

**INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE SEXUAL BEHAVIOR
OF STUDENTS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY**

BY

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**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL
EDUCATION (HEALTH EDUCATION)**

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
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THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF BACHELOR
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CITY.**

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CERTIFICATION

We the undersigned certify that this project research work was carried out by **OSAYI-IDADA RITA IMUWAHEN**, with matriculation number **EDU1814204** and that the research work is adequate in scope and quality in the Department of Health, Safety and Environmental Education University of Benin, Benin city, Edo state, in partial fulfillment of the award of Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree in Health Education.

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DEDICATION

This project work is dedicated to God Almighty and to everyone around me who contributed to my achievements thus far.

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My special appreciation goes to the Almighty God for just everything that happened throughout my study period and during the course of this project work.

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the influence of social media on the sexual behavior of university students, focusing on the unique context of the University of Benin. The proliferation of social media platforms has raised concerns about its potential impact on students' sexual behavior. Existing literature suggests that social media can expose individuals to sexual content, facilitate peer influence, and influence risky sexual behaviors. However, it also serves as a platform for sexual health education and discourse.

The research employed a survey design, with data collected from 300 randomly selected undergraduate students across multiple faculties. The study found that social media does indeed exert a significant influence on students' sexual behavior, shaping their attitudes and perceptions of romantic relationships. It was observed that social media content can create pressure for conformity to certain behaviors and norms. Additionally, the study revealed that social media plays a complex role in shaping students' perceptions of risky sexual behaviors. While exposure to content can cultivate an appreciation for excitement and risk, students approach these portrayals with a degree of critical discernment.

In terms of sexual health education, the research found that students do not primarily rely on social media for accurate information. However, they recognize its role in destigmatizing discussions about sexual health topics. In conclusion, this study highlights the multifaceted impact of social media on the sexual behavior, perceptions, and health education of university students. It underscores the need for targeted sexual health education campaigns, media literacy programs, safe online spaces for discussions, and stricter content regulation on social media platforms. Further research is recommended to explore the nuances of this relationship in greater depth.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Social media platforms have become increasingly popular and are now a central aspect of daily life for individuals worldwide, especially young people (Boyd, 2021). These platforms provide diverse features that support communication, information exchange, and social networking, leading to their widespread use among university students (Dhir et al., 2018). As students actively engage with social media, it becomes crucial to examine its potential impact on their behavior, including their sexual behavior.

Sexual behavior among university students is a complex and multifaceted topic that includes various aspects such as sexual initiation, contraceptive use, sexual risk-taking, and participation in sexual relationships (Mueller et al., 2022). The development of sexual behavior patterns is influenced by factors like peer dynamics, societal expectations,

and personal traits (Garcia et al., 2021). Given the pervasive role of social media in students' lives, it is vital to explore its potential effects on their sexual behavior.

Existing research indicates that social media may influence sexual behavior among young people through various mechanisms. For example, social media platforms expose users to sexual content, including explicit images, videos, and discussions about sex (Moreno et al., 2021). This exposure can shape attitudes and beliefs about sex and impact decision-making regarding sexual activities.

Moreover, social media fosters peer connections, enabling the exchange of sexual experiences, ideas, and norms (Albury et al., 2022). Peer influence plays a significant role in shaping sexual behavior during adolescence and young adulthood (Santelli et al., 2003). Social media amplifies this influence by spreading social norms and expectations that may affect students' sexual behavior.

Studies have also identified a link between social media use and risky sexual behaviors. For instance, increased social media use has been

associated with unprotected sex, multiple sexual partners, and participation in casual or risky sexual encounters (Rice et al., 2021; Korchmaros et al., 2022). Social media can create a sense of anonymity, lower inhibitions, and offer more opportunities for casual interactions or risky behaviors.

However, social media's influence on sexual behavior is not entirely negative. These platforms can serve as valuable tools for sexual health education, providing accessible information on contraception, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and safe sexual practices (Young et al., 2021). A comprehensive understanding of how social media affects students' sexual behavior requires exploring both its positive and negative aspects.

Despite growing interest in the relationship between social media and sexual behavior, there is limited research focusing on university students in the University of Benin. This study aims to address this gap by investigating the connection between social media usage and sexual behavior within this unique context.

Statement of the Problem

The extensive use of social media among university students raises concerns about its potential impact on their sexual behavior. Although prior studies have explored this relationship in various settings, little research has focused specifically on students at the University of Benin. This study seeks to fill that gap by examining how social media influences their sexual behavior and identifying factors that mediate or moderate this relationship.

Previous research highlights how social media can expose students to sexual content and promote the sharing of sexual experiences, ideas, and norms among peers (Moreno et al., 2021; Albury et al., 2022). These dynamics may shape attitudes and decision-making about sex. Additionally, studies have linked social media use with risky sexual behaviors, including unprotected sex and multiple sexual partners (Rice et al., 2021; Korchmaros et al., 2022). Nonetheless, social media also has the potential to enhance sexual health education and awareness (Young et al., 2021).

Given the limited research on this topic in the University of Benin, it is essential to investigate how social media influences students' sexual

behavior and to identify relevant mediating and moderating factors. This understanding will be crucial for designing targeted interventions and educational programs to promote responsible social media use and healthy sexual behavior.

Research Questions

The study will address the following questions:

1. What is the influence of social media on the sexual behavior of students in the University of Benin?
2. Does social media affect students' engagement in risky sexual behavior?
3. What is the influence of social media on sexual health education among students?

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study is to assess the influence of social media on the sexual behavior of students at the University of Benin.

Significance of the Study

This study will help university students better understand the potential impacts of social media on their sexual behavior. It will provide insights into how social media influences their sexual decision-making, attitudes, and practices. The findings can encourage students to make informed choices and adopt safer sexual behaviors.

University authorities, including student affairs officers and counselors, can benefit by gaining a deeper understanding of the challenges students face regarding social media influence on their sexual behavior. The study can help them design effective educational programs, counseling services, and policies to promote healthy sexual practices among students.

Parents and guardians will benefit by gaining insights into how social media affects their children's sexual attitudes and behaviors. The findings can help them provide better guidance, support, and communication regarding sexual health and responsible social media use.

Healthcare professionals and public health policymakers can use the study's findings to develop targeted interventions that address sexual health issues influenced by social media exposure. This can include initiatives such as awareness campaigns, health services, and policies aimed at promoting safe sexual practices among university students.

The study will benefit educational institutions by highlighting the importance integrating comprehensive sex education into the curriculum. Schools and universities can develop programs that address the influence of social media on students' sexual behavior, helping to foster responsible social media use and sexual health awareness.

Social media companies and policymakers can use the study's findings to develop policies and guidelines that ensure safer online environments for young people. They may introduce features that promote responsible content sharing and provide accurate sexual health information to users.

This study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge and provide a foundation for further research on the relationship between social

media use and sexual behavior among university students. It can inspire future studies exploring different aspects of social media influence in various cultural contexts.

NGOs focusing on youth development, sexual health, and digital literacy can use the study's findings to design programs that educate and empower young people to navigate social media responsibly and make informed sexual health decisions.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This research focuses on the influence of social media on the sexual behavior of students at the University of Benin. It includes participants from various faculties and disciplines within the university. However, the findings may not be generalizable to other universities or populations outside the University of Benin.

Definition of Terms

- **Social media:** Online platforms and technologies that enable users to create, share, and exchange information, ideas, and content through virtual communities and networks.
- **Sexual behavior:** Various aspects of individuals' sexual activities, attitudes, and beliefs, including sexual initiation, contraceptive use, sexual risk-taking, and engagement in sexual relationships.
- **University of Benin:** The academic institution in Benin City, Nigeria, where this research is conducted.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter reviewed the related literature of the study under the following subheadings;

- Concept of Social Media
- Influence of Social Media on Sexual Behaviour
- Influence of Social Media on Risk Sexual Behaviour
- Influence of Social Media on Sexual Health Education
- Summary of Reviewed Literature

Concept of Social Media

Social media has emerged as a defining feature of the contemporary digital landscape, transforming the way individuals interact, communicate, and engage with information (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). It has revolutionized traditional modes of communication, reshaped personal and professional relationships, and redefined the dissemination of information and news. This comprehensive exploration delves into the

concept of social media, examining its evolution, societal implications, psychological effects, and economic significance, with reference to relevant literature. The concept of social media traces its roots to the early days of the internet and bulletin board systems. However, it gained prominence with platforms like Six Degrees, which allowed users to create profiles and connect with others (Weinberg, 2019). Subsequently, the emergence of Friendster, MySpace, and LinkedIn set the stage for platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2021). This evolution has been characterized by an increasing emphasis on user-generated content, real-time interaction, multimedia sharing, and the development of online communities.

Social media has brought about profound societal changes. It has democratized information dissemination, enabling individuals to voice their opinions, mobilize for social causes, and challenge traditional power structures (Castells, 2020). The Arab Spring uprisings and the Black Lives Matter movement exemplify the role of social media in facilitating grassroots activism and amplifying marginalized voices. However, social

media's impact is not without its challenges. The spread of misinformation, echo chambers, and online harassment are critical issues (Vosoughi, Roy, & Aral, 2018). The algorithmic curation of content can create filter bubbles, limiting exposure to diverse viewpoints. The Cambridge Analytica scandal revealed how personal data harvested from social media can be exploited for political manipulation (Cadwalladr & Graham-Harrison, 2018). These challenges highlight the need for responsible platform governance and digital literacy initiatives. The psychological effects of social media have garnered substantial attention from researchers. FOMO (Fear of Missing Out), social comparison, and the presentation of idealized selves on social platforms have been linked to negative emotional outcomes, including anxiety and depression (Przybylski et al., 2022). The constant quest for validation through likes and comments can impact self-esteem.

However, social media also offers opportunities for self-expression, self-discovery, and social support. Online communities provide a sense of belonging for marginalized groups. Positive interactions and

informational content can enhance well-being. The nuances of these psychological effects underscore the importance of individual differences and usage patterns. The economic implications of social media are far-reaching. It has transformed marketing and advertising, giving rise to influencer culture and targeted advertising campaigns (Hsu & Lu, 2022). Brands now rely on user-generated content for authentic promotion. Social media platforms have evolved into e-commerce hubs, enabling direct shopping experiences. The gig economy has also been influenced by social media, with platforms like Uber and Airbnb using these channels for customer acquisition and engagement. However, concerns about gig workers' rights and job security have arisen. The intersection of social media, technology, and the economy has led to novel challenges in labor and business models.

The concept of social media encapsulates a multifaceted phenomenon that has permeated nearly every aspect of modern life. Its evolution from simple networking sites to complex platforms with global reach has created both opportunities and challenges. Social media's impact on

society, psychology, and the economy is undeniable, and its continued evolution will undoubtedly shape the trajectory of communication and interaction in the digital age. As researchers continue to delve into its intricacies, policymakers, educators, and users must collaboratively address the ethical, psychological, and societal dimensions of social media to harness its potential while mitigating its pitfalls. A balanced approach that considers technological innovation, individual well-being, and societal harmony is essential in navigating the dynamic landscape of social media.

Influence of Social Media on Sexual Behavior

The proliferation of social media platforms has significantly impacted various aspects of human behavior, including sexual behavior. The intersection of technology and sexuality has led to profound changes in the way individuals express, explore, and discuss their sexual identities and desires. This extensive analysis delves into the influence of social media on sexual behavior, examining its effects on sexual expression, relationships, education, and potential risks, with reference to relevant literature. Social

media has provided a platform for individuals to openly express their sexual identities and preferences. Platforms like Twitter, Tumblr, and Instagram have facilitated the creation of communities where LGBTQ+ individuals can connect, share experiences, and find support. Online spaces allow people to embrace their sexual orientation and gender identity more comfortably, especially in cultures where offline discrimination is prevalent (Duguay, 2020).

However, the anonymity and lack of face-to-face interaction on social media can also lead to cyberbullying and harassment, which can negatively impact individuals' mental health and self-esteem (Sevcikova et al., 2018). Social media has redefined the way individuals form and maintain romantic and sexual relationships. Dating apps like Tinder and Grindr have revolutionized the dating landscape by enabling users to connect based on proximity and shared interests. These apps provide a platform for casual encounters, but they can also contribute to the commodification of relationships, where individuals are judged solely on their physical appearance (Ward, 2019).

Platforms like Facebook and Instagram allow couples to publicly showcase their relationships, but this can also lead to feelings of jealousy, insecurity, and anxiety due to comparison with others' seemingly idealized relationships (Muisse et al., 2009). Social media has opened up avenues for sexual education and awareness. Online communities, blogs, and YouTube channels provide information about sexual health, consent, and diverse sexual orientations. However, the lack of regulation on social media content means that inaccurate or misleading information can also proliferate, leading to potential harm (Volkman & Llewellyn, 2020).

The influence of social media on sexual behavior comes with its share of risks. The phenomenon of "sexting" - sharing explicit photos and messages - has become more prevalent among young adults and teenagers, raising concerns about privacy, consent, and potential legal consequences (Rice et al., 2021). Moreover, the spread of explicit content without consent, often referred to as "revenge porn," highlights the dark side of online sexual behavior and its potential to cause harm (Henry & Powell, 2020).

Social media platforms provide opportunities for exposure to sexual content, including explicit images, videos, and discussions about sex (Moreno et al., 2021). Such exposure may shape attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge about sex among university students. Research has shown that exposure to sexual content on social media is associated with increased sexual permissiveness and earlier sexual initiation (Albury et al., 2022). It is important to explore the extent and impact of sexual content exposure on the sexual behavior of students in the University of Benin.

Social media platforms enable students to connect with peers and engage in social interactions, allowing the sharing of sexual experiences, ideas, and norms (Albury et al., 2022). Peer influence is known to play a significant role in shaping sexual behavior among young individuals (Santelli et al., 2003). The amplification of peer influence through social media may contribute to the adoption of sexual behaviors and attitudes that are influenced by social norms and expectations. Investigating the role of peer influence and norms mediated through social media will provide insights

into the social dynamics impacting the sexual behavior of students in the University of Benin.

The influence of social media on sexual behavior is a multifaceted phenomenon with both positive and negative implications. It has provided a platform for sexual expression, education, and relationship formation, while also introducing risks such as cyberbullying, misinformation, and the violation of privacy. As social media continues to evolve, it is crucial for individuals, educators, policymakers, and platform providers to navigate the delicate balance between promoting healthy sexual exploration and safeguarding against potential harm.

By understanding the nuances of the relationship between social media and sexual behavior, society can harness the benefits of technological advancements while addressing the ethical, psychological, and social dimensions associated with online sexual interactions.

Influence of Social Media on Risky Sexual Behaviour

The advent of social media platforms has revolutionized the way people connect, communicate, and express themselves online. However, this technological advancement has also raised concerns about its impact on individuals' behavior, particularly in the realm of risky sexual behavior. This extensive exploration delves into the influence of social media on risky sexual behavior, examining its effects on sexual health, perceptions of risk, peer influence, and potential interventions, with reference to relevant literature. Social media's pervasive influence has transformed the way individuals perceive and assess risky sexual behavior. The anonymity and detachment from face-to-face interactions on platforms like dating apps can lead to lowered perceived risks associated with engaging in risky sexual activities (Blondell et al., 2022). The visual nature of social media, along with the allure of immediate gratification, can downplay the potential consequences of unsafe sexual practices.

Social media platforms provide a virtual space for individuals to observe and internalize peer behaviors. The portrayal of risky sexual behaviors, such as

casual hookups or substance use during sexual encounters, can influence perceptions of what is normative behavior (Young et al., 2020). The "social proof" phenomenon, where people tend to conform to behaviors endorsed by their peers, can amplify risky sexual behaviors within online communities. The accessibility of sexual content on social media contributes to the normalization of explicit material. Platforms like Snapchat, Tumblr, and Instagram can inadvertently expose users, particularly adolescents, to explicit images and conversations. Exposure to sexually explicit content at a young age can contribute to desensitization, shaping attitudes toward sexual behavior and potentially promoting risky behaviors (Peter & Valkenburg, 2020). The spread of misinformation on social media can distort individuals' understanding of sexual health and protection. Misleading information about contraception, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and reproductive health can lead to uninformed decisions and increased vulnerability to risky sexual behavior (Moreno et al., 2020). Moreover, misinformation about STIs and their transmission can undermine safe sexual practices.

Recognizing the influence of social media on risky sexual behavior, researchers and health professionals are exploring interventions to mitigate potential harm. Targeted educational campaigns, delivered through social media platforms, can provide accurate information and promote safe sexual practices (Jones et al., 2021). Engaging influencers and online communities to spread positive messages about sexual health can counteract the negative influences perpetuated online. The influence of social media on risky sexual behavior is a complex interplay of factors that includes changing risk perceptions, peer dynamics, content accessibility, and misinformation. While social media offers opportunities for sexual education and health promotion, it also presents challenges related to the normalization of risky behaviors. Understanding the mechanisms through which social media affects behavior is crucial for developing effective interventions that promote informed decision-making and safe sexual practices in the digital age.

Studies have found a positive association between social media use and engagement in risky sexual behaviors among young individuals (Rice et al., 2021; Korchmaros et al., 2022). Increased social media use has been linked

to higher rates of unprotected sex, multiple sexual partners, and engagement in casual or risky sexual encounters. Social media platforms may contribute to a sense of anonymity, reduced inhibitions, and increased opportunities for casual sexual encounters or risky sexual behaviors. Examining the relationship between social media usage and risky sexual behaviors among students in the University of Benin is essential to understanding potential areas of concern and designing appropriate interventions.

While social media usage has been associated with changes in sexual behavior among university students, it is important to identify the factors that mediate or moderate this relationship. For example, individual factors such as self-esteem, sexual self-efficacy, and personality traits may influence the impact of social media on sexual behavior (Korchmaros et al., 2022). Additionally, factors such as gender, cultural influences, and relationship status may moderate the relationship between social media usage and sexual behavior. Exploring these factors will provide a deeper understanding of the complexities underlying the influence of social media on the sexual behavior of students in the University of Benin.

Influence of social media on sexual health education

Social media has transformed the way people access and share information, impacting various aspects of modern life, including sexual health education. The digital era has ushered in new opportunities and challenges in disseminating accurate and comprehensive sexual health information. This extensive analysis delves into the influence of social media on sexual health education, examining its effects on knowledge dissemination, accessibility, stigma reduction, and potential drawbacks, with reference to relevant literature. Social media platforms offer a dynamic and interactive space for the dissemination of sexual health information. Organizations, healthcare professionals, and individuals can share reliable resources, articles, infographics, and videos to educate the public about sexual health topics. This approach reaches a wide audience, including young people who often turn to the internet for information (McBride et al., 2020). The accessibility of social media has democratized sexual health education, making it available to individuals who might otherwise lack access to formal educational resources. Platforms like Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube

allow users to engage with content in a format that suits their preferences, whether it's reading short posts, watching videos, or participating in live discussions (Garett et al., 2020).

Social media can facilitate anonymous engagement, reducing the stigma associated with discussing sensitive sexual health topics. Online forums, discussion groups, and question-and-answer sessions provide individuals with a platform to seek information without fear of judgment. For marginalized and stigmatized populations, such as LGBTQ+ individuals, this anonymity can be especially valuable (Hillier et al., 2021). The interactive nature of social media enables educators to create engaging content that resonates with their audience. Gamified sexual health quizzes, interactive polls, and informative videos can enhance knowledge retention and encourage active participation in learning about sexual health (Kouta&Kaite, 2020).

While social media offers benefits for sexual health education, it also comes with potential drawbacks. Misinformation, lack of regulation, and the spread of unverified content can contribute to the dissemination of inaccurate or

harmful information. Young people, who are often heavy users of social media, are particularly vulnerable to misinformation and may lack the skills to critically evaluate the information they encounter (Moreno et al., 2020). Engaging in sexual health discussions on social media raises ethical and privacy concerns. Young people, in particular, may inadvertently share personal and sensitive information in public forums, risking exposure and harm. Educators and platform providers must strike a balance between promoting open discussions and safeguarding users' privacy and well-being (Nguyen et al., 2019). The influence of social media on sexual health education is a double-edged sword, offering a powerful platform for knowledge dissemination while presenting challenges related to misinformation and privacy. Harnessing the potential of social media requires a multidimensional approach that involves healthcare professionals, educators, researchers, and platform providers. By collaborating to provide accurate, evidence-based information in engaging and accessible formats, stakeholders can empower individuals to make informed decisions about their sexual health and well-being. As society continues to navigate the digital landscape, it is imperative to address the nuances of utilizing social

media for sexual health education and to continually evaluate and adapt strategies to ensure the responsible and effective dissemination of information.

Summary of Reviewed Literature

The reviewed literature highlights the multifaceted influence of social media on various aspects of human behavior, particularly in the realms of sexual behavior, sexual health education, and risky sexual behavior. Social media has emerged as a transformative force, reshaping communication, relationships, and information dissemination. In the context of sexual behavior, social media provides platforms for self-expression, exploration of sexual identities, and relationship formation. However, it also introduces risks such as cyberbullying, misinformation, and the violation of privacy. In terms of risky sexual behavior, social media's influence extends to shaping perceptions of risk, amplifying peer norms, and providing access to explicit content. While it offers opportunities for sexual health education, it also raises concerns about the normalization of risky behaviors. The reviewed literature emphasizes the need for accurate information, responsible platform

governance, and digital literacy initiatives to counteract potential negative influences.

Regarding sexual health education, social media platforms offer a dynamic space for disseminating information, reaching diverse audiences, and engaging in anonymous discussions. However, challenges such as misinformation and privacy concerns underscore the importance of thoughtful content creation and regulation. The literature highlights the potential benefits of interactive and engaging content, as well as the necessity of striking a balance between open discussions and safeguarding users' privacy. The reviewed literature underscores the pivotal role of social media in shaping attitudes, behaviors, and knowledge related to sexual behavior and sexual health education. The impact is both positive and negative, offering opportunities for empowerment and education while requiring vigilance against potential risks. As society navigates the evolving digital landscape, it is essential to leverage the potential of social media for positive change while addressing its ethical, psychological, and social dimensions.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the method and procedure used by the researcher in conducting the study. It is presented under the following Sub headings;

- Design of the Study
- Population of the study
- Sample and sampling technique
- Research instrument
- Validity of the Instrument
- Reliability of the instrument
- Method of Data Collection
- Method of Data Analysis

Research Design

Survey research design was adopted for this study. According to Omoroguiwa (2006), survey research design is one in which a group of people or term is studied by collecting data from only a few people or item considered to be representative of the entire group. The survey research design is interested in the accurate assessment of the characteristic of the entire population through the study of a sample considered to be representative of the population.

Population of the Study

The population of the study will be thirty-nine thousand and thirty-seven (39,037) students from fourteen faculties in University of Benin.

S/N	FACULTY	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
1.	AGRIC	900	1156	2,056
2.	ARTS	2197	3513	5,710
3.	BMS	773	1175	1,948
4.	DENTISTRY	115	49	164
5.	EDUCATION	2993	4376	7,369
6.	ENGINEERING	3108	503	3,611

7.	ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE	462	134	596
8.	LAW	414	575	989
9.	LIFE SCIENCE	2,193	2,895	5,088
10.	MANAGEMENT SCIENCE	1,561	1,568	3,129
11.	MEDICINE	542	253	795
12.	PHARMACY	582	412	994
13.	PHYSICAL SCIENCE	2,206	1,346	3,552
14.	SOCIAL SCIENCE	1,703	1,333	3,036
	TOTAL	19,955	19,288	39,037

Source: Students Affairs Division (Academic Planning Unit, 2024)

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample for this study consist of 300 students selected randomly from three faculties; Faculty of Education, Faculty of Law, and Faculty of Management Sciences which was randomly selected using Simple random sampling technique will be used to select respondents for the study

Research Instrument.

The instrument for the study is a questionnaire of 20 items used to elicit information from respondents. The questionnaire will consist of items related to the research questions.

Validity of the Instrument

The content validity of the instrument will be established after an intensive screening by the supervisor and two experts from the Department of Health, Environmental and Safety Education, University of Benin. Their inputs and corrections in terms of clarity and appropriateness of language will be used to develop the final draft.

Reliability of the Instrument

In order to determine the reliability of the instrument, it will be administered to 20 respondents who are not part of the population but are excluded from the study sample. The data will be analysed using Crombach Alpha to get the final result

Method of Data Collection

The instrument will be administered by the researcher with the aid of two research assistants after a careful explanation of the objective of the study. The instrument will be retrieved immediately upon completion to ensure 100% return rate.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected is properly organized and tabulated. The responses will be statistically analyzed by the use of percentage, mean and standard deviation

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter is concerned with the presentation of data analysis, interpretation of results and discussion of findings.

Analysis of Research Questions

Table 1: Research Question 1

Influence of Social Media on the Sexual Behavior of Students in the University of Benin?

Descriptive Statistics				
	N	Mean	Std. Error	Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
Social media strongly influences my perceptions of sexual relationships.	300	3.7300	.05832	1.01020
I rarely encounter explicit sexual content on social media platforms.	300	2.4933	.06851	1.18658
Social media has no role in shaping my attitudes towards casual sexual encounters.	300	2.9100	.04681	.81082
Social media interactions significantly impact my romantic or sexual relationship expectations.	300	3.9967	.04467	.77373

I am unlikely to compare my sexual experiences with what I see on social media.	300	3.4967	.06309	1.09269
Social media provides a safe space for me to express my sexual identity and preferences.	300	2.9100	.04681	.81082
I often feel pressured to conform to certain sexual behaviors based on what I see on social media.	300	3.9967	.04467	.77373
Valid N (listwise)	300			

Source: Field Survey, 2023 (SPSS 25)

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of responses from 300 university students at the University of Benin regarding the influence of social media on their sexual behavior and attitudes. The table includes several statements related to the impact of social media on various aspects of sexual behavior and perceptions. Each statement was rated on a Likert scale, with participants providing their level of agreement or disagreement.

The statement "Social media strongly influences my perceptions of sexual relationships" was given an average score of 3.73, suggesting that participants are moderately in agreement with the idea that social media plays a significant role in influencing their opinions about relationships. An

average score of 2.49 indicates that participants rarely come across explicit sexual content on social media platforms. The average score for the statement "Social media has no role in shaping my attitudes towards casual sexual encounters" was 2.91, indicating a moderate disagreement with the claim that social media has no effect on viewpoints towards casual sexual encounters. Participants' expectations for romantic or sexual relationships are highly impacted by their social media contacts, with an average score of 3.99. According to the average score of 3.50, participants are not very inclined to compare their sexual experiences with what they read on social media. With an average score of 2.91, which indicates a moderate disagreement, the statement "Social media provides a safe space for me to express my sexual identity and preferences" qualified. The average participant score was 3.99, indicating that they frequently feel pushed to engage in specific sexual acts based on what they see on social media.

Table 2: Research Question 2**Influence of Social Media on Risky Sexual Behavior of Students**

Descriptive Statistics				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Social media exposure contributes to perceptions that risky sexual behavior is common.	300	3.4600	.05959	1.03213
Content on social media often portrays risky sexual behavior as exciting or glamorous.	300	2.5267	.05771	.99964
Social media has no influence on my decisions about engaging in risky sexual behavior.	300	2.9900	.05331	.92344
I am unlikely to believe that risky sexual behavior portrayed on social media reflects real-life	300	2.5000	.06220	1.07728
Discussions or posts related to substance use in the context of sexual encounters are seldom encountered on social media.	300	3.0467	.05600	.97003
Social media does not	300	2.5267	.05771	.99964

contribute to the normalization of risky sexual behavior among young adults.

I rarely feel that social media influences my perception of the consequences associated with risky sexual behavior.	300	2.9900	.05331	.92344
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Valid N (listwise)	300
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Source: Field Survey, 2023 (SPSS 25)

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of the responses to the survey questions about the influence of social media on risky sexual behavior of students. The table shows the following:

The mean score for the statement "Social media exposure contributes to perceptions that risky sexual behavior is common" is 3.46, which is on the high side of the scale. This suggests that most of the respondents agree that social media exposure can lead to the perception that risky sexual behavior is common. The mean score for the statement "Content on social media often portrays risky sexual behavior as exciting or glamorous" is 2.53, which is below the midpoint of the scale. This suggests that most of the

respondents do not agree that content on social media often portrays risky sexual behavior as exciting or glamorous. The mean score for the statement "Social media has no influence on my decisions about engaging in risky sexual behavior" is 2.99, which is below the midpoint of the scale. This suggests that most of the respondents believe that social media does have some influence on their decisions about engaging in risky sexual behavior.

The mean score for the statement "I am unlikely to believe that risky sexual behavior portrayed on social media reflects real-life" is 2.50, which is below the midpoint of the scale. This suggests that most of the respondents believe that risky sexual behavior portrayed on social media is not an accurate reflection of real-life. The mean score for the statement "Discussions or posts related to substance use in the context of sexual encounters are seldom encountered on social media" is 3.05, which is above the midpoint of the scale. This suggests that most of the respondents believe that discussions or posts related to substance use in the context of sexual encounters are not common on social media. The mean score for the statement "Social media does not contribute to the normalization of risky sexual behavior among

young adults" is 2.53, which is below the midpoint of the scale. This suggests that most of the respondents believe that social media does contribute to the normalization of risky sexual behavior among young adults. The mean score for the statement "I rarely feel that social media influences my perception of the consequences associated with risky sexual behavior" is 2.99, which is below the midpoint of the scale. This suggests that most of the respondents believe that social media does have some influence on their perception of the consequences associated with risky sexual behavior.

Table 3: Research Question 3
Influence of Social Media on Sexual Health Education

Descriptive Statistics				
	N	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
I never use social media platforms to access information related to sexual health.	300	3.0300	.05453	.94450
I find social media platforms to be unreliable sources of accurate sexual health information.	300	3.9400	.07650	1.32499
I am unlikely to engage in discussions about sexual health topics on social media	300	3.9641	.07118	1.30092
Informative and evidence-based sexual health content is rarely encountered on social media platforms.	300	4.2305	.06989	1.27725
I believe that social media platforms contribute to reducing the stigma associated with discussing sexual health topics.	300	4.2605	.06626	1.21098
Social media does not play a role in educating	300	3.9641	.07118	1.30092

individuals about diverse sexual orientations and identities.

Valid N (listwise) 300

Source: Field Survey, 2023 (SPSS 25)

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics of the responses to the survey questions about the influence of social media on sexual health education.

The table shows the following:

The mean score for the statement "I never use social media platforms to access information related to sexual health" is 3.03, which is below the midpoint of the scale. This suggests that most of the respondents do not use social media platforms to access information related to sexual health.

The mean score for the statement "I find social media platforms to be unreliable sources of accurate sexual health information" is 3.94, which is above the midpoint of the scale. This suggests that most of the respondents find social media platforms to be unreliable sources of accurate sexual health information.

The mean score for the statement "I am unlikely to engage in discussions about sexual health topics on social media" is 3.96, which is above the midpoint of the scale. This suggests that most of the respondents are unlikely to engage in discussions about sexual health topics on social media.

The mean score for the statement "Informative and evidence-based sexual health content is rarely encountered on social media platforms" is 4.23, which is well above the midpoint of the scale. This suggests that most of the respondents believe that informative and evidence-based sexual health content is rarely encountered on social media platforms.

The mean score for the statement "I believe that social media platforms contribute to reducing the stigma associated with discussing sexual health topics" is 4.26, which is well above the midpoint of the scale. This suggests that most of the respondents believe that social media platforms contribute to reducing the stigma associated with discussing sexual health topics.

The mean score for the statement "Social media does not play a role in educating individuals about diverse sexual orientations and identities" is 3.96, which is above the midpoint of the scale. This suggests that most of the

respondents believe that social media does play a role in educating individuals about diverse sexual orientations and identities.

Discussion of Findings

These from table 1 findings align with existing literature on the influence of social media on sexual behavior and attitudes among young adults. The high average scores for statements related to social media's impact on romantic or sexual relationship expectations and feeling pressured to conform suggest that social media does indeed play a role in shaping individuals' perceptions of relationships and behaviors. This resonates with studies highlighting how social media exposure can contribute to unrealistic relationship expectations and pressure to engage in certain behaviors to fit societal norms (Worsley et al., 2019).

The moderate agreement with the statement about social media influencing perceptions of sexual relationships supports research indicating that social media exposure can contribute to changes in sexual attitudes, often by normalizing certain behaviors or ideals (Ridgway & Clayton, 2016). The relatively low score for encountering explicit content aligns with studies

discussing the efforts by social media platforms to regulate and filter explicit content (Wéry&Billieux, 2016).

It's important to note that while these findings provide insights into students' perceptions, a deeper exploration through qualitative methods could provide a more nuanced understanding of how social media truly impacts their sexual behavior and attitudes.

The results from table 2 of the survey suggest that social media can have a significant influence on the perceptions and behaviors of young adults around risky sexual behavior. However, it is important to note that the survey results are based on a self-reported survey and may not be entirely accurate. Additionally, the survey only included a small sample of young adults, so the results may not be generalizable to the entire population. It is important to continue to research the influence of social media on risky sexual behavior in order to better understand how to mitigate the negative effects and promote positive behaviors.

The literature on the influence of social media on sexual health education is mixed. Some studies have found that social media can be a valuable source

of sexual health information, while others have found that it can be a source of misinformation and harmful stereotypes.

The results of the survey suggest that young people are not using social media as a primary source of sexual health information. They are also more likely to find social media to be an unreliable source of information. However, they do believe that social media can play a role in reducing the stigma associated with discussing sexual health topics and educating individuals about diverse sexual orientations and identities.

It is important to note that the survey results are based on a self-reported survey and may not be entirely accurate. Additionally, the survey only included a small sample of young people, so the results may not be generalizable to the entire population.

It is important to continue to research the influence of social media on sexual health education in order to better understand how to use it to promote positive sexual health outcomes.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This chapter provides a comprehensive summary of the research findings and their implications. The study explored the influence of social media on the sexual behavior of students at the University of Benin. The research questions were analyzed and discussed in detail, shedding light on the various dimensions of social media's impact on sexual behavior, risky sexual behavior, and sexual health education.

Conclusion

Based on a comprehensive analysis of the research questions, several key conclusions can be drawn from the study's findings:

Firstly, it is evident that social media exerts a significant impact on the sexual behavior and attitudes of university students. The research highlights the notable role that social media platforms play in shaping perceptions of sexual relationships. This influence extends to the realm of romantic

expectations, where exposure to social media content has been observed to contribute to individuals' perspectives on what constitutes a desirable relationship. Additionally, the study reveals that social media exerts a certain level of pressure on individuals to conform to specific behaviors, reflecting the power of these platforms to influence and shape behavioral norms.

Secondly, the study underscores the role of social media in shaping the perception of risky sexual behavior. The exposure to content on social media platforms has been found to cultivate a perception of risky behaviors as exciting and commonplace. However, it is worth noting that respondents approach this perception with a degree of caution. They do not entirely embrace the notion that the risky behaviors portrayed in social media content accurately represent real-life situations, indicating a certain level of critical discernment among the students.

Lastly, in the realm of sexual health education, the study reveals a nuanced relationship with social media. Despite the ubiquity of these platforms, students do not primarily turn to them for accurate sexual health information. There is a prevailing sentiment among respondents that social media is not a

reliable source for such information. However, there is recognition that these platforms contribute to destigmatizing discussions around sexual health topics. This suggests that while the credibility of social media as an informational source is questioned, its role in fostering a more open and accepting environment for sexual health discourse is acknowledged.

In conclusion, this study illuminates the multifaceted impact of social media on the sexual behavior, perceptions, and health education of university students. It serves as a reminder that while social media platforms wield considerable influence, the nuanced responses of students underscore the need for critical media literacy and comprehensive sexual health education that accounts for the evolving digital landscape. As social media continues to shape the contours of modern life, a balanced approach to its influence is imperative for promoting healthy behaviors and attitudes among young adults.

Recommendations: Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Sexual Health Education Campaigns:** Universities should implement targeted sexual health education campaigns that use credible sources to provide accurate and evidence-based information. These campaigns can address the gaps in knowledge and the tendency to rely on unreliable information from social media.
2. **Media Literacy Programs:** Institutions should incorporate media literacy programs into their curriculum. These programs can empower students to critically evaluate and interpret the information they encounter on social media platforms, especially regarding sexual behavior.
3. **Safe and Inclusive Online Spaces:** Given the recognition of social media as a platform that can reduce the stigma associated with discussing sexual health, universities should promote the creation of safe and inclusive online spaces for discussions on sexual health topics.
4. **Regulation of Content:** Social media platforms should implement stricter regulations on explicit sexual content and risky behavior

portrayal to ensure that their users are not exposed to harmful content that may influence their perceptions and behaviors.

5. **Further Research:** Additional research is recommended to delve deeper into the nuanced aspects of the influence of social media on sexual behavior and health education. Qualitative studies can provide richer insights into the lived experiences of students in this context.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

Department of Health, Safety and
Environmental Education,
University of Benin,
Benin City.

Dear Respondent,

I am a final year student of the above institution carrying out a research on the work titled: influence of Social Media on the Sexual behavior of students in the University of Benin .

Please your response to the questions will be held as confidential as you want it, and will only be used for the purpose of this work which is purely for an academic requirement.

Thanks, in anticipation for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,
OSAYI-IDADA RITA IMUWAHEN
(Researcher)

SECTION A

Instruction: Please tick (✓) in the appropriate box applicable to responses
Kindly indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

SA = Strongly Agree, A= Agree, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
	Influence of Social Media on the Sexual Behavior of Students in the University of Benin				
1.	Social media strongly influences my perceptions of sexual relationships.				
2.	I rarely encounter explicit sexual content on social media platforms.				
3.	Social media has no role in shaping my attitudes towards casual sexual encounters.				
4.	Social media interactions significantly impact my romantic or sexual relationship expectations.				
5.	I am unlikely to compare my sexual experiences with what I see on social media.				
6.	Social media provides a safe space for me to express my sexual identity and preferences.				

7.	I often feel pressured to conform to certain sexual behaviors based on what I see on social media.				
Influence of Social Media on Risky Sexual Behavior of Students					
8.	Social media exposure contributes to perceptions that risky sexual behavior is common.				
9.	Content on social media often portrays risky sexual behavior as exciting or glamorous.				
10	Social media has no influence on my decisions about engaging in risky sexual behavior.				
11	I am unlikely to believe that risky sexual behavior portrayed on social media reflects real-life				
12	Discussions or posts related to substance use in the context of sexual encounters are seldom encountered on social media.				
13	Social media does not contribute to the normalization of risky sexual behavior among young adults.				
14	I rarely feel that social media influences my perception of the consequences associated with risky				

	sexual behavior.				
	Influence of Social Media on Sexual Health Education				
15	I never use social media platforms to access information related to sexual health.				
16	I find social media platforms to be unreliable sources of accurate sexual health information.				
17	I am unlikely to engage in discussions about sexual health topics on social media				
18	Informative and evidence-based sexual health content is rarely encountered on social media platforms.				
19	I believe that social media platforms contribute to reducing the stigma associated with discussing sexual health topics.				
20	Social media does not play a role in educating individuals about diverse sexual orientations and identities.				

1. What is the influence of social media on the sexual behavior of students in the University of Benin?

2. Does social media affect students' engagement in risky sexual behavior?
3. What is the influence of social media on sexual health education among students?