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Assessment of the Extent of Usage of Photographic Images in Social Networking among Youths in Lagos and Ondo States, Nigeria

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Abstract
The most recent revolution in photography is the Social Photography Revolution, where photographic images are used to power the social media and boost social networking. The traditional means of dissemination of information is now almost usurped by social media with Social Networking Sites, (SNSs) fast becoming mainstream platform of communication among people particularly the youths. This study therefore assessed of extent of usage of photographic images in social networking among youths in Lagos and States, Nigeria. Questionnaire and interview were employed as tools to elicit relevant information from youths on the frequency of their usage of photography on SNSs in the study areas. A total of 1010 questionnaires were returned and analyzed using descriptive statistics. The result revealed that that large number of youths made use of photographic images as means of interaction and communication among themselves and the public. It also identified the preferred device used by youths to share photos and the reasons for the preference. The research findings further revealed the degree to which youths patronise photographic images; to the extent that social networking perhaps, may be impossible or unpopular if photographic images were not involved.

Keywords: extent of usage, photographic images, social networking; youths

INTRODUCTION

Photographic Images are images produced by action of light on light sensitive material (Clark, 2009). The production of photographic images had taken a different dimension since the advent of digital technology where the light sensitive material, usually a film, has been replaced by a light sensitive material known as image sensor. Therefore, in digital photography, images are produced without the intermediaries of film, paper or chemicals (Sassoon, 2007).

Adamski (2012) notes that the evolution of digital photography is a completely new concept and outlook on the photographic image, as digital images consist of recorded pieces of data or bits. These pieces of information/data are "translated" by the computer through numerical representation, which form pixels. Pixels are tiny "points" of colour and tonal values that make up an image (Adamski, 2012). These pixels constitute the building blocks of digital photos. In the same manner that bricks are used to build home, pixels are assembled in an elaborate mosaic to create digital photos (Dickman and Kinghorn, 2009). Photographs are visual images that according to Dickman and Kinghorn, (2009) record the range of feelings written on the human face, the beauty of the earth as well as the skies that man has inherited. Parts of the record kept by photographs also include the wealth and confusion man has created. It is a major force to reckon with in explaining man to man (Steichen in Dickman and Kinghorn, 2009).

The rate or frequency of use of photographic images in SNSs may not be unconnected with the ease of creating photos digitally which virtually anybody with a digital camera or smartphones and allied gadgets could achieve. Jose (2012) posits that the simplicity of the technicalities of producing a photograph, and the social networking revolution has helped every person become a photographer and get praised for his work. Cheap access to digital camera and smart phone could also be responsible. The importance attached to photographic images in online interaction and dissemination of information may also have prompted the use of photographic images. In a survey among youths in selected states in south western Nigeria, Ibiwoye (2016) observes that many would not interact on SNSs if are no photographs to prompt them. Therefore the rate at which youth make use of photos on SNSs may have some correlation with the use or importance attached to its use. This study therefore sought to assess the rate of usage of photographic images in social networking among youths of Lagos and Ondo states, Nigeria

The advent of computer technology and the internet brought so many opportunities especially in the area of information dissemination and transfer or sharing of knowledge and ideas. The marketing world has also been taking the advantage of its global coverage to market products and services. It is however pertinent to note that Social Photography play an important role in the dissemination of information and transfer or sharing of knowledge and ideas. Photographic images seem to form the basis of many

interactions on Social Networking Sites, (SNSs) especially among the youths. Sadly though, a number of problems have been identified with the usage of photographic images in the SNSs which borders on the social cultural life of the youths. This study therefore aimed at investigating the extent of usage of photographic images in social networking among youths of selected states in Nigeria.

Statement of Problem

The presence of photographic images in social networking has continued to make its impact on different aspect of the social cultural lifestyle of Nigerian youths.

Daniel (2013) notes that nude pictures are beginning to dominate the Nigerian Twitter space as the act is fast becoming fashionable among young ladies. The author bemoans the act of one of the typical Twitter female users by name Pretty Osaro of the social network who engages in the act of showing off her nakedness (Plate. 1).

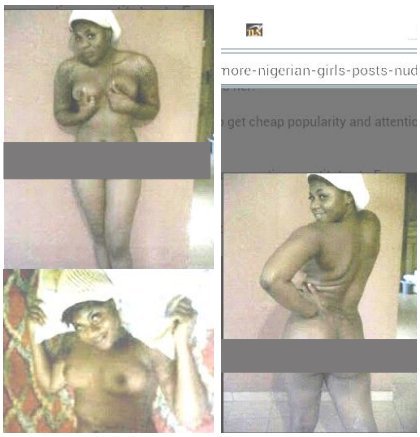

PLATE. 1 Photos of Pretty Osaro Posted on her Twitter page

Source*:* *http://www.africaeagle.com/2013/06/more-nigerian-girls-posts-nude-pictures.html*

Osaro was reported to have posted three nude pictures of herself on May 15, 2013 each showing her in different positions, and her motive was that she wanted to be famous and it does not matter how people feel about it. Personal photos have both private and public meanings. The public meaning is what a stranger sees in an image, while the private meaning depends on its personal significance (Van House and Ames, 2006). The same image, may take on different meanings depending on the context it is used.

It has also been shown in a number of researches carried out in the country that youths are becoming addicted to the SNSs, which implies that the use of photographic images continues to increase.

In a survey study on youths in part of the western region of Nigeria by Ajewole and Fasola (2012), the finding shows that youths between the ages of 16 and 30 spend inordinate number of hours on social networking sites. Many of the youths according to the study owned-up that they were already addicted because they had tried reducing the number of hours spent on the site but without success, and this, they believe negatively affects their productivity. Huang and Park (2013) posit that sustained exposure to a set of cultural practices will affect individuals' social perception both in the offline world and in cyberspace.

The creators of graphics and photo packages such as Photoshop, Paint Shop Pro, and Photo paint, had good intention of providing tools that can help make a photographic image more presentable and appealing, especially for advertisement. Interestingly, the same packages could be used to 'doctor', that is, manipulate photographs to perpetrate crime. A popular internet scam in Nigeria is known as *yahoo yahoo*, where unsuspecting and gullible individuals are swindled of large sum of money and other valuables. They are not able to perpetrate their crime without the use of photographs, which are often manipulated. Plates 2, 3 and 4 are examples of manipulated photographs that could be used to deceive or present an over bloated impression about self.

PLATE 2 Manipulated Superman

Source: Researcher's Collection; Created by Omoloja A. (2015)

PLATE 3 Manipulated Photos
Source: Researcher's Collection; Created by Opasho O.O. (2015)

PLATE 4 "He has her body", Manipulated photos
Source: Researcher's Collection; Created by Nnamoko S. (2016)

The disposition of the youths in interacting with photographic images may not be unconnected with the influence of postmodern photography practice which has tremendously influenced the forms and contents photographic images youths tend to interact with in the contemporary society. Baudrillard concept of images and signs in postmodernism is poised toward the disintegration of the Saussurean concept of sign which is a departure from the real to the only infinitely recursive simulacra (Raizman, 1998).

The contemporary society is filled with torrent of images and signs which are often communicated through the mass media. Raizman (1998) further echoes the thought of Baudrillard which argues that the unreal is virtually supplanting the real, as the real gradually loses its meaning and what is believed and had to deal with are mere simulacra. Plate 5 is an example of a postmodern photograph, a mere glance may suggest a human skull, and it is on a closer look that the constituents of the photograph are revealed as earlier stated by Mullen (1998). All art forms manipulate reality in order to reveal truths not apparent to the uncritical eye. This also indicates that contemporary photography is more of art form rather than representation of reality.

PLATE 5. Postmodern Photograph
Source:https://irvine-cct.wikispaces.com/file/view/Dali_women_skull. Dali_women_skull.jpg (2016)

METHOD

The study was centred on youths in selected secondary and tertiary institutions as well as artisans and employed/unemployed youths in Lagos and Ondo states, Nigeria; these youths therefore constituted the research population. Lagos state was selected being the most urbanized city not just in South-Western Nigeria, but in Nigeria as a whole (Aluko, 2010). Ondo state was selected as a less

urbanised state in comparison with Lagos in South-Western Nigeria. Two Federal Universities, namely; the University of Lagos and the Federal University of Technology, Akure were selected, this was meant to harvest a research population that will fairly capture the six geopolitical zones in the country, as federal institutions are prone to having student population that cut across the entire country.

The Federal Government College, Ijanikin, being a mixed-gender secondary school, and the only Federal Government College situated in the West senatorial district of Lagos state was selected; as the other Federal Government Colleges are situated in the Central/East senatorial district, where the university was selected from. CAC Grammar School, Akure, Ondo state was selected based on the fact that it is one of the most populous public mixed-gender secondary schools in the state capital which afford opportunity for research population that cut across, students from different backgrounds

This study is essentially survey design. The data on population were consequently used in calculating the sample size in Table 1

Table 1 Sample Size fo r ±5% Precision Level where Confidence Level is 95% and P=0.5

Institution	Population Sample Frame	Sample Size	Male Population	Female Population	Sample Size (Male %)	Sample (Female %)
Lagos						
University of Lagos (45.2%)	45,000	381	24,660	20,340	209 (54.8%)	172
Federal Government College, Ijanikin (41.7%)	3,245	108	1,890	1,355	63 (58.3%)	45
Akure						
Federal University of Technology, Akure (24 %)	15,656	375	10,760	3,396	284 (76%)	90
CAC Grammar, Akure (62.2%)	2,548	85	963	1,585	32 (37.8%)	53
Employed/unemployed, and Artisans Youths in Lagos and Ondo states (49%)	∞	385	∞	∞	196 (51%)	188

Source : Computation from Author Preliminary Enquiry

Cochran (1963) equation cited in Israel (1992) with a precision of +/-5% i.e. 0.05 and 95% confidence level was used to determine the sample size thus:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2} \quad 1$$

$$n = \frac{1.96^2 x 0.5 x 0.5}{0.05^2} = 384.16 \approx 384$$

Therefore, the Sample size for the infinite of population of unemployed/employed youths and young artisans according to Cochran (1963) equation is 384.

To determine the Sample Size for each unit of the finite population:

$$n1 = \frac{no\ N}{no + (N-1)} \quad 2$$

Equation 2 was used in calculating the sample size for the population of University of Lagos and the Federal University of Technology, Akure. In order to arrive at a fairly proportionate sample sizes. Systematic Random Sampling method was employed to calculate the sample sizes for the Secondary Schools, that is, the Federal Government College, Ijanikin, Lagos, and CAC Grammar School, Akure.

$$Sampling\ fraction = \frac{n}{N} = \frac{100}{10000} = \frac{1}{100} \quad (i.e.\ 1\ in\ 100) \quad 3$$

There are essentially five units in the sample frame. The sample size for each unit as derived by equation 2 and 3 is as follow:

University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos - 381
Federal Government College, Ijanikin, Lagos - 108
Federal University of Technology, Akure - 375
CAC Grammar School, Akure - 85
Other Categories of Youths in Akure - 384
Total 1,333

Both probabilistic and non-probabilistic sampling methods were employed in arriving at appropriate sample for the study. Non probabilistic sampling known as convenient/purposive sampling method was employed in selecting Lagos out of the six states

in the South-western Nigeria for the study, while a probabilistic sampling method was used to randomly select Ondo State from the remaining five states. Lagos is selected being the most urbanized of the six states in South-Western Nigeria. Aluko (2010) notes that Lagos is Africa's second fastest growing urban centre, second only to Cairo.

Stratified sampling method was used to categorise the study population into youth groups thus: secondary schools, tertiary institutions, young artisans, and employed/unemployed youths, randomly selected from the study area. Stratified random sampling was therefore employed to select respondents from each stratum of the population for the administration of questionnaire. A close-ended questionnaire was designed to cover categories of youths of secondary and tertiary institutions in the selected study area. Employed/unemployed youths and young artisans were also captured. The questionnaires were divided into two parts. The first part solicited information on personal data of the respondent to elicit data for demographic sample, while second part/section drew data on photography and social networking among youths. This part is expected to obtain relevant data that would satisfy the research objectives. A modified version of the Likert scaling was used in eliciting information from respondents.

SA	A	U	SD	D
5	4	3	2	1

Where: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, U = Undecided, SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, (Nworgu, 1991).

The study employed a survey design to carry out the research. In determining the rate of usage of photographic images in social networking among youths in the study area a number of data were collected via the instrumentality of questionnaire. The analyses are presented in the tables that follow:

The result of analysis carried out to know if the respondents had profile pictures is displayed in Table 2. According to the result, the majority (90.1%) indicated that they had profile pictures while only small percentage (8.3%) do not have profile pictures, while 1.6% of the respondents did not respond to the question.

Table 2: Possession of Profile Pictures by Respondents

Profile pictures	Frequency	Percent
Yes	910	90.1
No	84	8.3
No response	16	1.6
Total	1010	100.0

Source: Author's field work (2015)

On the average number of pictures youths view each time they are online, Table 3 reveals that 22.1% viewed between 1 and 5 pictures, 24.8% (5-10 pictures), 24.7% (10-20pictures) and 6.6% (20-40pictures). While 11.4% of respondents viewed no pictures online while the remaining, 1.7% did not respond to the subject matter.

Table 3: Average number of pictures received by respondents

Number of Pictures Received	Frequency	Percent
No pictures	115	11.4
1-5 pictures	223	22.1
5-10 pictures	250	24.8
10-20 pictures	249	24.7
20-40 pictures	67	6.6
40 pictures and above	89	8.8
No response	17	1.7
Total	1010	100.0

Source: Author's field work (2015)

The result of analysis on the average number of pictures youths share/post on daily basis on any SNSs; Table 4 reveals that the majority (55.1%) shared between 1-5 pictures on daily basis. While 13.2% shared between 5-10 pictures daily only, about 3.4% posted 10-20 pictures on daily basis and those who shared between 20-40 pictures formed 1.2% and only about 0.9% shared above 40 pictures daily. It will also be noted that about 24.8% of respondents shared no pictures on SNSs and 1.6% of them did not respond to the issue.

Table 4: Average Number of Pictures Posted by Respondents

Number of pictures posted	Frequency	Percent
No picture	265	26.2
1-5 pictures	557	55.1
5-10 pictures	133	13.2
10-20 pictures	34	3.4
20-40 pictures	9	0.9
40 pictures and more	12	1.2
Total	1010	100.0

Source: Author's field work (2015)

To further determine the extent of usage of photographic images in social networking among youths in the study area, the respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which certain activities were been carried by them (Table 5). Examining the first variable, "how often do the respondents share pictures on any of the SNSs such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, Google plus, Webcasts, e.t.c. Those that shared pictures very often constituted 19.4% of respondents, 26.3% (often), 28.9% (sometimes), 16.8% (Rarely) and 6.9% (Never). About 1.6% of respondents however did not indicate their position regarding the issue. The mean

response (3.35) indicates that on the average, the youth sometime share/post on the SNSs.

Regarding the second variable, "how often do you share funny photos?" 9.1% of respondents indicated very often, 28% (often), 32.4% (sometimes), 17.2% (rarely) and 11.1% (Never). The remaining 2.2% however did not indicate their status as to the frequency with which they shared funny photos. The mean response of 3.06 indicates that the respondents on the average sometimes post funny photo SNSs.

On the third variable , " how often have you been carried away viewing and sharing photos and discovered you have spent more time than you had intended to spend" 12.6% of respondents indicated that it happen to them very often, 25% indicated that it happened to them often, 35.1% experience it sometimes. While 13.7% rarely experienced it, 11.1% never experience it. The mean response (3.14) indicates that the respondents on the average sometimes experienced the situation being carried away while viewing and sharing pictures.

The fourth variable "how often do you share, that is, post or receive photos with mobile phone?", about 21.1% of respondents did it very often, 29.9% did it often while 27.2% sometimes did it, 11.8% rarely did it and 7.3% never did it. This therefore indicates that the mean respondents often engaged in this activity.

The fifth variable examined the frequency with which the respondents post or receive photos with Tablet computers. The result of the analysis indicates that 5.9% of respondents did it very often, 18.5% did it often, while 23.7% sometimes did it, 22% rarely did it and 27.3% never did so. The mean response of 2.53 indicates that the respondents, on the average sometimes post or receive photos with Tablet computers.

The sixth variable examined "how often do the respondents post or receives photos with laptop computer", 6.1% of respondents indicated that they did it very often, 12.8% (often), 29.2 % (sometimes), while 22.1% rarely did it, 27% indicated they never received photos with laptop computer. The mean response of 2.47 indicates that the respondents sometimes post or receive photos with laptop computer.

The seventh variable examined how often the respondents post or receive photos with desktop computer". The result of the analysis indicates that 4% of respondents did it very often, 10.3% did it often, 19.4% did it sometimes while 26.4% rarely did it, 36.7% never post or received photos with desktop computer. The mean response of 2.16 indicates that the respondents on the average rarely post or receive photos with desktop computer.

Table 5: Determination of Extent of Usage of Photographic Images in SNSs

SN	The Variables	Very often (5)	Often (4)	Sometimes (3)	Rarely (2)	Never (1)	No Response	Mean	Rank
1	Frequency of sharing picture on SNSs	196(19.4)	266(26.3)	292(28.9)	170(16.8)	70(6.9)	16(1.6)	3.35	3
2	Frequency of sharing funny photos	92(9.1)	283(28)	327(32.4)	174(17.2)	112(11.1)	22(2.2)	3.06	3
3	Spending more time than intended on SNSs	127(12.6)	252(25)	355(35.1)	138(13.7)	114(11.3)	24(2.4)	3.14	3
4	Frequency of posting/receiving pictures with mobile phone	213(21.1)	302(29.9)	275(27.2)	119(11.8)	74(7.3)	27(2.7)	3.47	3
5	Frequency of posting/receiving pictures with Tablet computers	60(5.9)	187(18.5)	239(23.7)	222(22)	276(27.3)	26(2.6)	2.53	3
6	Frequency of posting/receiving pictures with laptop computer	62(6.1)	129(12.8)	295(29.2)	223(22.1)	273(27)	28(2.8)	2.47	3
7	Frequency of posting/receiving pictures with Desktop Computer	40(4.0)	104(10.3)	196(19.4)	267(26.4)	371(36.7)	32(3.2)	2.16	2

Source: Author's field work (2015)

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The English idiom; "a picture is worth a thousand words" meaning that a complex situation or experience can be explained or convey using a single image. This buttresses the attitude of the cutting-edge crowd of young folks communicating with a simple image, be it a picture of what is for dinner or a street sign that slyly inform or direct a friend on a subject matter. This approach is easier than bothering with words, even in a world of hyper-abbreviated Twitter posts and texts (Bilton, 2013).

As rightly observed by Galer (2004), photography has proved to be an ideal vehicle for personal expression and a potent tool for persuasion and propaganda, he however, notes that the communication of content should always be the primary consideration of the photographer. Communication by means of photographic images has been enhanced by the advent of the computer technology and the internet as well as access to affordable devices. The mean respond of 3.47 for respondents who used the mobile phone (fourth variable) and 2.16 for respondents who used the desktop computer (seventh variable) indicates that more youths used their mobile phone to post or receive photo on the SNSs, 2.16 mean score for desktop computer implies that it is the least used gadget by respondents to interact with photographic images on the SNSs. This is consistent with observation of Cohen (2013) that increased ownership of mobile devices containing cameras means that many consumers can snap an image whenever they wish and easily share it to a broad audience via social media, email or text.

Karlson et al. (2014) note that phone is highly leveraged for digital information needs beyond calls and SMS, and that phone is emerging as a primary computing device for a number of users, rather than as a peripheral to the PC. This is associated with the fact that Smartphones are affordable and could also serve as minicomputer, the ease of carriage and prompt access might have also influenced the wide preference for mobile phone and some allied devices such as Tablets. The assumption is further established by the results of the study which shows that a large proportion of youths make use of photographic images in their social networking activities, especially with the aid of their mobile phones.

The implications are that visual perception and literacy have become a major part of the daily communication system in the society especially among the youths. It is therefore recommended that the government and relevant authorities put adequate plan on ground to aid visual perception and literacy in the society.

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