

AUDIENCE PERCEPTION OF FACEBOOK AS A COMMUNICATION  
PLATFORM: A CASE STUDY OF STUDENTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL  
INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM, YENAGOA STUDY CENTRE

BY

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## CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project by **SAVIOUR OWEI-EBI DESE-OTU** with **Matriculation Number: ND/MASS/19/075** has been read and approved as having met the requirement for the award of National Diploma in Mass Communication of the Bayelsa State Polytechnic, Aleibiri.

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this project to my God Almighty for seeing me through this course of study.

BAYELSA STATE POLYTECHNIC, ALEIBIRI

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I am most grateful to God Almighty for his mercy and making my academic pursuit a success.

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## ABSTRACT

*Facebook is used to be one of the largest communication channels of the social media, as its main advantage is that it helps in connecting and reconnecting long distant friends and relatives. In spite of that, there has been a lot of controversies on its effects towards the users. This study examined the 'Audience Perception of Facebook as Communication Platform of the Social Media: A Study of Students of International Institute of Journalism, Yenagoa Centre.' The research method used for the study was Questionnaire and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) of the Survey design, which tried to find the ideas, views and believes of Facebook. 390 copies of questionnaire were distributed to other users like Journalists, out of which 375 were retrieved. For the FGD, 20 PG students were drawn for the discussion. The results from the findings were analyzed using simple percentage and explanation building for the FGD. At the end of the research, the researcher found out that the audience do not view Facebook as a reliable medium for sourcing information and believes that frequent exposure to Facebook can have a negative impact on the academic and social behavior of the users. The researcher also found out that the audiences see Facebook as a good medium for socialization haven connected a lot of people and helped introverts to develop their communication skills. Based on the findings obtained from the research, the researcher recommended that youths be sensitized to strike a balance between their academic and usage of the medium. Parents were also encouraged to add their children/wards as 'Facebook friends' to enable them monitor their activities on Facebook.*

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background to the Study

‘Communication is a basic human need and for that reason, man has always found means of meeting this need either through interpersonal or mass communication’ (Alfred 2006:56). In line with that, McLuhan opines that the world has transformed to be a global village compressed into a single electronic chat room. The rapid growth of new technologies in the 20<sup>th</sup> century propelled by the emergence of the internet gave birth to what is popularly known and referred to as the social media. So, what is social media all about?

According to Idumange (2013:4), social media or new media refers to the publication and dissemination of media content such as text, images, audio and videos through online social interactions via highly accessible and scalable publishing platforms such as websites, social networking sites, and blocks and media aggregators.

Elekele (2018:262) observed that, earlier the use of computer was the only means of achieving these aims but today many gadgets such as iPads, iPhones, tablets, laptops and android phones are available for such services; with the availability of the network providers. Social media are channels for social interaction, using highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques. Social media use web-used

technologies to transform and broadcast media monologues into social dialogues and one of such is facebook. Social media which is also known and referred to as social networking site, create opportunities for people to exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks.

The main advantage of social networking site is that it helps in establishing connection with friends and relatives irrespective of the distance. It helps to maintain relationship and also establish contact and ties with loved ones whom one has lost contact with. Social media helps students in sharing their ideas, views, pictures and lots of things; it also offers opportunities for business people to advertise their products and services without extra cost and also transact business deals. Social networking sites can be accessed from any part of the globe. It saves time and cost by facilitating faster communication.

However, one of the major disadvantages is that a lot of users get addicted to it. Also, many people provide detailed information about themselves like their addresses, mobile numbers, etc; hence exposing themselves to dangers of being tracked by some criminals. Many people have lost their sense of privacy and upload information of their daily activities online.

Among the various types of social media utilized all over the globe is facebook, which is the most popular social network widely, used worldwide. It combines all of these services for the benefit of the users. It was launched on February 4, 2004 by Mark Elliot Zuckerberg (born May 14, 1984 in White Plains, New York,

US). Zuckerberg is an American computer programmer and internet entrepreneur; he created Facebook of which is the Chief Executive and President. Facebook is a popular free social network website that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos, videos, send message and also keep in touch with friends, families and colleagues. According to statistics from the Nelson Group, internet users within the United States spend more time on Facebook. Facebook has grown to become the biggest and most popular social networking site today with a population of above 500 million active users. (Facebook statics, 2012).

Facebook is not just website but it has become a global communication platform where almost one billion people gather daily to interact and share information. Facebook shapes people's reality through the information it filters. Many things have been said about Facebook and with more than 900 Million users Facebook is really changing the way we communicate. People can now easily share their photos, thoughts, activities and connect with their friends as well as make new friends. Facebook is a very popular social networking site where millions of people connect and get to know almost every detail about an individual. A lot of people have lost their sense of privacy as they post every detail about their life. These days one easily get detailed information about others by checking their profile, status, friends, phone numbers, addresses, likes and dislikes, daily activities etc. Many people especially students spend a lot of time on their site

creating profile, updating or doing research while some just use it to chat with friends, post latest pictures of events they attended.

With the introduction of Facebook in 2004, technology has transformed to be a daily utility all over the globe. A general motion strongly held by observers and analyzes shows clearly that despite the medium, tremendous impact on education, information and entertainment, the individuals most times runs the risk to being transformed into a violent generation (Barnes, 2006).

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The advent of Facebook as a communication platform of the social medium has greatly revolutionized not only the life pattern of the users but the control of the electronic media. With the global reach of this medium, people use it to broadcast all manner of information which cannot be censored or regulated like the print and broadcast media. According to Nwabueze (2014) 'Facebook has become the largest social network in the world, yet it is being looked upon at with skepticism by some people while being looked from operating in some countries because of its perceived negative impacts.' "In Nigeria, it is evident that the increasing number of students that have and make use of mobile phones to 'all night browsing' of the internet; while the empowers some students, the increasing use of ICTs still pose a challenge on the academic and social lifestyle of students (Omenugha, 2010:30)

According to Ihejirika (2007), youths who are said to be the major users of ICT appropriate them in various ways-impacting positively and negatively on them.

There have been reported cases of cyber fraud, pornography, false identity and invasion of privacy amongst Facebook users. Some people give out wrong information to unsuspecting 'Facebook friends' so as to deceive them for a selfish or mischievous acts.

It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to find out that people think about Facebook as a communication platform of the social media.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

This research work seeks to find out the following:

1. To find out if Facebook audience rely on it for obtaining accurate information on events around the globe.
2. To find out the perception of the audiences as regards Facebook contents (pictures, group chats and posting) and its level of decency.
3. To find out if the audience view Facebook as a good medium of socialization.
4. To find out if the frequency of exposure of Facebook has any impact on the academic and social behavior of users.

## **1.4 Research Questions**

This research works seeks to find answers to the following questions listed below.

1. Does the audience rely on Facebook for getting accurate information on events around the globe?
2. Does the audience view Facebook contents (pictures, wall messages, posts as decent or indecent materials?
3. Does the audience view Facebook as a good medium for global communication and interaction?
4. Does the frequency of exposure to Facebook affect the academic and social behavior of users?

## **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The study will serve as a reference guide to existing literature or research about audience perception of the social media. It will guide users of the social media on how best to utilize the medium so that it would impart positively to their lives. The research will further educate those who do not use the social media on the merits and demerits of the medium and how to maximize it.

The findings obtained from their research will aid to the social managers in policy formulation regarding the use so as to regulate the postings and also protect people's accounts. Furthermore, it is expected that this study will be of great

assistance to the student and researchers generally embarking on a similar study in the future, it will contribute to the growing literature in the field of mass communication, information and communication technology, and other related discipline.

### **1.6 Scope of the Study**

This study was narrowed down to students of International Institute Journalism (IIJ) Yenagoa Study Centre, where the views of the students would be sampled to represent other Facebook users in Nigeria.

### **1.7 Limitation of the Study**

The researcher encountered some challenges while carrying out this study which may have directly or indirectly affected the findings of the research. They include the followings:

Some respondents were not friendly and cooperative as expected in providing answer to the questions. Some saw the task of filling the questionnaire as a disturbance and just filled it reluctantly after much pleading. One of the major limitation is that the validity of the results or findings is dependent on the honesty of the in providing the needed information. The researcher cannot test the honesty of the respondents who reluctantly ticked the questionnaire and immediately submitted it back.

Also, during the Focus Group Discussion, some of the respondents did not stay till the end because their lecturer came in for lectures and they had to leave to attend the lectures. Another limitation of the study is the sampling of a particular section to represent the perceptions of the entire Facebook users. Due to finance and time constraints, the researcher could not study the entire facebook users and there is a possibility the study of a particular area may not be the true representation of the general views of the entire Facebook users. For instance, one who has friends that upload more of indecent pictures and posts may be biased to say that Facebook contents are indecent because he is always exposed to such materials such time he logs in.

### **1.8 Conceptual Definition of Terms**

**Perception:** Perception means the belief or image one has as a result of how he sees and understand something. It is the ability to understand the true nature of something.

**Audience:** Audience implies all those persons who hear what one says; or reads what one writes. It is also defined as a group of viewers or listeners of a work of art or entertainment, especially those present at a performance.

**Communication:** Communication is the imparting or exchanging of Information by speaking, writing or using some other media. It is also a two-way process of reaching mutual understanding, in which participants not only exchanging

(encode-decode) information, news, ideas and feelings but also create and share meaning.

**Platform:** Platform is an opportunity or a place for somebody to express that opinions publicly or make progress in a particular area.

**Social Media:** Social Media is the collective of online communications channels dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration.

**Facebook:** Facebook is a popular free registered social networking websites that allows registered users to create profiles, upload pictures, videos and send messages so as to keep in touch with family ties and loved ones.

**Post:** To send a letter, etc., to somebody by post/mail.

**Comment:** To express an opinion or explain about something either in a written or a verbal form.

## 1.9 Operational Definition of Terms

**Perception:** Perception in reference to this study means the belief and understanding of IJ students about the use of Facebook.

**Platform:** For this research work, platform refers to Facebook.

**Social Media:** Social Media here simply means Facebook as used by IJ students.

**Audience:** For this research audience implies IJ students who have access to Facebook.

**Post:** To send your opinion, remark etc. on the wall or photos of another users(s)

**Comment:** To post an opinion/idea, a remark, or an observation about the photo of another user (usually a friend) or on the wall of another user.

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**CHAPTER TWO**  
**LITERATURE REVIEW**

The reason for literature review is to go carefully study and analyze all available and relevant literature relating to the topic of study in order not to neglect the existing knowledge or previous researched works. This is to avoid omission of important literature which could mar the study and also to better understand the research work. The researcher sourced literature in the field of Mass Communication, and other literatures similar to the study. Articles, textbooks, internets materials in the above-mentioned field were reviewed to provide depth understanding of the subject of inquiry.

## **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

The theories used for this study emanated from the dominant theoretical perspective and models that have been used in the past to analyze media use and media effect on the audience. On the strength of the above, theories to be concentrated on in this chapter include, use and gratification and social categories theories.

The rationale of selecting these theories is obvious. The first theory emphasized on what people do with the media while the second explores how people react to media messages and contents and how much impact these media contents would have on their attitudes and behavior.

## **2.2 Uses of Gratification Theory**

This theory is primarily concerned with why people use a particular media. Uses and gratification theory is more concerned with what people do with the media ranging from information, entertainment, education, etc. A lot of emphasis has been on what the media do to people. 'To embrace the interactive relationship between the media and the audience, the emphasis at this point changes to what people do with the media' (Okunna 2002:20). The theory however is often credited to Herta Herzog, although she mostly likely did not give it its label. Her 1944 article, entitled "Motivations and Gratifications of Daily Serial Listeners", was the first published research to provide an in-depth examination of media gratifications. As espoused in McQuail (2005:424), the basic assumptions of the approach among others are:

- (i) Media and content choice is generally rational and directional towards certain specific goals and satisfactions (thus the audiences active and audience formation can be logically explained)
- (ii) Audience members are conscious of the media-related needs which arise in personal (individual) and social (shared) circumstances and can voice these in terms of motivations.

The research identified three major types of gratifications obtained from listening to radio soap operas which include one: a means of emotional release, two wishful thinking, and three, obtaining advice.

Stephenson's (1967) *play theory* as cited in Okunna (2002:20) is also another approach centered on what use we make of the media and the gratifications we derive there from. The *play theory* suggests that we use the media as a means of escaping into a world of "play" not accessible at other times. The uses and gratifications theory is purely audience-centered and addresses needs like surveillance, excitement, guidance, relaxation, tension, social integration, entertainment, escape, identity, and socialization and information acquisitions. Other studies in uses and gratification include those done by Katz (1974), Savary and Carico (1971) and Wilbur Schramm (1954, p.19) cited in Beran and Davis (2006, p. 263) which he called fraction of selection. According to him, 'people weight the level of reward (gratification) they expect from a given medium or message against how much effort they must make to secure the reward'. He further stated that this can be represented thus:

Expectation of Reward

---

Effort Required

McQuail (2005:424) affirms that the central question passed by this theory is "why do people use media, and what do they use them for?" This presupposes that individuals also use media for related purposes such as personal guidance, relaxation, adjustment, information and identity formation. The theory has also been applied to studying the appeal of the new electronic media (Perse, 1990, cited in McQuail, 2005: 423).

This theory possesses a number of strengths as attainted by Varan and Davis (2006). However, four (4) of them will be listed out here that are basically sued for this work. They are: The Theory

1. Focuses attention on individuals in the Mass Communication process.
2. Provides insightful analysis of how people experience media content.
3. Studies the use of media as a part of everyday social interaction.
4. Provides useful insight into adoption of new media.

In relating this theory to Facebook, it is evident that Facebook, as a characteristic of the new media, is used by individuals or groups to source for information, entertainment, self-fulfillment, social, religious, cultural and or political interactions with people from all works of life who share the same interest with them. But the more important usefulness of Facebook is the identity formation that enables users to upload their identify, their personal profile which might include name, location, state, age and “pictures” on the site.

In relation to this study, the ‘uses and gratification theory’ explains that the youths who have Facebook accounts and who upload pictures on Facebook do so for various benefits derived through the media and these pictures affect other users directly or indirectly. Some upload pictures to show others pictures of an event; to show their beautiful pictures and dressing; or to draw the admiration of others.

### **2.2.1 Technology Determination**

Technology determination is a reductionist theory that presumes that a society's technology derives the development of its social structures and cultural values. The term is believed to have been coined by Thorstein Veblen (1857-1929), an American Sociologist. The most radical technological determinist in America in the twentieth century was most likely Clarence Ayres who was a follower of Thorstein Veblen and John Dewey. Technological determinism has been summarized as "the belief in technology as a key governing force in society..." (Smith, M.R, Leo. M, 1994). The idea is that technological development determines social change. It changes the way people think and how they interact with each other. For instance, before the advent of ICTs, people relied so much on the post office to send letters to their loved ones across thousand miles and would have to wait for weeks or even months to get a reply, but with the introduction of the social media, one can interact with people across the world and receive instant feedback. The use of social media has made communication process easier and much faster. Also, the habit of visiting cyber café is gradually eroding as most handset have an internet facility which enables the user to stay at his comfort zone and browse.

Most interpretations of technology determinism share the two general ideas:

1. That the development of technology itself follows a predictable, traceable path largely beyond cultural or political influence and

2. That technology in turn has “effects” on societies that are inherent, rather than socially conditioned or produced because that society organizes itself to support and further develop a technology once it has been introduced (Wikipedia, 2011).

According to the theorist McLuhan (1962), technology determinism state that media technology shaped how we as individuals in a society think, feel, act and how our society operates as we move from one technological age to another. We learn and feel and think the way we do because of the message we receive through the current technology that is available. Whatever society as a whole is using to communicate, we human will use it to communicate. Therefore, they will adapt to the medium they are using to send and receive messages like everyone else.

As medium changes, so does society’s way if communicating. People can only use the medium for the purpose for which it was created. E.g. phone, for communicating over lines or Facebook for chatting with friends, uploading pictures, etc.

We are in the age of the new electronic media where information, messages and what have you are got from and sent through the internet, where there are sundry social networks like Facebook, for interacting with people from all walks of life, sending and receiving messages and uploading pictures. Therefore it is technology, the medium available to the society that they can use to achieve these objectives.

### **2.2.2 Social Categories Theory**

To begin with, the mass media audience is not one uniform mass of people with the same characteristics and who expose themselves to the mass media in the same way, according to the view of the audience embodied in the mass society theory. Instead according to the social categories theory, the audience is made up of different sub-groups, each consisting of a “mass within a mass”. (Bittner, 1989:376) as cited in (Okunna 1999:164). Social categories assume that there are broad collectives, aggregates, or social categories in urban-industrial societies whose behavior in the face of a given set of stimuli is more or less uniform (Defleur, 1970, pp. 122-123 cited in Baran and Davis 2006:149). ‘In addition, people with backgrounds (for example age, gender, income level, religious affiliation) will have similar patterns of media exposure and similar reactions to that exposure. Social categories provide a useful means of seeing how demographic and psychographics affect media use. The kinds of magazines, newspapers, radio and television programmes preferred by man often do not appeal to women and vice versa. Similar difference exists among males and females of different ages and other social categories’ Okunna, 2002:19’.

However, the work of Paul Lazars fled created a basis for this theory, in his work, called the people’s choice where he examined the voting system in America, he discovered through research that the main effect of the media was the reinforcement of existing attitudes of voters. There are mediating factors, also

called intervening variable that determine how much impact these media messages would have on the people's attitudes and behaviours.

The theory generally discussed how media contents affect people, how social categories like sex, age, etc affect media use of the audience and how these factors determine how people react to Facebook users who exposed to immoral profile pictures. Their age, sex and other such categories determine how they are affected by and react to such exposure. This shows that audience who share a common experience or values will most likely respond to the same mass media messages in a similar way for Instance, in Nigeria, researchers have proven that the females respond more positively to the entertainment media and its contents that the information content; the explains why women prefer to by fashion magazine more than Newspapers.

## **2.3 The Review**

### **2.3.1 ICTs: The New "Electronic" Media**

ICTs stand for Information and Communications Technologies. There isn't any universally accepted definition of ICT because the applications and technology involved in these constantly keep changing almost on a daily basis. The changes happen so fast which makes it difficult to keep up with them. However, ICT is an umbrella term that includes any communication device or application, encompassing: radio, television, cellular phones, computer and networking hardware and software, satellite systems etc. it covers any product that will store

retrieve, manipulate transmit or receive information electronically In a digit form for example, personal computer, digital television, email etc.

(google.com).

The main features of ICTs are their interconnectedness, their accessibility to individual users as senders and/or receivers, their interactivity, their multiplicity of use and open ended character and their ubiquity ad delicateness (Mc Quall, 2005) over some distance by electronic means this is achieved by the use of network connecting different hardware to send and receive data. A very common example of network is the internet which is “a vast interconnected hardware system made up of different types of computers (Rodman, 2006: 298).”

The most fundamental aspects of ICTs are digitalization and convergence. This media institution is widely noted for its ability to converge all existing media forms in terms of their organization, distribution, reception and regulation. Interactivity is another fundamental features of the new electronic media. Communication through ICTs is not one-sided but allows all parties involved to send as well as receive message, information and even feedbacks.

We live in a world constantly evolving digital world. ICT has an impact on nearly every aspect of our lives-from work, socialization and attitudes. The digital age has transformed the way young people communicate, access information, and business and even educational pattern. The youths have become online generation who access the internet through various measure computers, mobile phones etc.

In Nigeria, it is evident that the increasing number of students that have and make use of mobile phones, do 'all night browsing' of the internet and have access to mobile phones. (Omenugha, 2010:30). While this empowers some students, the increasing use of ICTs still pose a challenge on the academic and social life style of these students. The use of ICT too, some suggest increase independent learning, making learners more responsible and focused. (Awoleye et al, 2008) many researchers have been conducted to show the prevalent mode of ICT by young people. ICT is infused into the psychological and mortal choices of the younger generation and this in turn influences their behaviours, decision-making process, adherent to parental rules, etc.

In the 1984, Rice defines new media as communication techniques that enable or facilitate user-to use interactivity and interactivity between user and information. Such definition replaces the one-directional or one-to-many model of traditional mass communication with the possibility of a many-to-many web of communication. The convergence of new methods of communication with new technologies also reshapes the ways we interact and communication with one another.

Finally new media as many to many. Neuman (N.D.) cited in Croteau and Hotness (2003, 0. 322) argues that new media will:

- ❖ Alter the meaning of geographic distance.
- ❖ Allow for a huge increase in the volume of communication.

- ❖ Provide the possibility of increasing the speed of communication
- ❖ Provide opportunity for interactive communication
- ❖ Allows forms of communication that were previously separate to Develop and interconnect.

ICTs have taken over aspect of our daily lives from commerce to leisure and even culture. Today, mobile phones, desktops, computers, handheld devices, emails and the use of internet have become a central part of our culture and society.

ICTs have made us a global society where people can internet and communicate swiftly and effectively. ICTs have contributed towards the elimination of language barriers and other barriers such as race, distance, age, religion, etc. Examples of ICTs tools are e-mails, instant messaging (IM), chat rooms and social networking sites, such as Facebook, cellular phones and similar applications.

We can conclude that the new communications revolution has generally shifted the balance of power from the media to the audience. Mass communication has in several respects becomes less massive and less centralized. “Worthy of note is that new electronic media can be viewed as an addition to the existing media rather than as a replacement” (Mc Quall, 2005:137).

## **WHAT IS COMMUNICATION PLATFORM?**

Communication is the imparting or exchanging of information by speaking, writing, or using some other media. It is also a two-way process of reaching mutual understanding, in which participants not only exchange (encode-decode) information, news ideas and feelings but also create and share meaning. In general, communication is a means of connecting people or places. Communication is the process of sending and receiving message through verbal and non-verbal means.

Communication platform means the opportunity, place or medium that enables one to express his or her opinions publicly. It implies a medium for interaction and dissemination of communication.

Hence, Facebook is a communication platform because it offers the public the free opportunity to express their views publicly.

### **2.3.2. An Overview of Social Network**

In plain terms, a social network is a social structure made up of individuals (or organizations) called “node”. (or links or connections), which are tied (connected) by one or more specific types of interdependence, such as friendship, kinship, common interest, financial exchange dislike, sexual relationships, or relationship of beliefs, knowledge or prestige (Boyd and Ellison, 2007).

People have used idea of social networks loosely for over a century to connote complex sets of international. Barnes (1954) started using the term systematically to denote patterns of ties, encompassing concepts traditionally used by the public and those used by social categories (e.g. gender, ethnicity). Scholars such as Ronald Burn, S.D. Berkowitz, Scot John and others expanded the use of systematic social network analysis.

In the context of this work, we can define social networks as web-based services or sites that allow individuals to;

1. Construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system.
2. Articulate a list of other users with whom they share connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site (Boyd and Ellison, 2007).

The first recognizable social work site launched in 1997 – six Degree.con. It allowed user to create profiles, list their friends and beginning in 1998, surf the friends list. Although each of these features existed in some other forms before six degree, it service later closed in 2000 when it failed to become a sustainable business.

From 1997 to 2001, a number of community tools began supporting various combinations of profile and publicity articulated friends. Asian Avenue, black planet and miciente, live journal, Ryce.com were dome to the social networks launched at this period. Fraudster was launched in 2002 though the site

encountered technical and social difficulties when their population surgeg (Boyd, 2000b). My space was launched in Santa Monica, California, and begins in 2003. Facebook launch e on February 4, 2004 as “The Facebook” and later dropped “The” from its name in 2005.

Social network sites focuses on building and reflecting of social relations among people, e.g.; consists of a representation of each other user (oftena profile), his/her social links, and a variety of additional services. Most social networks services are web based and provide means for users to interact over the internet, such as e-mail and instant messaging. Social networking sites allow users to share ideas, activities, events and internets within their individual networking.

Social networks have served a lot of purposes. They have affected the social life and activity of people I various ways. They are now a form of interactive communication where users can send and receive message (chat) instantly. Old relationships are renewed on these sites.

Social networks can also be used for education purpose. The National school Boards Association reported that almost sixty (60) percent of students who use social networking talk about education topics online. Information for investigative purpose can also be gotten from these sites especially in developed countries like USA. This is achieved by using the profile of the suspect which is uploaded on the site to trace them. Businesses, companies, associations, and what

have you now advertise on social networks. They use it to launch new product or to create awareness.

Social networks are not alien to Nigerians. Infact, estimate has it that 3,377,300 Nigerians use Facebook. Greater populations of these users are mostly youths. Because of the interactive nature of the site, they tend to patronize it more. They can chat using mobile phones, pass across information to one another and meet old as well as new friends today, it is estimated that there are now over 200 active sites using a wide variety of social networking models around the world.

### **2.3.3 Facebook**

Facebook is a popular free social networking website that allows registered users to create profiles uploads photos and videos, send message and keep in touch with friends, family, and colleagues. The site was launched on February 4, 2004 by Mark Zukerberg and his colleagues while at Harvard College. At first, Facebook was designated to support distinct college networks only. Facebook began in early 2004, as a Harvard – only social network site. To join, a user had to have a Harvard education e-mail address. In March 2004, Facebook expanded to Stanford, Columbia and Yale. It soon opened to the other Ivy League schools, Boson, University, New York University, and gradually most universities in Canada and the United State (Facebook.com).

Facebook launched a high-schools version in September 2005, which Zukerberg called the next logical step. At the time, high school networks required an

invitation to join Facebook was then opened on September 26, 2006 to everyone of 13 and older with a valid e-mail address. Users of Facebook can create profiles with phones, list of personal interest, contact information and other personal information. Users can communicate with friends and other users through private or public message and a chat feature. They can also create and join interest groups and “like pages” (formerly called “fan pages”, until April 19, 2010), some of which are maintained by organizations as a means of advertising. The website is free to user, and generates revenue from advertising. Facebook enables users to choose their own privacy setting and choose who can see specific part of their profile.

Facebook has a number of features with which users may interact. They include the wall, a space on every user’s profile page that allows friends to post message for the user to see, pokes which allows users to send virtual “poke” to each other, photos, where users can upload albums and pictures, and status, which allows user to inform their friends of their whereabouts and actions.

Facebook has impacted socially, politically, and otherwise to the society. Society, it has made it easier for people to interact with one another in order to share ideas, interest, activities, etc. together. It reunites people –family and friends. On the other hand, some studies have named Facebook as a source of problems in relationships. Several news stories have suggested that using Facebook causes divorce and infidelity, but the claims have been questioned and refuted by other

commentators. The site is used by users to inform others of the political situation in the country like in Nigeria. Through comments and post.

Facebook even attracted the media and in October 1, 2010 a drama film, “The social network” directed by David Fincher about the founding of Facebook, was released. Advertisements are now posted on Facebook by business, institutions, associations, companies, etc. According to Comscore, Facebook is the leading social networking site based on monthly visitors, having overtaken main competitor my space in April 2008. Comscore reports that Facebook attracted 130 million unique visitors in May 2010, an increase of 8.6 million people. Right now there are social media it has become easy to get information on nearly every issue around the globe.

#### **2.3.4 Previous Research or Scholarship on Social Network Sites**

Scholarship containing social network sites is emerging from diverse disciplinary and methodological traditions, address a range of topics, and builds on a large body of CMC (Computer Mediated Communication) research (Boyd and Ellison, 2007). The goal of this section is to survey research that is directly concerned with social network sites (with particularly reference to Facebook) that has a bearing to this study.

According to Boyd and Ellison (2007), the bulk of social network site research has focused on impression management and friendship performance, network and network structure, online/offline connections and privacy issues.

Some of the research works include the following:

- i. “Explaining why young Adults use my space and Facebook through uses and gratifications theory.” By Urista, Doing and Day (2009).
- ii. Identity management multiple presentations of self in Facebook. By DiMicco, and Millan (2007).
- iii. Facebook: threat to privacy by Harvery and Hiram (2005).
- iv. How peer photos influence member participating are online communities by Hapoor, Nishikanti, Jonathan, Joseph and Terveer. Loren (2009).
- v. Older Adolescent’s motivations for social Network site use: The influence of gender, group identity and collective self esteem. By Valirie (2009).
- vi. Personality impressions based on Facebook profiles. By Goshing, Gaddis and Vazire (2007).
- vii. Searching for media complementarily use of social network sites and other media for campaign information among young adults. By Kushin, and Yamamoto (2009 February).
- viii. How risky are social networking sites? A comparison of places online where youth sexual solicitation and harassment occurs. By Ybarra and Mitchell (2008).

So many other researchers have been done in social networking site by various scholars. Only a few number of the border on profile pictures or photos on these

sites. This work, therefore, tends to fill in the gap by ascertaining the morality level of people uploaded on Facebook by users.

## **2.4 Empirical Review**

### **2.4.1 Omenugha, K.A. (2010). Journal of communication research (43-53): Influence of modern ICTs on the academic and social behaviour of students in a selected Nigeria University Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Akwa**

The research is related to the study because it also studied the view of users of modern ICTs as regards the advantages and disadvantage. The research work also tried to find the possible effects these ICTs could have on an average user.

The objectives for the study were to find out the following:

1. The most popular ICT used by students
2. To what use they put the ICTs
3. What benefits they derive from the use
4. How these uses/benefits impact on their social and academic behaviour.

The study was anchored in the “use and gratifications theory”

This paper was designed as a qualitative study which employed mixed qualitative methods and approaches in the collections of data. These included the use of observations, review of documents and focus group discussion.

The researcher came up with the following findings;

1. Students from the focus group indicated that mobile phones and internet are the most prevalent ICT used by students. However, the study revealed that the use of Facebook is gradually eroding the use of mails because going to cybercafé has become outmoded since the mobile phones have internet applications. Academic purpose, majority of the student appropriates them for entertainment.
2. The study also revealed that though some students use the ICT for academic purpose, Majority of the student appropriate them for entertaining.
3. The research in answering the question of what benefit the students derive from the use of ICT, showed that the use of Facebook offered the students the golden opportunity of interacting with so many people whom they would not have had the opportunity to meet in real life.
4. Furthermore, in a bid find out the benefits of ICT to the students and the impact to Facebook has done a lot of damage to the academic and social life of students.
5. Also emerging from the research findings is that students become more brazen in behaviour throwing ethics, discipline, and traditional conversion to the wind.

They engage in excessive quest for materialism, loss of concentration in academic work, unconventional use of English Language, examination misconduct amongst others.

Based on the findings, the researcher recommended that right condition should be provide for positive use and appropriation of ICT in schools. The researcher further recommended that ICTs be employed in education to accelerate, enrich and deepen basic skills in reading, writing, mathematics, science, and motivate students to learn as they become independent and responsible for their learning.

#### **2.4.2 Anozie Nneoma. 2011. Analysis of Facebook Pictures and their Influence on users: a study of Anambra State University Students, Igbariam Campus. Anambra State.**

The study was aimed at ascertaining the morality level of profile pictures of Facebook. Nigerians Facebook user's profiles were used for the study. The study objectives included: ascertaining the morality level of profile pictures on Facebook; finding out which generate uploads indecent pictures more; determining whether exposure to these indecent pictures affect the exposed, i.e. the users especially teenagers and youths, and finding out which gender is affected most.

The objectives of the research were as to find the following:

1. The morality level of profile pictures on Facebook.

2. Which gender uploads indecent pictures the more.
3. The effect exposure to indecent profile pictures on the users.
4. The gender that is affected most.

The theory used in explaining more on the study was the use and gratification theory Technological Determinism theory.

Content analysis research method was used so as to analyze the pictures seen on Facebook while survey method was also used to ascertain the views of the users concerning the morality level of Facebook and its effects on the others.

The findings from the research work were as follows:

The result showed that decent pictures have the higher percentage of 71.25 on Facebook while indecent pictures have 28.25 percentages. This proved that the decent pictures on Facebook outweigh the indecent ones uploaded.

The findings from the research also proved that female profile pictures have the highest level of indecent with 54 percent. After a thorough analysis of the questionnaire the result attested that respondents are of the opinion that teenagers and youth who are exposed to indecent pictures on Facebook are negatively affected and that both parties (male and female) are mostly affected.

**2.4.3 Larry Rosen. (2011). Effects of Facebook on teenagers: Positive and negative: Psychological effects and its Overuse. University of California.**

This research work is related to the study because it studied the effects of Facebook the users who are mainly teenagers. It also observed the views of the public on the positive and negative effects of Facebook on the users just as the study.

In a research conducted by Rosen on the effect of Facebook on teens, 1000 teens were used were Surveyed and 300 teens actively studying. He came up with the following conclusion:

1. Teens who use Facebook frequently may become narcissistic.
2. Teens who have strong Facebook presence may display psychological disorders, such as anti-social behaviours, and mania, and aggressive tendencies. Facebook frequently may become narcissistic.
3. Facebook effect is real, but teens who “overdose” on technology daily, and this includes video games too, have higher absenteeism from school and are more likely to get stomach aches, have sleep issues, and feel more anxious and depressed.
4. During the 15 minutes studying time research, those students who checked their Facebook most often also had the lowest rates of reading retention.

This probably is not too surprising, but now it is a proven fact.

## **POSITIVE SIDE**

1. Development of a “Virtual” empathy which actually friend’s moods positively, and caused teens to be more empathetic in their everyday lives, as well.
2. Facebook and other social media gives shy children a way to socialize which might otherwise be lacking altogether, hopefully, this virtual training ground can extend into face-face interactions.
3. Use of Facebook can impact self-esteem in a positive way and allows children to develop their self-identity. Choosing a profile photo, likes and dislikes, favourites of this-and-that quotations, and the like, all “force” the child to become more self-aware.

Findings from this research showed that Facebook can help the users’ self esteem by the high number of likes and praise comments one gets from his pictures and post. It also showed that Facebook helps in building the communication skills of users especially introvert who find it difficult to socialize with others.

### **Summary of the Literature Review**

Communication, they say, is two way traffic – it sends and receives messages, information, etc. It takes two to tangle and so in an interpersonal level, it takes two to communicate, i.e., the sender and the receiver. Communication has become a great tool for development in the society. It has helped enlighten the people and get them aware of the goings on the society. Communication itself

has become enhanced in the sense that various forms of communication especially on the new technologies continue to emerge on daily basis hence, the social network phenomenon. Social networks have enhanced communication considerably. Nowadays, it is very easy for someone in a town like Onitsha to communicate with someone in a faraway town like Beverly Hills.

Based on the discussion so far, we can see that social networks also perform the basic functions of the mass media:

1. To educate
2. To inform
3. To entertain
4. For advertising

It has somehow managed to bridge the communicating gap between developed and developing nations. The barrier of language, religious affiliation, age, etc. is gradually melting away in the face of social networks.

It is necessary, therefore, to examine these network sites with the aim of ferreting out their strengths and weakness, the advantage and threats to the society, their mode of operation, with a view of devise useful means of tackling any problem emanating from the activities of the social network site (with particular reference to Facebook).

### **CHAPTER THREE**

#### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This chapter examined the procedures and methods used in carrying out the study. The Questionnaire and the Focus Group Discussions (FGD) of the Survey design were the research methods used in carrying out the study. This is because the survey method enables the researcher to examine, analyze, interpret and predict perception, media and understanding of the respondents as regards 'Facebook as a social media and a communication platform.

Survey method is the systematic gathering of information from respondents for the purpose of understanding and predicting some aspects of the behavior of the population of interest' (Bonald 1990: P 35). This research method was used because it creates an avenue for the researcher to decrease the choices of error in

the result and enables the researcher to measure characteristics, opinion, and behavior of the given population.

The Focus Group Discussion was also considered important for this study because it is a qualitative research method in which group of people gather to share their views, attitudes, beliefs towards a particular product, services, or concept. This granted the researcher the opportunity to have an interpersonal communication with her audience on the focus of study. It also enabled the respondents to further explain and clarify their views because they have not been given a close-ended questionnaire that limits their responses. It facilitates effective communication and immediate response to feedback.

### **3.1 POPULATION OF STUDY**

Population of study is the total number of subjects or objects found in a given area of study. (Owuamalam, 2010: P.106). this defines the limit within which the research findings are applicable (Asika, 2000: p.95). the population of study for this research work which is the total number of students of International Institute of Journalism Abuja as obtained from the school authorities is 1,078.

For the FGD, 20 students from PG school who have access to Facebook were selected for the discussion. The researcher chose 20 because it would be cumbersome to study the entire PG students in International Institute of Journalism Abuja.

### **3.3 SAMPLE SIZE**

A sample size is a subset of a population which is taken to be a representative of the entire population. According to Owuamaman (2012, p.65), sample size refers to the number selected to represent a specific population study. The sample represents the entire population if it is so vast and can't be studied.

Hence, because it would be impossible to study the perceptions of the entire students of International Institute of Journalism Abuja, about 'Facebook as a communication platform of the social media', a sample of 290 was drawn out from various faculties and departments in the school using the Taro Yamane model. Also, a sample of 20 PG students was drawn for the focus group discussion because those in PG school are older and more exposed, and would be more matured being more conversant to answer questions on their perceptions about Facebook as a communication platform of the social media. 20 people were selected because it would be too cumbersome to study the entire students in PG school. The group was split into two sections. The first group comprised of PGD class of Journalism while the second was from Public Relations department and the discussion were held separately with the groups.

### **3.4 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE**

Sample is a portion of the research population selected for a particular study. It is a sub-set of the population a researcher intends to study. The selected samples must be representative of the population.

Because the population of Facebook users in IJ is known, Taro Yamane's formula was used in determining the sample size. Yamane (1967: p.886), provides a simplified formula to calculate sample sizes as follows:

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

Where n = Sample Size

N = Population size

E = Error margin

To apply this to the study, we have;

n= sample size (to be determined)

N = population of Nigeria Facebook users

E = error margin (0.05)

$$n = \frac{1,078}{1 + 1078(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{1078}{1 + 1078 (0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{1078}{1 + 1078 \times 0.0025}$$

$$= \frac{1078}{1 + 2.695}$$

n = 1078

3.690

n = 1078

3.695

n = 291.74

Sample size = 292

Therefore, three hundred and ninety (390) Facebook users in International Institute of Journalism were drawn to be the sample and were considered adequate and appropriate.

Purposive sampling was used to select the respondents. This was done to ensure that only Facebook users were allowed to fill the questionnaire in order to achieve the main aim for which the questionnaire was distributed. This technique takes into cognizance unique features that are common to the population from which the sample is to be drawn. The researcher purposely administered the questionnaire to only those who have and utilize Facebook because they partake in the use of Facebook and are more conversant with the daily activities that go on there. Also, during FGD, the researcher ensured that only those who have and use Facebook were part of the discussion group. Furthermore, for the FGD, the researcher purposely drew students from the PG class because they are more matured and rational in reasoning due to their age and wealth of experience.

### **3.5 RESEARCH INSTRUMENT**

Questionnaire is the instrument to be used in obtaining data from the sample. A questionnaire consists of a set of questions designed to gather information from data for analysis, the results which are used to answer the research questions or test relevant hypothesis. A 10-items questionnaire was designed to collect data for demographic characteristics and thematic responses from the respondents. The questionnaire is made up of close-ended questions. The close-ended questionnaire was used because it offers the advantage of easier coding, tabulation, and uniformity of respondents as well as saves time. The questionnaire contains two sections; (A) demographic data, while section. (B) Contains data related to the perceptions of the audience about Facebook as a communication platform of the social media.

390 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents at their various faculties.

For the Focus Group Discussion, an interview section was organized amongst students selected from the Post Graduate class using an interview guide. A voice recorder was used to record the discussion while paper and biro was used to jot down some striking statements and the names of the respondents.

### **3.6 VALIDITY OF MEASURING INSTRUMENT**

Validity refers to the authentic nature of measuring instrument in being capable of eliciting the necessary information, applicable to study. (Owuamalam, 2010: pp 128 – 129).

For the questionnaire used in gathering data for this research work, it was given to the academic supervisor for thorough review and validation. This helped to eliminate the errors to ensure accuracy and efficiency.

### **3.7 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION**

The demographic data collected was presented using tables, and the simple percentage test. This means that the responses to questions with majority percentage were accepted as the dominant answer to that question while the minorities were discarded.

For the thematic section and data derived from the Focus Group Discussion, explanatory building was used to explain the findings.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS**

The data obtained from this research were presented using the simple percentage and explanation building. For the questionnaire, the demographic data and thematic data derived from the questions relating to the research questions were presented using the simple percentage, while the responses derived from the Focus Group Discussion were analyzed in an explanatory building.

#### **4.1 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION**

Out of the 390 copies of questionnaire distributed to the respondents, 375 copies were retrieved, 10 copies were lost while 5 were returned back without being

filled. Data showed that demographic variables were divided into three namely age, gender, and level.

## **SECTION A: ANALYSIS OF DEMOGRAPHIC DATA**

**Table 1: GENDER OF RESPONDENTS**

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male	202	53.8
Female	173	46.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: field survey 2020

Table 1 show that we had more male respondents of 53.8 than female which was 46.2

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**Table 2: AGE OF RESPONDENTS**

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
18 – 28	270	72.1
29 – 38	93	24.8
39 – Above	12	3.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: field survey (2020)

The table revealed that those within the age bracket of 18 – 28 had the highest responses with 72.1%. This means that they are the most active Facebook users, followed by those within the age of 29 – 38 and then those within 39 – above.

**Table 3: ACADEMIC LEVEL OF RESPONDENTS**

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
100	112	29.7
200	120	32

300	55	14.7
400 & Above	88	23.6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: field survey (2020)

### Answer to Research Questions

#### **RESEARCH QUESTION ONE: Does the audience rely on Facebook for obtaining accurate information on events around the globe?**

Item no. 5 & 6 from the questionnaire were used to answer this research question.

**Table 4: RELIABILITY OF FACEBOOK**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	63	16.8
No	225	60.00
Sometimes	87	23.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: field survey (2020) questionnaire item no. 5

In responded to the above question, 60% responded negatively in regards to relying on Facebook for obtaining accurate information while 16.8 are of the view that they rely on Facebook for getting accurate information. This portrays that majority of Facebook users do not have confidence on Facebook as a reliable medium for getting accurate information.

**Table 5: Do you subscribe to products and services advertised on Facebook?**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
-----------------	------------------	-------------------

Yes	108	28.8
No	267	71.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: field survey (2020) item no. 6

The table reveals that only 28.7% would subscribe to product and services advertised on Facebook while the larger population of 71.2% does not subscribe to products and services advertised through this medium because they lack confidence on it.

**RESEARCH QUESTION TWO: Does the Audience view Facebook contents (pictures, wall messages, posts) as decent or indecent materials?**

Item no. 4 & 8 from the questionnaire were used to answer the question

**Table 6:** Decency of Facebook Contents

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	250	66.7
No	125	33.3
No idea	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: field survey (2020) questionnaire (item no. 8).

This table shows that the decent pictures have higher percentage of 66.7 while indecent ones have 33.3. This shows that the audience believes that although there are indecent pictures on Facebook, the decent pictures are more than the indecent ones.

**Table 7:** Do you view Facebook as a decent medium of communication?

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	200	53.3
No	155	41.3
No idea	20	5.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: field survey (2020) item no. 4

The responses derived from this table 53.3% agreed that Facebook is a decent medium of communication, 41.3% disagreed, while 5.4% did not respond to the question.

**RESEARCH QUESTIONS: Does the audience view Facebook as a good medium of socialization?**

Item no from the questionnaire was used to answer the question

**Table 8:** Responses on audiences' view of Facebook as a medium of socialization.

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	350	93.3
No	21	5.6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: field survey (2020) item no. 7

Response to the above question portrays that 93.3% believes that Facebook is indeed a good medium for socialization while just 5.6% has a contrary view.

Table 8 reveals that the audience strongly have the view that Facebook remains a very good medium for global communication and interaction.

**RESEARCH QUESTION 4: Does the frequency of exposure to Facebook affect the academic and social behavior of users?**

Answering research question 4, item no. 9 & 10 from the questionnaire were used to answer the question.

**Table 9: EFFECTS OF FACEBOOK ON USERS**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	270	72.3
No	100	26.7
No idea	5	1.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: field survey (2020) item no. 9

As depicted in this table, majority of the respondents with 72% admitted that Facebook has influence on the behavioural pattern of users, 26.7% believed it has no influence, while 1.3% were not sure if Facebook actually has any influence on the behavioural pattern of users.

**Table 10: Does the frequency of exposure to Facebook affect the user's academic and social behavior?**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	266	70.9
No	109	29.1
No idea	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: field survey (2020) item no. 10

As shown in the table above, 70.9% of the respondents were of the view that high level of exposure and usage to Facebook has negative effect on the academic performance of students, while the remaining 29.1% had contrary view.

#### **4.2 ANALYSIS OF FINDING FROM FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION**

The first objective of the study was to find out if Facebook audiences rely on it for obtaining accurate information on events around the globe.

Most of the respondents were of the view that Facebook is not a reliable means of sourcing information. They described Facebook as the fastest means of spreading news but stated that the contents cannot be verified as it lack credibility. One of the respondents from English department in PG school said. 'I don't subscribe to products and services advertised on Facebook because there are lots of internet fraudsters who use Facebook to create an account and do illegal business with unsuspecting information, people still don't have absolute trust on it. One of the respondents further to narrated a story on how someone opened a Facebook account with her pastor's name and picture, asking people to donate money for evangelism through his personal account. She expressed doubt and unbelief about the news people post and some services advertised. Majority of the respondents state that since Facebook is not censored like the print and broadcast media, everyone has become a mass communication and can post whatever he or she likes whether is true or not.

The second objective of the study sought to find out the perception of the audience as regards Facebook contents such as pictures, group chats and postings.

During the discussion, almost all the participants attested to haven come across some indecent comments, posts, pictures and videos, but still maintained that the decent outweigh the indecent contents. According to one of the respondents, ‘although the abnormally around the world make people to post nude pictures, it still doesn’t prevent the usefulness of Facebook as a social medium’.

Also, some of respondent were of the view that the issue of indecent contents the social media cannot be completely wiped out because people have difficult cultural orientation and value system. According to majority, people’s value system and cultural or religious background can affect their judgment on what is moral, decent or indecent. Research was to find out if the public see Facebook as a good medium of socialization.

Majority of the respondent believed that Facebook is a good medium of socialization because of its ability to connect people across the world. One of the respondents stated that Facebook has offered introverts and people who are not much accommodated physically the golden opportunity to socialize and also build up their communication skills as well as their self-esteem. He believed that by chatting more with people and also by receiving positive comments and ‘likes’ on the pictures and messages one post online, he would feel approved, loved and

respected thereby being encourage to socialize more. Furthermore, members of the FGD saw Facebook as a medium of making new friends except one who has a contrary view that she can never add anymore who she does not know personally as her Facebook friend. Hence, majority of the respondents maintained that Facebook is a good medium of socialization.

The fourth objective of this research work sought to find out if the frequency of exposure to Facebook has any impact on the academic and social behavior of the users.

During the discussion of this objective, all the respondents were of the view that the frequency of exposure to Facebook affects people's lifestyle not only in academics but in official duties and many more. The respondents recounted cases whereby people received queries, and other forms of punishment in their offices for chatting or Facebooking and neglecting the job which they have been paid to do. Most of them complained about people chatting during lectures, pinging during church services and at many odd honours and places. However, one of the respondents had a contrary view on this matter, he believed that the kind of friends and groups one belongs on Facebook determines the effect it could have on the user. According to him, if one have more of immoral friends, he would always be exposed to the indecent materials such person post. Also, because people tag their friends to some pictures and messages they post, it would appear

on the friend's wall and seen by all his friends. However, majority of the respondent stated that high level of exposure to Facebook could lead to addiction thereby drawing away the user's attention and making him to lose concentration on important aspects of his life.

#### **4.2.1 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

##### **Research question 1: Do audiences rely on Facebook for obtaining accurate information events around the globe?**

Respondents from the Focus Group Discussion indicated that the audience does not have solid confidence on Facebook so they don't see it as a reliable medium for receiving news. However, a few indicated that they still rely on it for news but wouldn't patronize products or services advertised through this medium. They believe that since people can create account using someone else's pictures and false identity, they could be duped by unsuspected '4192', during discussion, it was discovered that people can hack people's account or use another person's picture to open another account so as to deceive and defraud them. One of the respondents from a popular church in Nigeria said that someone had sometime used her pastor's picture to open a Facebook account; asking people to donate fund through an unknown bank account. Hence, the findings showed that audience do not view Facebook as a reliable medium of communication. The

findings from the research is in consonance with the findings of Dr. Rosen which stated that Facebook is not a reliable medium as people can always give out false information which cannot be verified.

### **Research question 2: What are the audience perception of Facebook?**

The result from the questionnaire proved that there are lots of pornographic pictures and indecent postings on Facebook; however, the decent contents outweigh the indecent contents. In the analysis of empirical review by Nneoma Anozie on ‘audience analysis of profile on Facebook’, it was observed that the researcher came up with the result that decent pictures are more than indecent ones on Facebook and that synchronized with the findings obtained from this research. The findings from this relates with the use and gratification theory which is primarily concerned with why people use a particular medium. During the Focus Group Discussion, some said they upload pictures to show off their beautiful dressing, some upload event pictures to let their friends know the latest, some upload cartoon pictures to make people laugh, while some said they do that to draw admiration and get people’s judgments.

### **Research question 3: Do Facebook audience view it as a good medium of socialization?**

The responses derived from the questionnaire and the FGD shows that audience view Facebook as a good medium of socialization. During the Focus Group Discussion, the respondents were of the view that Facebook has helped to

reconnect a lot of old forgotten friends together. In relation to the use and gratification theory which is primarily concerned with what people do with the media allowing for a variety of responses, the findings is in consonance that majority of Facebook users appropriate it for socialization. Many of the respondents indicated that what motivates them more about the use of Facebook is chatting and making new friend. The findings also attested to the view of Newman (2003: p.322) that social media provide possibility of increasing the speed of communication and provide opportunity for interactive communication. The findings from this research also relates to the empirical review on the research conducted by omenugha (20) on ‘the influence of modern ICTs on the academic and social behavior of students’. The research showed that students found the use of Facebook empowering as they ‘meet’ people who they may not have had the opportunity to ‘meet’ and chat with in the real life.

**Research question 4: Does frequency of exposure to Facebook have effect on academic and social behavior of users?**

From the responses of the respondents during the Focus Group Discussion, it was deduced that the use of Facebook has both positive and negative effects on the users. They were of the view that Facebook helps introverts to make friends and develop communication skills because the user would overcome shyness since he or she is not meeting with the respondent directly. However, the respondents had the perception that frequency exposure to Facebook has more negative effects on

the user. Some of the negative effects outlined by the respondents include; the user may have sleeping disorder by staying awake to chat late at nights, losing attention and getting distracted from official duties, lectures, church programmes amongst others. The findings attested to the findings by Dr. Omenugha that frequent exposure to Facebook can lead to addiction. His findings revealed that students become more brazen in behavior throwing ethics, discipline and traditional convention to the wind. She further stated that users lose concentration in academic work and engage in unconventional use of English language. Hence the findings from this research work attest to the findings of Dr. K. Omenugha that addition to Facebook has done a lot of damage to the academic and social life of students.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Summary of findings**

The study was aimed at finding how the audiences perceive Facebook as a communication platform of the social media. The study objectives included: ascertaining the reliability of Facebook as a medium for obtaining accurate and current information; evaluating the decency level of Facebook contents; finding out if Facebook is a decent medium of socialization; determining whether frequency of exposure to Facebook affects the exposed, i.e. the users.

In this regard, the introduction, statement of problem, objectives, significance of study along with definition of terms were carried out in the first chapter. Chapter two consisted of the review of related literature on mass media, the new media which constitutes ICTs. It also contains theoretical framework (uses and gratifications, social categories and Technological Determinism theories).

To give the study a direction, a detailed step by step methodological procedure was given in chapter three. The methodology adopted was Questionnaire and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) of the survey design. This was done to ensure that the objectives of the study were adequately realized. Purposive sampling was used to select the three hundred and ninety respondents that filled in the questionnaire. This was to make sure that only Nigerian who own an account on Facebook were allowed to fill the copies of the distributed questionnaire. International Institute of Journalism Students were used for the study.

Chapter four of this research work included technique for data presentation and analysis. The fourth chapter computed and analyzed all the data gotten from both the Focus Group Discussion and questionnaire and came up with the results. The data analysis showed that audiences do not rely on Facebook for getting accurate and current information on events around the globe. The findings also showed that the audience see Facebook as a good medium for socialization. Furthermore, the findings revealed that frequent exposure to facebook affects the exposed negatively and that both males and females are affected. Table and simple percentage were used in the presentation and analysis for easy comprehension. For the responses derived from the Focus Group Discussion, explanation building was used to present the findings.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

Facebook has become a powerful means of communication in Nigeria and the universe at large. It's been known to have united both lost family members and old friends. Though it has shortcomings and a number of disadvantages, the fact remains that it has become one of the communication channels of the millennium.

The issue of whether social media helps or harms academic performance is often dependent larger issues like self-discipline, psychological effects, self-regulation concerns.

From the data presented and analyzed, the following conclusions were made that Facebook contains a lot of indecent posts and pictures but the decent ones outweigh the indecent ones; that the audience do not rely on Facebook to get accurate information on events around the globe; that Facebook still remains a good communication platform of the social media haven helped in re-uniting a lot of people.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Seminars or workshop should organized for young people to sensitize them on the disadvantages and negative effects one may suffer as a result of frequent exposure to Facebook and also encourage them to embrace the positive sides more. Students should be encouraged to rather create

educational groups where they can interact and have discussion on the subjects and courses taught so as to improve academically and socially.

2. Facebook users should refrain from giving out detailed information about themselves and their activities to strangers whom they add as their 'Facebook friends'. Also, Facebook users should try to maintain a sense of privacy for their safety and avoid posting messages about their daily activities on their walls.
3. Law should be enacted to restrict Facebook users from uploading indecent pictures as well as restriction of the kind of messages people post.
4. Parents and guardians should be encouraged to own a Facebook account and add their children on their friend list so that they would be able to access the pictures and post their wards/children upload. By doing so, their wards and children would be cautious of the things they post.

Finally, the invention of Facebook by Mr. Mark Zuckerberg was aimed at improving human relationship amongst other positive reasons, so we should be in control of it and not otherwise. Hence, facebook users should not polluted the society. If these measures could be judiciously applied, it would be expected that Facebook would have a more positive impact on both users and the society at large.

5. Facebook should device a means of gate-keeping articles, so as to control unnecessary post for the consumers and end users.

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BAYELSA STATE POLYTECHNIC, ALEIBIRI

## **APPENDIX**

Department of Mass Communication,  
School of Comm. & Management Science,  
Bayelsa State Polytechnic,  
P.M.B. 168, Ekeremor  
15<sup>th</sup> May, 2021.

Dear Respondent,

### **LETTER OF INTRODUCTION**

I am a National Diploma (ND) student of the Department of Mass Communication of the Bayelsa State Polytechnic, Aleibiri.

I am conducting a research study on the topic “Audience Perception of Facebook as a Communication Platform: A case Study of Students of the International Institute of Journalism (IIJ), Yenagoa Study Centre”. It is a condition for the completion of the academic programme for the award of a National Diploma in Mass Communication.

I shall be honoured if you sincerely fill in the questionnaire which is for the purpose of this research. It is purely an academic exercise and it is guaranteed that all information supplied will be treated with utmost confidence. Thanks for your anticipated cooperation.

Yours faithfully,

Savior Owei-Ebi Dese-Out  
(Research Student)

### QUESTIONNAIRE

Please kindly supply the following information by ticking the appropriate boxes provided and also a brief answer where necessary.

1. Sex:

Male  Female

2. Age:

18 – 28  29 – 38

39 & above

3. Academic level of respondents:

100  200

300  400 & above

4. Do you rely on Facebook for obtaining accurate information on events around the globe?

Yes  No

Sometimes

5. Do you subscribe to products and services advertised on Facebook?

Yes  No

6. Do you view Facebook contents (pictures, wall messages, posts) as decent materials?

Yes  No

No idea

7. Do you view Facebook as a decent medium of communication?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

No idea [ ]

8. Do you view Facebook as a good medium of socialization?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

9. Does the frequency of exposure to Facebook affect your academic and social behaviour?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

No idea [ ]

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