

Parental Concerns Towards the Use Of Social Networking Sites Among Adolescents and the Impact on the Family

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The European Conference on Technology in the Classroom 2014
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

The study aims to focus on the perception of parents towards the use of social networking sites (SNS) and its impact on the family. The research employed a descriptive survey design and the data of 150 parent and 100 adolescents from tertiary institutions in Lagos state. The instrument used was a questionnaire. Two sets of questionnaire were drawn for adolescents and parents on the use of SNS and were used to test two hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The analysis was done using chi-square. The result indicated a significant difference between parental concerns over the use of SNS in tertiary institutions, there was a significant impact of SNS on the family. The finding highlights a prompt need for SNS usage regulation for parents in order to direct and control their adolescents.

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Introduction

The 21st century is an era of the globalization of the enabled, empowered and enjoined individual. It is characterized by a dynamic force for individuals to collaborate and compete in a world which is driven by technology and information and operated in a global community, one of which is social networking sites. Social networking sites engage students in online learning communities using technologies familiar to and accepted by their generation (Oradini & Saunders, 2008). Social Networking Sites (SNSs) are one of the latest examples of communications technologies that have been widely-adopted by students. Students are increasingly using new generation technologies, such as social networks, text, messaging, media sharing, blogs, wikis, web 2.0 and other applications, to communicate and collaborate (Pence, 2007; Underwood, 2007). Social media sites offer multiple daily opportunities for connecting with friends, classmates, and people with shared interests.

An adolescent from an educator's perspective is someone who is between the ages of 12-18. Adolescents have intellectual, physical and social characteristics. Some of the social skills includes: modelling behaviour after that of older students, not necessarily that of parents and other adults, immature behaviour when social skills lag behind mental and physical maturity, experimenting with ways of talking and acting as part of searching for a social position with peers, exploring questions of sexual identity in visible or invisible ways, feeling intimidated or frightened by the initial middle school experience, liking facts and being interested in popular culture, seeking approval of peers and others with attention-getting behaviours, Engaging in various forms of social media is a routine that research as shown to benefit adolescents.

During the last few years, the number of preadolescents and adolescents using such sites has increased dramatically. According to a recent poll, 22% of adolescents log on to their favourite social media sites more than 10 times a day, and more than half of adolescents log on to a social media sites more than once a day. Seventy-five percent of adolescents now on cell phones, and 25% use them for social media, 54% use them for texting and 24% use them for instant messaging (Gween and Kathleen, 2011). This means that the large part of this generation's social and emotional development is occurring while on the internet and on cell phones. However, the use of social networking sites is not without potential risks and limitations because of their limited capacity for self-regulation and susceptibility to peer pressure. Questions regarding content ownership, privacy, stalking and cyber bullying, and virtual integrity, clique forming, sextual experimentation, sexting, internet addiction, and concurrent sleep deprivation are often issues that require consideration (Cluett, 2010; McCarthy, 2012; Willems & Bateman, 2011; Gween and Kathleen, 2011). In addition, concerns about *social networking sites* as a form of distraction (Wise et al., 2011) and the influence it has on academic performance (Kirschner & Karpinski, 2010) have been raised. Seven major social network categories as stated in (http://socialnetworking.lovetoknow.com/What_Types_of_Social_Networks_Exist) are:

1. Social Connections: Keeping in touch with friends and family members is one of the greatest benefits of social networking. **Examples include:** Facebook, Twitter, Google +, MySpace etc.

2. Multimedia Sharing: A social networking that makes it easy to share video and photography content online. Examples are: [YouTube](#), [Flickr](#), [Picasa](#) etc.

3. Professional: Professional social networks are designed to provide opportunities for career-related growth. Some of these types of networks provide a general forum for professionals to connect, while others are focused on specific occupations or interests. A few examples of professional social networks are listed below. Examples include: LinkedIn, Classroom 2.0, Nurse Connect etc.

4. Informational: Informational communities are made up of people seeking answers to everyday problems. For example, when you are thinking about starting a home improvement project or want to learn how to go green at home, you may perform a web search and discover countless blogs, websites, and forums filled with people who are looking for the same kind of information. A few examples include: Super Green Me, HGTV Discussion Forums, do-it-yourself community etc.

5. Educational: Educational networks are where many students go in order to collaborate with other students on academic projects, to conduct research for school, or to interact with professors and teachers via blogs and classroom forums. Educational social networks are becoming extremely popular within the educational system today. Some examples of such educational social networks are: The Student Room, UK-based student community, The Math Forum, ePALS School Blog etc.

6. Hobbies: A few examples of hobby-focused social networking sites include: Oh My Bloom, My Place at Scrapbook.com, Sport Shouting,

7. Academic: Academic researchers who want to share their research and review results achieved by colleagues may find academic-specific social networking to be quite valuable. A few of the most popular online communities for academics are: Academia.edu, Connotea Collaborative Research,

Gween and Kathleen (2011) reported that many parents today are good at technology use, feel comfortable and capable with the programs online Venuses that their children and adolescents are using online. Nevertheless, some parents may find it difficult to relate to their digitally savvy adolescents for several reasons. Such parents may lack a basic understanding of these new forms of socialization, which are integral to their adolescents' lives.

They said parents frequently do not have the technical abilities or time needed to keep pace with their adolescents in the ever-changing internet landscape and they often lack a basic understanding that social networking sites are an extension of their adolescents' offline lives. The end result is often a knowledge and technical skill gap between parents and adolescents.

This paper therefore sought to research into parental concerns towards the use of social networking sites among adolescents and the impact on the family.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. Do adolescents in Lagos State make use of SNS?
2. What types of SNS are used by adolescents in Lagos state?
3. What is the frequency of adolescent engagement with each SNS?

4. Do parents have any concern on the use of SNS by adolescents?
5. Does the use of SNS by adolescents have any impact on the family?
6. What remedies can be employed to reduce parental concerns over the use of SNS by adolescents

Hypotheses

H₀₁: Parents' location is not a significant determinant of their concern on the use of social networking sites by adolescents.

H₀₂: The use of SNS among adolescents has no significant impact on the family.

Methodology

Research Design

The research employed a descriptive survey research design.

Population

The target population for the study comprised of parents and adolescents in Lagos State.

Sample and Sampling procedure

From the population, one hundred and fifty {150} parents and one hundred adolescents from tertiary institutions and secondary schools respectively, were sampled using simple random sampling.

Research Instrument

The instrument used was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire is of two types viz-a-vis: parents and students questionnaire. The parents' questionnaire has four sections {demographic variables, parental concerns on the use of SNS by adolescents, the use of SNS among adolescents and impact on the family, and remedies that can be employed to reduce parental concerns over the use of SNS. It was rated in the form strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree using the four point likert scale in the range 4, 3, 2, and 1. The student questionnaire on the other hand was divided into section A, B and C. Section A elicited information on the demographic variable of the respondents, section B also elicited information on the types of SNS the adolescents use with a Yes/No option while section C elicited information on the frequency of engagement with each SNS with the options {daily, less than a week, weekly, Less than a month, monthly, and only when a new post has been made}.

Validity and Research of the Instrument

The instrument was face validated by co-lecturers in the department of home-economics and a further content validity was done by experts in the test and measurement department of the College. Also, a pilot study was conducted on twenty {20} adolescents and fifty {50} parents using the test-retest method and a reliability coefficient of 0.74 and 0.81 was obtained respectively and this is suitable for the research.

Administration of the instrument

The instrument was administered to the respondents with the help of two research assistants. Some of the questionnaires were collected on the spot while some are collected later.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, and charts. The two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using linear regression and Chi-square analysis. The SPSS package version 20 was used for the analysis.

Results

The demographic variables of the respondents were reported, pertinent answers were given to some of the research questions and two hypotheses were tested.

Table1: Socio-demographic characteristics of the Adolescents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	46	46.0
	Female	54	54.0
Age range	12-15	56	56.0
	16-18	44	44.0
Course	Arts	27	27.0
	Commercial	47	47.0
	Science	26	26.0
Location	Epe	47	47.0
	Mushin	53	53.0

From table 1 above, 46.0% are male while 54.0% are female, 56.0% are aged between 12 to 15 years, 44.0% are aged between 16-18 years. Also 27.0% are arts students, 47.0% are commercial students, while 26.0% are science students. 47.0 are located in Epe local government while 53.0% are located at Mushin area of Lagos State

Table 2: Socio-demographic characteristics of the Parents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	73	48.7
	Female	72	48.0
	Total	145	
CONTENDISS	7-8	54	40.0
	9-10	12	9.0
	11-12	25	18.8
	13-14	22	16.5
	15	20	15.0
	Total	133	
Educational Background	NCE/OND	33	22.0
	B.Sc and Equivalent	65	43.3
	B.Sc and Equivalent	28	18.7
	Ph.D	2	1.3
	Total	128	
Location	MOCPED	77	51.3
	LASPOTECH	73	48.7

In table 2 above, some of the respondents did not fill the questionnaire very well and that accounts to the variation in the total frequency as against 150. Hence, 48.7% are male while 48.0% are female. Majority of the respondents are at the lower cadre {40.0%} awhile 15.0% are at the higher cadre. 43.0% of the respondents have B.sc degree and its equivalents while only 1.2% had a Ph.d certificate. Also 51.3% are aged between 12 to 15 years, 44.0% are aged between 16-18 years. Also 27.0% of the sampled respondents are located at Michael Otedola College of Primary Education {MOCPED} while 48.7% are located at Lagos State Polytechnic {LASPOTECH}.

Answering of Research Questions

Research Questions 1: Do Adolescents in Lagos State make use of social networking sites?

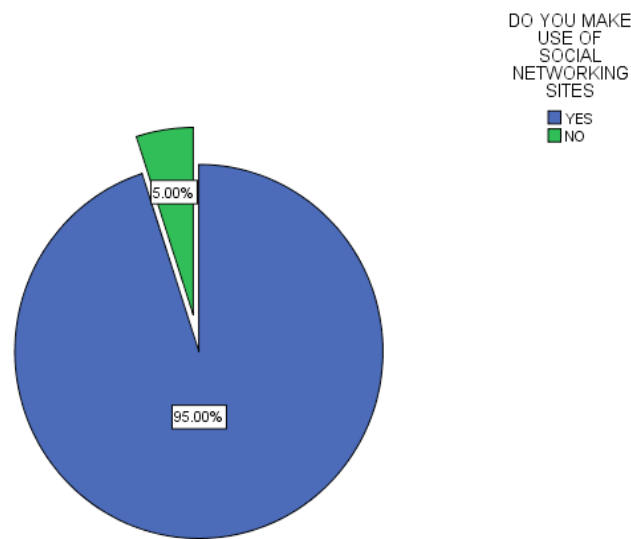


Fig 1: Pie chart on Adolescents use of social networking sites

From the fig 1 above, only 95% of the adolescents make use of social networking sites while 5% did not use it.

Research Questions 2: What types of SNS are used by adolescents in Lagos State?

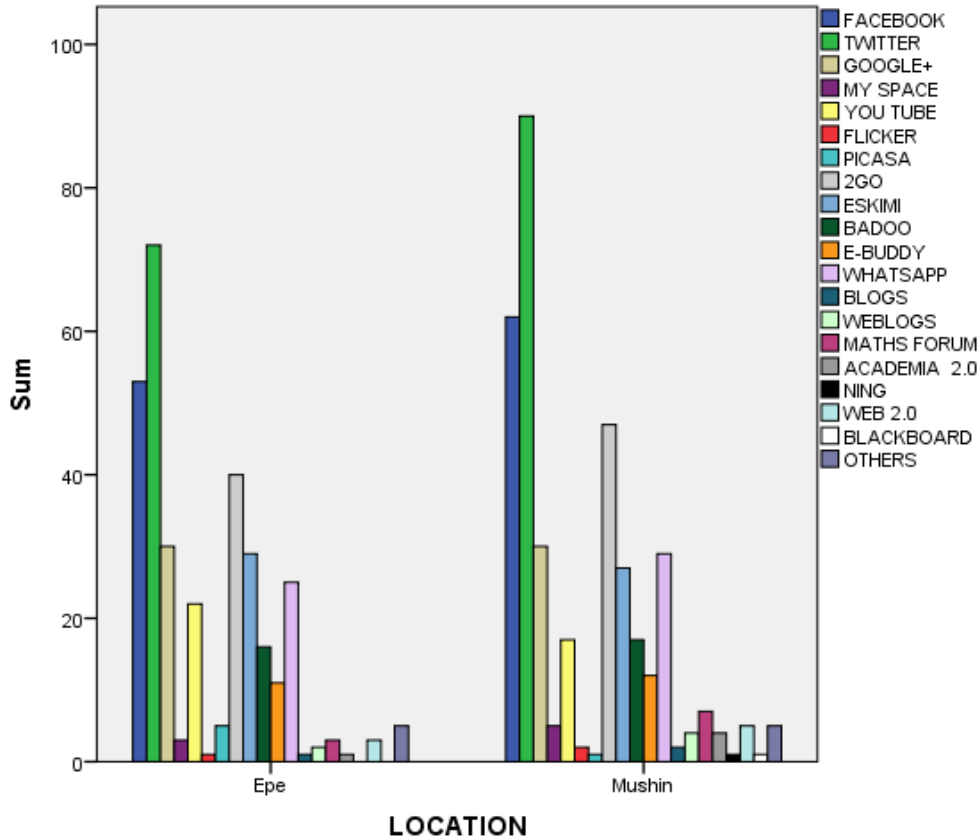


Fig 2: Clustered Bar chart on types of social networking sites used by adolescents in Lagos state

From the bar chart above revealed that the social networking sites the adolescents use mostly are face book, twitter, and 2go at both Epe and Mushin area of Lagos State. Google+, You tube, Eskimi, and Whatsapp are averagely used while My space, flicker, blogs, weblogs, math forum, academia 2.0, Ning, web 2.0 blackboard and other which are not mentioned here are rarely used at both locations.

Research Questions 3: What is the frequency of adolescent engagement with each SNS?

Table 3: Frequency of adolescents’ engagement with each SNS?

SNS Types	Daily {%}	Less than a week {%}	Weekly {%}	Less than one month {%}	Monthly {%}	Only when a new post has been made {%}	Total items picked	Missing
Facebook	37 {37.0}	27{27.0}	13{13.0}	3{3.0}	2{2.0}	4{4.0}	86	14
Twitter	10 {10.0}	9 {9.0}	10{10.0}	9 {9.0}	5{5.0}	4{4.0}	40	60
Google+	31 {31.0}	13 {13.0}	1010{10.0}	1 {1.0}	3 {3.0}	1 {1.0}	59	41

My Space	3{3.0}	4{4.0}	0{0.0}	5{5.0}	2{2.0}	1{1.0}	15	85
You Tube	4{4.0}	15{15.0}	5{5.0}	6{6.0}	4{4.0}	2{2.0}	36	64
Flicker	1{1.0}	0{0.0}	1{1.0}	0{0.0}	2{2.0}	0{0.0}	4	96
Picasa	3{3.0}	4{4.0}	1{1.0}	4{4.0}	0{0.0}	0{0.0}	12	88
2go	67{67.0}	4{4.0}	4{4.0}	1{1.0}	4{4.0}	3{3.0}	83	17
Eskimi	21{21.0}	16{16.0}	8{8.0}	6{6.0}	2{2.0}	2{2.0}	55	45
Badoo	9{9.0}	13{13.0}	3{3.0}	5{5.0}	3{3.0}	0{0.0}	33	67
Ebuddy	8{8.0}	5{5.0}	6{6.0}	1{1.0}	1{1.0}	1{1.0}	22	78
WhatsApp	26{26.0}	12{12.0}	8{8.0}	5{5.0}	1{1.0}	1{1.0}	53	47
Blogs	1{1.0}	2{2.0}	0{0.0}	0{0.0}	0{0.0}	1{1.0}	4	96
Weblogs	3{3.0}	2{2.0}	4{4.0}	0{0.0}	1{1.0}	1{1.0}	11	89
Maths Forum	10{10.0}	1{1.0}	2{2.0}	1{1.0}	2{2.0}	0{0.0}	16	84
Academia 2.0	4{4.0}	1{1.0}	0{0.0}	1{1.0}	1{1.0}	1{1.0}	8	92
Ning	1{1.0}	2{2.0}	0{0.0}	0{0.0}	0{0.0}	1{1.0}	4	96
Web 2.0	2{2.0}	2{2.0}	1{1.0}	1{1.0}	1{1.0}	1{1.0}	8	92
Blackboard	2{2.0}	0{0.0}	0{0.0}	1{1.0}	1{1.0}	1{1.0}	5	95
Others	0{0.0}	1{1.0}	0{0.0}	0{0.0}	0{0.0}	4{4.0}	5	95

From the table 3 above, the social networking sites the adolescents mostly used daily are 2go{67.0%}, facebook {37%}, google+{31.0%}, WhatsApp{26.0%} and Eskimi{21.0%} while others {Twitter,{10.0%}, Maths Forum{10.0%}, Badoo {9.0%} sparingly used and some are not used daily at all. Also, facebook{27.0%}, Eskimi, 16{16.0}, You tube {15.0%}, Badoo 13.0}, and WhatsApp{12.0} are used less than a week, other social networking sites are either used sparingly or not used at all in less than a week. {13.0%}, {10.0%} and {10.0} of the adolescents uses facebook, twitter and google+ weekly while Eskimi {8.0%}, WathsApp{8.0%} and Ebuddy {8.0%} are also used with a lesser percentage. Only {9.0%}, {6.0%}, {6.0%} of the adolescents uses twitter, You tube and Eskimi less than one month respectively. A lesser percentage of the respondents uses each of the social networking sites monthly and only when a new post has been made.

Research Questions 4: What remedies can be employed to reduce parental concerns over the use of SNS by adolescents

Table 4: Remedies for reducing parental concerns over the use of SNS by adolescents

Statements	Agreed {%}	Disagree {%}	Total
Parents should learn and get familiar with social networking sites	115 {86.47}	18 {13.5}	133
Parents should join their adolescent social network groups to know what they post and their comments	17 {12.32}	121 {90.8}	138
Parents should teach then to think critically before responding to messages or comments made on social networking sites	130 {95.9}	6 {4.51}	136
Parents should model good behavior	132 {100}	0 {0}	132
Parents should encourage the adolescent about what	128	5	133

is and isn't appropriate to post online	{96.24}	{3.76}	
Parents should teach and model social skills and empathy	125 {96.15}	5 {3.85}	130
Parents should know the content of the type of social network sites their child is consuming and watch with them	126 {94.03}	8 {5.97}	134
Parents should discuss content viewed online	102 {78.46}	28 {21.54}	130
Parents should confront the adolescent about inappropriate post to/from friends	102 {72.27}	30 {22.73}	132
Parents should remind them not to post content that could help strangers find them in real world	98 {74.24}	34 {25.76}	132
Parents should set limits on the use of social networking sites per day	106 {80.30}	26 {19.70}	132

From the analysis in table 4 above, many of the parents did not fill some sections of the questionnaire, and that gives the reason for the variation in the total score of each option as against 150. Therefore, the greater percentage {86.47%}, {95.59%}, {100%}, {96.24%}, {96.15%}, {94.03%}, {78.46%}, {72.27%}, {74.24%}, and {80.30%} of the parents agree that the remedies can be employed to reduce parental concerns over the use of social networking sites but {90.98} of the parents disagree that parents should join their adolescents social network groups to know what they post and their comments.

Testing of Null Hypotheses

H₀₁: Parents' location is not a significant determinant on their concern on the use of social networking sites by adolescents.

Table 5: Chi-square table on Parents' location on their concern on the use of social networking sites by adolescents

Statements	Chi-square	df	Asymp. sig
It leads to loss of concentration/time consumption	97.027 ^a	3	.000
It increases social interaction	56.182 ^b	2	.000
It improves self-control/discipline	18.000 ^c	3	.000
Creates distraction	48.519 ^d	3	.000
Facilitate better assistance	80.921 ^e	3	.000
Ensures adequate relaxation/recreation	65.048 ^e	3	.000
Communication	107.438 ^f	3	.000
Not relevant to academic work	38.182 ^g	3	.000
News/knowledge/update	85.492 ^e	3	.000
Awareness of others experience with cyber bullying threatening	108.061 ^g	3	.000
Online dating and relationships	68.061 ^g	3	.000
Decreased face-to-face communication	89.515 ^g	3	.000
Personal experience with cyber bullying	112.936	3	.000
Less time on other activities including academ2.827ic	85.750	3	.000
Less time reading	114.063	3	.000

Sharing of private information	89.563	3	.000
A potential for greater anxiety	31.778	3	.000
They are always influenced by negative interactions	77.188	3	.000

The analysis of table 5 above reveals that all the statements are significant. Hence hypothesis one is rejected. This implies that parent's location is a significant determinant on their concern on the use of social networking sites by adolescents.

H₀₂: The use of SNS among adolescents has no significant impact on the family.

Table 6: Chi-square analysis on the use of SNS among adolescents has impact on the family

Test Statistics

	Reduced interaction with family members	Increased exposure to violence which result in aggressive behavior, thought or feeling	poor attitude towards women	An increase in rape myth acceptance	Increase in violence against women	Withdrawal from other areas of life due to the time spent on social networking site	Escape from real world interactions	Restlessness and irritability when not online
Chi-Square	29.692 ^a	2.278 ^b	9.394 ^c	7.576 ^c	13.625 ^d	94.174 ^e	9.810 ^f	44.182 ^e
df	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.517	.024	.056	.003	.000	.020	.000

The analysis of table 6 shows that majority of the variables are significant. Hence hypothesis two is therefore rejected. This shows that the use of social networking sites among adolescents has impact on the family.

Discussion of Findings

The paper investigated parental concerns towards the use of social networking sites among adolescents and the impact on the family. Two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. It was therefore revealed in hypothesis one that parents' location is a significant determinant on their concern on the use of social networking sites by the adolescents. The meaning of this is that the location of parents in Lagos state (Epe and Mushin) determines the level of concern on the adolescents use of social network sites. Since the rate of use of these SNS is high among the adolescents in the urban area in Lagos State (Mushin) than in Epe, parents in the urban area will be more concerned about their adolescents use of SNS.

Hypothesis two also shows that the use of SNS has impact on the family. From the result of the hypothesis the variable that shows significant difference are (Reduced interaction with family members, poor attitude towards women, Increase in violence against women, Withdrawal from other areas of life due to the time spent on social networking site, escape from real world interactions, Restlessness and irritability when not online. This result is in support of (Cluett, 2010; McCarthy, 2012; Willems

& Bateman, 2011; Gween and Kathleen, 2011). The said use of social networking sites is not without potential risks and limitations because of their limited capacity for self-regulation and susceptibility to peer pressure. Questions regarding content ownership, privacy, stalking and cyberbullying, and virtual integrity, clique forming, sextual experimentation, sexting, internet addiction, and concurrent sleep deprivation are often issues that require consideration. In addition, Wise et al., (2011), Kirschner & Karpinski, (2010) views are in support of the result.

Conclusion and Recommendation

From the results obtained it was concluded that

1. Parents' location is a significant determinant on their concern on the use of social networking sites by the adolescents.
2. The use of SNS has impact on the family.

It is therefore recommended that:

1. Parents evaluate the sites on which their adolescents wishes to participate to be sure that the site is appropriate
2. There should be an enlightenment campaign where parents will be advised to talk to their adolescents about the use of social networking sites and the specific issues that today's adolescents face.
3. Parents should try to become educated about many technologies their adolescents are using.
4. Families need to have online-use plan that involves regular family meetings in order to discuss online topics and checks of privacy settings and online profiles for inappropriate posts.

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