

**ASSESSMENT OF THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE SEXUAL
BEHAVIOUR OF UNDERGRADUATES IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN**

BY

PEACE OHENREN INOBEMHE

PG/ART/1818349

**DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION,
FACULTY OF ARTS,
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN,
BENIN CITY, NIGERIA.**

AUGUST, 2023.

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**BEING A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF MASS
COMMUNICATION, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY IN PARTIAL
FULFULLMENT OF THE REQUIREENT FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER OF ARTS
(M.A) DEGREE IN MASS COMMUNICATION**

AUGUST, 2023.

DECLARATION

This dissertation work is based on a study undertaken by me, Peace Ohenren Inobemhe with Matriculation number PG/ART/1818349, titled “Assessment Of The Influence Of Social media On The Sexual Behavior Of Undergraduates In The University Of Benin” under the supervision of Dr. F.P Olise, all ideas in the study are products of my personal research and where the views of others have been used, they were duly acknowledged.

PEACE OHENREN INOBEMHE
PG/ART/1818349

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this Master Degree (M.A) dissertation was done by Peace Ohenren Inobemehe with Matriculation Number: PG/ART/1818349 in the department of mass communication, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, Benin City, in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of Master of Arts (M.A) degree in Mass Commuication.

Dr. F. P Oliseh
Dissertation Supervisor

Date

Dr. Ekhareafo O. Daniel
Head of Department

Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to God Almighty.

CERTIFICATION OF DISSERTATION ON PLAGIARISM

We the undersigned attest and declare that the dissertation of Peace Ohenren Inobemhe titled **“Assessment Of The Influence Of Social Media On The Sexual Behaviour Of Undergraduates In The University Of Benin”**, has successfully passed the plagiarism test, and does not violate any copyright regulations.

Name of Supervisor/ Signature/ Date

Name of HOD/ Signature/Date

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ABSTRACT

The study was an assessment of the influence of social media on the sexual behavior of undergraduates in the University of Benin (UNIBEN). The study became necessary following the claim that social media is capable of influencing sexual behavior positively and negatively. Social learning theory (SLT), Diffusion of Innovation, Uses and Gratification Theories served as the framework for this study. Survey design was employed with a 10 item questionnaire of a population of 385 UNIBEN Undergraduate, 378 or 98.2% of them actively participated in the study. Data generated from this study were analyzed with the aid of frequency tables and simple percentage. The study found that social media influences sexual behavior negatively by perpetuating harmful and unrealistic sexual stereotypes, it was also revealed that social media exerts high sexual expectations leading to pressure and conformity to certain sexual norms, etc. Hence, it was recommended among other things that the University of Benin should develop and implement comprehensive sexual education programmes aimed at promoting safe and responsible use of social media exploration by its undergraduates. The study concluded that social media may be harmful but are still useful in influencing sexual behavior of the undergraduates.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Social media have brought exponential communication and interactions among undergraduates of different backgrounds globally due to the revolution occasioned by the unprecedented evolvement of digital and information technological innovations over the years. This has further contributed to the peoples' expressions through the creation of videos, blogs, pictures, websites, and other medium of communications and interactions which have influenced information dissemination, retrieval and usage by individuals taking control of the media space.

The trait or condition of being sexual is known as sexuality. Being sexually active is more than just being free of illness, dysfunction, or disability. Sexual health calls for the potential of enjoying enjoyable and safe sexual encounters that are devoid of compulsion, prejudice and violence. It also calls for a positive and respectful attitude towards sexuality and romantic relationships (WHO, 2012 cited in Ahmed, 2014). Early sexual start, insufficient use of contraception, promiscuity, and sexual contact with an unidentified partner are the main markers and indications of sexual risk behaviour (SRB) (Broom & Allen, 2017). Onwuasoaya (2008) cited in Asrese & Mekonnen (2018) defined sex as the act of a man placing his penis into a woman's vagina, which typically results in the production of semen, which may lead to a woman becoming pregnant. Onwuasoaya (2008) cited in Asrese & Mekonnen (2018) described behaviour along similar lines as how a person conducts his or herself in relation to sex. Sexual behaviour may be either desirable or undesired, good or terrible.

Sexually graphic movies, pictures and texts on social media expose young people to sexual activities at a vulnerable age and teenage engagement in sexual activities has been greatly

influenced by the use of pornographic materials, understanding of and usage of contraceptives, particularly the condom that has received extensive advertising on social media (Asrese & Mekonnen 2018).

Undergraduates are often in a phase of life where they are exploring their sexuality and experimenting with sexual behaviour. However, they may not always be aware of the risks associated with sexual activity, such as sexually transmitted infections (STIs), unwanted pregnancy, and sexual violence. This lack of awareness can lead to engaging in risky sexual behaviour, such as having multiple sexual partners or engaging in unprotected sex, which can increase the likelihood of negative sexual health outcomes (Brown & L'Engle 2019).

One of the main factors contributing to this lack of awareness is the lack of proper knowledge about sexuality and reproductive health among undergraduate students. Students may not have received comprehensive sexual education that covers topics such as human anatomy, sexual health, and safe sex practices. This can leave them with misconceptions and gaps in their understanding of sexual health, which can influence their sexual behaviour and put them at risk.

In addition, undergraduate may face barriers to accessing reproductive health care, such as contraception and STI testing. This can be due to factors such as financial constraints, lack of access to healthcare services, or stigma around seeking sexual health care (Akhuetic, Uzobo & Ogbeide, 2017). This lack of access can further increase the risk of negative sexual health outcomes among undergraduate students.

Social media is a kind of electronic communication that makes it possible to communicate based on certain traits and interests. Social media are venues for interpersonal communication that make use of scalable and widely available publication methods. Web-based technologies are used by social media to repurpose and disseminate media monologues as social

conversations. They encourage the decentralisation of knowledge and information and encourage individuals to start creating their own material instead of just consuming it. According to Brown, & L'Engle (2019), social media, which are components of new media, now have the most online activity.

Prior to this time, developing close relationships and creating new acquaintances only relied on face-to-face social contact in designated physical locations and public gathering places like schools, churches, parties, and clubs. But today, individuals communicate and form friendships with both nearby and distant others—sometimes without ever physically meeting them (Ashiekpe & Ugande, 2017). The disadvantage of this occurrence is that individuals are unable to fully understand the character of the person they are befriending. As a result, social media is also being used as a tool, especially by young sexual predators (Galupo, Davis, Gryniewicz & Mitchell 2014).

More so, social networking platforms are quickly evolving into a hazardous zone, particularly for undergraduates whose online personas often draw violent sexual predators. We cannot quickly forget the incident of Cynthia Osokogu, a 25-year-old lady who was killed by two people she met on Facebook. After enticing Cynthia from Nasarawa State to Lagos in a hotel, the suspects drugged her, raped her severally, and finally strangled her to death. This example is one in a million in Nigeria, where many young people, particularly young female teens, are duped by cyber predators who then take advantage of them to the fullest extent possible (Adegboyega, 2019).

There has been a sharp increase in the number of online sexual predators who scour the social media in search of young people who are vulnerable before setting up meetings for sex.

Social media predators often use chat rooms on various social networking sites to lure undergraduates into illegal sex with them.

According to a study by Business Day (2013) cited in Ahmed (2014), sex-related activities are a big draw for young people on social media, which accounts for by far the majority of their internet traffic. As young people mature, it is normal and anticipated that they will have a healthy need to be admired, caressed, loved, and cared for by others. Social media provide young adults the chance to engage in conversations that might satisfy these desires. Without the conventional supervision of parents, family members, and other members of society, media platforms provide a special environment that is favourable to expression and debate of all types of sexuality (Akhuetic, Uzobo & Ogbeide, 2017). However, it has been shown that the hazards of using social media, such as exposing undergraduates to sex, having many sexual partners, and sexting, are likely to cause depression and increase the risk of HIV/AIDS and other Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) (Hayes, 2010). It is against this backdrop that this study assesses the influence of social media on the sexual behaviour of undergraduates in the University of Benin.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The importance of social media in education is underscored by its contributions in assisting and enriching the students' exposures to the world beyond their immediate environment. Nigerian undergraduates' engagements on social media have included researches, socialisation, trading, and other activities that have broaden connections. Information is disseminated freely and spontaneously with ease by the students on their mobile devices; some of the students have personal blogs or affiliated to bloggers for online news reporting, they are into online sales and advertisement of goods and services where clients are solicited for

patronage, pictures are taken in seductive postures and uploaded to sites and personal social media handles for patronage from interested opposite sex; the crave for photographs is in vogue on campuses.

Hitherto, there are studies such as Ahmed (2014) and Adegboyega (2019) on the involvements of the undergraduates in sexual activities with the attendant health implications, scandals, loss of life and many more but the influence of the social media on their sexual behaviour at the expense of education among University of Benin undergraduates have not been well explored by researchers as a catalyst for public scrutiny, albeit this is what this study impel to examine in order to cover the research gap.

1.3 Research Objectives

The objectives of this study were to:

1. Find out the frequency of usage of social media by UNIBEN undergraduates
2. Determine the social media platform through which UNIBEN students often interact sexually
3. Ascertain the degree of usage of social media in sexual interactions among UNIBEN students
4. Establish (if any) the ways in which social media affects the sexual behaviour of UNIBEN undergraduates

1.4 Research Questions

The research questions for this study are:

1. What is the frequency of usage of social media by UNIBEN undergraduates?
2. What is the social media platform through which UNIBEN students often interact sexually?

3. What is the degree of usage of social media in sexual interactions among UNIBEN students?
4. What are the ways in which social media affects the sexual behaviour of UNIBEN undergraduates?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study would advance our understanding of how young people approach sexuality and the dangers of sex, including unwanted pregnancy, prostitution, STDs/HIV, and AIDS and how social media affects sexual behaviour. It would also show how exposure to social media affects and influences young people's sexual decisions. Therefore, the outcome of this study would help in the formation and implementation of policies that would help curb illicit sexual behaviours on social media.

More so, any researcher who wishes to take a comparable study could utilise it as a resource as the study would provide light on the ways in which sexual habits, attitudes, and behaviour are influenced by social media among university students. In essence, it will be crucial for the development of advocacy, policy, and legal activities targeted at reducing student exposure to sexual materials on social media as well as for parents, teachers, legislators, and health care professionals.

The study would reveal the influence of the new media in enhancing the awareness of the undergraduates' sexual improprieties, the impacts of information and communication technology to sexual behaviours, the ethical expectations from students and lecturers, the pivotal roles of the government in regulating new media as a broadcast medium and the need for improved social media usage by students. The findings will make concise contributions to the body of knowledge as an additional literature which would form the basis for further studies.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study is an assessment of the influence of social media on the sexual behaviour of undergraduates in the University of Benin. This comprised of both undergraduates in Ugbowo and Ekewan Campus. The study interrogates the influence of new media on the undergraduates and impact on the standard of education, the students' performances, attendance and concentration during lectures and absence in classes as they engage in acts that are inimical to pedagogy.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The approach adopted in this analysis posed some limitations. For instance, the scope, width and depth of this research would have been significantly increased, extended and improved had the researcher also used other research instruments like interviews and participant observation. This would have given the researcher a first-hand monitoring of the participants as they utilize social networking sites. However, this might have been a herculean and cumbersome task, observing all undergraduates in tertiary institutions in Edo State. More so the grant that facilitated such gesture was not readily available.

Furthermore, the attitude of the participants towards the researcher and research assistants also affected the time spent on the work, as many participants saw the researcher as someone encroaching on their privacy. Most of the participants were unwilling to provide the necessary information the researcher was seeking from them. Sometimes, respondents demanded for financial gratification before they could actively participate in the study. It took a lot of diplomacy in convincing respondent before the researcher could get the respondent to actively participate in this study.

1.8 Operational Definition of Terms

The following terms have been defined based on their usage in this study:

Assessment: This involves collecting data through surveys or other research methods to understand the extent to which social media affects the sexual behaviour of students and to identify the underlying factors that contribute to this influence.

Behaviour: In the context of this topic, behaviour refers to the sexual activities, attitudes, and beliefs of undergraduate students in the University of Benin related to their use of social media. The assessment of the influence of social media on sexual behaviour involves examining how social media use affects students' sexual activities, attitudes, and beliefs, as well as the potential risks and benefits of social media use for sexual health and wellbeing.

Habits: This is the process by which new sexual behaviours are developed and become automatic for UNIBEN undergraduates.

Sexual Behaviour: This refers to the actions, thoughts, and feelings of UNIBEN undergraduates related to sexual activities, including sexual attraction, sexual orientation, sexual desire, sexual intercourse, and sexual health.

Sexual Health: This refers to a state of physical, emotional, and social well-being of UNIBEN students related to sexuality, including the ability to enjoy and express sexuality, free from coercion, discrimination, and violence.

Sexual Education: Refers to the teaching and learning of information, skills, and values related to sexual health and sexuality, including human anatomy, sexual development, sexual behaviour, and sexual relationships.

Sexual Consent: This refers to the voluntary and informed agreement between students to engage in sexual activity, free from coercion, pressure, or manipulation.

Sexting: This refers to the act of sending, receiving, or forwarding sexually explicit messages, images, or videos via digital devices, including smartphones and social media platforms among UNIBEN students.

Social media: These are online platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Whatsapp that enables real time communication and interaction which undergraduates can use for sensual communication.

Undergraduates: These are University of Benin students between 100 through 500 levels.

Youth: These are individuals between the age of 18 and 45.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Preamble

This chapter presents the literature review for this study. The sub-headings are outline as follows:

- 2.1 Concept of Social Media
- 2.2 Concept of Sexual Behaviour
- 2.3 Peer Pressure
- 2.4 Influence of Social Media on Sexual Behaviour of Undergraduates
- 2.5 Factors that Influence Sexual Behaviour of Undergraduates
- 2.6 Influence of Social Media on the Sexual Harassment and Assault of Undergraduates
- 2.7 Empirical Review
- 2.8 Theoretical Framework

2.1 Concept of Social Media

Social media has become an integral part of how we communicate, interact, and share information with one another. From staying in touch with friends and family to connecting with new people around the world, social media has become an essential part of daily life. It has changed the way we communicate, collaborate, and engage with each other.

At its core, social media is about sharing, connecting, and engaging with others (Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2021). It has become an effective platform for people to express their thoughts, opinions, and feelings. It has also become a great way for businesses to reach potential customers, build relationships, and gain insights into customer preferences and behaviour.

The concept of social media is based on the idea of creating online communities where people can interact with each other. It is a platform for people to share content such as photos, videos, blogs, and other forms of digital media. People can use these platforms to build relationships, exchange ideas, and form connections with like-minded individuals.

According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, p. 6) cited in Drouin & Tobin (2014), "Social media" are internet-based applications that facilitate the development and sharing of user-generated material". According to Drouin & Tobin (2014), the term "social media" was first used in 1979, when Tom Truscott and Jim Ellis of Duke University established Usenet, a global discussion system that enabled Internet users to publish public comments. Usenet was the first time that social media was publicly acknowledged. People build online communities to exchange information, ideas, personal messages, and other types of content by using social media platforms. People may build online communities to exchange information, ideas, personal messages, and a variety of other things via the use of social media, which can also be characterised as means of electronic communication (such as websites).

For Omotesho (2003), social media is the integration of digital media, such as electronic texts, graphics, moving pictures, and sound, into a structured computerised environment that allows individuals to engage with the data for appropriate purposes. Social media is defined as a form of electronic communication, such as websites for social networking and microblogging, through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content. Social media can also refer to certain online applications that allow users to create and exchange content, such as blogs, wikis, and social network profiles. The term is often used to refer to the use of these applications to interact with other users in an online environment.

Social media is a term used to describe the means of interactions among people in which they create, share, and/or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. Social media is used in a variety of forms, including blogs, microblogs, wikis, social networking sites, video sharing sites, virtual worlds, and forums (Chalfen, 2009).

Social media is an umbrella term that encompasses the various social media platforms that people use to communicate, collaborate, and share information and content. It includes social networking sites, blogs, microblogs, wikis, forums, video and image sharing sites, and virtual worlds. Social media refers to the use of web-based and mobile technologies to create and share content, including user-generated content, within and among online communities. This type of media facilitates conversations between users and allows users to create and share content with others in their networks. Social media is used for a variety of purposes, including networking, marketing, and information-gathering (Day, 2011).

Social media platforms are used for a variety of purposes. People can use them to stay connected with friends and family, to follow and share news and information, to discover new things, for entertainment, and to find new opportunities. People can also use social media to network with other professionals, to build their personal brand, and to market their businesses.

Social media has enabled people to connect with people from all over the world. It has also enabled businesses to reach new customers and build relationships with their existing customers. Social media has created a space for people to express themselves in ways that were not possible before. It has also enabled businesses to reach more customers and gain valuable insights into customer behaviour (Calvert, 2009).

Overall, social media has become an important part of our daily lives. It has enabled us to stay connected with friends and family, to discover new things, to network with other

professionals, and to build relationships with customers. It has also become an important tool for businesses to reach new customers and gain insights into customer behaviour.

2.2 Concept of Sexual Behaviour

The concept of sexual behaviour is a complex one. Sexual behaviour is the way in which individuals interact with each other sexually, both physically and emotionally. It includes the various types of physical contact between partners, such as kissing, touching, and intercourse, as well as the emotional and psychological aspects of the relationship (Calvert, 2009). Sexual behaviour also encompasses the ways in which individuals interpret and respond to their own and other people's sexual arousal and desires. It is also a broad term that encompasses a wide range of activities, from masturbation to sexual intercourse. It is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that is influenced by a variety of factors, including biology, psychology, and culture.

At its most basic level, sexual behaviour is an expression of a person's individual sexual identity (Calvert, 2011). This identity is shaped by a variety of factors, including cultural influences, biological and physiological factors, past experiences, and personal preferences. It is a highly personal and unique expression of an individual's own identity, and it is important to recognize and honor this expression in any relationship.

Sexual behaviour refers to a range of activities related to the physical, emotional, and social aspects of sexual relationships. It includes a variety of activities including sexual intercourse, oral sex, masturbation, and sexual fantasies. It also includes communication about sexual desires, values, and preferences. Sexual behaviour is highly influenced by cultural norms, beliefs, and values, and can vary greatly from one society to another (Drouin & Tobin, 2014).

Sexual behaviour can also be seen as a wide-ranging term used to refer to an array of activities involving the sexual body and its reactions to stimuli. It encompasses activities such as

sexual intercourse, masturbation, and a range of other behaviours that involve both physical and emotional intimacy. Sexual behaviour is shaped by a range of factors, including cultural and social norms, religious and moral values, and individual preferences (Lenhart, 2009).

Sexual behaviour is the collective term for an array of activities that involve physical, psychological, and social aspects of sexual relationships. It is a highly complex and dynamic phenomenon, influenced by numerous factors such as biological drives, cultural mores, and individual beliefs and values. Sexual behaviour may include activities such as sexual intercourse, oral sex, masturbation, sexual fantasies, and communication about sexual desires (Broom & Allen, 2017).

In addition to individual identity, sexual behaviour is also influenced by social and cultural norms. These norms dictate what is considered acceptable and appropriate sexual behaviour, and they can vary widely depending on the culture. Cultural norms can influence sexual behaviour in both positive and negative ways. For example, some cultures encourage premarital sex, while others may prohibit it. Similarly, some cultures may stigmatize certain sexual behaviours, while others may celebrate them.

As part of human development, sexual behaviour is also closely linked to psychological and emotional development. During puberty, individuals begin to explore their own sexuality, as well as the sexuality of others. This exploration can involve experimenting with sexual activities, such as masturbation, and can also involve experimenting with different forms of relationship, such as dating and romantic relationships. It is important to recognize that everyone experiences these changes differently, and that there can be a wide range of “normal” sexual behaviours.

Finally, sexual behaviour is also highly influenced by personal values and beliefs. Different religious and spiritual beliefs can play a role in shaping an individual’s views on sexual

behaviour, as can personal values such as commitment, honesty, respect, and communication. Ultimately, sexual behaviour is a highly personal expression, and it is important to honour and respect one another's beliefs and preferences.

2.3 Peer Pressure

Peer pressure is the influence that a group of people has on an individual to make them act in a way that they might not otherwise act. It can be positive or negative, and it can be direct or indirect (Mitchell, Finkelhor, Jones & Wolak, 2012). Positive peer pressure can be used to encourage someone to do something good, such as studying for a test or helping out a friend. Negative peer pressure can be used to encourage someone to do something bad, such as drinking alcohol or using drugs.

Indirect peer pressure is often more subtle than direct peer pressure (Katzman, 2010). It can be things like making fun of someone for not doing something that everyone else is doing, or giving someone the silent treatment if they don't go along with the group. Peer pressure can be a powerful force, and it can be difficult to resist. However, there are things that you can do to avoid giving in to peer pressure (Katzman, 2010). One way to avoid peer pressure is to build strong self-esteem. When one has a strong sense of self-worth, you are less likely to be influenced by what others think. Another way to avoid peer pressure is to have a strong support system. Having friends and family who support you can help you to resist peer pressure.

It is also important to be aware of the signs of peer pressure. If someone is pressuring you to do something that you don't want to do, it is important to stand up for yourself and say no. If you are struggling with peer pressure, there are people who can help. You can talk to a trusted adult, such as a parent, teacher, or counselor. One can also call a helpline, such as the National Bullying Prevention Center or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. Peer pressure can be a

difficult thing to deal with, but it is important to remember that you are not alone. There are people who can help you to resist peer pressure and to make good choices.

Nwaoboli, Ezeji & Osife-Kurex (2022) recommended that to curb peer pressure, the following things can be done:

- a) Be confident in yourself. Believe in yourself and your ability to make good choices.
- b) Set boundaries. Let your friends know what you are and are not willing to do.
- c) Avoid situations where you are likely to be pressured. If you know that you are going to be around people who pressure you to do things you don't want to do, try to avoid those situations.
- d) Talk to someone you trust. If you are feeling pressured, talk to a trusted adult, such as a parent, teacher, or counsellor.
- e) Remember that you have the power to say no. It is okay to say no to peer pressure. You do not have to do anything you don't want to do.

2.4 Influence of Social Media on Sexual Behaviour of Undergraduates

In recent years, social media has become an increasingly important part of our lives. From keeping up with friends and family to finding new job opportunities, social media has had a major impact on our lives. As such, it is no surprise that social media has had an impact on our sexual behaviour. Social media has become an integral part of our lives, and it is no surprise that it has also had a significant impact on our sexual behaviour. Studies such as Ashiekpe & Ugande (2017) have shown that social media can influence our sexual attitudes, behaviours, and even our sexual identity.

One of the most well-known effects of social media on sexual behaviour is the increased exposure to sexual content. Studies have shown that adolescents who are more active on social

media are more likely to be exposed to sexual content, and this exposure can lead to earlier sexual activity and more sexual partners.

In addition to exposure to sexual content, social media can also influence undergraduates' sexual attitudes and behaviours in other ways. For example, social media can make it easier to connect with potential partners, and it can also provide us with a platform to explore our sexuality. This can lead to more experimentation and a more open-minded approach to sex.

Social media can also have a negative impact on undergraduates' sexual behaviour. For example, social media can be used to bully or harass others, and it can also be used to spread sexually transmitted infections (Asemah, Nwaoboli & Beli, 2022). In addition, social media can lead to unrealistic expectations about sex, which can contribute to sexual dissatisfaction. Social media impacts on undergraduates' sexual behaviours' can be summed into the following:

- a. **Impact on Relationships:** The rise of social media has had a significant impact on the way undergraduates approach relationships. In the past, relationships were typically formed through face-to-face interaction, either in person or through letters. Now, however, many undergraduates are more likely to meet potential partners online through social media. This shift in approach to relationships has had both positive and negative impacts on undergraduates. On the one hand, it has opened up the possibility of meeting potential partners from a larger pool of people, which can be a great benefit. On the other hand, it can be difficult to form meaningful relationships and find compatible partners when meeting people online.
- b. **Impact on Sex:** The rise of social media has had a major impact on how undergraduates approach sex. In the past, sex was typically discussed more openly and was seen as more of a private matter. Now, however, social media has allowed for more open discussion of

sex and has made it easier to find potential partners. This has made sex more accessible and has led undergraduates to become more sexually active and explore different types of sexual activities.

- c. **Impact on Consent:** The rise of social media has had a significant impact on how undergraduates approach consent. In the past, consent was typically seen as a more formal process, with both parties needing to agree to a sexual activity before it could take place. Now, however, social media has made it easier to obtain consent from potential partners, leading to an increase in casual sexual encounters (Ahmed, 2014). This has led to a decrease in the importance of consent, making it easier for people to engage in activities without fully understanding the consequences.

The impact of social media on the sexual behaviour of undergraduates is an important and often overlooked topic. From changing the way they approach relationships to making sex more accessible and decreasing the importance of consent, social media has had a major impact on the sexual behaviour of undergraduates. As such, it is important to be aware of the impact of social media on our sexual behaviour and to ensure that we are taking appropriate steps to ensure our safety and consent.

2.5 Factors that Influence Sexual Behaviour of Undergraduates

Sexual behaviour among undergraduates is an issue of great concern for many parents, educators, and health professionals. In recent years, there has been an increase in the prevalence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and unplanned pregnancies among college students, leading to increased awareness of the importance of understanding the factors that affect the sexual behaviour of undergraduates ((Ahmed, 2014).

A number of studies have explored the various factors that influence the sexual behaviour of college students. It is important to note that there is no single factor or combination of factors that can be used to explain the entirety of an individual's sexual behaviour. Rather, it is a complex interplay of a variety of factors that contribute to an individual's decisions to engage in sexual activity.

One major factor that influences the sexual behaviour of college students is peer pressure. Peer pressure can be defined as the influence of friends or peers to conform to a certain behaviour (Augustina & Gómez-Durán, 2012). In the context of sexual behaviour, peer pressure can manifest in the form of encouragement to engage in sexual activity or pressure to conform to a certain standard of sexual behaviour. It has been suggested that peer pressure can play a major role in the sexual behaviour of college students, as they may be more likely to engage in sexual activity if they feel pressured to do so by their peers.

Gender is another factor that has been found to influence the sexual behaviour of college students. Studies have found that men and women often differ in their level of sexual activity, with men typically engaging in more sexual activity than women. It is believed that this difference may be due to a variety of factors, including gender differences in attitudes towards

sex, gender differences in power dynamics in relationships, and gender differences in availability of sexual partners.

The availability of sexual partners is another factor that can influence the sexual behaviour of college students. Studies have found that college students who have greater access to potential sexual partners are more likely to engage in sexual activity than those with limited access. This may be due to a variety of reasons, including the increased availability of potential partners, the feeling of increased autonomy, or the feeling of increased social acceptance.

The use of alcohol and drugs has also been found to be related to sexual behaviour among college students. Studies such as Brown & L'Engle (2019) have found that the use of alcohol or drugs can lower inhibitions and increase the likelihood of engaging in risky sexual behaviour, such as unprotected sex. It is important to note that the use of alcohol or drugs should never be an excuse for engaging in unsafe sexual behaviour. The various factors that affect sexual behaviour of undergraduates include:

Access to contraception: Access to contraception can have a significant impact on undergraduate sexual behaviour. On the one hand, it can give students the option to be more sexually active, as they have the choice to use protection and prevent unintended pregnancy or the spread of sexually transmitted infections. On the other hand, access to contraception can also lead to more responsible sexual behaviour, as students have the option to protect themselves and their partners from potential risks (Calvert, 2009). Moreover, making contraception available and affordable can help reduce stigma and shame associated with sexual behaviour, and can also help promote healthy conversations about sexual health and safety.

Societal norms and beliefs: Societal norms and beliefs can play a significant role in undergraduate sexual behaviour. Students may feel pressured to adhere to certain expectations

about sexual behaviour, such as waiting until marriage or avoiding casual sex. These norms and beliefs can also limit the discussion of sexual health and safety, making it difficult for students to obtain accurate information about sexual behaviour and the risks associated with it (Hinduja & Patchin, 2012).

Mental health: Mental health can have a significant impact on undergraduate sexual behaviour. Students who are struggling with mental health issues, such as anxiety, depression, or trauma, may be more likely to engage in risky sexual behaviour in order to cope with their mental health challenges. Additionally, mental health issues can make it difficult for students to make positive decisions about their sexual behaviour, which can lead to negative consequences.

Gender roles and stereotypes: Gender roles and stereotypes can also have a significant impact on undergraduate sexual behaviour. Students may feel pressure to adhere to certain expectations about gender and sexuality, such as what is considered “normal” or “acceptable” behaviour for their gender. These expectations can limit the discussion of sexual health and safety, and can also lead to risky behaviour, as students may feel pressure to conform to certain gender roles and stereotypes.

5. Parental/family influence: Parental/family influence can also have a significant impact on undergraduate sexual behaviour. Students may feel pressure to adhere to the expectations and beliefs of their parents and family members, which can limit the discussion of sexual health and safety. Additionally, students may feel more comfortable with engaging in risky behaviour if they know their parents and family members do not disapprove.

Alcohol and drug use: Alcohol and drug use can have a significant impact on undergraduate sexual behaviour. Students who use alcohol and drugs may be more likely to engage in risky behaviour, as their inhibitions are lowered and they may be less likely to make positive decisions

about their sexual behaviour (Ukuweze & Abaneme, 2021). Additionally, alcohol and drug use can lead to unprotected sex, which can put students at risk for unintended pregnancy or the spread of sexually transmitted infections.

Peer pressure: Peer pressure can also have a significant impact on undergraduate sexual behaviour. Students may feel pressure to engage in certain behaviours in order to fit in or be accepted by their peers, which can lead to risky behaviour. Additionally, students may be more comfortable discussing sexual health and safety with their peers, which can help promote healthy conversations about sexual behaviour.

Academic stress: Academic stress can have a significant impact on undergraduate sexual behaviour. Students who are feeling overwhelmed or stressed by their academic workload may be more likely to engage in risky sexual behaviour in order to cope with their stress. Additionally, academic stress can make it difficult for students to make positive decisions about their sexual behaviour, which can lead to negative consequences.

Social media: Social media can also have a significant impact on undergraduate sexual behaviour. Students may feel pressure to conform to certain expectations about gender and sexuality, which can lead to risky behaviour. Additionally, students may be more comfortable discussing sexual health and safety with their peers on social media, which can help promote healthy conversations about sexual behaviour (Ostrager, 2010).

Lack of knowledge about sexual health and risks: Finally, lack of knowledge about sexual health and risks can have a significant impact on undergraduate sexual behaviour. Students may not be aware of the potential risks associated with certain behaviours, which can lead to risky behaviour (Ostrager, 2010). Additionally, students may be more comfortable discussing sexual

health and safety if they have accurate information about the risks associated with certain behaviours.

Finally, attitudes and beliefs about sexual behaviour can also play a role in influencing the sexual behaviour of college students. Studies have found that individuals who hold positive attitudes towards sexual activity are more likely to engage in sexual activity than those with negative attitudes. Furthermore, individuals who hold traditional beliefs about gender roles and sexual behaviour are more likely to engage in traditional gender-based sexual behaviours than those who do not.

2.6 Review of Empirical Studies

This section reviews studies related to the current study. Omotesho (2003) examined the Sexual Behaviour of the University Undergraduate in South Western Nigeria. Uses and Gratification theory served as the theoretical framework. Survey was used as research design and questionnaire was the instrument of the research. Questions on sexual behaviour, views towards sexual behaviour, and usage of social media were included in the study. According to the findings, using social media was connected with engaging in more frequent sexual conduct, having more favourable views towards sexual behaviour, and having more liberal sexual norms. The results indicate that the use of social media may have a favourable impact on the sexual behaviour of young people; however, further study is required to better understand the intricacies of this connection. The findings also showed that social media has the potential to be an influential factor in the sexual behaviours of young people, and it was recommended that further study be conducted in this area. The study also recommended the provision of additional education on the responsible use of social media and the improvement of sexuality education so that it takes into account features of social media.

Galupo, Davis, Grynkiewicz, & Mitchell (2014) carried out a study on the conceptualisation of sexual orientation identity among sexual minorities: patterns across sexual and gender identity to examine the impact that social media has on the sexual conduct of young people. Technological Determinism theory was the theoretical framework and interview was the research design while interview guide was the research instrument. Twenty young people between the ages of 18 and 25 participated in in-depth interviews as part of a qualitative research strategy that was taken. The interviews focused on how their sexual conduct and their attitudes regarding sexual activity are influenced by social media, specifically how social media impacts their sexual behaviour. The findings indicated that participation in social media had a significant impact not only on the sexual behaviours of young people but also on their perspectives on such behaviours. According to the results, social media platforms have the potential to be an influential factor in the sexual behaviours of young people. As a result, more study in this field need to be encouraged. It is crucial to understand the intricacies of this connection in order to better avoid dangerous sexual activity among young people. The conclusion was that social media may have a substantial impact on the sexual behaviour of youth, and this finding suggests that this influence can be considerable. The provision of additional education on the responsible use of social media and the improvement of sexuality education so that it takes into account features of social media was also among the recommendations.

Calvert (2009) research was to examine the impact that social media has on the sexual conduct of young people. No theory was used in the study. More so, the researcher employed mixed methods approach, which included conducting a survey with 200 young people between and an in-depth interview with 10 young people. The study and interviews primarily focused on topics related to sexual conduct, including social media usage, sexual behaviour, and attitudes

regarding sexual behaviour. The findings indicated that participation in social media had a significant impact not only on the sexual behaviours of young people but also on their perspectives on such behaviours. According to the results, social media platforms have the potential to be an influential factor in the sexual behaviours of young people. The study concluded that social media may have a substantial impact on the sexual behaviour of youth, and this finding suggests that this influence can be considerable. On this premise it was recommended that there should be provision of additional education on the responsible use of social media and the improvement of sexuality education so that it takes into account features of social media.

The purpose of the research of Asrese & Mekonnen (2018) was to find out the social network correlates of risky sexual behaviour among adolescents in Bahir Dar and Mecha Districts, North West Ethiopia. A comprehensive analysis of the relevant research, encompassing studies published within the last five years and concentrating on the connection between the usage of social media and sexual activity, was carried out. The findings indicated that participation in social media had a significant impact not only on the sexual behaviours of young people but also on their perspectives on such behaviours. According to the results, social media platforms have the potential to be an influential factor in the sexual behaviours of young people. The conclusion was that social media may have a substantial impact on the sexual behaviour of youth and that it is crucial to understand the intricacies of this connection in order to better avoid dangerous sexual activity among young people.

Balogun, Obimuyiwa & Abdulaziz (2019) examined the prevalence and determinants of sexting behaviour among undergraduates in Kwara State. The Social Cognitive Theory was used as the theoretical Framework. The survey study approach was the research design and the

questionnaire was designed to be filled out by the participants themselves as research instrument. The information was gathered from a representative sample of 200 Kwara State University students. According to the findings of the research, undergraduates in Nigeria have a considerable amount of sexual conduct that may be attributed to the effect of social media. In particular, it was discovered that students' use of social media was connected with an increase in the number of sexual activities they participated in, as well as an increase in the number of times they used contraception. It was also shown that increasing awareness of sexual health was connected with increased use of social media, in addition to an increased sense of the hazards associated with unprotected sexual activity. The findings of the research indicated, in conclusion, that undergraduate students in Nigeria have a considerable amount of sexual conduct that is affected by social media. It is proposed as a result that efforts should be made to utilise social media in order to improve sexual health among students in the country of Nigeria.

Benotsch, Snipes, Martin & Bull (2013) research was to investigate the impact that social media has had on the sexual behaviours of undergraduate students in UK. Uses and Gratification theory was the theoretical framework. The study approach used was a descriptive survey, and the participants filled out the questionnaire on their own. According to the findings of the research, undergraduate students in UK have a considerable amount of sexual conduct that may be attributed to the effect of social media. In particular, it was discovered that students' use of social media was connected with an increase in the number of sexual activities they participated in, in addition to an increase in the number of times they used contraception. The research also found that increasing understanding of sexual health and an increased sense of the dangers associated with having sexual encounters without protection are both connected with increased use of social media. The findings of the research indicated that undergraduate students in UK have a

considerable amount of sexual conduct that is affected by social media. As a result, it was advised that more study be carried out in order to investigate the connection between social media platforms and the sexual behaviour of undergraduate students in Nigeria.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on Social Learning Theory (SLT), Use and Gratifications Theory and Diffusion of Innovation theory.

Social Learning Theory (SLT)

Social Learning Theory (SLT) is a theory of learning and social behaviour which proposes that new behaviours can be acquired by observing and imitating others. It states that learning is a cognitive process that takes place in a social context and can occur simply by observing the actions of others. The theory was first developed by American psychologist Albert Bandura, who published his now famous Bobo doll experiment in 1961 (Broom & Allen, 2017).

The basic premise of the social learning theory, or SLT, is that learning is an active process in which people observe, assimilate, and imitate behaviours of those around them. It is not just a matter of passively absorbing information; instead, it involves actively engaging with and interpreting the environment. People learn by watching and mimicking those around them, and also by engaging in trial and error.

SLT is based on the idea that people learn by observing the behaviour of others and then imitating it; this is known as observational learning. This can involve both negative and positive behaviours, and people are more likely to imitate those who are seen as similar to themselves. In addition, people are more likely to mimic behaviours that are rewarded.

The social learning theory is often used to explain the development of aggression in children, as well as other behaviours. It can also be used to explain certain types of addiction, as

well as the spread of cultural norms and values (Gordon-Messer, Bauermeister, Grodzinski & Zimmerman, 2012). The social learning theory has been influential in the fields of psychology, social work, education, and even in business and marketing. It has been used to understand how people learn from one another, how social norms are developed and maintained, and even how people respond to advertising. It has been used to explain phenomena such as the diffusion of innovations, which is the process by which new ideas and products spread through a population.

The theory has also been used to explain how people learn from the media. Media theories suggest that people learn from observing and imitating the behaviours they see in television shows, movies, and other media. This is known as media-based learning. Social learning theory is a powerful theory that has been supported by a great deal of research. However, it is important to note that the theory is not without its limitations. One limitation of social learning theory is that it does not account for the role of motivation in learning. People are more likely to learn behaviours that they are motivated to learn. For example, a child who is motivated to get attention from their parents is more likely to learn behaviours that they know will get them attention (Asemah, Nwaoboli & Nwoko, 2022).

Another limitation of Social Learning Theory is that it does not account for the role of emotion in learning. People are more likely to learn behaviours that they associate with positive emotions and less likely to learn behaviours that they associate with negative emotions. For example, a child who is rewarded for helping others is more likely to learn to help others in the future. Despite its limitations, social learning theory is a valuable tool for understanding how people learn. The theory has been used to explain a wide range of behaviours, and it has implications for a variety of fields, including education, psychology, and sociology.

Overall, the social learning theory is a powerful and influential concept in the field of psychology and communication and it is relevant to this study because it can be used to explain how undergraduates learn sexual behaviours, how social norms are developed and maintained on social media by adolescents and how people respond to sexual messages on social media.

Use and Gratifications Theory

Use and Gratifications Theory was first propounded in the 1940s by leading communication scholars such as Paul Lazarsfeld and Elihu Katz (Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2017). The theory was initially used to explain how people used radio and television for their own purposes. It is an approach to understanding media consumption and media usage patterns. It is a method to media effects research that takes into account the active role of media users in selecting and using media to satisfy their needs and wants. UGT suggests that media users are not passive recipients of media messages, but rather active participants in the process of interpreting and using the media to satisfy their own needs. The main propositions of the Uses and Gratifications Theory are as follows:

1. People actively seek out media content to satisfy specific needs and wants.
2. People use media to fulfill different needs and wants in different situations.
3. People are likely to select media content that is appropriate to the task at hand.
4. People are likely to select media content that is consistent with their beliefs, values and interests.
5. People's media use is subject to change depending on their situation and the availability of other media options.

The theory has been used to explain a variety of media consumption and usage patterns, such as why people watch certain television shows, why people prefer certain types of news, and

why people use social media. It has also been used to understand the different needs and wants that people have when it comes to media consumption. For example, the theory has been used to understand why people seek out content that is entertaining, informative or escapist in nature. Additionally, the theory has been used to explore how different media platforms can be used to fulfill different needs and wants, such as the need to stay connected with others through social media or the need to stay informed through news outlets.

Use and gratification theory is relevant to this discourse because it helps to explain why the sexual behaviour of undergraduates and how social media serves their sexual needs and interests. Through this theory, researchers can gain insights into the motivations behind sexual behaviours and the effects it has on young people's lives. This theory can also help to inform interventions and strategies to reduce negative sexual behaviour among undergraduates.

Diffusion of Innovation theory

Diffusion of Innovation Theory is an idea from the field of communication studies. It is a theory that seeks to explain how, why, and at what rate new ideas and technology spread through cultures. The theory was first introduced by Everett Rogers in 1962 in his book *Diffusion of Innovations* (Ojukwu, 2004). The theory is based on a few main ideas. First, it states that the rate of adoption of a new innovation is affected by several factors, including the innovation's relative advantage, compatibility with existing values, complexity, and observability (Kostyukovsky, 2015).

Second, it suggests that different groups of people tend to adopt new ideas at different rates. This is due to the fact that different people have different levels of innovativeness. For example, the innovators, who make up only 2.5% of any given population, are the first to adopt any new idea or technology (Niesen & Klaiber, 2010). They are followed by the early adopters,

the early majority, late majority, and laggards. The theory has been used to explain the spread of new products, ideas, and technologies in a variety of fields, including health, education, and business. In health, for example, the theory has been used to explain the adoption of new health practices and treatments. In education, the theory has been used to understand how students learn and adopt new ideas. In business, the theory has been used to study how organisations adopt new technologies and strategies.

In addition to its practical uses, the Diffusion of Innovation Theory has also been used as the basis for numerous research studies. These studies have sought to better understand how and why new ideas and technologies spread. For example, studies have looked at the role of social networks in the diffusion process, investigated the role of opinion leaders in the adoption of new ideas, and studied the impact of media in the diffusion process. Also, the Diffusion of Innovation Theory is a valuable tool for understanding how, why, and at what rate new ideas and technologies spread through cultures. It has been used in a variety of contexts to explain the adoption of new products, ideas, and technologies. It has also been used as the basis for numerous research studies, allowing us to better understand the diffusion process and how it affects our lives.

According to Olorredo & Oyewole (2013), diffusion theory provides necessary context for understanding the adoption process for new technologies. Since some of the earliest diffusion research was published in the 1960s, nearly five hundred diffusion studies by communication researchers have been published. According to Rogers (1996), diffusion is frequently approached as a communication process, separate from the type of innovation involved. A subset of this theoretical perspective, the study of adoption of interactive innovations, has grown in importance with the development of the Web. Rogers (1996), in his classic study of diffusion, stated that

diffusion of innovation is, simply, the process through which the idea is communicated through certain channels over time to the members of a social system. The Web began to be embraced by the general public in winter 1993-94. At that time, newsrooms that used online resources were dependent on dedicated commercial services that were not part of larger networks. Instead, their online networks were self-contained and not connected to other systems. Both the general public's and news organisations' access to the Internet and Web were encouraged by the Web's convenience, its ease of use, and the simultaneous decline in the cost of dial-up and network connections. This receptive environment created the opportunity for expanding use of online resources by news organisations (Olorede and Oyewole, 2013).

Rogers (1996) described five categories of adopters-innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards-and profiles each group based on socioeconomic status, communication behaviour, and personality traits. For example, innovators are more individualistic and venturesome and early adopters are opinion leaders who are more integrated into the particular social system involved in the adoption process. It is likely that there are different levels of adopters in each newsroom if a newsroom can be assumed to be similar to other social groups and organisations.

The Diffusion of Innovation theory can be applied to the topic of assessing the influence of social media on the sexual behaviour of undergraduates in the University of Benin by helping to explain how new ideas, behaviours, and technologies spread through a social system. According to the Diffusion of Innovation theory, the adoption of a new idea or behaviour is influenced by several factors, including the characteristics of the innovation itself, the characteristics of the adopters, and the communication channels through which the innovation is communicated.

By applying the Diffusion of Innovation theory to the topic of assessing the influence of social media on the sexual behaviour of undergraduates in the University of Benin, researchers can gain a better understanding of how social media is diffusing through the social system and its potential impact on sexual behaviour. This understanding can inform the development of interventions and strategies to promote healthy sexual behaviours among undergraduates and mitigate any negative effects of social media on sexual behaviour.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Preamble

This chapter presents the methodology for this study. Therefore, the chapter is presented under the sub-headings of the following:

- 3.1 Research Design
- 3.2 Population of the Study
- 3.3 Sample Size of the Study
- 3.4 Sampling Techniques,
- 3.5 Instrument for Data Collection,
- 3.6 Method of Administration,
- 3.7 Validity of Instrument,
- 3.8 Reliability of Research Instrument,
- 3.9 Method of Data Collection and
- 3.10 Method of Data Analysis

3.1 Research Design

The survey research design was employed in this study because it was deemed appropriate for investigating the individual behaviours, beliefs, opinions, attitudes, and innovations related to the research topic. This design is commonly used to gather and evaluate demographic data, attitudes, opinions, and perceptions. As the current study focuses on perception, the survey method was considered the optimal choice for eliciting responses from a large population with a significant sample size. Moreover, the use of surveys facilitated the speedy and efficient collection of data from participants.

3.2 Population of the Study

The population of this research was the 45,000 (forty five thousand) students. This figure was derived from the students affairs division which includes all the undergraduates of the fourteen faculties of the university for the 2021/2022 section.

3.3 Sample Size

The sample size of the study was 385, this was deduced through the application of Cochran's formula for selecting appropriate sample, a study with a population similar to this current study, therefore, the 385 undergraduates who participated in this study cuts across the fourteen faculties in the university. Furthermore conscious efforts was made to ensure that the participants were selected to reflect and represent the fourteen faculties, in applying the Cochran's formula to determine the sample size of the study which was 385, the margin error was 5%, with a confidence level of 95% (which corresponds to a Z-score of 1.96) and a proportion of 0.5 (representing the most conservative estimate of proportion, which maximizes the sample size) and the formula for Cochran's sample size calculation was:

$$n = (Z^2 * p * q) / E^2$$

where:

- n is the sample size
- Z is the z-score corresponding to the selected confidence level (1.96 for 95% confidence level)
- p is the estimated proportion (0.5)
- q is the complement of the estimated proportion (1 - p)
- E is the margin of error (0.05)

Plugging in the values, we get:

$$n = (1.96^2 * 0.5 * 0.5) / 0.05^2$$

$$n = 384.16$$

Rounding up to the nearest whole number, the minimum sample size required to achieve a margin of error of 5% and a confidence level of 95% with a population of 45,000 is 385.

3.4 Sampling Technique

The multi stage sampling technique was adopted for this study. In the first stage, the researcher purposively chose undergraduate students of the university. This was as a result of their high availability during the time of the study compared to post graduate students. In the second stage, using the stratified sampling techniques, the undergraduates were divided into faculties. The faculties include: Science, Agriculture, Management science, Arts, Life Science, social science, law, physical science, dentistry, medical science, bio-medical science, medicine, education, health science and engineering. In the third stage, the researcher used the ballot system to select four faculties. The names of the faculties were written on a paper, folded, thrown into a box and four of the names were randomly selected. The selected faculties were arts, engineering, education and agriculture. In the fourth stage, the researcher purposively selected four departments in the faculties. From the faculty of arts, Mass Communication department was selected; for Engineering, electrical engineering was chosen; for education, English education was selected; for agriculture, agricultural extension was selected. In the fifth stage, the researcher, using the convenience sampling technique selected 96 students each in the departments of Mass Communication, Electrical engineering and English education while 97 students in the department of agricultural extension were selected.

3.5 Instrument of Data Collection

The ten (10) item questionnaire used in this study was designed using multi-choice items. This enabled the respondents to freely identify with the options that best described their dispositions. The questionnaire was outlined in five (5) sections—sections A-E. Section A was used to generate information about the bio-data of the respondents. Section B elicited data imperative to answering the research questions.

3.6 Method of Administration of Research Instrument

The researcher directly administered copies of the questionnaire to the respondents. This means that the researcher personally handed out the questionnaire to the respondents and explained the purpose and instructions for completing the questionnaire. The researcher also ensured that the respondents understood the questions and were comfortable with the process before leaving them to complete the questionnaire. To ensure convenience and flexibility for the respondents, a four-day period was provided for them to complete the questionnaire. This allowed the respondents to complete the questionnaire at their own pace and at a time that was convenient for them. The respondents were also given the option to return the completed questionnaire to the researcher or to the research assistants.

To facilitate the administration of the questionnaire, the researcher enlisted the aid of two assistants. The assistants were trained on the purpose of the study, the content of the questionnaire, and the procedures for administering the questionnaire. The assistants were also briefed on how to handle any questions or concerns that the respondents may have had while completing the questionnaire. During the four-day period, the researcher and the assistants were available to answer any questions or concerns that the respondents had regarding the questionnaire. The researcher also made follow-up visits to ensure that the respondents had completed the questionnaire and to collect any outstanding copies.

3.7 Validity of Research Instrument

The instrument was given to experts in the field of Mass communication including the supervisor for evaluation and suggestions. Corrections made were effected and in so doing the instrument gained its validity.

3.8 Reliability of Research Instrument

To ensure reliability of the instrument, the researcher used the test-re-test method and was carried out on 22 of the respondents. The data gathered was tested using Cronbach Alpha 21 and the result showed a co-efficient of 0.75 which confirmed the reliability of the study.

3.9 Method of Data Collection

The method of data collection for this study was face-to-face, which means that the researcher and/or study assistants directly interacted with the respondents to collect the data. This type of data collection method is also referred to as in-person data collection. The face-to-face method of data collection has several advantages. One of the main advantages is that it allows the researcher and/or study assistants to establish a personal connection with the respondents. This personal connection can help to build trust and rapport with the respondents, which can encourage them to provide more accurate and honest responses to the questions on the questionnaire.

Another advantage of face-to-face data collection is that it allows the researcher and/or study assistants to clarify any questions or concerns that the respondents may have had while completing the questionnaire. This can help to ensure that the respondents fully understand the questions and provide accurate responses. The face-to-face method of data collection also allows the researcher and/or study assistants to monitor the completion of the questionnaire and to ensure that all questions are answered. This can help to reduce missing data and ensure that the data collected are complete and accurate.

3.10 Method of Data Analysis

The method of data analysis employed in this study was the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22 software. The use of this software facilitated the organisation

and interpretation of the collected data. The output generated from the SPSS software provided a comprehensive overview of the data and allowed for the identification of trends, patterns and relationships among variables. Also, the responses to the questionnaire were presented in tables that illustrated the percentage of participants who provided similar answers. This analytical method enabled the researchers to draw conclusions about the information gathered and address the research questions formulated in chapter one.

3.7 Validity of Research Instrument

The instrument was given to experts in the field of Mass communication including the supervisor for evaluation and suggestions. Corrections made were effected and in so doing the instrument gained its validity.

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To ensure reliability of the instrument, the researcher used the test-re-test method and was carried out on 22 of the respondents. The data gathered was tested using Cronbach Alpha 21 and the result showed a co-efficient of 0.75 which confirmed the reliability of the study.

3.9 Method of Data Collection

In order to gather data for the research, respondents are given copies of the questionnaire to complete independently. The questionnaire was self-administered by the researcher and two study assistants who kindly assisted in its laborious manual collection which led to a high retrieval rate of the questionnaire.

3.10 Method of Data Analysis

In this study, the researcher utilised tabular presentations and simple percentages to analyze and present the responses obtained from the administered questionnaire. This approach involved displaying the responses in tables that illustrated the percentage of participants who

provided similar answers. The resulting percentages were then used to draw conclusions about the information gathered and to address the research questions formulated in chapter one. The data analysis was conducted using the SPSS 22 software.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Preamble

This chapter captures the presentation and analysis of the study's primary data. Three hundred and eighty five (385) copies of the questionnaire were given out during the field study, but three hundred and seventy-eight (378), or 98.2 percent of them, were returned and validated for the study's final analysis while 7 (1.8%) of copies were lost. Furthermore, the chapter is presented in three parts. The first part is demographic characteristics of respondents, the second part is the presentation of data based on other items in the questionnaire while the third part is the discussion of findings.

4.2 Data Presentation

Table 1: Age of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
16-20	145	38.3
21-25	128	33.9
26-35	88	23.3
36 and above	17	4.5
Total	378	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Table 1 shows that the majority of the respondents were in the age range of 16-20 years, accounting for 38.3% of the total sample. The age group with the smallest percentage was 36 years and above. However, all age groups of undergraduates were duly represented in the study.

Table 2: Gender of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	145	38.4
Female	233	61.6
Total	378	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Table 2 shows that the majority of the respondents were female, accounting for 61.6% of the total sample. This perhaps was because there were more females in the research population available to fill the questionnaire.

Table 3: Marital Status of Respondents

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	288	76.2
Married	90	23.8
Divorced	0	0
Total	378	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

The marital status distribution of the respondents shows that the majority of the respondents were single, accounting for 76.2% of the total sample and there were no respondents who identified as divorced.

Table 5: Educational Qualifications of Respondents

Educational Qualifications	Frequency	Percentage
100	94	24.8
200	77	20.3
300	89	23.5
400	118	31.2
500	0	0
Total	378	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Table 5 showed that that the majority of the respondents were in their 400 level, while the 200 level had the lowest percentage of respondents.

Table 6: Frequency of usage of social media usage among UNIBEN undergraduates

Frequency	Frequency	Percentage
Extremely High	327	88.5
High	13	3.4
Low	38	10.1
Extremely Low	0	0
Total	378	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Table 6 shows that a large proportion of the respondents use social media very highly. The implication of this data suggest that social media is a widely used tool for communication and information sharing among the respondents. The high frequency of daily usage suggests that social media platforms are an important part of the everyday lives of the respondents.

Table 7: Average number of hours you spend on social media platforms for sexual exploration per day

Average number of hours of social media use	Frequency	Percentage
1 to 2 hours	91	24.1
3 – 4 hours	141	37.3
5-6 hours	78	20.6
7 to 8 hours	41	10.8
Above 8 hours	27	7.1
Total	378	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

The data presented in Table 7 shows that a significant proportion of the respondents use social media platforms for sexual exploration, with many spending several hours per view. The majority of the respondents (37.3%) reported spending 3-4 hours per view on social media for sexual exploration. This highlights the potential impact of social media on the sexual attitudes and behaviours of UNIBEN undergraduates, emphasizing the need for accurate and comprehensive sexual education and support from parents, educators, and health professionals.

Table 8: Social media platform through which students are majorly exposed to sexual messages

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook	112	29.6
Twitter	12	3.2
Instagram	78	20.6
Whatsapp	98	25.9
Youtube	78	20.6
Others	0	0
Total	378	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Table 8 indicates that all the students surveyed reported being exposed to sexual messages through at least one social media platform and that Facebook and Whatsapp are the

most common platforms for exposure to sexual messages among the respondents. The implications of this data suggest that social media platforms, particularly Facebook and Whatsapp, are significant sources of exposure to sexual messages among UNIBEN undergraduates.

Table 9: Degree of usage of social media platforms to communicate with sexual partners

Degree of usage	Frequency	Percentage
Extremely High	213	56.3
High	111	29.4
Low	15	3.9
Extremely Low	39	10.3
Total	378	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Table 9 shows that the majority of the respondents (56.3%) use social media platforms to communicate with their sexual partners extremely high. This suggests that social media is a significant means of communication for the respondents in their sexual relationships.

Table 10: Ways in which Social Media affects UNIBEN undergraduates' sexting behaviour

Ways social media affects sexting behaviour	Frequency	Percentage
Increased your knowledge of sexual health and safety	91	24.0
Increased the pressure on you to conform to certain sexual norms or expectations	90	23.8
Made it easier for you to explore your sexual fantasies	99	26.2
Increased your awareness of the risks associated with sexual behaviour	98	25.3
Total	378	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Table 10 shows that social media affects sexting behaviour in multiple ways. The most common way is by making it easier for students to explore their sexual fantasies, with a

significant number of respondents reporting this effect. Another significant way in which social media affects sexting behavior is by raising awareness of the risks associated with sexual behavior. Additionally, social media was reported to increase pressure on students to conform to certain sexual norms or expectations and to increase knowledge of sexual health and safety.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

Research Question One: What is the frequency of usage of social media by UNIBEN undergraduates?

The frequency of social media usage by UNIBEN undergraduates is extremely high. Table 6 and 7 were used to answer the research question. The findings from this study suggest that social media is a widely used tool for communication and information sharing among UNIBEN undergraduates, with a significant proportion of the respondents using it for sexual exploration. The high frequency of usage indicates that social media platforms are an integral part of the everyday lives of the respondents.

These findings are consistent with previous research on social media usage among youths. For instance, a study by Gatter & Hodkinson (2016) found that social media was used as a means of communication and socializing among young people. Similarly, another study by Hefner & Wilson (2010) reported that social media was used for sharing information, discussing news and events, and maintaining social connections among young adults.

However, the findings regarding sexual exploration through social media are concerning, as they suggest that UNIBEN undergraduates may be exposed to potentially harmful content and may engage in risky sexual behaviours as a result. Several studies have highlighted the potential negative impact of social media on young people's sexual health. For example, a study by Barker, Ricardo, Nascimento, Olukoya & Santos (2012) found that adolescents who spent more time on

social media were more likely to engage in risky sexual behaviours and have multiple sexual partners. Similarly, another study by Döring (2014) reported that young adults who used social media for sexual purposes were more likely to report having unprotected sex.

Therefore, the findings of this study highlight the need for accurate and comprehensive sexual education and support from parents, educators, and health professionals. It also highlights the need for parents and educators should provide guidance and education on safe and responsible use of social media, especially with regards to sexual exploration.

Research Question Two: What is the social media platform through which UNIBEN students often interact sexually?

The social media platform through which UNIBEN students often interact sexually are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Whatsapp and Youtube. The high frequency of encounters with sexual content on social media platforms, as indicated in Table 8, highlights the need for students to be equipped with the knowledge and skills to navigate and manage their exposure to such content. Studies have shown that exposure to sexual content on social media can have negative effects on young people's sexual health, including increased risk of engaging in risky sexual behaviours and reduced use of condoms (Hébert et al., 2018; Van Ouytsel et al., 2014). This finding is also consistent with several studies that have identified Facebook and Whatsapp as popular social media platforms for sexual communication and exploration among young people (Van Ouytsel et al., 2014; Albury et al., 2013).

Research Question Three: What is the degree of usage of social media in sexual interactions among UNIBEN students?

The degree of usage of social media for sexual interactions among UNIBEN students is extremely high. Table 5 indicates that a significant proportion of students use social media for

sexual exploration. Seeking sexual information, online dating, and sexting were reported as common ways that students use social media for sexual exploration. This highlights the potential risks associated with using social media for sexual purposes, including the potential for exploitation, harassment, and exposure to sexually transmitted infections. This finding is consistent with previous research that has found that using social media for sexual purposes can increase the risk of engaging in risky sexual behaviours (Hébert et al., 2018; Rice et al., 2012). The finding also aligns with previous researches that have found that social media is a popular means of communication among young people in intimate relationships (Gibbs et al., 2011; Van Ouytsel et al., 2014).

Research Question Four: What are the ways in which social media affects the sexual behaviour of UNIBEN undergraduates?

The ways in which social media affects the sexual behaviour of UNIBEN undergraduates include increasing their knowledge of sexual health and safety, the pressure on them to conform to certain sexual norms or expectations; making it easier for them to explore their sexual fantasies and increasing their awareness of the risks associated with sexual behaviour.

Table 9 shows that a significant proportion of students feel that social media has increased the pressure on them to conform to certain sexual norms or expectations. This finding is consistent with previous research that has found that social media can perpetuate harmful or unrealistic sexual stereotypes and expectations (Barker et al., 2012; Gatter & Hodkinson, 2016). The pressure to conform to certain sexual norms or expectations can be harmful and may lead to negative outcomes such as coercion, exploitation, and gender-based violence. This finding is also consistent with previous research that has found that social media can provide a platform for individuals to express their sexual desires and explore their sexuality (Döring, 2014; Gatter &

Hodkinson, 2016). However, it is important to note that sexual exploration on social media can also be risky and may lead to negative consequences such as exposure to sexually transmitted infections or exploitation.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENATIONS

5.1 Summary

This study was an assessment of the influence of social media on the sexual behaviour of undergraduates in the University of Benin. The objectives of the study were to find out the frequency of usage of social media by UNIBEN undergraduates; determine the social media platform through which UNIBEN students often interact sexually; ascertain the degree of usage of social media in sexual interactions among UNIBEN students; and establish (if any) the ways in which social media affects the sexual behaviour of UNIBEN undergraduates. Social Learning Theory (SLT), Use and Gratifications Theory and the Diffusion of Innovation theory served as theoretical frameworks for this study. Survey was the research design while questionnaire was the research instrument.

The study provides insights into the frequency of social media usage and its impact on the sexual behaviour of undergraduate students at UNIBEN. The findings suggest that social media is widely used by UNIBEN undergraduates for communication, information sharing, and sexual exploration. Facebook and Whatsapp are the most common platforms for exposure to sexual content among the students. Social media can have both positive and negative impacts on the sexual behaviour of UNIBEN undergraduates. On the positive side, social media can provide a platform for sexual exploration, access to sexual health information, and increased awareness of the risks associated with sexual behaviour. However, on the negative side, social media can perpetuate harmful sexual stereotypes and expectations, increase the pressure to conform to certain sexual norms or expectations, and increase the risk of engaging in risky sexual behaviours.

The study also showed that social media can perpetuate harmful or unrealistic sexual stereotypes and expectations, leading to pressure to conform to certain sexual norms or expectations; sexual exploration on social media can be risky and may lead to negative consequences such as exposure to sexually transmitted infections or exploitation; and that social media can provide a platform for individuals to express their sexual desires and explore their sexuality.

5.2 Summary of findings

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concludes that:

1. The frequency of social media usage by UNIBEN undergraduates is extremely high
2. The social media platform through which UNIBEN students often interact sexually are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Whatsapp and Youtube.
3. The degree of usage of social media for sexual interactions among UNIBEN students is extremely high.
4. The ways in which social media affects the sexual behaviour of UNIBEN undergraduates include increasing their knowledge of sexual health and safety, the pressure on them to conform to certain sexual norms or expectations; making it easier for them to explore their sexual fantasies and increasing their awareness of the risks associated with sexual behaviour.

5.3 Conclusion

Arising from the findings of this study, it is recommended that:

1. The University of Benin should develop and implement comprehensive sexual education programs aimed at UNIBEN undergraduates to promote safe and responsible use of social media

for sexual exploration. These programs should be designed to provide accurate information on sexual health and safety, as well as guidance on how to navigate and manage exposure to sexual content on social media platforms.

2. Non-Governmental Organisations, the government and tertiary institution students should provide support and education to students who may feel uncomfortable or uncertain about their sexual behaviour on social media platforms. This could include counseling services, peer support groups, and targeted educational interventions aimed at promoting healthy sexual exploration and reducing the risk of harm.

3. Parents and lecturers should provide guidance and education on safe and responsible use of social media, particularly with regards to sexual exploration. This could involve providing resources to parents and educators on how to talk to undergraduates about sexual health and safety, as well as promoting the use of parental control tools and monitoring software to help parents and lecturers manage undergraduates social media use.

4. Tertiary institutions should work with social media platforms to promote safe and responsible use of their platforms for sexual exploration. This could involve developing and implementing policies and guidelines aimed at reducing exposure to harmful content, promoting healthy sexual exploration, and providing access to accurate information on sexual health and safety. Social media platforms could also consider implementing features such as age verification tools and content filters to help protect young people from exposure to inappropriate content.

5.4 Recommendations for Further Studies

Based on the conclusions drawn from the study, the researcher recommends the following for further studies:

1. Impact of social media addiction on the academic performance of undergraduates in select universities in South-South Nigeria.
2. Role of social media in facilitating sexual harassment and assault among tertiary institution students in Edo State.
3. Effectiveness of sexual health education campaigns on social media in promoting safe sexual practices among University of Benin students.
4. Influence of social media on gender and sexual identity formation among tertiary institution undergraduates.

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APPENDIX
QUESTIONNAIRE

Department of Mass Communication,
Faculty of Arts,
University of Benin,
Benin City,
Nigeria.

Dear Respondent,

REQUEST FOR COMPLETION OF QUESTIONNAIRE

I am a post-graduate student from the above-named department carrying out a research on Assessment of the Influence of Social Media on the Sexual Behaviour of Undergraduates in the University of Benin. This is an academic research for the award of Master of Art (M.A) and your honest opinion is required.

Please be assured that there is no right or wrong answers to any question. Your answers will be treated with utmost confidence. Thank you for your anticipated co-operation.

Yours sincerely,

Researcher.

Please fill the questionnaire by ticking [] in the option most applicable to you.

SECTION A: Demographic data

1. **Age:** 16-20 [] 21-25 [] 26-30 [] 31 and above []
2. **Gender:** Male [] Female []
3. **Marital status:** Single [] Married [] Divorced []
4. **Religion:** Christianity [] Islam [] Others, Please specify.....
5. **Level:** 100 [] 200 [] 300 [] 400 [] 500 []

Key: SA: Strongly Agree; A: Agree; D: Disagree; SD: Strongly Disagree

SECTION B: FREQUENCY OF USAGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY UNIBEN UNDERGRADUATES

6. The frequency at which you use social media for sexual exploration is

S/N	Frequency	SA	A	D	SD
1.	Extremely High				
2.	High				
3.	Low				
4.	Extremely Low				

7. Average number of hours you spend on social media platforms for sexual exploration per day

S/N	No of Hour	SA	A	D	SD
1.	1 to 2 hours				
2.	3 to 4 hours				
3.	5 to 6 hours				
4.	7 to 8 hours				
5.	Above 8 hours				

SECTION C: SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM THROUGH WHICH UNIBEN STUDENTS OFTEN INTERACT SEXUALLY

8. Social media platform through which you often interact sexually is/are

S/N	Social media platform	SA	A	D	SD
1.	Facebook				
2.	Twitter				
3.	Instagram				
4.	Whatsapp				
5.	Youtube				
6.	Others				

SECTION D: DEGREE OF USAGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN SEXUAL INTERACTIONS AMONG UNIBEN STUDENTS

9. Rate the degree of your usage of social media for sexual interactions

S/N	Degree of usage	SA	A	D	SD
1.	Extremely High				
2.	High				
3.	Low				
4.	Extremely Low				

SECTION E: WAYS IN WHICH SOCIAL MEDIA AFFECTS THE SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR OF UNIBEN UNDERGRADUATES

10. The ways in which Social Media affects your sexting behaviour is/are

S/N	Ways of it affects sexting behaviour	SA	A	D	SD
1.	Increased your knowledge of sexual health and safety				
2.	Increased the pressure on you to conform to certain sexual norms or expectations				
3.	Made it easier for you to explore my sexual fantasies				
4.	Increased your awareness of the risks associated with sexual behaviour				