching and learning environment in institutions of higher learning across the world, universities in South East, Nigeria inclusive. Research findings on this new platform for social and public communications in Nigeria have largely shown that significant number of Nigerian undergraduates and universities including those in South East of the country engage in online social networking for the purposes which among others are: social interaction, communicating instruction and directives, teaching and learning.

However, the issue now is that though many of these students by now possess the technical know-how of social media use, they may still remain ignorant of the fact that some of their online activities and postings via the various social media platforms injurious to their online reputations.

Stained or dented online reputations may work against candidate's interest in such occasions as job interview, promotion in work place, scholarship award,

etc. as obtained today in some nations, like USA, Britain, France etc.

The problem of the study therefore, becomes the need to ascertain if the students in universities of South East, Nigeria are aware, and as well, have the knowledge that some of their online social networking activities are injurious or harmful to their online reputations. Besides, the study is also interested in determining if universities in South East, Nigeria have mechanism on ground for educating their students on responsible use of the social media.

Research Objectives

The broad objective of the study is to determine the knowledge level of the students about the negative implications of irresponsible social media use while the specific objectives are:

1. To determine the undergraduates' level of awareness that irresponsible social media use is injurious to their online reputations.
2. To ascertain if universities in South East, Nigeria are making effort geared towards promoting responsible use of the social media among their undergraduates.
3. To evaluate if irresponsibility in the use of the social media among the undergraduates is related to their gender.
4. To determine if there is a significant difference in the way the Social media platforms are used to promote teaching and learning by the first, second and third generation Universities in South East, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The followings are the research questions:

1. Are the students in universities of South East, Nigeria aware that irresponsible use of the social media is injurious to their online reputations?
2. Does the level of irresponsibility in social media use among the undergraduates depend on the lack of social media education in their respective Universities?
3. Are the female undergraduates in universities of South East, Nigeria more irresponsible in their social media use than their male counterparts?
4. Is there a significant difference in the way the social media platforms are used to promote teaching and learning among the first, second and third generation universities in South East, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The hypotheses of the study are:

Hypothesis One:

Ho: Irresponsibility in the use of the social media among the undergraduates is not as a result of their unawareness that it is injurious to their online reputations.

Hypothesis Two:

Ho: The level of irresponsibility in social media use among the undergraduates is not dependent on the lack of social media education in their Universities.

Hypothesis Three

Ho: The female undergraduates are not more irresponsible in their social media use than their male counterparts.

Hypothesis Four

Ho: There is no significant difference in the way the social media platforms are used to promote teaching and learning by the first, second and third generation Universities in South East, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Though many researches have been undertaken to investigate the pattern of social media use among the Nigerian Youths, particularly, among undergraduates of tertiary institutions of learning, the researcher at the point of this study was yet to find any work specifically tailored to probe the students' level of awareness and knowledge that some of their social media practices are injurious to their online reputations. This study is embarked upon to cover this lacuna.

The study's novel idea of investigating if there is organized or structured mechanism put in place by universities in South East, Nigeria for educating their undergraduates on responsible social media use is another significant contribution to knowledge.

Therefore, the study is of high significance to undergraduates of Nigerian universities, particularly, those in the South East of the country. This is because their respective reputation is asset and key to their future successes. The major thrust of this study is nothing but the protection and promotion of the students' online reputation.

Again, universities bear the responsibility of churning out on annual basis graduates who are found worthy both in character and learning. And whatever that is capable of staining the character and reputations of these graduates must be given a hot chase.

Parents and guardians of these students stand to benefit as the study is aimed at ensuring acceptable cum standard online socialization and proper character and image building among their children in the universities.

The study will also be an addition to the body of knowledge and works already existing on the use of the social media in Nigeria nay Africa at large.

Scope of the Study

The study is only interested in investigating the students' awareness of the consequences of irresponsible use of social media and not the diversified uses in which the social media have witnessed across the globe. The study believes that whatever social media practice that is capable of giving one bad reputation is outside the purview of responsible use.

By implication, the study covers all the social media platforms which the undergraduates in universities of South East, Nigeria use in connecting one another such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, BBM, 2GO, YouTube etc. Again, the study is only interested in verifying if universities in South East, Nigeria have realized the need to orientate their students on responsible use of the social media to avoid present and future dent of their online reputations. Hence, the study does not primarily aim at investigating if universities in South East, Nigeria as public institutions have cued into the evolving world of social media use. Moreso, only undergraduates are being studied because it is assumed that postgraduates students and university staff would have been more concerned about reputation damage through irresponsible social media practices. Though, this may be subject of further study.

Validity and Reliability of the Research Instrument

The validity of the measuring instrument (the questionnaire), was ensured through the use of pre-testing and post-testing approach. Ten copies of the questionnaire were produced and administered on randomly selected ten students of Federal University, Ndufu-Alike, Ikwo (FUNAI). The responses generated indicated areas of ambiguity in the questionnaire. The affected questions were reframed, and at the end, the researcher returned to the school for post-testing before the production of the final copy of the questionnaire.

Also, the reliability of the instrument was calculated using the formula:

$$R = \frac{2ro}{1 + ro}$$

Where r = reliability

o = odd number questions

e = even number questions

At the end, the calculated value of r is +1.99 which is greater than 0 is as a decision point. This means that reliability of the instrument is assured.

Conceptual Clarifications

The need to carry the reader along a writer's line of thought to avoid misconception and misunderstanding lends credence to the imperativeness of this session designed for conceptual clarifications.

By **social media knowledge** in this work, the researcher is referring to the students' awareness and knowledge of the negative consequences of irresponsible social media use, and as well, knowledge of what constitutes irresponsibility in online social networking practices.

Social media use, this is referring to such irresponsible online social networking

practices among the students which go beyond the borders of crime and immorality to include other negativities, as addiction to social media use, online bullying, posting of indecent pictures/videos, being racist, being tribalistic, abusive etc.

Again, **social media education** means what the university managements have done or what is being done to sustainably educate or orientate the undergraduates on the responsible use of the social media to avoid stain in their online reputations even after their university days. For example, the university managements can organise workshop, seminar, town hall meetings on responsible social media use.

Review of Related Literature

The Emergence of Social Media: An Overview

There is no doubt that the social media have recorded unprecedented popularity as means of both interpersonal and public communications in the contemporary world. The interactive nature of the social media which allows people to simultaneously serve as both consumers and producers of the social communication contents has to a large extent resurrected the debate on the merit or otherwise of libertarianism. It is perhaps in recognition of this high level of freedom in social media communications that Nwabueze, Obasi and Obi (2013, p. 36), posit that “social media are social interaction channels which functionally involves both sender and receiver in determining message content.”

Social media platforms as highlighted earlier, therefore, are internet oriented social communication channels or platforms through which people irrespective of distance are connected to one another for the purpose of sharing ideas, experiences, information, building relationship, pursuance of common interest etc, through the use of pictures, text or audio messages, videos, drawings,

cartoons and symbols.

Okoro, Nwafor and Chibuwe (2013), hold the same view when they posit that Social media are interactive web-based media which belong to the new genre of media that focus on social networking allowing users to express themselves, interact with friends, share personal information and as well, publish their own views on the internet. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), concur when they opine that social media are web-based technologies that transform and broadcast media monologues into social dialogue. The uniqueness of the social media communication as already noted lies on its interactivity and the high degree of freedom granted the individuals involved in the creation, consumption and the recreation of the communication contents to do it the way they want it.

The social media make a significant departure from the mainstream media because they are greatly characterized by the ability of the individuals to create and consume information instantly and freely, and as well, share it on the internet, (Nwabueze, Obasi and Obi, 2013). It is not only that there are so many social media platforms available to users, but each of these platforms, is constantly witnessing technical upgrading for the purpose of providing more efficient and effective services addressing some technical lacuna and introducing new services; all in a bid to increase and sustain their respective users. Such social media platforms among others are: Facebook, Twitter, Orkut, Myspace, WhatsAPP, YouTube, 2go. Flickr, Wordpress, LinkedIn, Wikipedia wetpaint, wikidot, secondlife, Delicious, Digg, Reddit, Lulu, skype, Qzone, blog, Typepad and H15 etc.

Haruna and Dalandi (2013 p. 72), appear to be more technical in their conception of social media as they refer to Bohler-muller and Van-der-merwe (2011), as saying that social media are “web-based tools and services that allow users to create, share, rate and search for content and information without having

to log into any specific portal site or portal destination.” In their words, Kaplan and Haenlein, (2010, p. 59), further technically define social media as a group of “Internet based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of web 2.0, that allow the creation and exchange of user generated contents.” While noting that there six types of social media platforms namely: Collaborative project example Blogs, content communities, social network sites, virtual game worlds and virtual social worlds. They maintain that, there are two major technical concepts that are associated with the concept of social media. These are web 2.0 and User Generated Content (UGC). To them, web 2.0 is an improvement on web 1.0. In their words:

Web 2.0 is a term used to describe a new way in which software developers and end users started to utilize the world Wide Web, that is a platform whereby content and applications are no longer created and published by individual (as done in the era web 1.0), but instead are continuously modified by all users in a participatory and collaborative fashion. While applications such as personal web page; Encyclopedia Britannica online and the idea of content publishing belong to the era of web 1.0, they are replaced by blogs, wikis and collaborative projects in web 2.0 When web 2.0 represents the ideological and technological foundation. User Generated Content (UGC) can be seen as the sum of all ways in which people make use of social media, (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010, p. 60).

Today, the world is already anticipating the arrival of the predicted Web 3.0. The third generation web 3.0 is expectedly an evolutionary stage that promises significant improvements on the services offered by web 2.0. It is anticipated that the web 3.0 will be faster than the web 2.0, and as well, provide better search engine through social bookmarking which will offer more intelligent results than Google.

Generally, the third generation web (web 3.0) will witness the “merger of computers as source for Music, movies, and puts the internet more at the centre of both our work and our play, and as well, increase the generality of internet access

through different types of mobile devices,” (Computer.howstuffworks.com/web-3.0htm). It therefore, suffices to say that social media is now a major component of today’s world and will probably play more significant roles in people’s lives in the days ahead.

The opportunities offered by the social media are paying off in different areas of life-business and marketing, teaching and learning, sporting, politics, entertainments etc. Indeed, it is quite obvious that the social media are nothing, but, one of the practical expressions of the reality of globalization. And as such, no modern society and man can escape its pervasive influence and uses. What should be of paramount importance now is not how to muzzle or gag the social media but the probing of the people’s knowledge and awareness of its responsible uses as a general guide to social media education in Nigeria, and as well, other nations of the world.

Technophilia: Challenges Inherent in the Complementary Role of the Social Media in the 21st Century Formal Education

Increasing number of researchers and educationists are emphasizing the unfolding complementary relationship between the social media use among students and teachers for structural or formal education across the globe. For instance, tertiary education worldwide is structured in such a way that both the students and the teachers are constantly involved in research and collaborative efforts geared towards attaining educational excellence, fortunately, the social media platforms now provide greater and more enhanced opportunities for this much desired academic collaboration and researches. It also provides more

flexible ways of teaching and learning. Today, the development and introduction of the new Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), which has in turn, ushered in the “technophoric” era of the social media, has indeed, given both the learner and the instructor the opportunity to search for more information, and as well , interact positively and progressively from different locations, (Sanusi, Adelabu and Okuunade, 2014).

According to them, many students and educationists are using sites like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Myspace, Flickr, Netlog, slideshare, and tools such as skype, and Yahoo messenger to connect students to learning opportunities in new and exciting ways.

A columnist with the *USAToday*, Lori Grisham in an article entitled “Teachers, Students and Social Media: Where is the Line?” notes that “some instructors want to use Facebook and Twitter as teaching tools, yet, there is concern that appropriate boundaries are maintained.” Grisham narrates the story of Carol Thebarger, a 79- year-old substitute teacher in Claremonth, USA, who was directed to unfriend the more than 200 students on her Facebook account by the authority of the school she is teaching and she preferred resigning saying that she regards her Facebook as an extended classroom.” The story further reveals that the school authority gave the ultimatum after another teacher in the school; Christopher Leblance was arrested for sexually assaulting a 14-year old female student of the school. Grisham concludes that teachers-students social networking is “a very slippery slope” because the teacher may have the best of all intention only to be misinterpreted by the student and parent.

Consequently, some school officials are trying to find a middle ground. Grisham gives example of New York City Dept of Education Development Guidelines that provides that teachers can create professional social media sites

such as Facebook pages created for class or project, but, should not communicate students through their personal pages and that Twitter is a good social media option because it is more public.

In their own argument, Sanusi, Adelabu and Okunnade, (2014, p. 24) maintain that inspite the fact that students and the instructors/teachers can abuse the use of social media for teaching and learning, it still suffices to accept that the sites offer tremendous education. In their worlds:

Critics of structural school learning have argued in favour of a more flexible way to pass knowledge from instructor to learners at the learners' convenience. What that implies is that learners are expected to have a choice in the learning environment of where when and how learning should take place. This is what experts call flexible or personalized learning. It aims to meet individuals need by providing choices that allow students to meet their own educational requirements in ways suitable to their individual wants. Thus, flexible learning implies learning that promotes extra classes like tutorials, posting of notes, lecture updates or notice to students through these social networking sites.

It is therefore, proper to say that online social networking and their various platforms are increasingly becoming integral part of the 21st century peoples' culture. And the entire process of teaching and learning especially at the university level should now be structured to reflect the realities of today's environment-social media practices. Onwe and Ezekwe (2013), concur when they maintain that the use of ICT (e-learning) in tertiary institutions of learning, teaching and community development is an on-going reality. However, they expressed worries that the inequalities that exist among tertiary students in terms of access, knowledge and use of ICT is a significant challenge and threat to the success of e-learning in our country Nigeria. Moreover, many researchers on the uses and gratifications of the social media among Nigerian Youths, particularly, students, reveal that those that have access, knowledge and the technical skill and

experience of using social media platforms mostly, do so for other personal gains/gratifications rather than for academic performance or activities (Onwe and Ezekwe, 2014). This observation ordinarily lends credence to the imperativeness of empirically studying the students' awareness of the negative implications of irresponsible use of the social media. Asogwa and Ojih (2013), conclude in line with their research finding that majority of the students do not consider contents of the social networking sites as being offensive or indecent.

This obviously implies that the students are ignorant of what constitute offensive and morally decadent postings which are injurious to both their online and offline reputations. However, some questions are fundamental in this regard: are the students (users) really ignorant of what constitute bad online social networking practices? Could it be that they know and post what is bad/negative and choose to damn the consequences? What are the universities doing to help their student makes more profit oriented and acceptable use of the social media opportunities? These questions are more are the very lacuna that this study seeks to cover.

Reputation Damaging Pictures Posted on the Facebook News Feed by the Nigerian University Undergraduates.

Empirical Review

Enahoro, A. B. (2009). "The Role of Stakeholders in Promoting Safe Internet Environment among Youths." *Journal of communication and media Research*, Vol.I. No.2, Oct. 45-60.

The above study was conducted to:

1. Find out the online activities that youths are vulnerable to.
2. Identify the dangers posed by these activities

3. Examine the effects of the online activities on youths
4. Ascertain the role of stakeholders in youths online protection.

The study which was anchored on the technological determinism theory adopted the survey research method. As such, 200 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the purposively sampled respondents who were made up of different categories of people. Young people, parents, civil society organizations and ICTs professionals. The study was carried in Asaba, the capital of Delta State. The data generated were collated and analyzed using simple percentage tables.

The findings of the study were as follow:

1. That the areas of online activities that youths are vulnerable to include e-mails, websites chat rooms, instant messages, blogs and online social networks.
2. The dangers posed by online activities are pornography, internet fraud, online violence, hate speech, hate culture, impersonation, sexual solicitation etc
3. Inability to discriminate between real and cyber world, anti-social behavior, aggression, low self esteem etc are some of the effects of internet/social network abuse
4. That stakeholders have critical role to play in ensuring that the use of internet for negative purposes are minimized.

Consequently, the study among other recommendations request that:

1. There should be a massive internet awareness campaign targeted particularly at the young people.
2. Young people/children should adopt well established internet etiquette while working online, and that:
3. There should be sustained collaborative efforts among stakeholders towards promoting safe internet culture among young people.

It is against this backdrop that our study is probing to ascertain if these young people (undergraduates) are really aware that some of their online social networking activities are not acceptable and are highly injurious to their reputations. The study reviewed above is interested in telling the young people what not to do in their internet surfing/online social networking. But our own effort is rather emphasising the need to educate them on why/the implications of doing what is wrong in their online/internet practices.

Again, another study carried in 2011 by the duo of Folajimi Akindehin and Miyiwa Akindehin entitled, “online social networking practices of some Nigerian university undergraduates. Implications for counseling,” published in *British Journal of Arts and Social Science* Vol3. No I (66-77), is considered very relevant and its empirical review will, as well, beneficially impact the study at hand.

The objectives of the study included to find out:

1. Ways in which online and offline experiences are deeply entwined.
2. The extent to which online discussion are affected by problems of offline activities.

3. If the adoption of particular services correlates with the individual's gender, age or educational level.

The study which adopted the quantitative research approach used five hundred copies of what it called internet usage questionnaire (IUQ) to obtain vital data from five hundred undergraduates who were randomly sampled from the University of Ibadan. These data were subjected to the discriminant analysis of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), using the stepwise option. The grouping variables were: age, sex, and level of study. Whereas, the discriminant variables among others included proficiency in internet usage frequency of internet usage and effect of internet usage on interpersonal relationships.

The results of the computations showed that social media use does not depend on age. However, it was found that years of usage and proficiency are of high significance in social media use among the undergraduates, and that, there is a significant difference in the online social network practices between male and female undergraduates.

In consequence, they, among others, recommended that university counselors need to establish helping relationship with the students and guide them in social networking practices as complement of classroom learning activities.

As could be noted from the above findings, the study merely found that there is a significant difference between the female and male undergraduates' social networking practices. It is from this stand point that our study wants to find out the gender that is more irresponsible in social media use, and as well, establish if ignorance of the consequences of irresponsible uses is the underlying factor for the increasing problem of social media misconduct the students.

Theoretical Framework

The study is theoretically anchored on the social responsibility and technological determinism theories. History records that the social responsibility theory is a direct consequence of the abuse of the absolute freedom granted the during the libertarian era. During that time, press irresponsibility got to the highest level culminating to the notorious era of yellow journalism which was marked by sensationalism, irresponsibility and character assassination, (Okunna 1999). As the call by critics of the principle of libertarianism failed to enjoy massive and universal acceptance, the Hutchins Commission was then set up in the USA to brainstorm and look for the best way out. And by 1947 Hutchins Commission Report on a Free and Responsible press was already out. The content and recommendations of the report formed the fundamental postulations of the social responsibility theory. This therefore means that the theory emanated purely from the Report of the Hutchins Commission.

Baran and Davis (2006), observe that the theory thrives largely on John Milton's self-righting principle. This implies that the theory emphasises self control and correction instead of the use of external force to elicit responsible actions and control. According to Okunna (1999), the underlying principle of the social responsibility theory is that the press should be free to perform the function which the libertarian theory had granted it freedom to perform, but that this freedom should be exercised with responsibility. The theory advocates that if journalists cannot embrace self- control and make themselves responsible, then the government should control them.

The theory stresses both freedom and responsibility, but Wogu (2008) observes that the emphasis is much more on responsibility than freedom, thereby requiring the individual to careful and communicate with all caution and sincerity. Bittner

(1989 p. 349) summarizes the basic tenets of the theory by saying: “within the framework of open and free press criticism, codes of ethic or government regulation, guidelines for responsible action by members of the press lies the social responsibility theory”. Nwabueze (2012), and Okunna (1999) outline the basic postulations of the theory thus:

- (1) The mass media have to accept and carry contain duties or obligations to society, and there should be a multiplicity of media voices, that is, pluralism to reflect and represent the diverse categories and viewpoints in society.
- (2) Mass media practitioners should be accountable to the society and not only to their employers and others who could exercise economic control on them.
- (3) The press should regulate itself.
- (4) The society has the right to expect the press to perform creditably and where the press becomes irresponsible that government intervention and control is justified.

A look at the world of the social media reflects a complete reminisce of the event and debate that led to the emergence of the social responsibility theory. The social media has led to unprecedented democratization of the communication space worldwide. The social media is increasingly millions of global citizens voices, but who hitherto, had no means of putting across their voices. The and old and the young, the rich and the poor, the educated and the less educated, the male and the female, the leader and the led are all becoming equal consumers and producers of communication contents through the social media platforms. As usual, this unfolding opportunity and freedom have started witnessing pocket of abuses and misuse, thus leading to the emergence of a new time which Sule

(2012), refers to as the era of digital technology masturbation syndrome. Expatriating on this he posits that it is the use of digital technology to stimulate the release of one's innermost thoughts values or desires. Prior to the emergence of the digital resolution many people had a number of negative thoughts, values and desires which were either suppressed in their subconscious due to the societal structure at that time. There were limited available channels to release these suppressed thoughts, values and desires ... But the emergence of digital revolution has now provided them the medium to release them.

Against this backdrop, one can now agree that there are sufficient reasons for predicating this study on the social responsibility theory of the press.

First, the study by implication is investigating the students' level of knowledge of responsible use of the social media. The social media user as a matter of fact has to remain responsible to the society, and as well, to himself, through the self righting principle as postulated by the social responsibility theory.

Secondly, the study is still determining the level of social responsibility on the part of the universities in South East, Nigeria in relation to what is being done to ensure that their students remain responsible as they savour the unlimited communication opportunities provided by the social media in today's world.

Thirdly, the social media in line with one of the tenets of the social responsibility theory has given opportunity for the reflection of multiple and divergent voices which were hitherto suppressed and where voices become irresponsible, the paper advocates for intervention by the university management as provided for by the theory.

Meanwhile, the Technological determinism theory postulates that communication contents are product of the technology in use. This implies that the technology in use shapes the way people, think, feel and act and how the society operates.

The theory owes its origin to a scholarly work done by Marshall McLuhan in 1962 .He is reputed to have interpreted and expanded the tenets of the theory, (Baran (2010). The theory postulates that technology is a cardinal casual element in the process of social change. Such communication contents through the social media platforms are only possible because digital and internet technology are available.

The theory is also relevant to this study since the technology has given the users unlimited opportunity of disseminating all kinds of communication contents without due consideration of how responsible such contents are. Moreover, the novelty of this technology enhanced online social networking is not even allowing some of the users to think about the negative consequences of actions and postings. Hence this study is geared towards finding the best way to make the students make responsible use of digital technology in their learning and character formation.

Methodology

Since this study centrally aims at ascertaining the students' knowledge and awareness or otherwise of the implications of irresponsible social media practices, and as well, find out what the universities in the area of study are doing to ensure responsible social networkings among their students, the survey and interview research methods were adopted as the best research approach for the study. For the fact that the study is probing the hidden reason(s) for the irresponsibility in social media use among the students, it became imperative that the complementary data generated through interview be used to explore further some of the issues about the subject matter, thereby making the study both quantitative and qualitative.

The survey method as was adopted for the study allowed the researcher to

systematically draw respondents across the selected universities. The responses generated were analysed and used to make general inference for the entire population of the study.

Area of the Study

The universities in the South East geopolitical zone of Nigeria comprising Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo states constitute the area of this study. However, due to the fact that the study was also interested in determining the level of social media knowledge and use among the first, second and third generation universities, South East, Nigeria, a number of decisions guided the sampling of the actual universities used for the study.

First, the study was delimited to only the Federal Universities area. This is to enable the researcher study a group of universities that have the same ownership influence, and are supposedly operating within the same level of economic resources. This decision was imperative considering the fact that research findings have pointed that there is a level of correlation between availability of internet facilities and the economic strength of the individuals or institutions. And the economic resources strength of the universities is largely dependent on the ownership. Hence, the choice of universities with common ownership.

Secondly, the Federal Government of Nigeria before now monopolized the ownership of universities in Nigeria, and as such, going by age, there is no state and private universities in Nigeria that can be classified to be first generation universities. Therefore, all state universities in the south East Nigeria fall within the second and third generation universities and all private ones fall with the third generation universities. It is taken that all universities founded between 1940s and 1970s in Nigeria are first generation ones, those established between 1980s-1990s

are second generation ones, while those established from 2000 to date are third generation universities.

By this consideration, it is only the Federal Government that has universities that fall within the three classifications and to avoid the possible influences of such disparities in terms of economic resources, ownership factor, etc as pointed out earlier, the researcher studied only the Federal Universities that fall within these three categories.

In selecting the actual universities used for the study, the researcher purposively choose university of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN) in Enugu State which is the only first generation university, South East, Nigeria and Federal University, Ndufu-Alike Ikwo (FUNAI) in Ebonyi State which is the only third generation Federal University, South East, Nigeria. However, for the fact that there are a number of second generation Federal Universities in South East, Nigeria, the researcher through the simple random sampling of lucky deep picked Federal University of Technology, Owerri in Imo State. Therefore UNN, FUTO and FUNAI were sampled to represent the universities in South East, Nigeria.

Area of the Study

According to the information obtained from the registries of the three universities above, UNN has 29, 003, FUTO has 18, 193 while FUNAI has a total of 1569 undergraduates. Therefore, a total of 48,765, constituted the population of this study.

Sample and sample size

To determine the sample size, the Taro Yamene's formula was used and the confidence level was set at 95%

$$S = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where S = sample size to be determined

N = population of undergraduates UNN, FUTO and FUNAI

e = margin of tolerable error = 5%

$$\begin{aligned} S &= \frac{48,765}{1 + 48,765(0.05)^2} \\ &= \frac{48,765}{1 + 48,765 \times 0.0025} \\ &= \frac{48,765}{1 + 121.913} = \frac{48765}{122.913} = 396.7 \text{ (397)} \end{aligned}$$

The sample size of 397 as got from the calculation is acceptable reliable and reasonable considering the fact that Owuamalam (2012), referred to Wimmer and Dominick (2000), as recommending the use of sample size as follow: 50 = very poor, 100 = poor, 200 = fair, 300 = good, 500 = very good while 1,000 is excellent.

The above recommendation shows that our calculated sample size of 397 is between good and very good.

Sampling Technique

Since the total population of the undergraduates of each of the sample Federal Universities is not the same figure, the researcher adopted proportional sampling, to get the proportionate number of respondents from each of the three universities. This was done through the use of simple arithmetic proportion

$$\frac{nhn}{N}$$

$$N$$

Where n = segment of the population

hn = sample size

N = Total population

$$UNN = \frac{29,003 \times 397}{48765}$$

$$= 236$$

$$FUTO = \frac{18193 \times 397}{48765}$$

$$= 148.4=148$$

$$FUNAI = \frac{1569 \times 397}{48765}$$

$$= 13$$

The computation above therefore means that a total of 236 respondents were sampled from UNN, at FUTO, the researcher drew a total of 148, whereas, only 13 respondents were sampled from FUNAI, this made a total of 397 respondents.

Again the researcher used simple probabilistic sampling of lucky deep to sample four faculties each from UNN and FUTO and one from FUNAI. The same method was equally adopted in selecting one department each from the sampled faculties. The table below shows the results:

Table 1. Sampled faculties and departments from the selected universities

University	Faculty	Department
UNN (1) (2) (3) (4)	Engineering Law Education Physical Sciences	(1) Mechanical Engineering (2) Law (3) Admin. & Planning (4) maths/statistics
FUTO (1) (2) (3) (4)	Environmental Science and technology Management Technology Agriculture and Agricultural Technology School of Sciences	(1) Urban & Regional Planning (2) Project Management Technology (3) Agricultural Economics (4) Geology
FUNAI (1)	Humanities & Social Sciences	(1) English/Linguistics/Literary Studies/Visual Arts/History and Strategic studies

Source: Field Study 2015

To get the actual respondents in each of the selected departments, the researcher divided the proportionate number of respondents due to each university by the number of the sampled departments. As presented below:

Table.2: Allocation of Respondents to Department

University	Department	Assigned no of respondents
UNN	Mechanical Engineering Law Administration & Planning Mathematics/Statistics	59 59 59 59
Total		236
FUTO	Urban & Regional Planning Project Management Technology Agricultural Economics Geology	37 37 37 37
Total		148
FUNAI	English/Linguistics/Literary studies Strategic Studies /visual Arts/History and strategic studies	13

Source: Field work, 2015

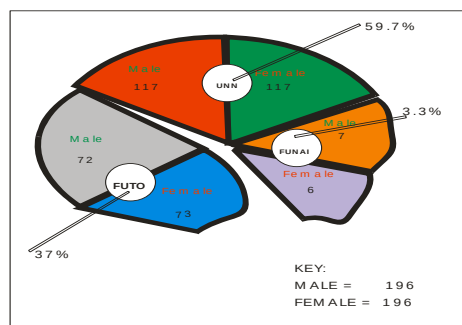
In drawing out the respondents from each of the department, the researcher drew only the 100 to 400 level students, such that at UNN, 59 respondents due to each department was divided by 4 and it gave each of one to three levels 15 respondents each, and 14 to 400 level. The same procedure was used in drawing out the respondents from each of the departments and levels at FUTO and FUNAI. At FUTO, each of one to three hundred levels in each of the sampled departments produced 9 respondents while 400 level produced 10 respondents.

In administering the questionnaire, the researcher combined the principles of purposive and accidental sampling techniques. As such, the researcher moved around the lecture halls within the selected faculties and departments and students found in the halls were asked their departments and levels and copies of the questionnaire were served them.

Data Presentation and Analysis

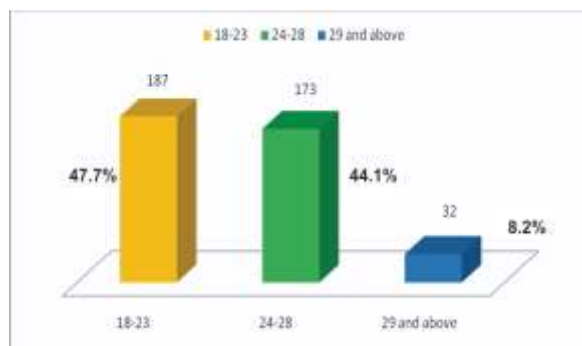
The researcher distributed a total of 397 copies of the questionnaire, but succeeded in retrieving 392 copies. This amounted to 98.7% return. This means that only 1% of the copies of the questionnaire was lost, hence, it was concluded that the lost copies were too insignificant to affect the result of the study. Again, the computed data were packaged in pie charts and bar charts as presented below:

Figure 1: Gender of Respondents



For, the purpose generating data which would be used in testing the hypothesis on which gender is more irresponsible in social media use, the researcher had to purposively sample equal number of males and females for the study as reflected in figure 1 above.

Figure 2: Age of Respondents



The figure 2 above shows that 187 representing 47.7% of 392 respondents are between the ages of 18 and 23 years. Those between 24-28 years old are 173 representing 44.1% of 392 respondents and 8.2% (32 respondents) are 29 years old and above.

Figure 3: Respondents engagement in online Social networking practices

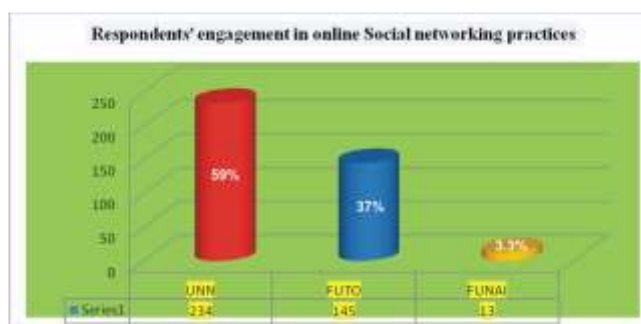


Figure 6: Ascertaining whether it is wise and safe to fake one's personal identity while engaging in social media practice

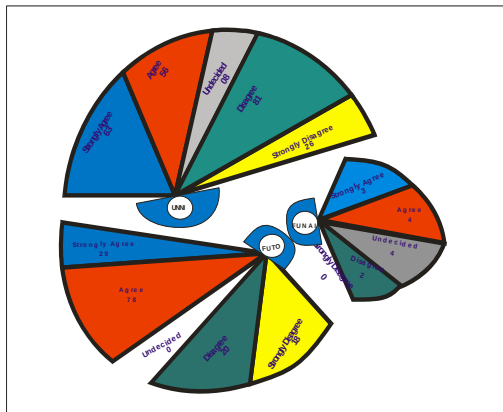


Figure 7: Ascertaining if it is wise and safe to accept social media friendship invitation of an unknown person.

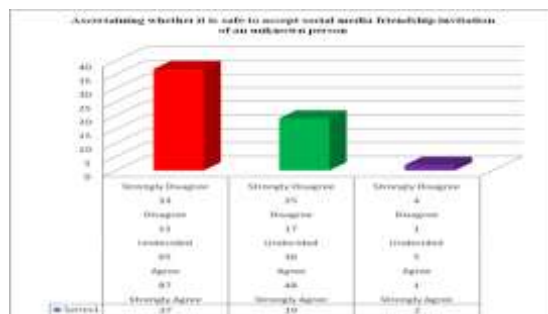


Figure 9: Irresponsibility in the use of the social media among the undergraduates is as a result of their unawareness that it is injurious to their online reputations.

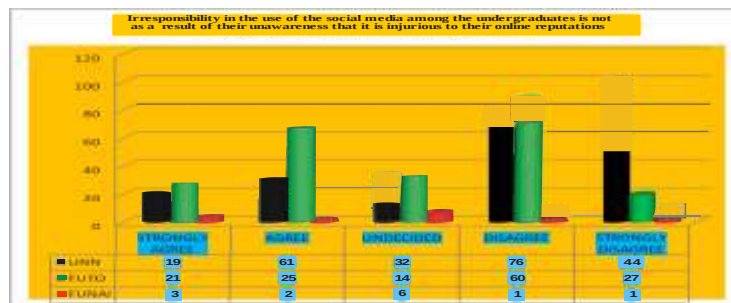


Figure 10: Female undergraduates are more irresponsible in their use of the social media than their male counterparts.

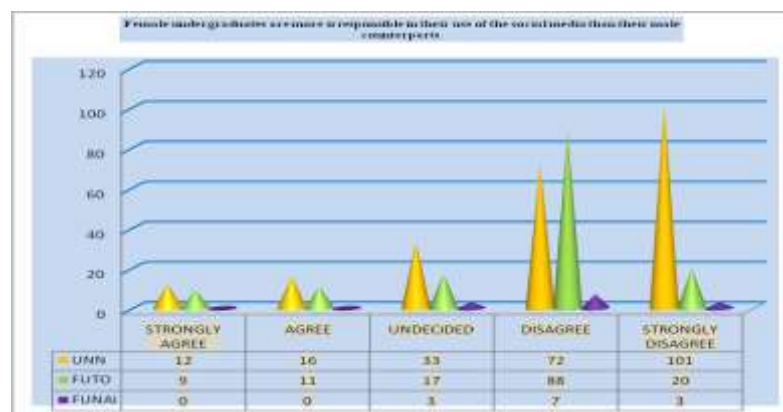
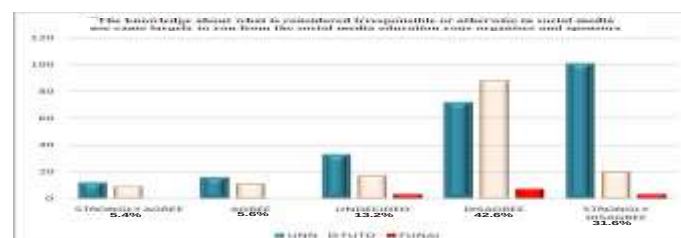


Figure 11: The knowledge about what is considered irresponsible or otherwise in social media use came largely to the students from the social media education that their respective universities organize and sponsor.



Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Irresponsibility in the use of the social media among the undergraduates is not as a result of their unawareness that it is injurious to their online reputations.

Parameters	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Cut-off Value = 3.0		
				t	df	P-value
Irresponsibility in the use of the social media among the undergraduates is as a result of their unawareness that it is injurious to their online reputations.	392	3.27	1.295	4.173	391	0.000

Since the mean score value of the students on the irresponsibility in the use of the social media among the undergraduates is as a result of their unawareness that it is injurious to their online reputations is greater than 3.0 which is the cut-off point, and the $P < 0.05$, it is therefore stated that the hypothesis is rejected and concluded that irresponsibility in the use of the social media among the undergraduates is as a result of their unawareness that it is injurious to their online reputations.

Hypothesis 2: The level of irresponsibility in social media use among the undergraduates is not dependent on the lack of social media education in their universities.

Parameters	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Cut-off Value = 3.0		
				t	df	P-value
The level of irresponsibility in social media use among the undergraduates is dependent on the lack of social media education in their universities.	392	3.12	1.295	3.963	391	0.000

Since the mean score value of the students on the level of irresponsibility in social media use among the undergraduates is not dependent on the lack of social media education in their universities is greater than 3.0 which is the cut-

off point, and the $P < 0.05$, it is therefore stated that the hypothesis is rejected and concluded that the level of irresponsibility in social media use among the undergraduates is dependent on the lack of social media education in their universities.

Hypothesis 3: The female undergraduates are not more irresponsible in their social media use than their male counterparts.

Sex	N	Mean	Standard deviation	t	Df	P-value
Male	196	2.98	1.522	0.099	390	0.921
Female	196	2.96	1.524			

The mean score for male students is 2.98 ± 1.522 , and that of the female counterparts is 2.96 ± 1.524 . Since the $P > 0.05$, it is therefore stated that the hypothesis is accepted and concluded that the female undergraduates are not more irresponsible in their social media use than their male counterparts.

Hypothesis 4. There is no significant difference in the way the social media platforms are used to promote and learning by the first, second and third generation universities in south East, Nigeria.

Universities	N	Mean	Standard deviation
UNN	234	2.00	1.146
FUTO	145	2.32	1.012
FUNAI	13	2.00	0.707

ANOVA Table

Source of Variations	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P-value
Between Groups	9.195	2	4.598	3.893	0.021
Within Groups	459.407	389	1.181		

Total	468.602	391			
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The mean scores for students in UNN is 2.00 ± 1.146 , FUTO is 2.32 ± 1.102 and FUNAI is 2.00 ± 0.707 . Since the $P < 0.05$, it is therefore stated that the hypothesis is rejected and concluded that there is significant difference in the way the social media platforms are used to promote teaching and learning by the first, second and third generation universities in south east Nigeria. This implies that the difference occurred in FUTO.

Discussion of Findings

It is interest to note that the findings of the study are sequentially connected, thereby pointing to the existential reality of the problem that prompted the study. Finding number establishes the fact that the students are irresponsible in their online social networkings because of their ignorance that it is injurious to their online reputations. This finding is in agreement with the earlier findings by Ajewole and Fasola (2012) who among others revelations, found that the majority of the students do not consider contents of the social networking sites as being offensive. Again Onasanya Yahaya, Akingbemisilu and Ayelagba, (2013), conclude that there is a significant relationship between students' ignorance of what constitutes irresponsible practices and their social media use on gender basis.

In a related manner, the finding number two states that the level of irresponsibility in social media use among the undergraduates is dependent on the lack of social media education in their universities. This implies the students' ignorance on the responsible use of the social media is further orchestrated by non organization of such for as seminars, workshop, symposia, town hall meetings etc for the purpose of educating and orientating the students on responsible use of the social media several studies have harped on the increasing irresponsibility of the students in the online social networking practices. As mentioned before now,

Asogwa and Ojih (2013) have concluded that the social media contribute to UNN students increasing engagement in sexual perversion. Onah and Nche concur by admitting that online social networking has given rise to moral issues especially among the youths. Consequently, Ajewole and Fasola (2012) and Akubugwo and Burke (2013) respectively advised that it is necessary that the university should strictly monitor how their students use the social media and that the youths should be wary of placing too much personal information online. All these and more are pointers to the imperativeness of social media education cum orientation in our universities.

The third finding which accepts that the female undergraduates are not more irresponsible in their social media use than their male counterparts is also not surprising. Perhaps, the reason for this find is far from the fact that irresponsibility in social media use is divergent and multi-faceted. Though, the female gender may post more of indecent pictures and videos their male counterparts may be more involved in the cases of cyberbullying sexting (sex solicitation) and other, forms of online crimes and immoralities, hence, both genders are all equally involved in irresponsible use of the social media. For this reason, Enahoro (2009-p. 52) cites one Carstehson, project manager of Save the Children Fund as saying that the late all children are at state and the best defence for them is to make them aware of what can happen online and provide options and solutions.”

When the fourth hypothesis was statistically tested through the use of ANOVA analysis it shows the acceptance of the alternate hypothesis that there is significant difference in the use of social media to promote teaching and learning in universities. Interestingly, the difference occurred in FOTO meaning that UNN and FUNAI are not different in their use of the social media for teaching and Learning.

Perhaps, the reasons for the difference occurring on FUTO is because ordinarily FUTO being a Science and Technology oriented university should show more emphasis in internet and online social networking among their students. This should not in any way contradict the earlier acceptance of the alternate hypothesis two that the level irresponsible use of the social media among the students is dependent on the lack of social media education in their universities. What is implied is that universities in South East Nigeria we that have been doing some thing to promote responsible use of the social media, more effort is required but where nothing has been done such, university should wake up to face challenge of harnessing the potentials of social media to promote teaching and learning.

Recommendations

1. Universities in South East, Nigeria and across the country should sit up and accept the imperatweness of periodically organizing seminars, workshops symposia, town hall meeting with the sole target of educating and orientating their students on responsible use of the social media.
2. The students should know that nothing posted online is secret. Hence; and no any online activity is secret. But even at that, it is recommended that the students should master the private settings of their respective social media account, and privatize their account.
3. Students should activate and set the social media contents and reputation security/check alert to enable track unwanted tagging by unfriendly friends.

In all, it is worthy to note that the computations as contained in tables which were not used for the test of the hypotheses equally lend credence to be above

findings. For instance when the respondents were asked if it wise and safe to take's one's identity in social media practices, 24.2% and 35.2% of 392 respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively.

When they were further asked if it is proper and safe to accept social media friendship invitation of an unkwon person, 35% and 27% of 392 strongly agreed and agreed respectively. This responses re-echoed when they were asked if the social media provides protection to those who engage in hate speeches, cyberbullying, rumour, mongering posting of indecent pictures/ videos and sex solicitation 26.3% and 32% of 392 strongly agreed and agreed respectively. All these are besides the responses generated during the interview sections which are all testimonies to the fact that the students are wallowing in ignorance as far as their participation in online social networking is concerned. It the majority of the students do what they with their social media accounts for the fun of it without evaluating the implications on their online reputations.

Recommendations for Further Study

1. Further studies should be carried to ascertain the level of responsibility in social media use among postgraduates and employees of public and private organizations.

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