Influence of Digital Media Sexual Contents on Prevalent Illicit Sexual Behaviour among Students of University of Ibadan

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Abstract

Illicit sexual behaviour is an act that is common among students and does not conform to basic global human rights. Digital media platforms are digital applications or communication software that function on computerised gadgets such as smart phones, tablets, laptops and other digital electronic devices that are used for social networking, intellectual, emotional and social interactions among young people. It has been observed that some digital media platforms are now occupied by nude pictures and other sexual related contents. The recent report of illicit sexual behaviour such as rape, harassment, sexual assault, masturbation, sexually transmitted diseases and gender based violence among students has prompted the researcher to examine the linkage between access to digital media's sexual contents and prohibited sexual act among students. The study adopted survey method. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire. The study population is 12100 undergraduates of University of Ibadan, Taro Yamani formula was used to derive 401 sample size. Simple random sampling technique was adopted for the study. The data were analysed using descriptive and SPSS Percentage table. The study concluded that students mostly gain access to sexual content through digital media, websites while some are found on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. The study also revealed that students' access to digital media's sexual contents triggers illicit sexual behaviour such as rape, sexually transmitted diseases and gender based violence. The study recommended that Students should avoid digital media's sexual contents as it could trigger illicit sexual behaviours. Digital media operators should provide gate keeping measures to reduce or restrict sexuality contents so as to prevent illicit sexual behaviours.

Keywords: Digital Media Access, Social Media, Sexual Behaviour, Illicit Sexual Behaviour,

Introduction

Awkward digital media behaviours started from distribution of sexual performance that include uncensored photos and prohibited sexual actions on digital media by some digital media influencers, while many engaged in subscribing, buying and selling of live or recorded nude videos and images, which have extended to online bullying prank exploitation, and other destructive or addictive behaviours (Ononogbu & Chiroma, 2018).

Digital media platforms such as social media have brought about a transformation from the traditional unidirectional medium of communication to a

multidirectional, real-time and interactive medium (Halwani, 2020). A related study stated that digital media offers both growth and loyalty opportunities for image brands and the development of a company's ideas and productivity (Owan, 2020).

Sexual content is also referred to as pornographic materials which have caused social issues and problems in different individuals (Envuladu, 2017). The content is said to influence sexual desire, sexuality, sexual arousal, masturbation and other mental behaviours that are deeply personal experiences (Scott, 2016).

Sexual behaviour involves several sensual practices that can result to different manners of sexual actions carried out by human beings as a way of expressing their sexuality (Williams, 2015). A related study observes that the transitions of humans from childhood to adolescence mostly take place in higher institutions (Scott, 2016). This is a critical stage of life where students experience both physical and psychological change and development which can be noticed through their behaviour (Idowu &Reuben, 2019).

Illicit sexual acts and misuse of media platforms in Nigeria has been traced to poverty and corrupt practices among individuals in given societies (Scott, 2016). A related study stated that nearly 800,000 young women between ages 15 and 19 years become pregnant annually, with most of them happening unintentionally.In addition, it is estimated that over 10 million new cases of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are discovered yearly among youths within the ages of 15 and 24 years (Idowu & Reuben, 2019).

Objectives

The present study is set out to realise the following objectives:

1. To find out digital media platforms where undergraduates of University of Ibadan gain access to sexual contents
2. To examine the influence of digital media's sexual contents on prevalent illicit sexual behavior among undergraduates of University of Ibadan

Concept of Digital Media

Digital media covers the entire field of computing, information technologies and associated data contents. It applies to computers, digital technology communication tools and gadgets (Divinagraciaaetal, 2012). Presently, Over 1.2 billion adolescents across various countries have open access to the digital media

for different purposes (Williams, 2015). Websites represent the Internet environment designed for different activities with features that are user friendly. These include clear sections that are easy to use, the creative transition between each section with good combinations of colours (Chen-Hsunetal. 2015). Social media plays a significant role and has an improved interactive communication at the personal, group and organizational levels within the modern society (Scott 2016). Moreover, blogs signify other Internet technology platforms used for notable communication, marketing, tourism activities and intense information processing (Chen-Hsunetal. 2015). Such platforms have helped various entrepreneurs to develop their businesses and become successful employers of labour (Lucy &Wahyudin, 2017)

Digital Media, Sexual Contents and Change in Student's Behaviour

Easy accessibility and high-frequency of use of social media sites have made the digital media prominent and effective when it comes to dissemination of information to the general audience and, most especially, the students (Soewito, & Muhamad, 2019). Sexual discussions and content displays have become increasingly frequent and explicit in all forms within the mass media (Scott, 2016). The use of digital media for sexual display is growing more rapidly than any other technology, which has dramatically increased the availability of sexually explicit contents (Soewito, &Muhamad, 2019). A study revealed that the inclusion of sexual contents ranging from seducing to sexual intercourse had increased drastically on so many digital media pages (Idowu & Reuben, 2019).

Half of thedigital media profiles belonging to teenage and student users contain nude images of the user, but little is known about the reasons why these adolescent profile owners showcase their nudity and erotic life online (Soewito, & Muhamad, 2019). This unwholesome development may not be unconnected with the rapid decline in traditional values in Nigeria where youngsters do not take any pride in any forms of decency, abstinence or religious piousness any longer (Williams, 2015). A related study explained that, the transitions of humans from childhood to adolescence mostly take place in higher institutions (Envuladu, 2017). Digital media provides online information that can be accessed from websites, electronic email, blogs, and social media networking sites (Divinagraciaa, etal., 2012).

Prevalent Illicit Sexual behaviour

The advent of the digital media as well as its rapid expansion has provided both positive and negative impacts on undergraduates' behaviour (Nnebue, 2020). Studies have shown that access to the digital media has drastically increased due to cheap and easy Internet subscription and the availability of innovative mobile technology. It was estimated in 2012 that 37 million Google users have had access to, used and transferred "porn movies", while 506 million users searched for materials involving sex (Scott, 2016).Frequent exposure to digital media's sexual contents could increase the rate at which undergraduates get infected with sexually transmitted diseases and the usage of unreliable methods of contraception (Nnebue, 2020).

Rape is a behaviour that involves forceful carnal knowledge of the same or opposite gender though it is mostly referred to as unusual intercourse with girls or adult women without their consent. Rape is defined according to the law as sexual intercourse, or other forms of sexual penetration, committed by a perpetrator against a victim without their permission (Idowu & Reuben, 2019).Sexual assault includes forced or coerced sexual behaviour that involves violent penetration by another gender that involves touching sensitive areas of the body of the opposite sex or being forced or coerced to touch another person's genitalia (Nnebue, 2020).

Youths and adolescents are vulnerable to sexually transmitted diseases due to casual sex which might be as a result of exposure to diverse sexual triggers that lead students into unprotected sex (Scott, 2016).Sexual violence ranges from forcible rape to non-physical forms of pressure, psychological intimidation, blackmail, harassment or other threats that compel persons to engage in sex. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination that violates rule of law in Nigeria (Scott, 2016).Gender-based violence is the act of vengeance and anger as a reason for sex given by some females who consent to sex with partners other than their boyfriends in order to get back at them (Adegboyega, 2019).

Theoretical Review

The study was anchored on Technological Determinism Theory

Technological Determinism Theory

Technological determinism considers technology as part of a larger spectrum of human activity. Technological determinism sees technology as the basis for change in human behaviour and actions. One of the assumptions of the theory shows the linkage between innovation, human development and productivity. This shows that human behaviour can be motivated through dynamic innovations and

its end product such as video, picture, and audio that affect human emotion. A study revealed that half of the teenagers and student's population profiles on digital media contain nude images of the users, but little is known on why adolescents choose to showcase their nudity and erotic life online (Soewito, & Muhamad, 2019).

Methodology

The present study adopted survey research design. The instrument is structured questionnaire, which were distributed among students of University of Ibadan. The study population is 12100 undergraduates of University of Ibadan. Taro Yamani formula was used to derive the sample size of 401 from the population. Simple Random sampling technique was adopted to distribute the questionnaire 401 respondents in the school. The data were analysed using descriptive and SPSS Percentage table.

Digital Media Platforms where Student Access Sexual Contents

S/No	Item (1)	**SA**	**A**	**D**	**SD**	**Mean**	**St.D**
1.	Gain access to sexual contents on websites	187 (50.5%)	120 (32.4%)	25 (6.8%)	38 (10.3%)	3.23	.966
2.	Gain access to sexual contents on Blogs	88 (23.8%)	142 (38.4%)	69 (18.6%)	71 (19.2%)	2.67	1.041
3.	Gain access to sexual contents on Facebook	96 (25.9)	130 (35.1)	67 (18.1)	77 (20.8%)	2.66	1.078
4.	Gain access to sexual contents on Instagram	98 (26.5%)	140 (37.8%)	132 (35.7%)	98 (26.5%)	2.91	784
5.	Gain access to sexual contents on WhatsApp	118 (31.9%)	124 (33.5%)	56 (15.1%)	72 (19.5%)	2.78	1.093
6.	Gain access to sexual contents on Twitter	95 (25.7%)	116 (31.4%)	71 (19.2%)	88 (23.8%)	2.59	1.111
7.	Gain access to sexual contents on YouTube	102	103	164	11	3.01	

Source: Field Study, 2021

Keys: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree, M= Mean, Std.D = Standard Deviation, WM= Weighted Mean

The data collected revealed that many of the respondents gain access to sexual contents on websites. The table also revealed that users gain access to sexual contents on Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and some gain access to sexual contents on YouTube.

Thus, the information on Table revealed that students mostly gain access to sexual contents on websites, which means that the prevalent digital media platform through which undergraduates of University of Ibadan gain access to sexual contents are websites.

Prevalent Illicit Sexual Behaviour among Students

S/No	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	S.D
1.	I commit illicit sexual behaviour through my access to digital media	194 (52.4%)	114 (30.8%)	14 (3.8%)	48 (13.0%)	3.05	1.133
2.	I am always tempted to commit **rape** through my access to digital media	83 (22.4%)	147 (39.7%)	42 (11.4%)	98 (26.5%)	2.56	1.161
3.	I have a feeling that digital media access among youths can bring about **sexual assaults.**	126 (34.1%)	125 (33.8%)	37 (10.0%)	82 (22.2%)	2.64	1.177
4.	I feel that Digital media can bring about **Sexually Transmitted Diseases** among Nigerian students	102 (27.6%)	120 (32.4%)	68 (18.4%)	80 (21.6%)	2.57	1.169
5.	I feel that access to Digital media can culminate to **Harassment** among Nigerian students.	118 (31.9%)	133 (35.9%)	52 (14.1%)	67 (18.1%)	2.93	.828
6.	I feel that Digital media do contribute to **Gender Based Violence** among Nigerian undergraduates	113 (30.5%)	129 (34.9%)	58 (15.7%)	70 (18.9%)	2.74	.973
7	I feel that digital media can promote **masturbation** among Nigerian students.	148 (40.0%)	117 (31.6%)	23 (6.2%)	82 (22.2%)	2.95	1.026

Source: Field Study, 2021

Keys: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree, M= Mean, Std.D= Standard Deviation, WM= Weighted Mean

The table revealed that high percentage of the respondents strongly agreed that they could commit illicit sexual behaviour through access to the digital media. The study also shows that many of the respondents strongly agree that students are always tempted to commit rape through access to the digital media's sexual contents. The study further reveals that many of the students have felt that digital

media access among youths can bring about sexual assaults. Moreover, the study reveals that the respondents felt that the digital media can bring about sexually transmitted diseases among Nigerian students. The study also reveals that many of the respondents have feelings that digital media access among youths can bring about sexual harassment, furthermore students felt that digital media can influence gender based violence among Nigerian undergraduates, while the data collected also shows that the digital media can bring about sexually transmitted diseases among Nigerian students.

Discussion of findings

What are digital media platforms where student access sexual contents?

The data analysed for the present study has revealed that majority of students gain access to sexual contents on websites, though few of them gain access to the contents on other social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. The data shows that the majority of the digital media sexual contents are seen on websites.

Thus, this result can be related to the review which stated that access to digital media has drastically increased due to cheap and easy Internet subscription and the availability of innovative mobile technology. It was estimated in 2012 that 37 million Google users have had access to and used and transferred sexual related contents and 506 million users have searched for materials involving sex (Scott, 2016). The review can be related to the assumption of technological determinism theory which opined that technology is considered to be part of a larger spectrum of human activity and shows the linkage between innovation, human development and productivity.

What is the prevalent illicit sexual behaviour among students?

The table revealed that students strongly agree that they commit illicit sexual behaviour through access to digital media sexual contents and that they are always tempted to commit rape, sexual assaults and sexual harassment, which sometimes can lead to sexually transmitted diseases as well as gender based violence in Nigeria. These findings can be related to the review which stated that youths and adolescents are vulnerable to sexually transmitted diseases due to casual sex, which might be as a result of exposure to diverse sexual triggers that lead students to engaging in unprotected sex (Scott, 2016). This means that sexual contents on the digital media can be one of the triggers of illicit sexual behaviour as seen in this study. This can also be related to the assumption of the theory which stated

that human behaviour can be motivated through dynamic innovations and its end product such as video, picture, and audio that affects human emotions.

Conclusion

The present study revealed that students gain access to sexual contents on various websites, while few of them gain access to the contents on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. University of Ibadan's students also admitted that they find themselves tempted to commit illicit sexual behaviour through access to digital media sexual contents. It also gives them impetus to committing sexual assaults, sexual harassment and rape, which may, sometimes, lead to contracting sexually transmitted diseases as well as promoting gender based violence..

Recommendations

This study recommends that university undergraduates should avoid digital media sexual contents as it could trigger illicit sexual behaviours. The study also suggests that digital media operators should provide gate keeping measures to reduce the proliferation of digital sexual contents so as to prevent illicit sexual behaviours among Nigerian university students.

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