

Psychosocial Variables and Social Networking among Senior Secondary School Students in Obingwa Local Government Area, Abia State

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Abstract

This study examined the influence of psychosocial variables on social networking among senior secondary school students in Obingwa Local Government Area (LGA) in Aba educational zone of Abia State. Two research questions were posed and two hypotheses formulated to guide the study. The study employed descriptive survey design. The population of the study consist of senior secondary school students in Obingwa LGA within 2017/2018 academic year. The respondents were drawn from five schools out of 17 existing schools using the stratified random sampling technique. Questionnaires was use for data collection. The instrument was validated by two experts in measurement and Evaluation, and educational psychology. Two research questions were answered with descriptive statistics and the hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significantly. Results of the study indicated that self-esteem and family type do not significantly influence social networking among students. While self-actualization significantly influences social networking among senior secondary school students in Obingwa LGA. Based on findings, it was recommended that stakeholders in education should collaboratively develop ways to capitalized on social network technologies in education system while ensuring effective safeguards are in place.

Key words: psychosocial variables, social networking, senior secondary school, students.

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INTRODUCTION

Social networking service (SNSs) is a website that allow people with similar interests to come together and share information, photos and videos. Social networking become popular from 2005 to 2011 after the creation of facebook and other SNSs like twitter, 2go, facebook has been identified as the most commonly visited SNSs in the world (Ogbe,2014). Officially it has hit 1 billion active monthly users (Zukerberg, 2013 cited in Okon, 2016). SNSs, like facebook, provide a variety of services such as users own unique space, and ability to share photos and videos, maintain blogs and encourage group interactions through chat-rooms, instant messages and emails. Some SNSs offer dating and match-making facilities. Industry surveys shows that people join and partake in SNSs for a variety of reasons, such as to stay in touch with old friends, make plans with friends or make new friends (Okon, 2016). Other reasons may include feelings for affections and belonging, need for information, goal achievement, staff identity, values and notions of accepted behaviours (Ridings & Gefen, 2014).

Young people are most frequent users of (SNSs). Sadly, it is rare to see students online who contact their classmates about questions regarding class works or assignments or even collaborating to do group project online through facebook. Instead, they spend time browsing and pinging the internet while lessons are going on, at the end they will not understand what was taught. These (SNSs), have made students lose focus of their studies (Arumesahum, 2014).

Psychosocial is a compound term for the combination of psychological and social variables. This includes; individual level processes and meaning that influence mental dispositions while social variables include at the level of human society in general concerned with social structure and social processes that may influence the individual (Upton,2013). A number of these psychosocial variables have been suspected to exert significant influences on the use of (SNSs) by senior secondary school students. This psychosocial variable as self-esteem and self-actualizations remains of specific interest to researchers.

Self-esteem can be seen as one's appraisal of value or worth of self. Heatherton and Wyland (2003) defined self-esteem, in relation to social networking, as the evaluative emotional compensation of self-concept. Research suggests that self-esteem level is related to one's online social behavior. It is commonly observed that the students embark on social networking for reasons such as attempting to compensate for past emotional neglect by significant others, letting out psychosocial frustrations and making one popular and acceptable as they post and expect favorable comments. By comparing themselves to others online, they get depressed. Actually, these SNSs users tend to forget to take into account that a lot of what they are seeing, especially from brands and celebrities is carefully orchestrated, it is not real life. Even friends, families and we, tend to only post the best versions of ourselves or our lives. This highlights the need to examine how social networking may impact student's self-esteem positively or negatively.

Self-actualization is another psychosocial trait that could be influenced by social networking. Self-actualization is an attempt of an individual to become the best version of one or reach one's full potentials. Shao (2009) suggests that some components of SNSs activities fulfill self-actualization needs such as ability for individuals to create and publish media online such as video or picture. This is referred to as content production. Shao argued that the production of content is related to the need for self-expression and self-actualization, both of which are used to create personal identity. This underpins the need to examine the association between self-actualization and social networking.

Statement of the problem

Online social networking sites have become increasingly popular and almost an integral part of everyday life especially for students. Although some students feel comfortable with social network services (SNSs) because they can get help and share information for educational reasons, others use these sites for selfish negative reasons such as swindling unsuspecting members of the society, medium for posting pornographic materials, sexual solicitation, character assassination among others. Several students have become victims or even addicts of social networking. Students spend so much time on social networking site and fall into danger of addiction of socializing with fictitious people thereby lacking the skills of real face-to-face socialization. The social networking sites also have negative impacts in the student's academic performance, for instance, so many students are getting used to the social networking grammar which is different from the real life and examination standard. Although several studies (Hargittai, 2007 and Okon, 2016) have been conducted on the influence of psychological and social variables on the social networking sites, with paucity of empirical findings

conducted on testing psychosocial variable such as self-esteem and self-actualization. It is against this background that it become pertinent to investigate psychosocial variables influence on social networking among senior secondary students in Obingwa Local Government Area of Abia State.

Purpose of the Study

The study was designed to examine psychosocial variables that influence social networking among senior secondary students in Obingwa L.G.A. Specifically, the study intended to achieve the following objectives:

1. Examine the influence of self-esteem on social networking among senior secondary school students in Obingwa L.G.A.
2. Examine the influence of self-actualization on social networking among senior secondary school students in Obingwa L.G.A.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this study.

1. To what extent does self-esteem influence social networking among senior secondary school students in Obingwa L.G.A.?
2. To what extent does self-actualization influence social networking among senior secondary school students in Obingwa L.G.A.?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at .05 level of significance:

1. Self-esteem does not significantly influence social networking among senior secondary school students in Obingwa L.G.A.
2. Self-actualization does not significantly influence social networking among senior secondary school students in Obingwa L.G.A.

Review of Related Literatures

Social Networking

Social networking allows individuals to communicate and interact with people of a large-scale and through a roust set of features (Munakash, 2016). To take advantage of social networking offerings, individuals must create a user profile which is personalized by users by adding pictures and information about their personal information, career and relationship status. Although individuals communicate and/or share information through their profiles, they however, interact with others by locating friends, family, and acquaintances, and invite them (or be invited by them) to become friends or followers within the social network. Once a individual has establish a set of friends or followers, they are involve I social networking and can share content either directly with the network or individually with friends I the network.

Students engage in social networking for different reasons. However, the two driving forces for social networking especially in facebook include the need to belong and the need for self-presentation (Nadkarin & Hoffman, 2012). Adkarin and Hoffman (2012) contended that the need to belong is motivated by cultural and demographic factors; whereas the need for self-presentation is influence by personality traits such as introversion, shyness and self-esteem. Regarding the need to belong, one of the most commonly cited reason for using facebook is to maintain relationships with existing close friends. The need to belong is also achieved on social networking sites through social information seeking, which involves how much one knows about an individual they have made offline (Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe, 2011). Social information seeking helps people become acquainted with new friends created in the physical world as well as deepen already establish relationships. For self-presentation, individuals tend to portray an ideal self, which may or may not be consistent with true self (Zhao, Grasmuck & martin, 2008). Arguably, the ideal selves reflect the epitome of self-presentation that for any number of reasons is yet to manifest in the real world. The present study sought to investigate some psychosocial variables that influence social networking among senior secondary school students.

Self-Esteem and Social Networking

Self-esteem appears to be a significant personality trait associated with social networking. Soraye (2010) sees self-esteem as a person's overall self-evaluation of his or her worth. Tazghini and Siedleck (2013) discovered association between facebook use and social capital, which is the benefits or resources available through social relationships. It was found that those with lower self-esteem benefited more or had greater social capital due to Facebook use than those with higher levels of self-esteem. Furthermore, individuals with low self-esteem try to compensate by becoming active in online activities such as spending more time on social networking sites, increasing their frequency by logging on to facebook and having more friends on facebook. By so doing, they attempt to compensate for their low self-esteem, by seeking more friends on social media in order to establish a sense of belonging and increase perception of popularity (Amichai-Hamburger & Vinitzky, 2010).

Research also indicates that those with low self-esteem tend to accept more friend requests from people they do not know very well; they easily connect with new friends and communicate through social network than having direct contact with peers (Tazghini & Siedlecki, 2013). This practice help students to build social capital, as social networking lowers barriers of participation and allows users who may initially shy away from initiating communication to respond to others and forge ties with others online (Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe, 2011). However, studies show that

excessive friending online can lead to negative self-evaluation and can be detrimental to one's well-being by being under the constant stress of being exposed to a large audience (Lee, Moore, Park & Park, 2012).

On the other hand, Barker (2009) contended that people with reportedly high self-esteem use social network as means of communicating with peer group members and pass time. A similar study found that extroverts, who admittedly have high self-esteem, tend to engage more in social activities on social network sites and use the sites to enhance and maintain social ties. They do not use social networking as alternative to social activities but as a means to enhance their social relationship (Skues, Williams & Wise, 2012). Lending credence to this finding, Kalpidou, Coston and Morri (2011) assert that introverts using social networking sites experienced decreased involvement in the community and increased level of loneliness, whereas extroverts experience decreased loneliness and more community involvement. In addition, introverts tend to disclose more information about themselves on their facebook profiles than extroverts. It seems that extroverts rely more on their social skills and do not feel the need to promote themselves the way introverts do in order to make friends on social networking site (Amichai-Hamburger & Vinitzky 2010).

It appears that people with high levels of self-esteem use facebook for different purposes than people with low self-esteem. They also tend to have a more positive experience with social networking than people with low self-esteem, using the site more as a tool to enhance the relationships they already have rather than using the site to build social capital (Raymer, 2015). This can be attributed to the fact that people who are more secure in face-to-face interactions, such as extroverts, tend to use social networking site more for social interaction, in comparison to those who do not feel connected to their peer group and use the site to seek social compensation (Barker, 2009).

Social networking site, while allowing users to create electronic profile for themselves, provide details about their life and experiences, post pictures maintain relationships, plan social events, meet new people, comment on other lives, express beliefs, preferences and emotions as well as fulfill belongingness needs (Ivcevic & Ambade, 2012), social networking also serve as a basis for social comparisons, self-evaluation or self enhancement (Haferkamp & Kramer, 2011). Humans possess a fundamental drive to compare themselves with others. Upward social comparison occurs when comparing oneself to superior others who have positive characteristics, while downward social comparison means comparing oneself with inferior others with negative characteristics (Wood, 1989).

Resembling and Egbert (2011) found that people who used facebook most frequently, had lower

trait self-esteem than those who used facebook less or not at all. Moreover, this negative effect on trait self-esteem is the result of the fact that the extent of upward social comparison was greater than that of downward social comparison. This implies that chronic facebook users experience a mostly negative impact from comparing themselves to others who are 'better' than themselves in terms of their social networking presence; this has a stronger impact on them than the potential benefits arising from downward social comparisons.

Similarly, Chou and Edge (2012) examined the impact of temporary exposure to social networking sites on state self-esteem. The results show that experienced lower state self-esteem and poorer self-evaluations after exposure to a person with a high activity social network. Participants also had poorer self-evaluation after exposure to up-ward healthy comparison target (someone who presented themselves as healthy, young and vibrant). Generally speaking, viewing social media profiles with positive contents result poorer state self-esteem and more negative self-evaluation. Most of the studies considered the effect of social networking site on self-esteem but the current investigation sought to establish how state of self-esteem influences social networking among secondary school students.

Self-Actualization Social Networking

Okon (2016) described self-actualization as the desire to accomplish, achieve success, attain a milestone, and the general tendency to become whatever the individual desire or is capable of becoming; and the associated need to make same known in order to garner attributes of worth. Munakash (2016) also defined self-actualization as "a process through which one's potential is developed in congruence with one's self perception and experience". Maslow (1943) argued that human needs exist on hierarchy with self-actualization at the top. Self-actualization is typically pursued once human's basic needs or those on lower human's basic needs – or those on lower levels of the hierarchy have been met.

Researchers have identified various underlying components of self-actualization including the ability to establish relationships based on mutual respect, being capable of empathy, having a realistic perception of oneself, being capable of not focusing on oneself, not being paralyzed by the judgment of others and having a well-developed sense of ethics (Leclerc, Lefrancovs, Dube, Herbert, & Gaulin 1988 cited in Murakash, 2016). Very little research has examined the association between social networking and self-actualization. However, Shao (2009) suggested that the need for self-actualization may motivate an individual to produce online content (that is, creating and publishing medial online such as pictures and videos with the goal of seeking recognition, fame, or personal efficacy.

Although individuals seeking self-actualization are in constant communication with their network friends, they use social networking as a means to contribute to the lives of others. The use of social networking sites helps to facilitate this goal because the self-actualizing individual is able to share information that is intended to improve the lives of the people in their network (Leclerc *et al.*, 1998 in Murakash, 2016). Sharing information tends not to highlight the self-actualizer, but instead focuses on topics of broader significance such as global issues and human rights. The current study will attempt to determine the influence of need for self-actualization on the use of social networking.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive survey design. This was considered appropriate because it allows the researcher the flexibility of studying a sample from a population and the result generalized to the entire population. The population of the study consisted of senior secondary students in nine LGAs in Aba Education Zone of Abia State (Abia State Secondary Education Management Board, 2017). The study employed multiple sampling techniques. First, abia north LGA was randomly selected from the nine (9) existing LGAs in the Aba Education Zone. Ten (10) senior secondary schools were randomly selected from 17 schools in Obingwa. The SS1, SS2 and SS3 students in the selected schools were used as sample. A research – made instrument, tagged Secondary School Students Social Network questionnaire (S⁴NQ) was used for data collection. Copies of the draft instrument, purpose of the study, research questions and hypotheses were given to experts in educational psychology and Measurement and Evaluation in National Institute for Nigerian Languages (NINLAN) to access the items to ascertain their relevance to the variables under study. Their comments and suggestions were integrated in the final version of the instrument. The instrument was administered to 20 students outside the schools sampled for the study. Their responses were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient. The procedure yielded a correlation coefficient of .743. The index was high enough to use S⁴NQ as a reliable instrument for data collection. The researcher obtained permission from the principals of the sampled schools to use their students for the study. The teachers of the various classes assisted the researcher in administering the questionnaire. They collected the questionnaires, after completion by the respondents, at the spot. This warranted 100% return. Scoring of instrument was done on 5-point scale. Positively worded items were weighted SA=4, A=3, D=2, SD=1, U=0. Negatively worded items had the weights reversed on the scale, except for 'Undecided', as follows SA=1, A=2, D=3, SD=1, U=0. The cumulative weights gained by all the items on a variable were recorded for each respondent and analyzed using appropriate statistics. To analyze data, respondent's responses were dichotomized for

each variable. First the mean scores on the independent variables, self-esteem, and self-actualization were computed. Mean scores above 2.5 were regarded as high indication of the variable under consideration whereas mean score below 2.5 was considered as low indication of the variables. The categories of these variables were analyzed based on the social networking scale. The research questions were answered using descriptive statistics. The hypotheses were tested at 0.5 alpha levels using independent t-test. The decision rule used was $p > 0.5$.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Data collected on the identified variables in this study were analyzed using descriptive statistics in order to answer the two research questions posed to guide the study. The results were presented in tables in the following subsections.

Research Question 1

How does self-esteem influence social networking among senior secondary school students of Obingwa L.G.A?

Data in Table 1 shows respondents responses on how self-esteem influences social networking among senior secondary students in the study area.

Table-1: Mean score and standard deviation of influence of self-esteem on social networking

Self-esteem	N	X	SD
High self-esteem	465	26.91	5.96
Low self-esteem	50	26.04	6.23

Table 1 shows that students with high self-esteem have the mean score and standard deviation of ($X = 26.91$, $SD = 5.96$) while those with low self-esteem have ($X = 26.04$, $SD = 6.23$). This shows that there is a

Table-3: Independent t-test analysis of self-esteem and social networking among senior secondary school students

Dependent variable	Self-esteem	N	X	SD	t-cal	df	t-crit
	High esteem	465	26.91	5.96			
Social networking					.976*	513	1.96
	Low esteem	50	26.04	6.23			

*significant at $p < .05$, $df = 513$, critical t-value = 1.96

The result presented in table 3 shows that computed t-value (.976) is less than critical t-value (1.96) at .05 level of significance and degree of freedom of 513. Therefore, the hypothesis which postulated that self-esteem does not significantly influence social networking among senior secondary school students in Obingwa L.G.A. was upheld. This implies that self-esteem does not significantly influence social networking.

slight difference between students with high and low self-esteem in respect to influence on social networking.

Research Question 2: How does self-actualization influence social networking among senior secondary school students of Obingwa L.G.A?

Data in table 2 reveals respondents responses on how self-actualization influences social networking among senior secondary students in the study area.

Table-2: Mean score and standard deviation of influence of self-actualization on social networking

Self-Actualization	N	X	SD
High self-actualization	422	27.18	5.81
Low self-actualization	93	24.55	6.43

Table 2 indicated that students with high level actualization have the mean and standard deviation ($X = 27.18$, $SD = 5.81$), whereas, those with low self-actualization have ($X = 24.55$, $SD = 6.43$).

From the result, students with high level of self-actualization have higher influence on social networking than those with low self-actualization.

Test of research Hypotheses

The researcher tested two hypotheses using independent t-test statistics. All hypotheses were tested at 0.5 level of significance.

Hypothesis 1: Self-esteem does not significantly influence social networking senior secondary school students in Obingwa L.G.A.

Data in table 3 shows the independent t-test analysis on the influence of self-esteem social networking among senior secondary school students.

Hypothesis 2: self-actualization does not significantly influence social networking senior secondary school students in Obingwa L.G.A.

Data in table 4 shows the independent t-test analysis on the influence of self-actualization on social networking among senior secondary school students.

Table-4: Independent t-test analysis of self-actualization and social networking among senior secondary school students.

Dependent variable	Self-esteem	N	X	SD	t-cal	Df	t-crit
	High self- actualization	422	27.81	5.81			
Social networking					.3.88*	513	1.96
	Low self-actualization	93	24.55	6.43			

*significant at $p < .05$, $df = 513$, critical t-value = 1.96

Table 3 shows that computed t-value (3.88) is greater than critical t-value (1.96) at .05 level of significance and degree of freedom of 513. Therefore, the hypothesis which postulated that self-actualization does not significantly influence social networking among senior secondary school students in Obingwa L.G.A. was rejected. This implies that self-actualization significantly influence social networking.

DISCUSSION RESULT

This section discussed the findings of the study with respect to the two null hypotheses tested in the study on psychosocial variables and social networking among senior secondary school students in Obingwa L.G.A.

The first hypothesis tested the significant difference between self-esteem and social networking. The analysis indicated that the observed difference between those with high self-esteem and those with low self-esteem was not significant. The result was expected because the purpose for use of social network due to one's self-esteem differs. For instance, Barker (2009), Skues, Williams and Wise (2012) and Raymer (2015) found out that people with high self-esteem tend to engage more in social networking in other to enhance and maintain social relationship. In addition, people who are more secure in face-to-face interaction, like those with high esteem, use social networking for social interaction and not necessarily to build social capital.

In contrast, researchers like Tazghini and Siedlecki (2013). Amicha-hamburger and Vinitzky (2010) concluded from their separate studies that those with lower self-esteem benefit more had greater social capital due to social networking, by so doing they attempt to compensate their low self-esteem by seeking more friends on social network. Lending credence to these finding, Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe (2011) contended that the practice of social networking offers those with low self-esteem a leeway of participation and allow those that may initially shy away from initiating communication to respond to others and forge relationship with others on-line. Generally, the use of social networking sites is influenced by self-esteem (Chou & Edge, 2012, Rosenberg & Egbert (2011).

The test of second hypothesis of self-actualization and social networking indicated significant difference between those with high self-actualization and those with low self-actualization in

engaging in social networking. This finding provided an empirical data to show that high need of self-actualization influenced social networking among senior secondary school students. it was observed that the desire to be assured of self-worth, desire for recognition for one's accomplishment, the feeling of importance, among others prompts social networking. This finding collaborates with those of shao (2009) who found that the need of self-actualization motivates an individual to produce on-line content with the view of seeking recognition, fame or personal efficacy. The finding of this study disagrees with those of Munakash (2016) who reported that the association between self-actualization and social network site usage was not significant.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made based on the finding of the study:

1. School guidance counselors should educate students on the possible harm misusing social network will have on their privacy, social relationship, lifestyle, self-esteem and psychological well-being.
2. Parents and school should help students have a positive and safe social networking experience by first becoming educated about the technologies youngsters are using, including ways to facilitate positive experiences and how to implement protective safeguards and strategies.
3. Parents should befriend their children on social networking and have other family members do so as well. This will help the students remember that what they are publishing and posting on social network sites are not just for their peers, but can be seen and read by everyone.

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