# INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE ON SELF-ESTEEM ON YOUTHS IN SOUTH WESTERN NIGERIA

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## Abstract

At the global level, studies are attempting to ascertain the effect of social media (SM) usage on youths' self-esteem. Though, there is paucity of studies of this nature in Nigeria. Consequently, the inquiry investigated the impact of SM usage on youths' self-esteem in South-Western Nigeria. Using a survey research design, the study elicited data from 384 youths in the south western states of Osun, Ondo and Lagos. Following analyses of data, result showed that: a good number of the sampled youths have high self-esteem; even though some expressed dissatisfaction about themselves and wanting to get more respect from others. Although all variables from the result of the multiple regression conducted predicted youths' self-esteem, factors such as gender, length of engagement on SM, frequency of engagement on SM, sources of content, and types of content uploaded on SM were positively connected with youths' self-esteem. While being wary of the negative effects of SM usage on youths, campaign and intervention programmes are needed to educate and orientate youths on best possible ways to use SM to define their selves and improve their self-worth.

**Keyword:** Social, usage, self-esteem, youths, Nigeria, southwest

## Introduction and Statement of Problem

The term "youth" refers to individuals who are between the ages of 15 and 24 (UNESCO, n.d.), 15 and 32 (UN Habitat, n.d.), or 15 and 35 (Africa Union, 2006). Now is the moment to acquire the essential traits and principles needed to develop into a decent citizen or a potential leader, as well as a critical period for physical and mental growth (Fraley, et al., 2013; Lee & Cole, 2009). It is also within this period that persons within these age range mostly engage with and socialize on social media (SM) platforms as they are not limited by geographical space or boundary. This is largely influenced by their technical abilities and exploratory spirit, which has made SM vital tools for youth (Lee & Horsley, 2017). Youth naturally acquire the capacity to understand and assimilate new technologies in this age of rapidly evolving technology, and they go on to become the primary SM users (Lusk, 2010; Liang, Et al., 2010). Several studies attesting to young people's heavy use of SM abound (e.g., Common Sense Media, 2012; Pew Research Centre, 2013, 2015; Rideout, et al., 2010; Sensis, 2016).

By offering a venue for more passive inspection via pooled streams of social materials and active communication amongst friends, social media (SM) enhances the offline world's network of connections (Burke, Et al., 2010). Although, social media

is a phenomenon that is universal, it lacks a generally agreed definition, due to such varying spatial, socio-cultural and scholarly influences. However, a popular definition of the term sees it in terms of key technological and social properties (Greenwood, 2014): "as web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system; articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection; and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system under which its (connection) nature and nomenclature may vary from site to site" (Boyd & Ellison, 2007, p. 211). Examples of SM (defined here in as a range of virtual communication platforms enabling transmission of information among users) comprise Facebook, YouTube, Del.icio.us, Twitter, Instagram, Linkedln, Digg, blogs and various websites with user-generated content (UGC) and content derived from user input.

Conversely, the term "self-esteem" describes the evaluative feature of one's self-concept in relation to an general perception of one's own deservingness or lack thereof (Baumeister, 1998). Furthermore, Coopersmith's definition encompasses definitive meaning of self-esteem:

 The evaluation which the individual makes and customarily maintains with regard to himself: it expresses an attitude of approval and indicates the extent to which an individual believes himself to be capable, significant, successful and worthy. In short, self-esteem is a personal judgment of the worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes the individual holds towards himself. (Coopersmith, 1967, pp. 4–5)

Therefore, founded on the above definitions, Heatherton and Wyland (2003, p. 220) elucidate self-esteem in light of an "emotional response that people experience as they contemplate and evaluate different things about themselves". In a more general sense, self-esteem includes self-confidence, self-direction, optimism, positive attitudes, problem solving abilities and others. The link between SM usage and self-esteem, in relation with other outcomes has been extensively documented (e.g., Burke, et al., 2010; Cox & Stephen, 2012; Forest & Joanne, 2012; Gonzales & Hancock, 2011; Hollenbaugh & Amber, 2014; Krämer & Winter, 2008; Shaw & Gant, 2002; Valkenburg, et al., 2006; Zywica & Danowski, 2008; Wanga, et al., 2012). While some of these studies (e.g., Gonzales & Hancock, 2011; Shaw & Gant, 2002; Wilcox & Stephen, 2013) have found a positive influence of SM usage on users' self-esteem, others (e.g., Bânyai et al., 2017; De Choudhury, et al., 2013; Primack et al., 2016; Wilcox & Laird, 2000) have revealed social media's negative influence in this regard – yet other studies (e.g., Barker, 2010; Burke et al., 2010; Kramer & Winter, 2008; Tartari, 2015) have presented mixed and or inconclusive results. Similarly, certain factors have been associated with individuals' engagement in social media activities. These factors include gender (e.g., Muscanell & Guadagno, 2012; Joiner, 2009; et al., 2005; Thelwal, 2008), age (e.g., McAndrew & Jeong, 2012; Subrahmanyama, Reich, Waechter, & Espinoza, 2008), frequency and length of engagement (e.g., Calder, Malthouse & Schaedel, 2009; Gentile, Twenge, Freeman, & Campbell, 2012), and the kind of content posted on social media (e.g., Gentile, et al., 2012; Subrahmanyam & Greenfield, 2008 ). However, in the setting of SM influence on self-esteem, few inquiries have explored the role of the above-mentioned intervening variables and their possible outcomes.

For a country such as Nigeria, youths' engagement with social media is a striking one. An average youth is a Facebook, Twitter

or an Instagram "addict." In other words, life significantly revolves around the social media for a good number of Nigerian youths. This trait is evident in their daily use of a number of social media platforms as activities characterized by politics, entertainment, religion, sexuality, relationships, etc. form the basis of discussions, interactions and contributions. On the other hand, the consequences of SM usage have become a topical subject of debate and discussion in the field of mass communication and related fields. For example, Adaugo, et al. (2015) explore the influence of SM on Nigerian youths in Aba Metropolis found a perceived association between unwanted pregnancies among female youths and exposure to social media pornography. Additionally, other authors have highlighted the impact of SM on youth academic performance, political involvement, sexuality and morality in general (e.g., Amoo, et al., 2013; Onah & Nche, 2014; Onyeka, et al., 2013). Though, there is dearth of empirical studies on the influence of SM on youths' self-esteem in Nigeria. Knowledge of such influence is important for policy makers and intervention programmes geared towards SM and youth development owing to the fact the idea of self is crucial mechanism for maintaining social order and wellbeing. Consequently, this study investigated the influence of SM usage on youths' self-esteem in South-Western Nigeria.

The significance of positive self-esteem can never be over emphasized. For young persons in particular, positive self-esteem equips them with the ability to personal and social problems. In other words, positive self-esteem can expand youths' capacity to function as good students, efficient worker (in adulthood), impressive innovator and engagers in meaningful and productive relationships. To achieve this, youths' most common agent of socialization

(the social media) in the 21$^{st}$ century may help provide the needed understanding in this direction, knowing full well that the lives of average youths across the world are increasingly revolving around social media. Thus, the quest to understand possible links between SM and self-esteem is abounding.

At the global level, studies are attempting to ascertain the effect of SM usage on youths' self-esteem. Though, there is paucity of inquiries of this nature in Nigeria and particularly in South-West Nigeria. Reason being that majority of the available studies has mainly focused on the impact of SM on academic performance, sexuality and the likes – thereby leaving out an important aspect of the self, which can help youths function better in other areas of their lives. Similarly, the role gender, age, frequency of engagement, length of engagement, types and sources of content uploaded on youths' self-esteem consequent upon their social media usage is poorly understood. As a result, the problem of this inquiry posed as a question is: "What is the influence of social media usage on self-esteem of youths in South-Western Nigeria?"

## Research Objectives

The following objectives were to:

1. Examine the perceived level of youths' self-esteem consequent upon their use of social media in South-Western Nigeria.
2. Determine the best predictor (whether gender, or age, or frequency and length of engagement, or type and sources of content uploaded) of youths' self-esteem consequent upon their use of social media in South-Western Nigeria.

## Research Questions

The inquiry was intended to be guided by the underlying queries:

1. What is the perceived level of youths' self-esteem consequent upon their use of social media in South-Western Nigeria?
2. What is the best predictor of youths' self-esteem consequent upon their use of social media in South-Western Nigeria: gender, or age, or frequency and length of engagement, or type and sources of content uploaded?

## Review of Concepts/Literature

## Concept of Social Media (SM)

Since the beginning of the 21ˢᵗ century, the popularity of the social media plummeted upwards in a manner that was never witnessed before. SM is playing a vital part in people's daily life (Huang & Lu, 2016), as it is evident in many places and areas of human lives worldwide. The term "social media" is well-defined by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) as an range of applications based in Internet created upon the technological and ideological foundations of Web 2.0, which enable the generation and interchange of user-generated content. According to Onah and Nche (2014), these foundations transform communication into an interactive interface. Additionally, Veil, et al. (2011) argue that SM is fundamental to human communication, with attributes such as involvement, transparency, conversation, community, and connectedness. They also emphasize how SM is utilized to disseminate are re-disseminate info to millions of people during times of disaster without the intervention of journalists. The writers also point out that news from sources known as SM are extremely powerful and sometimes even seen as more reliable than conventional media. The platform through which social media operates allow private persons to become bases of information online "sharing opinions, insights, experiences and perspectives with others" (Marken, 2007, p. 10).

Examples of such platforms are: Facebook, Instagram, Myspace, Twitter, etc. as an online means of communication, the social media gives room for an impressive number of "friends" or people to create and sustain a network of communication that is not possible to achieve offline or in real life. Away from the real world, the social media create a virtual reality which is believed to impact on our everyday living in one way or the other. What makes the phenomenon called social media particularly interesting is its continued growth and its future tendencies to direct all of human affairs. As it is known today, the social media is being employed to solve human and social problems (in the areas of security, corruption, governance, collaborative learning, etc.), even though much is being said about its ability to cause both personal and other social problems (cyber bullying, fraud, terrorism and others).

## Who is a Youth?

Views concerning the concept of youth can be constructed in varying ways. Ranging from one geographical space to another, time to time (that is, past, present and future), within societies and gender construction, defining the young people as a category takes several forms. Looking at the concept of youth as an age group, youths has been defined by several organizations as persons between the following age categories: 15–24 (UNESCO, n.d.), 15-32 (UN Habitat, n.d) or 15-35 (Africa Union, 2006). These categorizations, though of western origin, have continued to impact on the way lay persons and professionals in various fields of endeavour (who have had to work with youths) understand the concept. However, these definitions have hampered our understanding of the concept as Sommers (2006, p. 5) puts it "a persistent challenge confronting work with youths is defining who they are." Aside putting a number or figure to the concept of youth, Sommer

identifies other problems peculiar with defining a youth. According to him, The definitions of youths in general, adolescence in particular, and even what comprises young people in general, overlap with the widely accepted age-based classifications of child and adult; The fact that being a male or female can affect how society categorizes the concept of youth and that youths may not always be defined by age adds to the confusion around definitions of youths.

Conceptualizing youths as a social construct, according to the UNDP (2006), there is a great deal of cross-cultural variance in the definition of adulthood, which is inherently associated with various rites of passage during adolescence. In pre-colonial Africa for instance, being youth may be marked by certain rites that prepares a child to become set or ready for adulthood. Examples of these rites of passage include: passing through or the time in between puberty and parenthood, the period (away from infancy) before marriage (especially for girls), when going through biological changes such as menstruation, a time before the death of one's father (a common culture in Sierra Leone where a person is considered as youth until his or father's death); among others (Sommer, 2006).

Nevertheless, Alex De Waal's idealization of youth is brought in this segment of the study to neutralize the inconsistencies and confusion observed in these varied definitions. In his words: "the concept of youth is a western concept and a political construct…. Youth is a problematic, intermediary and ambivalent category, chiefly defined by what is not: youth are not dependent children nor are they independent, socially responsible adults" (De Waal, 2002, p. 15). From the above view, it is clear that we do know who a youth is not. However, knowing who a youth is; is dependent on several factors among which have earlier

being mentioned. Whatever perspective one decides to take on the concept, it must be noted that such perspective is restricted within the environment from which it was developed.

## The Concept of Self-Esteem

One could argue that individuals with high self-esteem enjoy several advantages, including feeling good about themselves, being able to handle difficulties and unfavorable comments, and living in a society where they are seen as valuable and respected by others (Heatherton & Wyland, 2003). On the other hand, having low self-esteem can translate to low self-concept and degenerates to a "vegetative state" when they are unable to handle difficulties or unfavorable comments in an appropriate manner. Rosenberg defines self-esteem as an individuals' feeling of self-worth (Rosenberg, 1965, 1986). According to Palermiti et al. (2017), self-esteem is a person's subjective belief about their own value in society.

Two theoretical approaches help explains things that defines the level of one's self-esteem (Zuckerman, et al., 2016). The first is based on James's (1890) competences model, which is connected to Bandura's self-efficacy theory, according to Zuckerman et al. (2016). According to Zuckerman et al.'s school of thought, one's degree of self-esteem is based on their performance or accomplishments in areas that are significant to them. Furthermore, the second strategy is predicated on Cooley's looking-glass model from 1902 and its contemporary equivalents, sociometer theory (Leary, et al., 1995; Leary, et al., 1998), as well as the associated idea of the need to belong (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). According to this school of thought, our sense of self-worth is a reflection of our acceptance and judgment by others. Therefore, Leary et al. (1995) placed more emphasis on the quality of connections than

did James (1890) on accomplishments. Numerous research conducted since the idea of self-esteem's birth have demonstrated its many positive consequences. Current scientific results, though criticized for not being universally applicable (Baumeister et al., 2003), nevertheless show that greater self-worth has a positive impact on health (Stinson et al., 2008), intimate connections (Murray et al., 2008), as well as job satisfaction (Orth et al., 2012).

**Relationships among Conceptual Variables in the Study**

The impact of SM is evident in the lives of youths around the world. In the developing countries (such as Nigeria, etc.) in particular, youths' engagement on SM platforms is increasing by the day. This affordability and the steady increase in access to social media technologies are mounting and these have given a greater number of youths in these parts of the world the opportunity not only to create the content they deem fit, but also to present themselves to others in ways they want to be seen. The pressure to present oneself in an acceptable manner on the social media, suggests a yielding to announcing one's worth to others. In other words, youths are pressured to individually measure themselves in relation to other people and things associated with those people. The resultant influence of such presentations and measurement of self on the social media can further be felt by youths when online and when offline. Thus, youths may develop positive or negative self-esteem even though some people attempt they may not say the truth about themselves or reveal those irritating aspects or shocking secrets in their lives.

Therefore, in developing self-esteem on the social media, certain variables serve as connecting rods among youths. These variables include: gender, age range, frequency and length of engagement on SM platform as well as the type and source of content that is being uploaded. For example, males may use social media differently from females and thus may define their self-worth differently based on what they seek to achieve online (bearing in mind that males and females are different in a lot of ways). Also, other important variables such as frequency of engagement may significantly influence how people define themselves in relation to what they do, see, want and get in an online environment. Studies that have incorporated gender, content, age, and engagement in SM abound and have been mentioned elsewhere in this study, even though there is still a dearth of studies linking all these mentioned variables with youths' SM usage and their self-esteem. The current inquiry therefore make efforts to add to existing knowledge on the subject matter.

## SCHEMATIC DIAGRAM OF THE INTER-RELATEDNESS OF THE CONCEPTS IN THE STUDY

It is pertinent also, to point out that all the concepts discussed are interrelated. Figure 1 below shows the direction of the relationship.
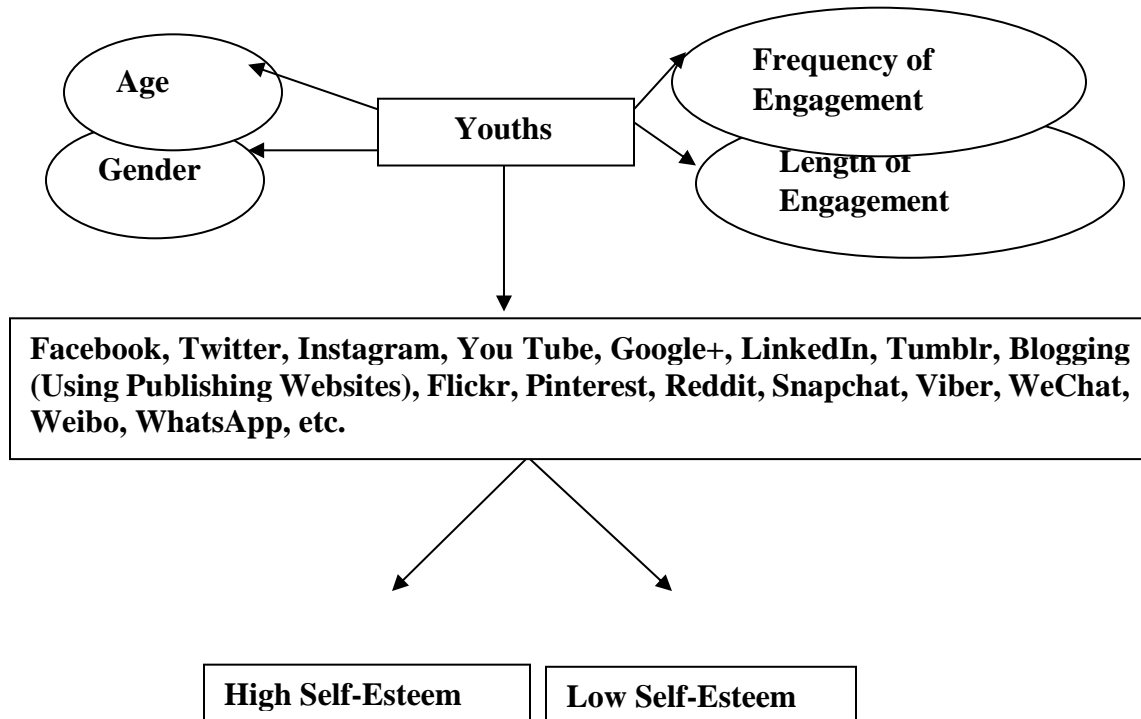


**Figure 1: Diagram Showing a Conceptual Schematic Representation of the Interrelatedness between Youths usage of SM platforms and Self-Esteem determined by their Age, Gender, Frequency of SM engagement and Length of social media engagement**

Source: Researcher

From the above schema, it can be observed that such variables as gender, age, frequency of engagement and length of engagement on social media platforms can determine youths self-level of self-esteem consequent upon their social media usage.

### Review of Empirical Studies

The researcher took into account pertinent empirical studies that are either conceptually or physically related to the current topic in this section of the investigation. The first is a research by Wang, Jackson, Zhang, and Su (2012) that looked into the relationships between the Big Five Personality traits—narcissism, self-esteem, and sensation seeking—and how participants used different SNS elements. The self-reports of 265 SNS users at a Chinese university were collected.

Regression study findings demonstrated that personality characteristics affect the use of SNS. According to the study, extroverts are more inclined to utilize social networking sites' communicative features—such as updating their status, leaving comments, and making new friends—while neurotic users are more likely to use these to voice themselves. Additionally, agreeable individuals are more likely to leave feedback on other people's profiles, as are those with high self-esteem. Finally, narcissistic users

are more likely to post their beautiful pictures on social media sites and refresh their status regularly to promote themselves. Additionally, it was discovered that gender significantly influenced the types of SNS use, with men reporting higher numbers of SNS friends and higher likelihoods of playing online games compared to women, who were more likely to upload and update their status updates and upload self-photos. The Hyper Personal Model from computer-mediated communication and the Objective Self-Awareness (OSA) from social psychology were the additional bases Gonzales and Hancock (2011) used to argue that Facebook will either raise or lower self-esteem. The results showed that, in contrast to earlier OSA study, seeing one's own Facebook profile and developing self-awareness actually increase rather than decrease self-esteem. Further support for the Hyperpersonal Model comes from the fact that experiment participants who updated and viewed their own profiles also reported better levels of self-esteem. The results exposed that impressions of oneself are influenced by selective self-presentation in digital media, which intensifies the establishment of relationships. Wilcox and Stephen (2013) showed in five studies that using social networks to browse one's social network while concentrating on close friends—that is, strong ties—improves one's sense of self-worth. Data analysis revealed that after exploring a social network, people who are focused on strong ties exhibit less self-control because of this transient rise in self-esteem. Furthermore, the authors provided data indicating that, among people who have close relationships to their social networks, increased usage of SM is connected to advanced levels of credit card debt and a advanced body mass index.

Shaw and Gant (2002) also investigated the theory that Internet use had positive effects on individuals. Five conversation sessions were held between the study participants and an anonymous partner. They received scales evaluating social support, depression, loneliness, and self-esteem at three separate periods. As a result, the study indicated that while perceived social support and self-esteem dramatically rose, Internet use significantly reduced feelings of loneliness and melancholy. In the second study by Subrahmanyama, et al. (2008), college students answered questions regarding their closest friends and online activities in three different contexts: face-to-face interactions, instant messaging, and social network sites, both in person and online. The findings demonstrated that participants frequently used social networking sites and other methods of online communication to connect with friends and family. As a result, the study found that individuals' offline and online networks overlapped. The trend indicated that developing grownups might utilise various online situations to reinforce various parts of their offline influences, despite the imprecise overlap. Furthermore, McAndrew and Jeong (2012) concentrated on Facebook usage patterns. 1,026 Facebook handlers from around the globe (284 males and 735 females; average age = 30.24) responded to an online survey regarding their Facebook usage. The findings also revealed that: women, younger people, and singles were the most frequent Facebook users, and there were numerous main effects related to age, sex, and relationships; women also engaged in more online family activities and spent more time on the SM platform. Additionally, women had more Facebook friends and were more probable to utilize their profile images to manage impressions. Ultimately, the study demonstrated that men's relationship status affected their Facebook activity, but not much so for women. Next, among older teenagers, Barker (2009) evaluated the reasons behind the usage of social network sites (SNS), the sense of group membership,

the overall self-esteem, and the gender effects. The primary driving force behind SNS use was communication with peers. Individuals with high levels of positive group self-esteem were highly motivated to use social network sites to interact with their peers. Females reported higher levels of positive group self-esteem, more frequent usage overall, and use of SNS for peer communication more frequently. In terms of entertainment, leisure, and group-in-self, women also showed higher means. Social compensation was connected with low collective self-esteem, indicating that individuals with low self-esteem resorted to SNS instead of interacting with other members of their group. Men reported lower collective self-esteem than did females, and they were more inclined to utilize SNS for social identity satisfaction and social compensation. Finally, Tartari (2015) looked into the effects that SM has on teens' growth, both good and bad. The investigator documented this phenomena in Albania through interviews with adolescents ranging in age from eleven to sixteen. The individuals chosen were frequent SM users. According to the study, SM has a good impact on kids and teenagers since it helps them communicate better, obtain information, improve their technical skills, and learn how to use modern technology. Conversely, research has shown that teenagers are at danger for cyberbullying, depression on Facebook, and online sexual harassment.

It has been observed that the studies reviewed are related to the current one because they examined relationships between several factors such as age, gender, self-presentation, etc. and use of SNS. However, majority of the studies did not include other factors such as frequency and length of engagement, and type and source of content uploaded as well as the effect of SM usage on youths' self-esteem. Also, there is paucity of data regarding the phenomena under study in

Nigeria as very few of studies have touched on this subject. Also, majority of the study's results lacks generalizability due to methods of sampling which could not allow for such. This study therefore, attempts to fill the identified missing gaps.

**Theoretical Framework**

This study employs Leon Festinger (1954) theory of social comparison. According to the theory of social comparison, individuals have an innate desire to examine their advancement and standing on numerous facets of their lives (Festinger, 1954). Festinger argues that in the lack of objective benchmarks, people assess their own standing by comparing it to that of others. Upward and downward comparisons are the two groups of social comparisons that Festinger (1954) distinguished. When people compare themselves to someone who is better off than they are, they are engaging in upward comparisons, which usually have unfavorable effects (Gibbons, 1986; Lemyre & Smith, 1985). Matching oneself to somebody who is less fortunate than oneself is known as a downward comparison, and it typically results in favorable outcomes (Wills, 1981; Marsh & Parker, 1984; Gibbons & Gerrard, 1989). Persons may also compare themselves to people they believe to be similar to them in a certain area, a process known as lateral comparison (Harris, et al., 2008; Pinkus, et al., 2008; Sohn, 2011). Similar to downward comparisons, lateral comparisons typically yield good results (Wheeler & Miyake, 1992).

This theory has the explanatory power to provide understanding of how self-esteem can be built in youths through the social media use. For example, the basic construct of the theory suggesting that people compare themselves to others explains one of the ways in which SM is used and the consequences that may follow its use. For youths who compare themselves with others (and what they represent) who are better than

them, there is the likelihood that they develop low self-esteem, while on the other hand, youths who make social media comparisons with those they are better than may likely develop low self-esteem. Both situations will occur in the absence of an objective standard for which comparison is made. It is on the foregoing basis that the present study employs Festinger's theory of social comparisons to investigate the influence of SM usage on youths' self-esteem as this is believed to be related to youth's orientation in south-western part of Nigeria.

## Methodology

To collect data for the study, a cross-sectional, descriptive survey was used. Surveys are frequently a useful tool for descriptive, explanatory, and exploratory purposes (Bhattacherjee, 2012; Babbie, 2013; Haralambos & Holborn, 2013). For these reasons, this study looked into how youths' self-esteem in southwest Nigeria is affected by their utilisation of SM. The research area encompasses the states of Osun, Ogun, Lagos, Oyo, Ondo, and Ekiti in southwest Nigeria. It is often referred to as Nigeria's south-west geographic zone. 27, 581, 992 people were living in the region in 2006, with a total land area of 77,818 km2 (NPC, 2006). According to Agboola (1979), it is situated between latitude 60 211 and 80 371N and longitude 20 311 and 60 001 East. The research area is bordered to the south by the Gulf of Guinea, to the west by the Republic of Benin, to the north by the states of Kwara and Kogi, and to the east by the states of Edo and Delta. This population constitutes a major part of the estimated 40 million Yoruba people found in south western Nigeria, north central Nigeria as well as southern and central Benin. Consequently, the population is described as all resident youths, males and females, between the ages of 15 and 35 years in all the six states comprising the south western part of Nigeria.

A total of 384 young people from southwest Nigeria comprised the investigation's sample. By applying the Cochran formula (1963, p. 75), the researcher was able to calculate the sample size. Using the Cochran Equation "1," a representative sample for a big population was produced with a 95% confidence level (confidence interval - + 10%), a population estimation of youths' SM utilization at 50% (.5), and an allowed margin of error at.05 (5 percentage points).

$$n0= \frac{[Z_{/2}]^2 (p\ q)}{e^2}$$

$$n0= \frac{[Z_{/2}]^2 (P)\ (1-P)}{e^2}$$

"Where: n0= sample size, $Z^2$= confidence level (the abscissa of the normal curve that cuts off an area α at the tails), p= rate of occurrence or prevalence (the estimated proportion of an attribute that is present in a population), q= complement of p and e= margin of error". Thus;

$$n= \frac{[1.96]^2\ 0.5\ (1 - 0.5)}{}$$
$$n= \frac{3.8416\ (0.25)}{0.05^2}$$
$$0.0025 \qquad n= 384$$

At this point, the investigator used a multistage cluster sampling approach based on likelihood. The technique is most appropriate in this situation because, as Babbie (2013, p. 153) put it succinctly, multi-stage cluster sampling "may be used when it's either impossible or impractical to compile an exhaustive list of elements composing the target population." This was due to the absence of a sampling frame consisting of the lists of youths in southwest Nigeria. At the first stage, the researcher adopted a simple random sampling by balloting by selecting three states out of the six states in the south west. As a result, Ondo, Osun and Lagos were selected.

Subsequently, a systematic sample with a random start was utilized to choose a

subset of 12 local governments from the three states that were chosen (the current sampling frame consists of 70 components from each of the three states). The rationale behind the selected figures was to promote adequate participation in the two domains. To do this, the researcher first chose one LGA at random, and then methodically chose LGAs every Kth (i.e., every sixth LGA on the list) (where K = N/n is the sample interval). The third step started with the 12 LGAs that were rigorously chosen. The process began with the creation of a feasible list of households from each of the 12 LGAs (which are all headquarters). From there, 32 homes were chosen at random from each of the 12 LGAs. Where the researcher could not get youths that have the characteristics needed for the study, a purposive sampling was adopted to make up the number. This amounted to 384 households in all. In the end, each of the homes that were designated made youths who served as respondents for the study. The eligibility criteria were: (1) ownership of at least one phone with capacity to browse the internet (2) aged 15-35, (3) willingness to participate and (5) a resident of the selected states.

A structured questionnaire instrument was engaged to gather data. Scales and Measurement tests were also employed. In this case, the researcher adapted the Rosenberg's (1965) Self-Esteem Scale, containing a ten-item Likert scale (ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (agree) to 4 (Strongly agree)), which measures global self-worth. Additionally, a nine-item Likert scale titled "Social Media Engagement Scale" (SMES) was also constructed for the study's purpose. This was done to ensure that youths' self-reported length and frequency of engagement in social media is measured to see whether they predicted youths' level of self-esteem. The Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha$) for the items (Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale & SMES) were .79 (79 percent) and .86 (86 percent) respectively and were found to be highly reliable.

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 20.0) was engaged in the examination of quantitative data in which descriptive (simple percentages and central tendency measures) and inferential statistics were utilized to define and relate the link and variance among the inquiry variables. Additionally, the standard multiple regression was employed in answering research question 2 of the study. In other words, the purpose of employing this parametric tool is to help explain how much of the variance in youths' level of self-esteem can be explained by gender, age, frequency of engagement, length of engagement, types of contents uploaded and sources of contents uploaded by youths on their social media platforms (where in the platforms refers to Facebook, Twitter and Instagram only) consequent upon their social media usage.

**Result**

The inquiry examined the impact of SM usage on youths' self-esteem in south western Nigeria. A total of 384 participants provided the needed data for the study. Therefore, this section presents results of key research questions raised. First, respondents were asked to give a self-report of how they feel in their past one month of using Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or YouTube. The reason for using one month in this research is to elicit responses that will almost be free of memory bias. As a result, respondents self-report varied and is present below in Table 1 along with the 95% confidence intervals (CIs).

**Table 1: Respondents self-reported esteem in their past one month of Social Media usage**

| S/N | Items | Mean | Std. Deviation | N | 95%CI |
|-----|-------|------|----------------|---|-------|
| 1 | I consider myself to be valuable, at least on par with others. = 53(13.8%), 83(21.6%) 113(29.4%), = 135(35.2%) | 1.8594 | 1.05018 | 384 | [1.75,1.96] |
| 2 | I think I possess a lot of positive traits. = 54(14.1%), 55(14.3%) 105(27.3%), = 170(44.3%) | 2.0182 | 1.07289 | 384 | [.93,1.12] |
| 3 | I tend to think of myself as a failure overall. (R) = 37(9.6%) =75(19.5%), =133(34.6%), =139(36.2%) | 1.0260 | .97185 | 384 | [1.59,1.79] |
| 4 | ın perform most tasks just as well as most individuals.SD= 48(12.5%), 122(31.8.3%) 115(29.9%), = 99(25.8%) | 1.6901 | .99098 | 384 | [1.68,1.88] |
| 5 | I don't think I have anything to be happy about. (R) = 134(34.9%), = 105(27.3%), = 101(26.3%), = 44(11.5%) | 1.7812 | .97438 | 384 | [1.68,1.89] |
| 6 | I have an optimistic outlook about myself. = 57(14.8%), 76(19.8%) 144(37.5%), = 107(27.9%) | 1.7839 | 1.01305 | 384 | [1.68,1.89] |
| 7 | ɔrall, I'm happy with who I am. = 35(9.1%), 177(46.1%) 69(18.0%), = 103(26.8%) | 1.6250 | .97755 | 384 | [1.53,1.72] |
| 8 | I wish I could treat myself with more dignity. (R) = 119(31.0%), = 193(50.3%), = 42(10.9%), = 30(7.8%) | .9557 | .85540 | 384 | [.87,1.04] |

| 9 | I do feel like a useless sometimes. (R) = 87(22.7%), = 66(17.2%), =163(42.4%), = 68(17.7%) | 1.2995 | 1.00982 | 384 | [1.20,1.40] |
| 10 | I sometimes feel like I am completely useless. (R) =43(11.2%) = 57(14.8%), = 212(55.2%), = 72(18.8%) | 1.1849 | .86696 | 384 | [1.10,1.27] |

**Source: Survey (2022)**

Note. "CI= confidence interval, M=mean, SD=standard deviation, N=Total number of sample, n (%) =sub-sample of items and percentages, (R)= For the items marked with an (R), reverse the scoring (0 = 3, 1 = 2, 2 = 1, 3 = 0)". Add the score to the elements that don't have a (R) next to them. Total the scores. Most persons score between 15 and 25 on the Rosenberg scale, with typical levels hovering around 22.

The above Table (1) represents a self-reported rating of respondents on the Rosenberg's self-esteem scale that was adopted for the purpose of this study. The result from this table is indicative of the fact that a good number of the sampled youths have a high self-esteem, except for where a majority expressed dissatisfaction and wanting to get more respect from people.

Further, the researcher incorporated a model to determine the best predictor (whether gender, or age, or frequency and length of engagement, or type and sources of content uploaded) of youths' self-esteem consequent upon their use of social media in South-Western Nigeria.

**Table 2: Simple Multiple Regression Analysis result on the influence of gender, age, length of engagement, frequency of engagement, sources of content, and types of content uploaded on social media on Youth's self-esteem**

| Model | Unstandardized | | T | 95% Confidence Interval for B | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | Coefficients | | | | |
| | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Variable | B | Std. Error | | Bound | Bound |
| (Constant) | .588 | .769 | .765 | -.924 | 2.100 |
| Gender | 3.774* | .664 | 5.687 | 2.469 | 5.079 |
| Age | -5.056* | .639 | -7.910 | -6.312 | -3.799 |
| Frequency of engagement | 2.356* | .175 | 13.431 | 2.011 | 2.701 |
| Length of engagement | .617* | .151 | 4.085 | .320 | .915 |
| Types of content uploaded | 1.475* | .154 | 9.553 | 1.171 | 1.778 |
| Sources of content uploaded | .561* | .092 | 6.134 | .381 | .741 |
| F Value | 153.6* | | | | |
| R | .842 | | | | |
| $R^2$ | .710 | | | | |

| | |
|---|---|
| Adjusted R square | .705 |

Note. N= 384. *p< .05

Result from table 2 reveals the output from simple regression analysis that was conducted in order to predict youth's self-esteem (outcome variable) using the set predictors (gender, age, length of engagement, frequency of engagement, sources of content, and types of content uploaded on social media). Findings showed the overall correlation (R) at 0.842 or 84.2%. This implies that this model (independent variables) explains 84.2% of variances in self-esteem measures. Additionally, the F-value that was run (153.6) was statistically significant (p<0.05).

A further perusal at the coefficients table provides the more information in the prediction. All predicting variables incorporated in the model had an expected relation of direction. Variables such as Gender (3.77), frequency of engagement (2.36), length of engagement (.617), types of content uploaded (1.48), and sources of content uploaded (.56) are positive related with youths' self-esteem. This explains the predictive ability and importance of the aforementioned variables in determining youths' self-esteem according to data from the study's sample. On the other hand, however, age (-5.06) was found to be negatively correlated with youths' self-esteem. These outcomes suggest that all but one (age) of all the variables in the model was associated with youths' self-esteem even though they (all the variables) predicted youths' self-esteem in the study.

## Discussion of Findings

This inquiry sought to examine the influence of SM usage on youths' self-esteem in south western Nigeria. The researcher found that a good number of the sampled youths have high self-esteem, except for where some expressed dissatisfaction and wanting to get more respect from others. This positive result adds to extant research (e.g., Gonzales & Hancock, 2011; Shaw & Gant, 2002; Wilcox & Stephen, 2013) as it thus revalidates findings supporting the efficacy of social media platforms to improve self-esteem. However, it may not be too safe to wholly conclude on the findings of the current inquiry. This is because of key important items to which majority of the respondents scored low (on the self-esteem): self-satisfaction and getting respect from others encourage people to be happy with their lives. As it is common, getting respect, or approval from others help individuals define their lives and even make future plans for further development. Therefore, for youths, such experience helps them to relate well as well as contribute meaningfully to societal growth.

Also, findings showed that variables such as gender, length of engagement, frequency of engagement, sources of content, and types of content uploaded on social media were associated with youths' self-esteem. These findings also revealed the predictive power of these variables in determining self-esteem. For this study in particular, the researcher has reasons to believe that SM usage may be improving youths' self-esteem, although the researcher cannot categorically imply a direct influence of all the predictive variables because of the likely intervening variables that the study did not isolate in the analysis. Other studies which have shown this relationship abound (e.g., Barker, 2009; Chou, & Edge, 2012; Gentile, et al., 2012; Subrahmanyam, & Greenfield, 2008). On the other hand, the researcher also found that age, though was not correlated with youths' high self-esteem. So, we could infer that a rise in the ages of youths who utilize social media platforms decreases self-esteem.

Furthermore, in view of the present findings, the theory of social comparison as proposed by Leon Festinger (1954) was revalidated and re-confirmed. Taking a look at the basic premises upon which the theory was proposed, humans, in this case youths, compare themselves with others on the social media platform (which in itself, lacks objectivity in assessment) and thus form an opinion about their person. Findings showed a distinctive pattern in which youths most worthy sources of social media information are the "self," very close "real life" friends, and virtual/mutual friends. This therefore suggests that youths on social media are all about their selves. This creates an atmosphere that is lacking in objectivity to assess one's self. As even close friends may not be objective as religious figures and other would. Comparing oneself to someone who is better off than oneself is known as an upward comparison, and it usually has unfavorable effects (Gibbons, 1986; Lemyre & Smith, 1985). People who compare themselves to someone who is less fortunate than they are are engaging in downward comparisons, which typically have good outcomes (Gibbons & Gerrard, 1989; Marsh & Parker, 1984; Wills, 1981). Although, this was not tested in this study, there are indications that either of these (upward or downward) or even lateral comparison may have helped in producing both positive or high self-esteem and negative or low self-esteem for respondents who scored high and low points on the self-esteem scale respectively. The researcher believes that this outcome has enormous implication for communication research and youth development, as well as policy development and intervention programmes. This finding therefore suggests a need to strengthen and expand knowledge on how social media can serve as effect tool towards improving youths' self-esteem as this can help build adult citizens who will help in nation building

– founded on the idea that having a high sense of oneself is crucial and that poor self-esteem is the root cause of numerous social evils, including drug and teen pregnancy, violence, failure in school, and criminality (Heatherton & Wyland, 2003).

## Conclusion and Recommendations

This investigation sought to examine the influence of SM usage on youths' self-esteem in south western Nigeria. As a result of the findings, the following conclusions were drawn: 1) Youths in the investigation area have high self-esteem resulting from their usage of SM; and (2) gender, length of engagement, frequency of engagement, sources of content, and types of content uploaded on SM predicted and were related with youths' self-esteem in the study's sample drawn from south western Nigeria.

Furthermore, the researcher recommends that:

1. While being wary of the negative effects of SM usage on youths, campaign and intervention programmes are needed to educate and orientate youths on best possible ways to use SM to define their selves and improve their self-worth.
2. More studies should be conducted on the topic to expand indigenous knowledge so as to see how SM can be utilized to advance self-esteem.

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