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Social Media as a Correlate of Prostitution Among Senior Secondary School Girls: A Challenge

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Abstract

Social media are characterised as Web 2.0 resources and emphasise active participation, connectivity, collaboration, and sharing of knowledge and ideas among users. Prostitution is the act of engaging in sexual intercourse in exchange for money. It is a common practice found among students all over the world. Some even consider prostitution as the only choice for paying for their education. To ensure reliability and validity of the data collected. Eight senior secondary schools were randomly selected. A sample of 160 Senior Secondary 3 (SS3) students were randomly selected as the sample. The data were obtained by the use of questionnaire and oral interview (from the students in the selected schools). Data were analysed and the result presented with the use of tables and percentages to facilitate simple presentation, interpretation and classification of the data collected. The hypotheses were tested using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation as the statistical tool. The hypotheses

result tested shows that the calculated r values of all the three hypotheses were close to 1 and hence the null hypotheses H₀ were rejected while the alternative hypotheses H₁ were accepted. The calculated r values were 0.96, 0.92 and 0.99, respectively. Hence, it was concluded that there is a significant relationship between students' gender and use of the social media for prostitution among students in senior secondary schools and there is a significant effect of wrong usage of social media. Apart from the frequency of use, most students use social media for wrong purposes such as flirting, through sending of "hot messages, manipulating images and hot videos" and sharing contacts for dating and prostitution. Some recommendations were made. Students of senior secondary schools should be commended for maintaining a regular online presence on social media. The frequent use of social media should not be addictive. The federal and state governments in Nigeria should strengthen their laws against prostitution and other related vices.

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Introduction

Social media are characterised as Web 2.0 resources that emphasise active participation, connectivity, collaboration and sharing of knowledge and ideas among users (Emmanuel and Chux, 2014). Social media resources can be divided into three distinct categories. While one category emphasises content sharing and organising sites like Delicious, Digg, Flickr, YouTube and RSS readers, the second category encompasses content creation and editing websites such as Blogger, Google Docs, Wikipedia and WordPress. The third category includes social network sites (SNS) like Facebook, Ning, Myspace and Orkut that serve as online communities that enable users to connect with old and new friends, and have ideas and resources (Mcloughlin and Lee, 2007). Social media are internet social networking sites that connect people for different purposes. Ekeanyanwu and Kalyango (2013) describes them "as the ninth Wonder of the World because such media platforms are becoming

increasingly connected, interactive, participatory, integrative, community-based, ubiquitous and digital”.

The explosion of social sites followed the establishment of Facebook in 2004. Social media sites are meant to socially connect friends. Members of this community of friends may be people of like minds and interests who could be continents apart. Social networks have metamorphosed into the social media, which perform roles akin to those of the conventional media.

The Social media play significant roles in societal interconnectivity. They bring the users together for mutual supply and the utilisation of mutual supply and information, thereby providing a platform for social interaction between the audience and the users (Picard, 2009; MacMillan, 2009). However, unlike the conventional media, there is no control, no code of ethics and no gatekeeping. These shortcomings have created room for vices such as falsification, incredibility, lack of professionalism, falsehood, sedition, blackmail, pornography, invasion of privacy, and other unacceptable media practices. They have also been used to promote prostitution.

Dixon (2012) points to a study of about 300 British university students in which 10% reported knowing a student who had worked as a prostitute or escort in 2010. This is up from about 6% in 2006 and 4% in 2000. Dixon explains that the rise coincided with an increase in college tuition fees. McCaskey (2012) corroborates the findings of Dixon by pointing out that the use of the social media could promote prostitution among students. For instance, Abati (2009) reports the case of a female university student who turned into prostitution after armed robbers raped her. She was reported to have used the social media to promote her prostitution.

Oladunjoye (2000) also reports a significant level of prostitution, not only among students of higher institutions in Nigeria but also among secondary school students. Umeh and Umeh (2003) disclose that there is a high incidence of a Nigerian female students “practising prostitution, stealing and other vices to support themselves and maintain their dependant relatives.” In a related study, Okunbor and Agwubike (2009) also found a high rate of prostitution among female students in Nigerians secondary schools and higher institutions. Hence, this study will focus on social media as a correlate to prostitution among secondary school students in Osun State using Iwo Local Government Area as the reference point.

Statement of the Problem

Many boarding secondary school girls sneak out of their hostels to meet clients they met through the social media; their freer counterparts in day secondary schools also meet clients during and after school hours. These girls, according to Uzokwe (2008), are easy tools in the hands of ritual killers and kidnappers. Furthermore, when a girl or a woman accepts money for sex, she has conferred on the man the authority and power to decide what kind of thing he may do to her. She would be expected to endure brutality, rape and other things that could be done to her behind closed doors. The prevalence and sophistication in promiscuous behaviour by secondary school students as confirmed by Olugbile and Uzokwe (2008) is enough to trigger a discourse.

Research Hypotheses

- H_0 : There is no significant relationship between prostitution among girls in senior secondary schools and their access to the social media
- H_1 : There is significant relationship between girls' gender and use of social media for prostitution in the senior secondary school.
- H_0 : There is no significant relationship between the use of the social media and prostitution rates among girls of the senior secondary school.
- H_1 : There is significant relationship between the use of the social media, moral decadence and prostitution rates among girls of the senior secondary school.
- H_0 : There is no significant effect of the wrong usage of social media and prostitution on the academic performance of girls in senior secondary schools.
- H_1 : There is a significant effect of the wrong use of the social media and prostitution on the academic performance of girls in the senior secondary school.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected were analysed and results presented with the use of tabulation and percentages to facilitate simple presentation, interpretation and classification of data collected. The hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation as the statistical tool. The formula is stated below.

where:

N = scores of respondents

X = the first question of the questionnaire obtained from the respondents and test for hypothesis.

Y = the second question of the questionnaire obtained from the respondents and test for hypothesis;

ΣX = Sum of X scores

ΣY = Sum of Y scores

ΣX^2 = Sum of Squared X scores

ΣY^2 = Sum of Squared Y scores

ΣXY = Sum of X and Y

Test of Hypotheses

The need for hypotheses is to provide direction for the study and prevent the review of irrelevant literature and the collection of useless or excessive data. A test of hypothesis has been described as a statistical technique that uses sample data to ascertain a hypothesis about the parameter of population. Two hypotheses were tested in this research.

Relationship between girls gender and use of social media for prostitution in the senior secondary schools

Hypothesis One

- H_0 : There is no significant relationship between girls' gender and use of social media for prostitution in the senior secondary schools.
- H_1 : There is significant relationship between girl's gender and use of social media for prostitution in the senior secondary schools.

Question 6 (vii and viii) of the section B of the questionnaire shall be used to test this hypothesis.

let X_1 represent question 6 (vii) and Y_1 represent question 6 (viii) from the section B of the questionnaire:

Table 1: Correlation Matrix on Relationship between Girls' Gender and Use of Social Media

In respect of the level of significance the closer the value of r to 1, the stronger the relationship between the variables and vice versa.

However, since the calculated r 0.96 is closer to 1, the Null Hypothesis (H_0) is rejected while the Alternative Hypothesis (H_1) is accepted. It is, therefore, concluded that there is a significant relationship between girls' gender and use of social media for prostitution among senior secondary schools.

The purpose of using social media among senior secondary school girls

Hypothesis Two

H_0 : There is no significant relationship between the use of the social media, moral decadence and prostitution rates among girls of the senior secondary school.

H_1 : There is significant relationship between the use of the social media, moral decadence and prostitution rates among girls of the senior secondary school.

Question 5 (iii and v) of the section B of the questionnaire shall be used to test this hypothesis.

Let X_2 represent question 5 (iii) and Y_2 represent question 5 (v) from the section B of the questionnaire:

Table 2: Correlation Matrix on Relationship between Use of Social Media and Prostitution Rates

In respect of the level of significance the closer the value of r to 1, the stronger the relationship between the variables and vice versa

However, since the calculated $r = 0.96$ is closer to 1, the Null Hypothesis (H_0) is rejected while the Alternative Hypothesis (H_1) is accepted. It is, therefore, concluded that there is a significant relationship between the use of the social media and prostitution among senior secondary school girls.

Effects of the wrong use of the social media and prostitution among senior secondary school girls

Hypothesis Three

H_0 : There is no significant effect of wrong use of social media prostitution on the academic performance of girls in the senior secondary schools.

H_1 : There is a significant effect of wrong usage of social media prostitution on the academic performance of girls in the senior secondary schools.

Question 7 (ix and x) of the section B of the questionnaire shall be used to test this hypothesis. Let X_3 represent question 7 (ix) and Y_3 represent question 7 (x) from the section B of the questionnaire:

Decision Rule

Calculated $r = 0.9910532 = 0.99$

And level of significance = The closer the value of r to 1, the stronger the relationship between the variables (vice-versa).

However, since our calculated r of 0.99 is closer to 1, we will reject the Null Hypothesis H_0 and therefore, conclude that there is significant effect of wrong use of social media and prostitution on the academic performance of girls in senior secondary schools.

Discussion of Findings

The result indicates that girls of senior secondary schools use the social media in a high extent for different purposes. It shows that most of them do not often use the social media for contributing to public discussion, academic purposes, reading news, leisure/entertainment and searching online resources. They use them for flirting through sending hot messages, for manipulating images and hot videos and for sharing contacts, for dating and for prostitution among others. The findings are also in line with those of McCaskey (2012), which show that most girls use the social media for flirting/prostitution.

The findings also show that female students use the social media for prostitution more than their male counterparts. This correlates with the findings of Hargittai (2007), Johnson (2008), Madden and Zickuhr (2011), Hampton *et al.* (2011) which show that there is a significant relationship between gender and social media use. They were of the view that there is high correlation between the use of social media by the girls and high involvement in prostitution.

Also, the finding that depicts that the wrong use of social media affects academic performance of the girls and reduces the standard of education agrees with the explanations of Fewster (2010), Belicove (2012), The Telegraph (2009), Jansze (2010), and Holmes (2009) that there is a significant correlation between the use of social media, students' involvement in prostitution and standard of education in higher institution. Lastly, the negative effect of the use of the social media among students, leading to prostitution, is that it leads to

unwanted pregnancies, drug abuse, ST diseases and social stigma, among others.

Summary of Findings

The study on the social media and prostitution rate in senior secondary schools has opened up a number of challenges for the social media as agent of prostitution among students of senior secondary school.

Respondents that fell between the age range of 10–14 years and 15–19 years gave all the information used for this study and virtually all the respondents were students. The study revealed that prostitution is a major social disease among female students and a large percentage of female students do have sex partners.

In testing for the hypotheses, the calculated r values of all the three (3) hypotheses were close to 1 and hence, the null hypotheses (H_0) were rejected while the alternative hypotheses (H_1) were accepted. The calculated r values were 0.96, 0.92 and 0.99 respectively. Hence it is concluded that there was a significant relationship between students' gender and the use of the social media for prostitution in senior secondary schools. There was also a significant relationship between the use of the social media and prostitution in senior secondary schools. There was also a significant effect of the wrong usage of social media and prostitution on the academic performance of students in senior secondary schools.

The study also revealed that the use of social media leads to prostitution and prostitution leads to unwanted pregnancies, disease infection.

Conclusion

The findings of this study suggest that students of senior secondary schools have adopted the use of social media and they use them frequently. Apart from the frequency of use, most students use the social media for bad purposes such as flirting, through sending hot messages, manipulating images and hot videos and sharing contacts for dating and prostitution. It was also instructive to note that gender plays a significant role in the use of social media for prostitution among students of institutions of higher learning as female students tend to use social media more than their male counterparts.

Recommendations

Based on this, the following recommendations are suggested.

- Students of senior secondary schools should be commended for maintaining a regular online presence on social media. There are many advantages of this. Social media are resources channels for educational and learning purposes. They also serve as news and information channels and help users stay connected with distant relations. However, the various schools Principals, teachers, parents, guardians, and other stakeholders in the education sector should mount a concerted orientation programme aimed at discouraging young people from the negative use of the social media, especially carrying out prostitution or other related disgraceful habits and lifestyles.
- Warning that the frequent use of the social media should not turn to addictive use is of paramount importance. Anything addictive could turn negative and eat into the students' studies and other related time schedules. In other words, addictive social media use could negatively affect students performance in their educational pursuits. This is a possibility that must be researched into and appropriate measures taken.
- The federal and state governments in Nigeria should strengthen its laws against prostitution and other related concerns. Both punitive and corrective measures must be aggressively taken to eradicate such cankerworm from our society. However, Government, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), religious institutions and bodies should address the conditions that lead our young people into prostitution in the first place. Sociologists and social psychologists could also engage in relevant research to advise the aforementioned bodies so that this negative phenomenon can be rooted out of the society. This, for us, should be the highpoint of any concerted effort to eradicate the incidence of prostitution among secondary school students.
- Seminars and workshops should be organised periodically on the dangers of promiscuousness in our lives.

- HIV/AIDS orientation should be organised for greater awareness by the Guidance and Counseling departments in secondary schools.
- The counseling departments should embark on the dissemination of valid HIV/AIDS information to students, staff and the community through.
 - (a) The use of audio-visuals like films (film strips), slides (overhead projectors), bulletin board among others.
 - (b) The use of electronic media like the internet, where it is available, usable and accessible.
 - (c) HIV/AIDS information being integrated into school subjects like biology and health education so as to catch them young.
- The government, Ministry of Health and some NGOs should extend the fight against HIV/AIDS—a bi-product of prostitution to higher institutions and secondary schools where there is a larger group of people who are vulnerable.

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