USES AND GRATIFICATIONS OF FACEBOOK AMONG MASS COMMUNICATION UNDERGRADUATES OF NASARAWA STATE UNIVERSITY, KEFFI AND IBRAHIM BADAMASI BABANGIDA UNIVERSITY, LAPAI

Emmanuel Helen Idowu, Professor Muhammad S. Rabiu & Professor Anthony I. Igyuve
Department of Mass Communication, Nasarawa State University, Keffi
Faculty of Social Sciences
Corresponding Authors: helenborn2016@gmail.com
rabiums123@gmail.com
anthonyigyuve@gmail.com

Abstract

This study analyzed the gratifications sought by Mass Communication Undergraduates students from the use of Facebook, and also the intensity of the use of Facebook among students. The survey research method was employed to conduct the investigation with the sample size of 325 and questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. Nasarawa State University, Keffi and Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University Lapai, Niger State were chosen as the population of the study. Stratified random sampling technique was adopted in the study. Major findings in the study show that Mass Communication Students in Nasarawa State University, Keffi and Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai utilize Facebook for their social interaction and as well as education activities. The study also revealed that gratifications sought significantly influence the intensity of Facebook use among students which range from entertainment, social interactions, relaxation, pass time, information seeking, excitement, companionship, etc. majority of the respondents' time spent on Facebook was very high (58.1%). It concluded that the extent and intensity of Facebook use by mass communication students is moderate, and the gratifications sought from Facebook by students ranged from entertainment, social interaction, relaxation, pass time and academic purpose including research. It was recommended, among other things, that students should use the Facebook platform prudently.

Keywords: Facebook, Communication, Internet, Undergraduate, Nigeria

Introduction

An inevitable component of every culture and civilization is communication. Communication is the livewire of human culture which is referred to as a process by which people exchange information, express their thoughts, feelings, ideas and views in discussion with other people using verbal or nonverbal expressions, signs and writing to convey message among themselves in the society (Aruma, 2018). Roles and essential of communication for human survival cannot be overemphasized perhaps it is a tool for sharing ideas, connect, inform, and more. Therefore, communication is very important to stimulate effective service delivery and sustains the efficient functionalities of the various social organizations and their numerous activities of the society (Babu, 2018). With the introduction of Internet in the 1990s, communication in the present era is distinguished with the introduction of social media (Kolan & Dzandza, 2018).

Social media are an Internet-based application that builds on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). It involves the technologies that facilitate social interaction, make possible collaboration, and enable deliberations across stakeholders. It is a fast and broad communication channel for sharing and discovers content concerning individuals, brands, information, entertainment and knowhow (Dearborn, 2014). As Internet-based applications, social media enable people to create, share and bookmark contents (Jha & Bhardwaj, 2012). The social media are categorized into six namely collaborative project, blogs and micro blogs, content communities, social networking sites, virtual game world, and virtual second world (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Kolan & Dzandza, 2018). Among these classifications, social networking sites (SNSs) are prominent.

Social networking sites are acknowledged for creating and maintaining social identities and ties for maintenance of community (Ulusu, 2010; Salimkhan, Manago, & Greenfield, 2010). Pew Research Center (2011) disclosed that SNSs are an appealing medium for various personal human gratifications including, but not limited to, staying in touch with current friends, staying in touch with family members, connecting with old friends, connecting with others who share similar hobbies and interests, making new friends, reading comments by celebrities, athletes or politicians, as well as finding potential romantic or dating partners (Bellarmine, 2013). In addition, they served as avenues for employees in organizations to maintain an active voice in the workplace by openly sharing their views (Miles & Muuka, 2011). Hence, two-third of the Internet world's population visit social networking sites (SNSs) thus serving as communication and connection tools (Kolan & Dzandza, 2018). SNSs include Yahoo Messenger, Messenger, Blackberry Messenger (BBM), Google talk, Google+ Messenger, and Facebook (Babatunde, 2017).

Facebook, an integral component of the contemporary social networking services (SNSs) landscape, functions as a social utility that facilitates real-time connection and communication, contributing to the broader cultural phenomenon of online social interaction (Bumgarner, 2007). Initially conceived as a personal project at Harvard University, it emerged in February 2004, publicly introduced by its founder, Mark Zuckerberg, to facilitate communication among friends and colleagues within the university. Over the years, Facebook has evolved into a globally recognized social networking platform with widespread appeal, engaging users of all age groups. As of 2021, it boasts nearly three billion users' worldwide (Hall, 2021).

Statement of the Problem

In the contemporary digital age, social media platforms have become integral in shaping communication patterns, particularly among university students. Facebook, as one of the most popular social networking sites, holds significant sway in the lives of individuals, influencing their information consumption, interaction patterns, and overall gratifications derived from its use. However, there is a paucity of research examining the specific uses and gratifications of Facebook among Mass Communication undergraduates in Nigerian universities, particularly Nasarawa State University, Keffi, and Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai.

The proliferation of social media usage raises pertinent questions about intensity of Facebook usage, and the gratifications derive from use of Facebook. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for educators, administrators, and policymakers to tailor communication curricula, implement effective social media policies, and support students in harnessing the positive aspects of Facebook while mitigating potential negative consequences.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

i. What is the intensity of Facebook use among mass communication undergraduate students in Nasarawa State University, Keffi and IBB University, Lapai?

ii. What are the gratifications sought from Facebook among mass communication undergraduate students in Nasarawa State University, Keffi and IBB University, Lapai?

iii. Are there differences in the intensity of Facebook use among mass communication undergraduate students in Nasarawa State University, Keffi and IBB University, Lapai?

iv. Are there differences in the gratifications sought from Facebook by among mass communication undergraduate students in Nasarawa State University, Keffi and IBB University, Lapai?

Review of Related Literature

Basically, this section covered broadly the intensity of Facebook use, and gratifications sought.

Intensity of Facebook Use

Advance technologies which has brought "globalization and social networking sites (SNS)" which made the world to become a global village in which activities in any part of the world can be easily communicated across has made virtually everybody mobile compliance (Menon & Meghana, 2021). The SNSs have significantly influence communication across the world. Among the famous SNSs is Facebook. In short, Facebook usage has become sine qua non of every individual especially youth. Studies across the world have established difference degree of extent and intensity of use of Facebook with inconsistent outcomes of impact of this on students, in particularly.

Gratifications sought from Facebook

The uniqueness of Facebook has made it ubiquitous among social networking sites. Perhaps, this is due to power to reach users of the internet prevails as one of the most fervent media platforms for all age groups and, its capacity to personalize information both for professional and personal use (Ajimakin, 2018). Also, as an audience-centric Social Network Sites (SNSs) application, it brings its users together by forming networked communities of shared preferences (Joinson cited in Menon & Meghana, 2021). Then, Facebook facilitates a wide range of activities, and usage and gratifications differ considerably among the users.

According to Menon and Meghana (2021), over a period of time, the usage of Facebook as a photo sharing medium is reduced as many other platforms like Instagram and Pinterest are available for photo sharing. This has changed the role of Facebook beyond photo sharing. Apart from photo sharing, however, despite the enormous growth and usage of Facebook, relevant research has not increased proportionally. In addition to this, the uses and gratifications of Facebook include relationship creation and maintenance, passing time, information seeking, entertainment, disclosure, affection seeking and social surveillance (Whiting & Williams, 2013; Dhir, Chen & Chen, 2017). Others include music, socialization, news sharing and sharing links (Baek, Holton, Harp, & Yaschur, 2011; Lee & Ma, 2012).

Education and research are not left out among the use and gratifications of Facebook. Both students and teachers across all levels of education are conversant with Facebook, and the gratifications sough in addition to the above mentioned include educational development in terms of sharing education resources, research, references, and dissemination of information and lecturers (Whiting & Williams, 2013; Dhir, Khalil, Lonka, & Tsai, 2017; Alamgir, 2019).

Review of Empirical Studies

Asemah, Okpanachi and Edegoh (2013) revealed that Kogi State University students' exposure to the social media especially Facebook has negative effect on their academic performance. Also, Ndaku (2013) disclosed that students in the University of Abuja spent reasonable time on social media which has negative effects on their academic performances. Likewise, Mensah and Nizam (2016) revealed that abnormal time spent on social media posed threat to students' academic performance in Malaysian Tertiary Institution. Furthermore, Araoye (2018) found Nigerian students spent time of social media including the Facebook with little gratification of academic potentials integrated in it.

However, Boateng and Amankwaa (2016) made known that the use social media by students positively influenced their academic life in China. Likewise, Ekechukwu (2017) revealed positive effects of the use social networking sites (SNSs) on academic life of students of Abia State Polytechnic, Aba. Also, Gilbert, Ali, Naif, Alwaleed, and Saad (2018) discovered positive use of Facebook for academic affairs by college students in Saudi Arabia. Similarly, Al-Yafi, El-Masri and Tsai (2018) revealed significant relationship between use of Facebook and academic performance of students in Qatar. In the same vein, Ajimakin (2018) disclose positive significant relationship between use of Facebook and academic performance of undergraduate students of University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. In addition, Kolan and Dzandza (2018) revealed that students in University of Ghana prudently explore the academic potentials of Facebook in addition to other gratifications sough. Moreover, Agwi and Ogwueleka (2018) revealed insignificant impact of social media sites on students' academic sojourn in a university in Nigeria.

Araoye (2018) examined level of usage and the effect of social media on students' academic life in higher institutions of learning in Nigeria. Survey research design was adopted for the study. Data

were obtained through questionnaire administered to three hundred and sixty-eight (368) respondents drawn from five higher institutions of learning ranging from College of Education, Polytechnics to Universities in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Data obtained were analyzed with descriptive statistics and, chi-square was for test of hypotheses.

Outcomes from analyzed data revealed that 318 of the 368 students surveyed always stays online, 85% have smart phones, 124 are on Facebook. It is also revealed that many of the students prefer WhatsApp and Facebook to other social network (117 and 121 respectively). Very high percentage agreed that they spend most of their time on chatting both in the morning and night. Many also disclosed that they chat while lectures are ongoing. This of course can have negative impact on their academic performances. It was concluded that Nigerian students do not know the right use of social media and how it can be applied to aid their learning, and that social media have negative influences on the academic performance among students of higher institutions of learning in Ekiti State as a result of valuable time spend on chatting in place of reading. It was recommended that there is need to integrate the use of social media to teaching platform for its effective use in higher institution of learning in Nigeria, and there is need for regular orientation among Nigerian students on the right use of social media for positive impact.

Generally, this study and the present study are similar in terms of objective, design, instrument for data collection, and statistical tools for data analysis. However, the difference between the studies lied in scope, and location. The present study is conducted in two universities in North central geopolitical zone of Nigeria with focus on the uses and gratifications of Facebook among mass communication undergraduate students while the reviewed study examined level of usage and the effect of social media on students' academic life in higher institutions of learning in Ekiti State.

Theoretical Framework
This work is anchored on the Uses and Gratifications theory and the Technological Determinism theory.

The Uses and Gratifications Theory
Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) was propounded in the 1970 by Blumler and Katz as a reaction to traditional mass communication research which lays emphasis on sender and the message while viewing the receiver as a passive component of the communication process (Griffin, 2012). UGT was developed to evaluate user motivations and gratifications of a specific media. Major assumptions of UGT are four including media use is goal-directed or motivated, people use media to satisfy their needs and desires, social and psychological factors mediate media use, and media use and interpersonal communication are related (Rubin, 1993 cited in Kircaburun, Alhabash, Tosuntaş & Griffiths, 2018).

The theory stressed that users of media are motivated by two different types of gratifications; gratifications sought and gratifications obtained. Gratifications sought refer to users' expectations of the types of gratifications they would get from using media, whereas gratifications obtained refers to the needs satisfied by media use (Kircaburun, Alhabash, Tosuntaş & Griffiths, 2018). Also, Uses and Gratifications theory does not focus on the idea of 'what media do to people' but rather 'what people do with the media'. It discusses how users deliberately choose media that will satisfy given needs and allow one to enhance knowledge, relaxation, social interaction, diversion or escape (Gallion, 2010; Griffin, 2012).

Likewise, Uses and Gratifications theory is at the center of the contemporary active audience paradigm which postulates that people put specific media content and medium to specific use in the hope of having some needs gratified (Katz & Blumler, 1974 cited in Bellarmine, 2013). There is a natural nexus, of course, between media and technology (Bellarmine, 2013). UGT is concerned with the social and psychological origin of needs. These generate expectation of the mass media which leads to different patterns of media exposure, resulting in need gratifications and other consequences, mostly unintended ones. The theory is purely audience centred and addresses needs like surveillance, excitement, guidance, relaxation, tension release, socialization, escape and integration. To be able to gratify these needs, it must be able to realize that the mass media audience may belong to the low, middle or high post brow group (Griffin, 2012).

These uses and gratifications (benefits) are determined by the needs of members of the audience. Such needs may include information, entertainment, self-esteem and prestige. Through the uses and gratification research, communication scholars have shown that everywhere, people

selectively expose themselves to mass media content, choosing only those media messages that would serve the function of satisfying or gratifying their needs (Griffin, 2012). Therefore, use and gratifications approach emphasizes audience member's motive for making specific consumption choices and the consequences of that intentional media use. That is to say, they choose the content, make meaning of it and act on the meaning (McQuail, 2010).

Uses and gratifications theory assert that people use media to gratify specific wants and needs. Unlike many media theories that view media users as passive, uses and gratification sees users as active agents who have control over their media consumption. Uses and gratifications characterizes people as active and motivated in selecting the media they choose to consume, the theory relies on two principles media users are active in their selection of the media they consume, and they are aware of their reasons f r selecting different media option. The greater control and choice brought about by the new media has opened up new avenues of uses and gratifications research and has led to the discovery of new gratifications, especially in regards to social media.

Technological Determinism Theory

Technological determinism theory (TDT) was propounded by an American sociologist and economist, Thorstein Veblen, (1857–1929). The theory posits that technology is the predictor of the society growth and development. According to TDT, in any given society, technology defines and determines its nature. Also, technology is viewed as the driving force of culture in a society and it determines its course of history. TDT aims to provide a causative link between technology and a society's nature. It tries to explain as to whom or what could have a controlling power in human affairs (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003).

Technological determinism states that media technology shape how we as individuals in a society think, feel, act and how are society operates as we move from technological age to another(Tribal – Literate – print – Electronic) – social media Marshall McLuhan (1962) primary article.

The theory holds that technological progress led to newer ways of production in a society and this ultimately influenced the cultural, political and economic aspects of a society, thereby inevitably changing society itself (Hauer, 2017).

Therefore, technology of a given society is a fundamental influencer of the various ways in which a society exists, and changes in technology are the primary and most important source that leads to change in the society (Winner, 2004).

Critique of TDT is that technology never forces itself on members of the society. Man creates technology and chooses to use them. He invents television and chooses to view it. There is no imposition on the part of the technology to be used rather technology requires people to participate or involve themselves at some point or another to use a car or a microwave. The choice of using technology and experiencing its effects therefore lies in the hand of a human being (Huesemann & Huesemann, 2011).

Obviously, this theory is applicable to the present study. As the theory posited that technology defined and determined nature and functionality of every society, Facebook is a technological based application. Definitely, communication in every society is determined by technology and Facebook cannot be isolated in this regards. Facebook is among the modern technological based applications that provide a causative link between technology and a society's nature, and even controlling power in human communication affairs.

Methodology

The descriptive survey design was adopted in this study. Descriptive survey design describes conditions as they exist naturally without manipulations. It allows researchers to select valid sample from a given population, collect data from the sampled population, and use the results obtained data to represent condition of the entire population (Nworgu, 2015; Ali, Nwafor & Onoh, 2019). Population of the study comprised mass communication undergraduate students of two selected universities in the North-Central Zone of Nigeria, namely Nasarawa State University, Keffi and Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai. The population of the study is 2045 students.

The Research Advisor's sample size calculator was adopted, at 95% confidence level and 5% margin error, to determine the sample size of the study. Hence, the sample size is 325. This is apportioned to each institution as well as students' education levels based on population. The stratified random sampling technique was adopted for distribution of sample in each level. Stratified

random sampling means that every student of the population had an equal chance of being selected in relation to their proportion of the total population. It was used to subdivide the population into different levels from 100 level to 400 level in the departments under study. The purposive sample technique was employed for selecting respondents. This is to ensure that only students with Facebook accounts participated in the study.

Instrument of the study, a questionnaire, was titled Uses and Gratification of Facebook among Mass communication undergraduate Students (UGFUS). It was adapted from Menon and Meghana (2021). The descriptive statistics was employed for analysis of data of the study. Results from the analysis were used for answering each research question of the study.

Data Presentation

Table 1: Demographic Information of Respondents

Variable	Group	NSUK Frequency	IBB Frequency	Total Frequency	Percentage
	Male	88	26	114	35.8
Gender	Female	138	66	204	64.2
	Total	**226**	**92**	**318**	**100**
	16 – 21	43	11	54	17.0
Age	22 – 27	160	74	234	73.9
(years)	Above 27	22	7	29	9.1
	Total	**225**	**92**	**317**	**100**
	100	14	24	38	11.9
	200	104	23	127	39.9
Level of	300	57	18	75	23.6
Education	400	51	27	78	24.5
	Total	**226**	**92**	**318**	**100**

Source: Field Survey, (2023)

Table 1 captured demographic information of the respondents of the study. It showed that two hundred and twenty-six (226) are from Nasarawa State University, Keffi (NSUK) while ninety-two (92) are from Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapia. The respondents composed of one hundred and fourteen (114) Male and two hundred and four (204) Female. Also, fifty-four (54) of the respondents are within the ages of 16 and 21 years, two hundred and thirty-four (234) are within the ages of 22 and 27 years while only twenty-nine of the respondents are more than 27 years. In addition, the respondents composed of thirty-eight (38), one hundred and twenty-seven (127), seventy-five (75), and seventy-eight (78) for 100, 200, 300 and 400 level students respectively. This implies that there is no gender bias in the sample of the study, and the respondents are mature to provide needed information regarding the objectives of the study.

Table 2: Intensity of Use of Facebook

Hours	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 1	26	8.2
1 – 3	80	25.2
4 – 6	166	52.2
7 – 9	34	10.7
More than 9	12	3.8
Total	**318**	**100**

Source: Field Survey, (2023)

Data related the intensity of Facebook usage among respondents were presented on Table 2 Majority (166 respondents) of the respondents spend 4 to 6 hours daily on Facebook followed those (80 respondents) that spend 1 to 3 hours. Thirty-four (34) respondents responded that they usually spend 7 to 9 hours while twenty-six (26) respondents spend less than an hour. Only twelve (12) respondents spend more than 9 hours on Facebook. The implication of this is that respondents are conversant with Facebook and use it at difference magnitude.

Table 3: Frequency on Facebook

Time	Frequency	Percentage
1 – 5	56	17.6
6 – 10	144	45.3
11 – 15	82	25.8
Above 15	36	11.3
Total	**318**	**100**

Source: Field Survey, (2023)

For frequency of time visiting Facebook by respondents, data collected were presented on Table 3 Only thirty-six (36) respondents visit Facebook more than 15 times daily, fifty-six (56) respondents visit it between 1 to 5 times daily while eighty-two (82) respondents visit Facebook between 11 and 15 times. Most of the respondents, one hundred and forty-four (144), visit Facebook between 6 to 10 times daily. Hence, it could be inferred from this that respondents frequently used Facebook.

Table 4: Gratifications sought from Facebook

S/N	Item	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean
1	Social interaction	165	104	45	4	0	**4.35**
2	Passing away time	106	42	102	46	22	**3.52**
3	Affection seeking	44	153	76	33	12	**3.58**
4	Information seeking	80	118	114	6	0	**3.86**
5	Continuous usage intention	49	102	105	59	3	**3.42**
6	Subjective norm	18	63	164	72	1	**3.08**
7	Social presence	109	123	52	30	4	**3.95**
8	Entertainment	172	100	36	7	3	**4.36**
9	Research and academic activities	80	125	99	12	2	**3.85**

Source: Field Survey, (2023)

For the gratifications sought using the Facebook by respondents, data collected were presented on Table 4. The entire items on the Table received mean greater than 30. The least mean is 3.08 while the highest mean is 4.36. This implies that all the items highlighted on the Table were among the gratifications sought on Facebook. The very most gratification is entertainment followed by social interaction. The least in this regard is subjective norms followed by continuous usage intention. This implied that gratitude sought from the use of Facebook by respondents include both academic and non-academic purposes. However, the gravity of non-academic gratification of Facebook is higher than the academic purposes.

Discussion of Findings

Based on the outcomes from analysis of data related to the research questions for this study as well as results from the test of formulated hypotheses.The study revealed that Mass Communication Students in Nasarawa State University, Keffi and IBB University, Lapai utilize Facebook for their social interaction as well as education activities. This, perhaps, made extent and intensity of Facebook use of the students considerably fair. Also, gratifications sought from the Facebook is encouraging. The study showed insignificant difference among mass communication undergraduate students in Nasarawa State University, Keffi and IBB University, Lapai in this regard.

In addition, the study discovered that gratifications sought significantly influence the intensity of Facebook use. More so, students' demographic information such as gender, age and level of education have significant influence on the intensity of Facebook usage and gratifications sought from it. Generally, findings of this study validated the major assumption of uses and gratifications theory that media use is goal-directed or motivated, people use media to satisfy their needs and desires, social and psychological factors mediate media use, and media use and interpersonal communication are related.

Therefore, finding of this study agrees with the findings of Asemah, Okpanachi and Edegoh (2013) who disclosed that extent and intensity of use of social media including Facebook among undergraduate students of Kogi State University posed threat to their academic performance. Perhaps, as a result of use of the social media for non-academic purposes. Also, Ndaku (2013) disclosed that student's academic performance in University of Abuja suffered setback as a result of extent and intensity of use of social media including Facebook by the students. In addition, Musa, Azmi and Ismail (2015) confirmed extent and intensity of students' use of social media among the students of mass communication in Nigeria. Furthermore, Mensah and Nizam (2016) discovered that extent and intensity of the use of social media including Facebook by students in Malaysian Tertiary Institution have positive relationship with their academic performance. More so, Boateng and Amankwaa (2016) revealed that use of social media has significant impact on students' academic life.

Other studies in this regard include Ekechukwu (2017), Gilbert, Ali, Naif, Alwaleed, and Saad (2018), Ajimakin (2018), Al-Yafi, El-Masri and Tsai (2018), Kolan and Dzandza (2018), Agwi and Ogwueleka (2018), and Araoye (2018) who individually revealed extent and intensity of students' use of social media include Facebook at different degree as well as the influence of academic endeavor of the students.

Conclusion

Based on the findings from this study, it could be concluded that Mass Communication Students in Nasarawa State University, Keffi, and IBB University, Lapai among global users of Facebook, and the social media application is being frequently explored by students. Extent and intensity of Facebook use by mass communication students is moderate, and gratifications sought from Facebook by the students ranged from entertainment, social interaction, relaxation, pass time and academic purpose including research.

Age and education levels of students speak of extent and intensity of Facebook use, and gratifications sought from it. In this regard, the older students the lower extent and intensity of Facebook use, and gratifications sought from it. Likewise, higher level of education the lower extent and intensity of Facebook use, and gratifications sought from it.

Recommendations

In line with the conclusion from the study, the following recommendations were submitted:

Students should be more proactive in their academic pursuit and use the social media platform prudently towards their academic activities. Students in the lower levels of education in higher institutions of learning should avoid distraction from Facebook towards their academic life. Since students spend high amount of time on Facebook, it will be advisable for lecturers to use social media (web2.0) to enhance teaching-learning process by uploading academic contents for use by the students. Lecturers can also make use of social media like Facebook, WhatsApp, BBM chat and others in creating groups to encourage and teach online journalism especially for Mass Communication students. Media like wikis can be used by supervisors and students to work on the same task at different locations. Students should prioritize education potentials of Facebook at the detriment of entertainment and social interactions. Gratifications sought from Facebook should be for education purpose majorly.

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