

EFFECT OF MEDIA HEALTH EDUCATION ON THE MENTAL HEALTH OF NIGERIA YOUTHS: A STUDY OF AFIKPO SOUTH L.G.A. OF EBONYI STATE

Nweze Samuel

Department of Mass Communication, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki
Ebonyi State.

Anthony G. Nwizi

Department of Mass Communication, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki
Ebonyi State.

Christian Mary-Jean Chinenye

Department of Mass Communication, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki
Ebonyi State.

Nwafor Samson C.

Department of Mass Communication, National Open University of Nigeria,
Abakaliki Study Centre, Ebonyi State.

Ogbodo Mmaduabuchi Ogbodo

Department of Mass Communication, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki
Ebonyi State

Uthulor Brenda Chidinma

Department of Mass Communication, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki
Ebonyi State

Igwe Rita Ngozi

Department of Mass Communication, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki
Ebonyi State.

ABSTRACT

In recent times, some remarkable changes have been observed across the globe regarding the qualitative and quantitative expansion of internet and social media, with a large number of people addicted to social media. This work ascertained the impact of extensive social media usage on mental health among youths of Afikpo South LGA. This study was anchored on Health Belief Model and adopted survey design using questionnaire for data collection. Sample size of 385 was drawn purposively. It was found that the undergraduates overstayed on social media during the pandemic. It was also found that the youths of Afikpo South LGA stayed on social media for business transactions, romance/relationships, games/betting and sports activities among other things. It was further found that excessive stay on social media caused the undergraduates depression, anxiety, headache and insomnia during the period. Among the recommendations is that parents should not allow their children to use the social media when they are not mature enough to avoid their being distracted by the glamour and fantasies of the social media.*

Keywords: *Social Media, Mental Health, Youth*

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

The germaneness of the above quote is rested on the fact that across all epochs the Issue of mental health has always affected virtually all strata of the human society. The poor, the rich, the black, the white, the old, the young, celebrities, peasants, leaders, followers, etc, have been victims of one form of mental illness or the other at one time or the other. The

Bible, the holy writ of the Christians in the book of Samuel (1 Samuel 16:14; 1 Samuel 18:10) noted that at a time in history King Saul of Israel had a mental health challenge, which came in bouts of madness. Amidst, the glitz, glamour, glitterati of Hollywood, some of its all-time greats such as Whitney Houston, Marilyn Monroe, Michael Jackson, to mention a few, have had to contend with one form of mental health challenge or the other. Many 'ordinary people' in the backwaters of communities in first, second and third world countries have been confronted or are still confronting different forms of mental issues. What is really mental illness? What is the global situation? What is the Ebonyi State, Nigeria scenario like? And, what have been the response of the broadcast media in terms of awareness creation and the provision of support systems for mentally ill persons in Ebonyi State? These are some of the issues this study has set for itself. Mental illness can be described as a state where the reasoning pattern of a person is altered in such a way that may cause discomfort to the person and/or his or her neighbours.

It is synonymous with terms such as psychosis, lunacy, insanity, etc. It is when an individual goes off the ark that he or she is said to be insane or mentally challenged. The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) states that mental illnesses are medical conditions that disrupt a person's thinking, feeling, mood, ability to relate to others and daily functioning (2012). Just as diabetes is a disorder of the pancreas, mental illnesses are medical conditions that often result in a diminished capacity for coping with the ordinary demands of life. Serious mental illnesses include major depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, dysthymia, obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), and panic disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and borderline personality disorder. Apart from these wild kinds of mental illness, there are milder forms such as minor depression, anxiety neurosis, seasonal affective disorder, minor sleeping disorders, among others. The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) asserts that "mental illnesses can take many forms, just as physical illnesses do. Mental illnesses are still feared and misunderstood by many people.." (2012). However, NAMI (2012) points out that "mental illnesses are treatable." space, geographical boundaries and .cut across a wide, range of audience(s) irrespective of differences in demographic and ecological characteristics. If this assertion is anything to go by, it means that television and radio are contemporary barrier-breakers that could be used to reach-out on social/health causes, including mental health issues.

This technologically negotiated reaching-out or dissemination of information naturally flows to all manner of persons regardless of their place of abode, class, political, social or religious orientations and persuasions. It is in this respect that we argue that radio and television media can readily provide congenial platforms for people to interact, with the intent of sensitizing and mobilising others to individually or collectively support identified social causes or objectives in spite of their differences in contemporary Nigerian society. Methodologically, this study deploys analytical, observation and interview techniques in considering the issue of mental illness in relation to the broadcast media in Alikpo South LGA, Ebonyi State Nigeria,

Statement of the Problem

The emergence of COVID-19 and the consequent declaration of inter-state lockdown by Nigerian government to curtail the disease brought attendant consequences. Among them were the restriction of movement of people and physical distancing in order to prevent the disease from spreading which forced people to stay indoors thereby leading to social media addiction. There are some studies conducted in other climes which found that social media addiction results

in health issues (Yubo, Dan, Tongiin, Lily & Wang, 2019). Other studies have also established negative effects of social media on the academic performance, psychological and emotional well-being of students both in Nigerian and other climes (Anyira & Udem, 2020; Dukper, Baffour & Beatrice, 2018). To this end, this study was done to ascertain if Ebonyi State undergraduate students were addicted to social media during COVID-19 period and the likely impact of such an excessive use of social media on their mental health during COVID-19 pandemic,

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

1. To ascertain level of social media usage of youths among Afikpo South Local Government Area.
2. To find out the type of discussions that kept youths of Afikpo South Local Government Area on social media during the Covid-19 pandemic.
3. To determine the impact of social media on mental health of youths of Afikpo South Local Government Area,

Research Question

The following research questions were asked in line with the research objectives:

1. What was the level of social media usage among youths of Afikpo South Local Government Area?
2. What type of discussion kept the undergraduate students of Afikpo South Local Government Area?
3. What impact did the social media have on mental health of youths of Afikpo South Local Government Area?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were predicted in relation to the research question and the demographic variables

Ho₁: There is no significant level of social media usage among youths of Afikpo South Local Government Area.

Ho₂. There is no significant discussion kept the undergraduate students of Afikpo South Local Government Area,

Ho₃. There is no influence social media have on mental health of youths of Afikpo South Local Government Area

Scope of the Study

The study will look at influence of media health education on the menial health of Nigeria youths using Afikpo South LGA as a study. Also its focus is areas that concern broadcast media fulfilling its role as a social informant and also as the watch dog of the people who is facing mental stress,

Significance of the Study

The study both theoretical and practical use

To the government, as policy makers, the finding of the study will be -useful in providing information on the use of social media to disseminate government news for better governance Also without valid and variable measurement of credibility, the

management of credibility in social media will be hardly feasible for policy action. For the media industry in general, this study will unravel best ways to improve the credibility of alternative media content. Theoretically, this study will contribute social scientific literature on credibility of the use of social media as sources of news. Finally, the academia will benefit from the study, as the finding will discover other areas rich for further researches to help commemorate the study.

Review of Related Literature

Conceptual Review

Youths; addicted to social media always show more latency in sleeping, disturbance, bottom level of achievement, very poor performance in academics and a very high level of depression compared to those without social media addiction (Ezcabii, Chibuikc & IJdeK, 2019; Islam, Bama, Raman, Khan, & Hossain, 2020; Anyira & I Idem, 2020). Students in tertiary institutions are more exposed to social media for many reasons. First, they have high level of literacy on internet usage, which makes them the greatest number of social network users. SECOND, unlike secondary school students, social media Activities of university students are not often regulated by their parents and lecturers. Third, campus students usually have somewhat flexible programmes, and they have unlimited access and more freedom to use social media. Fourth, some developmental programmes related to youths can also increase the hunger to use social network sites by university students. From the results of the above cited scholars, it can be deduced that addiction to social media presents enormous negative academic, physical, emotional and psychological effects on those who are addicted to the social media.

Mental Health Challenge and Broadcast Media in Nigeria'

The investigation of mental health challenge in this study draws on cases of mentally ill persons as portrayed on radio and television media and as observed by the researchers in Afikpo South LGA in Ebonyi State, Nigeria. We choose to use these areas in this study because Afikpo South LGA is one of the oldest LGA among the thirteen local in Ebonyi State. Hence, they can represent stand as points of references for Afikpo South LGA.. Apart from this, the communities can boast of at least one terrestrial broadcast station within its jurisdiction., with several primary, secondary and tertiary schools, health institutions, markets and other public and private infrastructures and properties strewn around them. Again, at least one case of mentally challenged person is taken from each of the communities to underscore the prevalence of mental ill-health in Ebonyi State. Moreover, the names of some of the persons used, as case studies or mentioned in the discussion have been changed in order to protect their 'interest' and avoid any kind of infringement of individual rights,

Relatively recently, it was reported in both print and broadcast media that several batches of lunatics, overtly and covertly mad persons, among other differently challenged persons, 'loaded' in commuter buses from elsewhere were 'mumped' in popular public places such as Amachi, Amaekwu, Amaizu, Amangbala, Amangwu, Amankwo, Amaobolobo, Amauro., Amauzu, Aimiku, Egeburu, Enohia-Item, Enohia-Ntalu, Evuma, Itim Villages, Kpogirikpo, Mgbom, Ngodo, Nkpogoro Village, Ohaisu Village, Ubam, Ugwu-Egu-Village; among other public places in Afikpo South LGA, Ebonyi State of Nigeria, These differently challenged persons seem to have swelled the number of miscreants and layabouts constituting menace to the physical and mental well-being of the communities under investigation. The attention that is 'given' to these cases in the media are mostly reportorial and nothing more. If these 'waves' or influxes of differently

challenged persons are merely reported because of the relatively modern outlook of the Amachi, what about the possibly huge unreported cases of overtly and covertly mentally challenged persons locked away in far-flung villages and towns within the state? These categories have yet to get any kind of attention from any quarter, including the media, the government agencies charged, with welfare matters, among other stakeholders. This is not healthy for the mental well-being of the Afikpo society, considering the possible negative consequences that the trend is capable of generating.

First, it was observed that virtually all social gatherings and intercourses such as marriage ceremonies, funerals, birthdays, village festivals and annual reunions of social, economic or political groups in the communities under survey and environs visited had at least one uninvited overtly mentally challenged person in attendance. Usually, such a challenged individual dances or sings without prompting and often behaves in an inconsistently consistent manner to the bewilderment of others. Second, all market places visited by the researchers in Amachi, were filled with at least an overtly mentally challenged person, either picking refuse in some dumpsite or picking quarrels with little children. This above observation speaks volume about the possible hugeness of mental health challenge in Ebonyi-State in view of the fact that those covert cases which are often culturally barred and not seen by the public may well be more frightening.

It is even more frightening to note that many people with children or family members with mental challenges tend to engage in self medication and 'traditional' or 'native' treatment practices, that often end in disaster for the them and those around them. The intriguing thing about this is that these noticeable cases or situations hardly get reported or followed by the radio and television media. Furthermore, the victims of mental ill-health in the communities under survey are left to their own devices and most times they are tagged with all lands of names such as 'witches', 'wizards', 'cursed ones', 'evil doers', 'bad people' and the like. This culturally induced tagging, tends to exacerbate the mental illness crisis in the communities which overtime becomes an ill-wind that blows no one any good. Overt and covert sufferers of mental ill-health are thus discriminated against and stigmatized for no rational and hardly justifiable reasons in Edo State (Nigeria). Some cases that were followed in the broadcast media channels as well as monitored by the researchers within Ebonyi State relatively recently in Nigeria may well help this study to further concretise the point being made. .

First the case of a popular Benin movie actor who was allegedly murdered while asleep by his mentally challenged wife in Benin City., as reported on Independent Radio (IDR) and Independent Television (ITV), Nigerian Television Authority, Benin City (NTA) and Edo Broadcasting Radio and Television, Benin City (EBS Radio and Television) on Tuesday 8, November, 2011, provides an interesting story for this discourse. According to the interview one of-the children granted ITV, their mother had a history of psychiatric problem which the family has been battling with for several years and that their father had earlier visited a pharmacy to get her some 'drugs' the day he met his untimely death. However, one clear point that can be gleaned from the report is that the lyamus tried to keep the issue under wraps and of course, this is probably because of the self and public stigmas associated with mental illness among the Edo people. Sadly, this reckless self medication and 'pride' eventually resulted in the murder of the bread winner of a family who was allegedly hit with a pestle in the head by his own wife. The point being made, is

that the tragic death of an individual resulting from the mental health challenge of another individual was brought to the public domain for discussion and possible reconsidering of the cultural bar that is put on mental illness within the Edo society, as raised on NTA, ITV, IDR, EBS radio and television,

But the unfortunate issue is that beyond the ripples in the air after the first few days of the incident, relevant GOs, NGOs or CBOs, including the broadcast media in the Edo State have yet to take any proactive step of making sure that similar sordid incidents do not occur in the future, Joshua Ufuah, a resident of Ekpoma (in an interview with these researchers in 2012) observed that for this one reported case - the Iyamu saga, there may have been tens of others that were never reported and may never be reported and here lies the challenge of breaking the cultural bar of keeping mute in the face of obvious dangers when certain members of one's family becomes mentally ill.

The second case is that of Jasper Aim, a young male artisan residing in the Sabo area of Auchi, who got reported about on radio and television news media sometime in 2010. Afterwards, nothing was held about Jasper from the angle of the media. From the researchers' monitoring, Jasper is, ordinarily; a happy-go-lucky young man who goes about his daily car spraying routines like every other artisan of his trade. However, the story changes immediately he takes or 'smokes' marijuana (popularly called *Igbo* or weed in the area). His family members and close neighbours are aware of the scare Jasper is capable of causing when under the influence of *Igbo*. So, with the help of FUCC and other sympathetic CBQs, the mother once in a while, takes him for psychiatric attention at the Uselu Psychiatric Hospital (UPH) in Benin City, Interestingly, whenever Jasper returns from rehabilitation he reverts back to *Igbo* smoking and as at the last time the researchers checked on him, his car spraying shop had been pulled down and some of his neighbours said he had taken to the streets in Afikpo South. Jasper has been left to his 'fate'. Jasper's family and the larger society hardly consider other sociological issues such as poverty; nobody, cares to probe what impels Jasper into taking of *Igbo*. He may have been going to work for days without job and money and in order to get himself out of such 'stress', gets hooked on weed.

In this regard, Audu, Tdris, Olisah and Sheikh (2011) argue that extreme poverty or stress may also be implicated in the issue of mental illness. It is more or less like what James Lee, the author of *For God and Country*, calls "regressive behaviour" (2011). Lee argues that when an adult individual has been subjected to a prolonged stress, he/she reverts to a psychiatric condition of behaving like little children, with signs of being psychologically damaged, emotionally depressed and mentally despondent. He illustratively underscores this with the several mental cases at the Gautamalo Bay, where he was once an inmate for no just reasons. But in all, the point to take home is that Jasper's is one pitiable case of 'a dog returning to its vomit' and, regrettably, broadcast media managers in Ebonyi State appear to be too 'busy'⁵ to bat an eyelid. The case of Fatima Abbas, a mentally challenged female teen who was almost lynched for alleged witchcraft practices when actually she was down with high fever and a minor personality disorder as reported on OTA-Abakaliki, EBBC radio and television, Benin and ITV and IDR, all broadcast media channels operating within Edo State, provides the third evidential basis for discussion in this study. Fatima was on the verge of being killed when journalists and police officers came to her rescue in a puddle in the Benin Technical College road area of Benin City. . -Her accusers said she said "she gave Obasanjo wealth" (Olusegun Obasanjo was once the president of Nigeria),, "she is the queen of the-puddle",

among other gibberish. Instead of being sympathetic to her plight the bystanders pelted her with atones and pebbles and even spat on her. It took the combined, efforts of the media, particularly, 1TV and IDR and CBOs such as Friends of Uselu Clinic Club (FUCC) to rehabilitate Fatirna at the Uselu Psychiatric Hospital (UPB) in Benin *City* and subsequently reunite her with her family members,

The various episodes of the Fatima story were on the airwaves from the months of June to September 2010. And, of course, hers was one clear case of what kind of monitoring or follow-up the broadcast media can do should do to address suspected cases of mental illness. Besides, the Fatima tale speaks to the issue of child psychiatry which, seems to have been neglected in the Nigerian society. This observation is consistent with the finding of Ronzoni, Omigbodun, Bella, and Atitola (2010). They contend that menial illness is highly prevalent among Nigerian children, which may be underpinned by lack of knowledge regarding mental health problem. Although Ronzoni, Omigbodun, Bella, and Atitola also accused the media, of sometimes fueling the problem they suggest educational interventions, including carefully designed radio and television programmes that encourage contact' with mentally ill persons to reduce stigma (2010). The fourth case that we have isolated for this study is that of Rosemary Oboh, a resident of the Ukpou area of Ekpoma.

Although her case has never been mentioned in the broadcast media, the researchers who have followed it, are convinced it will provide some illumination on certain sociological issues that tend to aggravate the mental illness predicament within the Edo society, Rosemary lives in a one-room **apartment** with her finance and does petty trading. She occasionally has bouts of madness and' whenever such arises she is rushed to her local church for prayers. There was this particular episode where she destroyed, virtually every property 'they had and tore her cloths, with her finance running helter-skelter for help. Her parents came to take her for native treatment of appeasing the Ogbanje or Mammy water spirit which they believe is troubling-her. However, a few weeks after the appeasement her madness recurs 'with even greater ferocity, site begins to destroy public properties and even obstruct vehicular traffic in her neighbourhood. This prompted the intervention of well meaning individuals who rallied round her finance to take her to the UPH, where she was eventually treated of her mental condition and restored back to normalcy.

Social Media and Mental Health Issues

The American Academy of Pediatrics has warned people on the likelihood of crisis associated with social media in teens and young children, especially Facebook depression and cyber-bullying. The same type of crisis may also face some adults (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2011). The more people stay on social media,, the less happy they appear to be. A study conducted recently discovered that Facebook use was connected to less moment-to-moment happiness and less life satisfaction (Walton, 2017), Medical health practitioners warn that sitting is just like smoking. They state the various diseases linked with sitting and the population of persons it kills annually. Sitting is one-of the most dangerous habits one should avoid for a balanced health. This is concerned with what people usually do when they are sitting down." Spending long time, scrolling through social media messages even when we know that we should not stay long on social media sites is not good. Aside intuitive knowledge, research results have confirmed that staying online for a long time is not a good practice as related to our general

psychology (Walton, 2017).

One of the ways Facebook and other social media press people to think they are isolated socially is comparison factors. People are often trapped when they compare themselves with others as they scroll via their news feeds, and give judgements on how they match up with the other. One research assessment measured how people compare posts made by others, in "downward" or "upward" directions. That is the depiction that, they are worse or better than their online friends already. This turns out that, when the comparisons make the social media user feel worse than his friend,, it makes the person feel so sad; and this type of comparison is associated with depressive symptoms (Walton, 2017). Social media addiction has been shown to induce -unhappiness as well as the development of other mental health concerns. Some of the negative effects of social media addiction on users' mental health are forgetfulness, anxiety, sleeplessness, isolation fatigue, depression, restlessness, eye diseases, neck or back pain, bad eating habit. Social media is often used for long-range interpersonal communication book keeping, which is not a laughing matter for adolescents because regular usage of .person-to-person communication book keeping might affect adolescents' mental well-being (Len-Rios, Hughes, McKec, & Young, 2016).

The constant overstay on social media is not good to health because it stops students from establishing personal links. As addiction center puts it, a typical social media addict logs into social media sites between 40-80 hours each week, with various relational, emotional and psychological issues (Tahiya, & Prokriti, 2020), Some scholarly works have recommended that families should monitor their wards' use of social media .and ensure that they use the social media and Internet for a limited period. Educators and guidance can make students know the negative impact of social media addiction on their health and explain to them what they, will lose if they spend much time on social media websites (Abbas, 2019).

Review of Empirical Studies

In a study conducted by Dukper, Baffour and Beatrice (2018), the majority of the respondents (41 %) stated that, on the average, they spent two-three hours on their best choice of social media platforms, (26%) of them reported that, they often spent less than thirty-minutes on social media, (14%) said that, they spent around thirty-one hours checking their best choice of social media platforms and (18%) maintained that they spent above two hours on social media. Anxiety or irritation when away from the internet, repeated "unsuccessful attempts to cut back on social media use, constant planning and thinking about social media, needing to spend more and more times online to experience the same rush and lying about the amount of time spent online are the psychological symptoms of addiction to social media while backache, headache, eye strain and carpal tunnel syndrome are the physical symptoms of social media addiction (Ran & Mettilda, 2017).

In another study conducted by Islam, Barna, Raihan, Khan, & Hossain (2020), it was found that out of the total 476 valid participants, 592 (82.4%) were found to have mild to severe depressive symptoms during COVID-19. period. However, this was not attributable to the use of social media.

However, Anyira and Udem (2020) conducted a study where they found that 75% of the students ..studies engaged in social media activities during the lockdown occasioned by COViD-19 pandemic and'97% spent their time on social media to chat with family and

friends.

Although the studies above are related to the current study, none specifically investigated what this study intends to Investigate. Therefore, it appears as if no serious thought has been given to the subject matter of this study and therein lies the gap it wants to fill.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Health Belief Model (HBM). The model is a psychological model that renders more predictions and explanations about health behaviours. It was introduced in the 1950s by social psychologists, Hochbaum, Rosenstock and Kegels in the United States' Public Health Services. The model concentrates majority on the dispositions and beliefs of the people about health-related matters- HBM was 'brought due to the failure of a free tuberculosis (TB) health assessment scheme. The model has been so useful in exploring a number of long-term and short-term health behaviours, including cough, malaria, cholera and respiratory diseases. HBM was spelt out in terms of four concepts .delineating the keen threat and net benefits, perceived susceptibility, perceived severity, perceived benefits, and perceived barriers. These concepts Were proposed as accounting for people's "readiness to act," An added concept, cues to action would encourage their readiness and arouse them to avoid overstay on social media website. The model was considered suitable for the study because it explains both the threats and benefits of taking and not taking necessary health actions with regards to social media use. However, the benefits of the model notwithstanding, it does not have the convincing power against cultural, social, religious and superstitious beliefs on which people may lean to take some negative health actions.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey design. The survey study technique is adopted,because according to Kerlinger (2005) when a research is concerned with individual or group opinion, the best method to adopt is survey design. Survey design enables researcher to make " generalization regarding a research work using some selected sample of the total population of the study.

Area of the Study

The research work covered Afikpo South LGA, Eddalands administratively-designated by Nigeria govt as Afikpo South L.G.A. It is the most homogeneous LGA in Nigeria with people of one language, one culture and one tradition across the entire LGA.

Eddalands is composed of many autonomous communities and towns which include: Eburnwana Edda, Kguzu Edda, Ekoli Edda, Owutu Edda, Amangwu Edda, Oso Edda, Etiti Edda, Ogbu Edda

etc. The local area headquarters Afikpo South,, being the Nigerian government designated administrative name for Eddaland is at Nguzu.

Population of the Study

Owing to the large nature of the area of the study and time constraint, the population will comprise the total number of youths drawn from Afikpo South Local Government Areas

selected, namely; Nguzu Edda, Ekoli Edda, Owutu Edda, Amangwu Edda, Oso Edda, Etiti Edda,

Ogbu Edda, However, according to the 2006 National population Census, the total number of young person's drawn from the Local Government Areas were 450242 (Four hundred and fifty thousand, two hundred and "forty two) as given "by National Population Commission (NPC) Ebonyi State Chapter.

Sample Size

Taro Yamani was used to determine the sample size for the study. The formular is given below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n - Sample Size
 N - Population of the Study
 1 = Constant
 c = Margin of error "0.05

$$n = \frac{450242}{1 + 450242 (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{450242}{1 + 450242 \times 0.0025}$$

$$n = \frac{450242}{96.205}$$

$$= 399.9$$

Approximately = 400 .

Sampling Technique

Probability sampling techniques were adopted using both stratified and simple' random sampling. Simple Random Sampling gives each element of me population equal chances of being selected. Samples resulting from the application of this procedure were said to be .unbiased and are therefore representative of the population. The reason for the choice of stratified sampling technique is based on the fact that the population is divided into strata, units or geopolitical zones which allowed the individual or the elements to be selected in each stratum by means of simple random sampling.

Sources of Data

In order to ensure the collection of relevant data for this study, the researcher made use of both

primary and secondary - sources of data. The primary source came from the views of the respondents emanating from the questionnaire administered on them and oral interviews conducted on them. The secondary sources of data came from the reviews of materials that

were in existence before the idea to conduct this research was initiated. These are published works such as text books, journals, newspapers, magazines, seminar papers, periodical and official gazettes etc.

Instruments of data Collection

Questionnaire was used as the major instruments of data; collection used in this research. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A focused on the demographic characteristics of the respondents while section B focused on thematic issues on influence of media health education on the mental health of Afikpo South LGA youths.

Validity of Instruments

The instruments and methods used in the research was validated by experts in media publicity and evaluation and some in mass communication department. The researcher will also personally involve in the distribution -and collection of questionnaire distributed to the respondents and the questions the. questionnaire will be structured in line with the research questions and hypothesis of the study,

Reliability of the Instrument

The researcher used test-retest method to test the liability of the instruments for the' research. After three weeks of distributing the first set of questionnaire- another set of questionnaire were also distributed to the other groups' of respondent's residents in Ebonyi State. The responses in the-first and second set of questionnaire correlated interns of responses mode. This was enough to stand for the reliability of the instrument. ,

Data Presentation and Analysis

This chapter presents and analyzes the data collected from the respondents through, the structured questionnaire, .The hypotheses were also tested based from data gathered from the respondents.

Data Presentation based on Respondents Bio-Data

Table 1: Questionnaire Administered to Respondents

Options	No of Respondents	Percentage
Distributed	400	100.
Returned	380	95
Unreturned	20	5

Source: field work, 2020

From the table above, it can be seen that out of 400 copies of questionnaire distributed, 380 copies of the questionnaire were returned, representing 95% while 20 copies of the questionnaire were not returned, representing 5%.

Table 2: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Options	No of Respondents	Percentage
Male 44.8	170	
Female 55.2	210	
Total 100	380	

Source: Field Work, 2020

The table above shows that 170 respondents, representing 44.8% were male while 210 respondents, representing 55.2% were female.

Table 3: Marital status of Respondents

Options	No of Respondents	Percentage
Single	200	52.6
Married	180	47.4
Total	380	100

Source: field work, 2020

The table above shows that 200 respondents, representing 52.6% were single while 180

respondents, representing 47.4% were married.

From the above table therefore, the majority of the respondents were single due to the fact that

they are the one that participate fully during election and as politicians use youth to achieve their aim during election period.

Table 4: Work Experience of Respondents

Options	No of Respondents	Percentage
1 -2 years	75	19.7
6- 10 years	85	22.3
11-16 years	80	21.1
16-20 years	60	15.7
21 and above	80	21.1
Total	380	100

Source: field work, 2020

Table 4 above shows the work experience of respondents. From the analysis of the table above it shows that 75 respondents, representing 19.7% have work experience between 1-2 years; 85 respondents, representing 22.3% have work experience between 6-10 years; 80 respondents, representing 21.1% have work experience between 11-15 years; 60 respondents, representing 15.7%-have work .experience between 16-20 while 80 respondents, representing 21.1% have work experience between 21.1.

Table 5: Educational Qualification of respondents

Options	No of Respondents	Percentage
WAEQ	150	39.5
OND/NCE	150	39.5
B.sc/HND	40	10.5
M.SC	30.	7.8
'Others	10	2.6
Total	,380	100

Source; field work, 2020

Table 5 above shows-that 150 respondents, representing 39.5% are with WAEC/GCE; 150 respondents, representing 39.5% are with OND/NCE; 40 respondents, representing 10.5% are with B.sc/HND; 30 respondents, representing 7.8% are with M.sc while 10 respondents, representing 2.6% are with other certificate.

"From the above table therefore, it can be seen that the majority of the respondents are with WAEC/GCE and OND/NCE respectively.

Discussion of findings

The data presented in Table 1 indicate that 245 (64%) of the respondents spent between three and nine hours or above on social media during the pandemic whereas 136 (36%) of them spent below one hour and two hours daily on social media during the pandemic. The findings here corroborate a study by Dukper, Haffour and Beatrice (2018) in which the majority of the ' respondents (41%) stated that, on the average, they spent two-three hours on their best choice of social media platforms, (26%) of said that they often spent less than thirty minutes on social media. (14%) of the respondents said that they spent around thirty-one hours checking their best choice of social media platforms and (18%) of them maintained that they spent above two hours on social media platforms. This shows that students spent much lime on social media. There is a high Kite of social media obsession amongst students of higher institutions in the present generation. This is a practice that can -affect their academic, social and spiritual lives negatively if not controlled (Charlton & Danforth, 2007). Many undergraduates often spend longer time surfing the internet on gossips and much irrelevant matters. Different research studies have found that some individuals cannot finish reading a fiction book from .cover to cover when they graduate from school (Brydolf, 2007).

Table 2. above shows that 246 (64.6%) of the respondents stayed long on social media for academic/research, politics, marketing, sports and scholarship purposes whereas 135 (35.4%) of them stayed long on- social media during the pandemic for business, romance/relationship and games/betting purposes. This findings slightly differ from the findings In Dukper, Haffour and ' Beatrice (2018) in which almost half of the students spent time on social media to collaborate with class mates on assignments and over 50% of them stayed on social media to keep up with friends. Although the figures in the two Studies differ, they are related in that the reasons for students' presence on social media in the two studies can be grouped into academic and non-academic reasons.

The main concern of this research work is to examine credibility of media as news source among youths of Afikpo South LGA. Three basic research questions were formulated. These research questions were accompanied with 25 other questions that helped to boost the research 'work. In this aspect of our research work we shall -holistic-ally review and digest the responses gathered from respondents in the each of the question posed except the demographic variables,

Out of the 28 questions posed in the questionnaire, Research questions one to six has to .do with the demographic aspect of the research work while questions to 28 were combination of all psychographic variables that helped to elicit responses from respondents. These questions were carefully formulated through the assistance of three communication scholars in the department of Mass Communication, Ebonyi State University Abakaliki, Below is our research findings' and interpretation: Respondents were asked if they have heard about media. Out of 390 respondents sampled. 347 (89.0%) attest to the fact they have heard about social media, 37 (9.5%) were of the opposite and 6 (1.5%) others declined to comment on the issue raised. This has further validated our research findings that there is greater public knowledge about social media Respondents were asked -what their perception of media medium of information gatheringnin terms of accuracy and inaccuracy is. Out of 390 responses sampled, 262 (67.2%).respondents say that the online medium were accurate, 100 (25.6%) of total population studied say that online medium were inaccurate. The remaining-28 (7.2%) could not say of the either. With the results obtained, it has also shown that social media is credible source of obtaining news (breaking news) online.

To ascertain how users trust the media for accessing news stories, respondents were asked whether the see the medium as trustworthy or untrustworthy. Out. of 390 responses

gathered, 262 "(6712%) says that the medium was trustworthy, 100 (25.6%) of the total population sampled were of the opposite while 6 other remaining respondents which constituted (7.2) of the total population sampled declined comment.

Summary

Media are a general category of channels and applications that highlight collaboration and working together to create and distribute contents. This collaboration not only consists of creating contents together, but also discussing- the content in the attempt to. improve it collaboratively and to come to P share understanding.

The continued growth of new media has meant that information consumers are now far less beholden to what passes through traditional gatekeepers and are able to bypass gatekeepers altogether and turn directly to primary information sources, many of which arc information consumers themselves. Because information provided in newer channeled often lacks

professional gatekeepers to check content, and thus, lacks some of the traditional makers used to determine source credibility, consumers become more responsible for making decisions about the credibility of information online.

Media are increasingly being used as an information source, including information related to risks and onsets. The current, study examines how pieces of information available in facebook impact perceptions of source credibility. Health education is crucial for 'the internet because past studies suggest people are less likely to pay attention to media they do not perceive as credible. Previous researches have focuses more on the perception of credibility of content and news sources in the mainstream me*!a, meanwhile tint much was known about the credibility challenge introduced by alternative media of facebook, twitter, blogs, -etc. this credibility problem associated with social- media news is of much concern to the questions of trustworthiness, objectivity, believability and professional input on social content, etc, which are, cardinal issues in ethics of communication.

Conclusion

The results of the study show that some of the students stayed on social media three hours, four hours, five hours, six hours, seven hours, eight hours, nine hours and above. Moreover, different activities on social media caught the attention of various students and 'made them obsessed with social media platforms. Some of the students were hooked onto the social media due to business, romance/relationship, games/bettings academics/research, politics, marketing, sports, economy, and scholarship.. Also, their obsession with social media caused them several mental health issues during COVID-19 period some of which include depression,, anxiety, headache, insoninia, low self-esteem, sadness etc. Based on the above findings,-this study concludes that Afikpo youths were obsessed with social media during COVID-19 pandemic.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. it is recommended among others that, the social media be increasingly used to share important information than had hitherto been done, especially in disseminating official information.
2. Since the study did not control for extraneous variables that may have predicted some of the outcome in the study, it is recommended that future studies focus on controlling these Variables,

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