

SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE AND SELF-ESTEEM AMONG UNIVERSITY OF UYO UNDERGRADUATES

Oyokunyi Otu Ita

and

Iniobong Courage Nda

Abstract

This study examined self-esteem and how the social media are a contributing factor. The study adopted the survey research method and the questionnaire was the instrument for data gathering. The sample size was 400 drawn from a population of 31,461 undergraduate students. Finding revealed that excessive use of the social media had a negative influence on University of Uyo undergraduates' self-esteem. Facebook was considered the most used social media platform followed by Instagram, Tik Tok and Snapchat in that order by the University of Uyo undergraduates; that the higher levels of social media usage would invariably result in lower level of self-esteem among the University of Uyo students. It was therefore recommended that undergraduates should avoid excessive usage of social media platforms as they could be detrimental to their self-esteem and mental health.

Introduction

Early 21st century marked the emergence and growth of social networking sites in the whole world. Since then these sites have become a major part of people's lives, specially the lives of the youth. Many teenagers are using social media namely facebook, Tik tok, Instagram among others to build relationships, connect with the world, share and gain knowledge and information, build stronger personalities and have better social lives Boyd, (2017).Imam & Tanisha (2023).

Mitchell (2019) claimed that social networking sites are used by youngsters to get engaged in romantic and casual online relationships. It has been observed by the changing behavior of the people that social media has many negative repercussions on people. Social networking sites help people to make social comparisons which increase the psychological distress of individuals and as a result lower the overall level of self-esteem (Chen & Lee, 2017). Many observers and researchers believe that due to increase in the usage of social networking sites, people have become the victims of lower self-esteem and self-growth. Social media platforms have become an integral part of our daily lives, especially among undergraduate students. With the advent of platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat, the way we communicate and interact has drastically changed. These platforms offer students opportunities to connect with others, share their experiences, and express themselves in ways that were not possible before. This study focuses on social media and its impact on self-esteem, particularly among undergraduate students of the University of Uyo . Self-esteem is a crucial aspect of a person's mental well-being as it influences how individuals perceive themselves and

their abilities. It plays a significant role in shaping their social relationships, academic performance, and overall happiness.

Understanding the relationship between social media usage and self-esteem among undergraduates is highly important, as it can shed light on the potential consequences of excessive social media consumption. While social media can offer a sense of belonging and empowerment, it can also be a breeding ground for comparison and low self-esteem. With the generation of media platforms such as Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, and Instagram, its users are now able to craft the most idealized version of their lives and broadcast with innate selectivity. With that, social media has successfully consequently generated the perfect platform for breeding social comparison as its billions of users aimlessly scroll through falsified lives of their peers in return for the numeric validation of another “like” or “comment”. Social comparison may entail the evaluation of one’s own successes, image, beliefs, and social status in reference to those of other people, which may induce either positive or negative psychological effects. Many studies have been conducted to investigate the positive and negative aspects of social media. Valkenburg, Peter, & Schouten (2006), concluded that “positive feedback on profiles enhanced adolescents’ social self-esteem and well-being, whereas negative feedback decreased their self-esteem and well-being.

Statement of the Problem

There are many issues that can occur when using social media sites. One issue that has been known to happen on social media is cyber-bullying. One study researched cyber-bullying, psychological distress, and self-esteem levels in youth-aged children. Their results were that overall, 22.9% of teenagers experienced cyber-bullying in the past year. Girls presented a higher prevalence of cyber-bullying, psychological distress, and low self-esteem than boys. Self-esteem is something that everyone has and each person has a different perception of themselves and different levels of self-esteem. Self Esteem is conceptualized as one as positive and negative evaluations of himself or herself and, relatedly, one as approval or disapproval of the self (Coopersmith, 2020; Rosenberg, 2021). One study focused on how many "selfies" a person posts on social media and how that relates to narcissism and self-esteem. This study also came to find that taking and posting "selfies" was not an action of showing off to their peers, it was more a typical way of communication (Barry, 2015).

The current study is taking a different path and not testing young children but testing young adults (undergraduates) to see if age might play a factor in the effects of social media. Once there is a clear understanding of what age group suffers the most then not only

psychologists but school administrators, parents, teachers, etc., can focus on eliminating cyber-bullying. The rapid rise in social media usage among undergraduate students has raised concerns about its potential impact on self-esteem. While social media platforms provide opportunities for students to connect and express themselves, there is increasing evidence suggesting that excessive use of social media may contribute to negative self-esteem outcomes. This study therefore seeks to answer to the question does social media usage by undergraduate students of University of Uyo have any significant relationship with their self-esteem affect aims to address the specific ways social media affects the self-esteem of undergraduates and also the promotion of self-esteem among undergraduates of University of Uyo.

Research Questions

The study sought answers to the following questions¹. How does social media affect self-esteem among undergraduate students in University of Uyo?

1. What are the social media platforms used to promote self-esteem of undergraduates students of University of Uyo?
2. Which is the preferred social media platform among undergraduate students of University of Uyo?
3. What are the factors that influence undergraduate students of University of Uyo self-esteem when using social media?
4. What is the perception of undergraduates about self-esteem across various social media platforms?

Literature Review

This section deals with critical concepts and the theoretical underpinning that gives the study the necessary bite and shape that makes it easier to appreciate the researcher's opinion.

Self Esteem

Self-esteem is identified by the way we act and behave, by the attitudes and beliefs we hold about ourselves and the way we feel about ourselves and the emotion we experience. Self-esteem is also the evaluation of oneself in either a positive or a negative way. James (2020) viewed self-esteem as an evaluative process; he argued that self-esteem, at its simplest, could be measured as the ratio of a person's successes to his or her pretensions. Pretensions are viewed as goals, purposes, or aims, whereas successes constitute the perception of the attainment of those goals.

As people attain more of their pretensions, the ratio grows larger and self-esteem becomes correspondingly stronger. Pretensions also add a vulnerability component to self-esteem in that these are the areas where the individual is proposed to be most competent. If he

or she comes up short in the perception of goal-attainment, or in comparison with others in the same pretension arena, self-esteem suffers. Rosenberg concluded that self-esteem is an attitude toward a specific object, the self. Feedback from others, particularly significant others, is a key element of self-esteem (Rosenberg, 2019). Wells and Marwell (2017) concluded self-esteem falls into 4 distinct categories which are object/attitudinal approach which means thoughts, feelings, and behaviours toward ourselves. Relational approach which means different thoughts, feelings, and behaviours when comparing our ideal self with our real self.

Next, psychological responses approach which means feeling either positive or negative about some elements about ourselves, such as our behaviour or our appearances and personality function/ component approach which means self-esteem as being part of personality (a construct itself), the self, or self-system. Guindon (2012) explained self-esteem as “the attitudinal, evaluative component of the self; the affective judgements placed on the self-concept consisting of feelings of worth and acceptance which are developed and maintained as a consequence of awareness of competence and feedback from the external world.” Humanists also described self-esteem. Rogers (2018) defined self-esteem as the extent to which people like, value, and accept themselves. He believed that the self develops from a combination of what is experienced and what is interjected, derived from values and affective preferences. The individual conceptualizes an ideal self, or the “person you would like to be”; and the true self, or the “person you really are.” The more congruent are these two aspects of the self, the healthier the self-esteem.

Social Media

The way people communicate with others has been significantly altered over the last couple of decades due to the development and improvement of social media sites such as Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and others. These platforms have allowed individuals to stay in contact with their friends and family members, even people from other countries. Since Facebook launched in 2004, the number of people who use social network sites has increased dramatically, year by year (Emarketer, 2018). While, as of January of 2017, on average, the total number of active social media users in the world was 2.789 billion, the total number of active social media users in January of 2018 was 3.196 billion, and the whole world population was measured as 7.593 billion (Kemp, 2018; Kemp, 2017). This growth shows that 42% of the world's total population actively use social media, and the global annual digital growth has been +13% since January 2017. Regarding the Nigeria specifically, the number of active social media users is 648 million among the total population of 1.011 billion (Kemp, 2018).

Facebook, which is one of the most heavily used social media networks in the world, had 1.871 billion active monthly users in 2017, while it had 936 million active daily users in the world in 2015 (Facebook, 2018). Globally, Instagram has more than 500 million regular active users (Instagram, 2018), and Nigeria is one of Instagram's top countries (Kemp, 2018). LinkedIn had more than 546 million active users in 2018 (LinkedIn, 2018). Snapchat had 178 million active daily users and 301 million monthly active users in 2017 (Snapchat, 2018). With regards to Nigerians, 78% of young adults (18- 24-year-olds) use Snapchat, and similarly, 71% of young adults (18-24 years old) use Instagram. Besides, almost half of this age group (45%) use Twitter (Smith, & Anderson, 2018).

As a result of social media's popularity, these significant increases in social media usage have attracted the attention of many researchers, and they have studied social media and its effects on people. Most of these researchers have only focused on Facebook usage, and on its influence on individuals' lives, because it has more global users than any other social media platform (Eksisu, Hosoglu, & Rasmussen, 2017; Burrow & Rainone, 2017; Blachino, Przepiorka, & Rudnicka, 2016; Woods & Scott, 2016; Blachino, Przepiorka, & Pantic, 2016). However, it has been observed that the usage of Facebook among Nigerian young adults 18-25 years-old has not been trendy over the last couple of years. Other platforms (such as Instagram and Snapchat) have been used more widely than Facebook (Smith, 2018). According to Smith (2018), the number of Facebook users in Nigeria will increase by 0.9% to 169.5 million in 2018, but it is expected that older people are going to make that increase. On the other hand, Facebook users will decrease between 5.6% and 9.3% among younger users aged under 25. Also, the most significant increase in use will be seen on Snapchat. It is expected that 68% of internet users aged 17 to 24 will use Snapchat actively. Snapchat's influence among internet users in this age group will thus surpass that of Facebook (47.2%) and Instagram (43.6%).

Additionally, the number of Instagram users is expected to rise to 104.7 million in 2018, up 13.1% from 2017 users 35 and older who are creating profiles will drive platform growth and be connecting with (likely younger) family members who spend less time on Facebook. This change in the use of social media has encouraged researchers to focus on it anew, and a few researchers have just started to study non-Facebook social media sites, such as Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter, and others (Hawi, & Samaha, 2017; Andreassen, Pallesen, & Griffiths, 2017). However, those research studies have focused on social media users in other countries besides Nigeria. This study intends to examine the associations between the use of different social media platforms (Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and others) and self-esteem and life satisfaction among young university students specifically residing in the Nigeria.

Social Media Usage

Social media websites are the most common activity of today's children and adolescents. It was reported that 22% of teenagers engage in social networking at least ten times a day and more than half of the teens report that they engage in social networking at least one time a day.(O'Keefe & Clarke Pearson, 2011). According to the Pew Internet and Nigerian Life Project, more than 70% of youth and young adults (ages 12 to 29) who use the Internet use social networking sites (Lenhart et al., 2010).

A survey found that 47% of Nigerian adults use at least one social network (Donde, Chopade, & Ranjith, (2018). 95% of university students maintain a Facebook profile Stefanone, Lackaff, & Rosen, (2021). This study also found that 268 college students (primarily freshmen) reported spending an average of almost two hours per day engaging in social networking. Facebook has reported that members upload over 2 billion photos per month and 14 million videos per week, in addition to blog posts and weblinks Stefanone, Lackaff, & Rosen, 2021). Another study showed that 88.5% of their sample of undergraduate students from one university reported that they visited a social networking site at least once a day.60% of the students stated that they visit these sites more than once a day. Social media has become so popular that it is a part of everyday life for students, Miller, Parsons, Lifer, (2010).

Social Media and Age

Use of digital media (e.g., text messaging, email, Facebook, Twitter, Skype, photo and video sharing, and other forms of digital communication) has skyrocketed in recent years in ways that are dramatically shifting how and when young people connect with their friends and family members (Common Sense Media, 2012). The expansion of both the forms of and access to social media has challenged staff in youth serving programs to create policies that are responsive to the affordances of these ever-changing forms of communication, while also guarding against unforeseen risks and unintended negative consequences to program participants, Schwartz, *et al.*, (2014). Communication through social media is so prevalent today that it has invariably affected interpersonal communication mode in the sense that most youths are no longer capable of holding meaningful dialogue in a face-to-face situation. Youth mentoring relationships, once largely considered to be one-to-one relationships between youth and adults that were cultivated through in-person meetings or activities in the community or at school, now take a wide variety of forms with some relationships taking place solely through digital forms of communication, Shpigelman, (2014). Reports show that people of all ages use social media sites. The age varies between the sites and is changing with each year. Usage is

increasing not only in age but in men and women also. More men were reported using social media sites in 2014 than they did in 2013. In 2014, it was reported that 70% of people with a high school education or less use Facebook. In that same study it was reported that 71% of people who had some college education used Facebook. 74% of people who have a college degree use Facebook. 66% of the people who used Facebook in 2014 were men and 77% were women. Duggan, *et al.*, (2014).

Twitter users have different statistics. In 2014 it was reported that 16% of secondary school graduates reported using Twitter, 24% of people with some college education reported using Twitter and 30% of college graduates use Twitter. Twitter users are 24% males and 21% females. These results are dramatically different from Facebook but there was a rise in use from 2013 and 2014 (Duggan, *et al.*, 2014).

Social Media and Self Esteem

Leary & Baumeister, (2020) asserts that self-esteem is defined as an individual's appraisal of his or her value. Furthermore, it also refers to a person's subjective judgment of his or her worth as a human being. There are approximately 35,000 studies on self-esteem as put forward by Bleidron *et al.*, (2016), given that it is one of the crucial phenomena for an individual's life because high self-esteem brings many positive outcomes. According to researchers, high self-esteem is one of the mediators of mental health (Taylor & Brown, 2018), physical health (Mechanic, 2019) and it is also linked to an individual's well-being (Mehdizadeh, 2017). Additionally, individuals with high self-esteem have more social support, more malleable coping behaviors, and less stress (Orth, Robins, & Widaman, 2019). In contrast, people with low self-esteem are observed to feel more lonely, shy, unsociable and anxious. They also face dissatisfied and short-term relationships more than those with a high self-esteem

Many factors affect an individual's level of self-esteem, and research has indicated that social media use is one of the factors that is associated with an individuals' self-esteem level (Andreassen, Pallasen, & Griffiths, 2017; Valkenburg, Peter, & Schouten, 2016). Many researchers have studied the relationship between social media use, especially Facebook, and self-esteem. The researchers have found that low self-esteem is related to intense social media usage and people who have a low self-esteem tend to use social media sites to increase their self-image and self-esteem. It has been established that there is a relationship between self-esteem, life satisfaction and negative and positive feedback they received through social media sites among 881 adolescents between the ages of 10 and 19. They found that a positive effect was positively associated with self-esteem and satisfaction with life ($r = .40$, $p < .001$ and $r = .37$, $p < .001$, respectively). Andreassen, Pallasen, & Griffiths, (2017) Similarly, Eksisu *et al.*, (2017) suggested that individuals with a low self-esteem spend more time on social media networks

and tend to log in to Facebook very frequently to compensate their lack of self esteem by having a high number of online friends to increase popularity and have a sense of belonging.

Theoretical Framework

Whenever we bring in theory in analyzing a study the underlying reason is often that it presents us a valuable tool for understanding our everyday lives, our relationships with others and the way communication shapes our world and social interaction. Thus this study is anchored on the social comparison theory. Leon Festinger (2018) developed social comparison theory to explain the process in which many facets of the self can be evaluated only through comparisons with other people. According to the theory, in the absence of a physical or objective standard of correctness, we will seek other people as a means of evaluating ourselves. Others' opinions may be particularly influential for physical appearance, where the objective criteria are not altogether clear. Felson (2015). The idea is that people are often motivated to explore their beliefs and abilities by comparing them with social reality. Wood (2019) has identified three reasons people use social comparison – evaluation, improvement, and enhancement. Because the goals differ, each of these motivations involves a slightly different way of comparing. When one's goal is self evaluation, people use social comparison to obtain an accurate impression of the self. Therefore, social comparison is more fruitful when we choose to compare ourselves with people whose abilities are similar to our own (Wheeler, Koestner, & Driver, (2022).

When choosing a “comparison other” for self-evaluation, people generally select someone whose performance represents a standard they may be able to match in the future. Later, if one's performance improves, the standard of comparison probably will rise as well. Sometimes however, exploration involves unfamiliar facts or dimensions of the self. Wood (2018) suggests an individual will seek information about people who represent the extremes of the dimension. This is because knowing your own on a dimension is not very informative unless you also know whether that level is high, low or in the middle of the range of possible levels of the dimension. As we learn more about our level in a particular dimension, we tend to choose to compare others who are similar to us. Gender, for example, is an important characteristic of comparing others. Both genders (males and females), generally showed a strong preference for someone of the same gender. The choice of someone of the same gender for comparison purposes is particularly like if the individual believes the task is somehow related to gender and if the individual has a strong tendency to refer to gender in processing information (Miller, 2017). Thus people will seek relevant others with whom to compare their performance, and similarity often serves as a cue for potential relevance. Festinger's

unidirectional drive upward is most apparent when self-improvement is the goal of social comparison. According to Wood (2018), people who are especially achievement oriented or competitive are likely to compare themselves to others who are better on a relevant dimension. Comparing ourselves to people who are better on the relevant dimension enables us to improve ourselves. At the same time, the fact that the “better person” is similar to us in other ways is a source of inspiration. Finally Wood notes that self-enchancement attempts to convince ourselves that we are better off than we are, usually leads to downward comparisons. That is, when we need to enhance our self-esteem, we compare ourselves with those who are worse off than we are (Taylor & Lobel, 2018). Social comparison is an active process. We are motivated by different goals that in turn affect the others with whom we choose to compare ourselves.

Research Method

This study made use of survey as a research technique which according to Senam and Akpan (2014), is one of the methods of quantitative research that entails a painstaking process of gathering information or data and using the results as the basis for determining the trend or the issues that formed the thrust of the research. These issues that form a research problem could be opinion, practice, attitude, behavior etc. The questionnaire was used as the instrument of data gathering in the study. The population of this study was University of Uyo undergraduates. According to the Admission Unit of the University, the projected population of Undergraduates as of the 2022 /2023 academic session is 31,461. Wimmer and Dominick (2018) defines a sample size as a subgroup or subset of a population or Universe. This subset is created from the population and is the representation of the entire population. The sample size for this study was Four hundred (400) and was determined using the Taro Yamane Sample Size determination Formula. Furthermore, subjects to be studied were selected using the multi stage sampling procedure to arrive at the respondents.

Presentation of Data

Out of the four hundred (400) copies of the questionnaire distributed to the respondents, three hundred and seventy-five (375) copies were correctly filled and returned. Hence the table analyses of data for this study were based on the three hundred and seventy five (375) copies of the returned and valid questionnaire, representing 94% response rate. This study had three hundred and seventy-five (375) as its total respondents, 162 (43%) were male and 212 (57%) were female respondents, within the ages of 16-25 years were 290 (78%) and those within 46 and above were 6 representing 1% of the respondents, 214 (57%) of the respondents were single, 161(43%) of the respondents were married.

Table I: Influence of Social Media on self-esteem of undergraduate students

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Never	30	8
Rarely	56	15
Sometimes	90	24
Often	116	31
Always	83	22
Total	375	100

Majority of the respondents (31%) self-esteem were often influenced by social media

Table II: Type of Social Media Influence on Undergraduate self-esteem

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Positively	116	31
Negatively	199	53
Others	60	16
Total	375	100

Majority of the respondents self-esteem (53%) were negatively affected by social media

Table III: Social Media apps used by undergraduates

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Facebook	124	33
Instagram	98	26
Tik Tok	79	21
X (formerly known as Twitter)	30	8
Snapchat	45	12
Total	375	100

Majority of the respondents (33%) used Facebook

Table IV: Hours spent on Social Media

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1-4	34	9
4-8	56	15
8-12	75	20
12-16	128	34
16-20	84	22
Total	375	100

Majority of the respondents (34%) agreed they spent 12-16 hours on social media

Table V: Thoughts of Social Media when not in use

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Never	23	6
Rarely	26	7
Sometimes	49	13
Often	66	18
Always	211	56
Total	375	100

Majority of the respondents (56%) always thought about Social Media when they weren't using it.

Tables VI: Factors that influence self-esteem while using social media

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Comparison	150	40
Online bullying	87	23
Lack of validation from online media users	75	18
Lack of recognition/ feedback from peers	51	15
Focusing on your physical experience	10	3
Total	375	100

Majority of the respondents (40%) agreed that Comparison lowers their self-esteem while using Social Media

Table VI: Social Media apps used to promote Self-Esteem

Response	Number of Respondent	Percentage
Facebook	60	16
Instagram	41	11
Tik Tok	139	37
X (formerly known as Twitter)	83	22
Snapchat	52	14
Total	375	100

Majority of the respondents (37%) used Tik Tok to promote undergraduates self-esteem

Table VII: Perception of self-esteem while using Social Media apps

Response	Number of Respondent	Percentage
Excellent	38	10
Very good	60	16
Good	90	24
Neutral	79	21
Bad	108	29
Total	375	100

Majority of the respondents (29%) felt bad about their self-esteem while using social media apps.

Discussion of Findings

The data presented and analyzed above formed the basis for this discussion. The discussion of findings is based on the research questions raised in the earlier part of the research.

Research Question 1:

How does social media affect self-esteem among undergraduate students in University of Uyo?

Table I and II provide answers to Research Question 1, while table i shows that 31% representing 116 respondents had their self-esteem often influenced by social media, 24% representing 90 respondents had their self-esteem sometimes influenced by social media, 22% representing 83 respondents had their self-esteem heavily influenced by social media, 15% representing 56 respondents had their self-esteem rarely influenced by social media, 8% representing 30 respondents never had their self-esteem often influenced by social media, Table ii goes to show the type of Social Media Influence on Undergraduate self-esteem. According to the obtained data, 375 respondents, 199 respondents representing 53% had their self-esteem negatively affected by social media., 116 respondents representing 31% had their self-esteem positively affected by social media.

Rosenberg (2019) reiterated the fact that excessive use or comparison with others' curated online personas can lead to lower levels of self-confidence and higher rates of body dissatisfaction among young adults. He also shed light on the potential negative effects that social media can have on an individual's sense of self-worth. He also argued that excessive use of social media leads to comparison and competition amongst peers, which ultimately impacts one's self-perception and confidence level. Wells and Marwell (2017) in relation with the social comparison theory also added that curated images often portrayed on these platforms create unrealistic standards for oneself to meet, leading to feelings of inadequacy and inferiority complex among young adults striving for acceptance in their peer groups through likes and followers. Hence, the majority of respondent's self-esteem is negatively influenced by Social Media.

Research Question 2: What are the social media platforms used to promote self-esteem of undergraduates?

From the data presented on Table VI, it was observed that Tik Tok which was picked by 137 respondents representing 37% respondents was the most selected Social Media platform used to promote self-esteem, the next being X which was selected by 83 respondents representing 22%, followed by Facebook selected by 60 respondents representing 16%, Snapchat was selected by 52 respondents represented by 14%, while 26 respondents

representing 7% selected Instagram as the social media platform least chosen to promote self-esteem.

According to Stankov (2018), certain platforms such as Tik Tok and Facebook allow users to curate their online image through filters and carefully selected content, boosting confidence levels. He also argued that positive interactions and support from friends on these platforms also contribute to higher self-esteem for undergraduate students. Sapmaz & Dogan, (2020), in relation to Self Presentation Theory posits that popular platforms such as Twitter and Facebook are effective in boosting confidence levels of students as they showcase their achievements, talents and positive aspects of their lives to a wider audience. This not only increases their own pride but also earns them validation from others, helping them develop a strong sense of self-worth. Their study highlighted the smart use of social media in improving undergraduate mental well-being through building confidence and providing support from online communities. Yildiz (2021) also agreeing with the data in the study believe that sharing motivational quotes and messages to creating empowering communities online influences mental health of undergraduates and also harness its power for positive influence. He also argued that undergraduates are increasingly using these platforms to uplift one another and create a supportive network that celebrates individuality and boosts confidence.

Research Question 3: Which is the preferred social media platform among undergraduate students of University of Uyo?

From the findings on the field, it was observed that Facebook which was picked by 124 respondents representing 33% was the most selected Social Media platform used by undergraduates, the next being Instagram which was selected by 96 respondents representing 26%, followed by Instagram selected by 66 respondents representing 18%, next being Tik Tok which was selected by 79 respondents representing 21%, Snapchat was selected by 45 respondents representing 12%, while 30 respondents representing 8% selected X (formerly known as Twitter) as the fewest social media platform chosen. Table IV also provides answers for Research Question 2 as it shows the social media usage of undergraduates. 128 respondents representing 34% spent 12-16, 84 respondents representing 22% spent 16-20 hours on social media, 75 respondents representing 20% spent 8-12 hours on social media, 56 respondents representing 15% spent 4-8 hours on social media while 34 respondents representing 9% spent 1-4 hours on social media. Rogers (2018) posits that there is a strong correlation between the usage of social media platforms and self-esteem levels among undergraduates. He agreed that as more and more young adults turn to these online platforms for connection and validation, their perception of themselves becomes heavily influenced by the curated images and lifestyles displayed on social media. This has sparked discussions on how excessive use of social media

can negatively impact one's self-image, leading experts to suggest taking breaks from it in order to cultivate a healthier sense of self-worth. Similarly Emarketer(2018) in relation with the social comparison and the data findings of the study is of the opinion that there is a negative correlation, she also argued that it depends on individual perception and motivational factors. She posits that using social media to compare oneself with unrealistic standards may lead to lower self-esteem; but positive interactions and support from online communities can boost one's sense of worth. Kemp (2018) also argued that undergraduates turn to social media platforms as a means of communication and validation, their self-worth becomes heavily influenced by the number of likes, followers, and reactions they receive. However, this reliance on external factors for validation can ultimately lead to lower levels of self-esteem when these expectations are not met in real life situations.

Research Question 4: What are the factors of social media that are responsible for lowering self-esteem of undergraduates?

Data displayed on table VI answers to Research Question 3, according to Table IV, 150 respondents representing 40% chose Comparison as the factor responsible for lowering self-esteem, 87 respondents representing 23% chose Online bullying as the factor responsible for lowering self-esteem, 75 respondents representing 18% chose Lack of validation from online media users as the factor responsible for lowering self-esteem, 51 respondents representing 15% chose Lack of recognition/ feedback from peers as the factor responsible for lowering self-esteem, 10 respondents representing 3% chose Focusing on your physical experience as the factor responsible for lowering self-esteem.

Taylor & Brown (2018) conducted a similar study and argued that the constant comparison to others' seemingly perfect lives and idolized standards portrayed on social media contribute greatly to this phenomenon. They also posit that the pressure to present a flawless image online also adds to feelings of inadequacy in individuals. Yigit (2018) in relation to the social comparison theory also argued that the comparison with others' seemingly perfect lives portrayed on social media can create feelings of inadequacy and lower self-worth for undergraduate students. He also argued that the pressure to maintain a certain image or persona online can also lead to a negative impact on their mental well-being and confidence levels. He posits that it is crucial for individuals who use social media regularly as undergraduates to be aware of these potential effects and strive for realistic expectations from themselves instead.

Research Question 5: What is the perception of undergraduates about self-esteem across various social media platforms?

Table VII provides information to Research Question 5. According to Table vii , data analyzed indicates that 108 respondents representing 29% felt their self-esteem was bad while

using social media apps, 90 respondents representing 24% felt their self-esteem was good while using social media apps, 79 respondents representing 21% felt their self-esteem was neutral while using social media apps, 60 respondents representing 18% felt their self-esteem was very good while using social media apps, 38 respondents representing 10% felt their self-esteem was excellent while using social media apps.

Rosen (2022) in line with the findings of the study posits societal pressure perpetuated through carefully curated posts on these platforms can negatively impact one's perception of themselves. He also argued that individuals believe that their self-worth is bolstered by attention and validation from others online; there are also those who feel pressured to maintain a certain image in order to fit into societal standards set by these platforms. Pantic (2019) also argued that the use of different social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter have a significant effect on one's level of self-esteem. With so much pressure to portray an ideal image online, undergraduates often find themselves comparing their lives to those curated on social media. He believes this can lead to feelings of inadequacy and lowered levels of self-worth amongst this demographic group.

Findings

The followings were findings revealed in the study:

- i. Excessive use of social media has a negative influence on university of uyo undergraduates self-esteem .
- ii. The following social media platforms are accessed for self esteem purposes : Tik Tok, Instagram, Facebook, SnapChat and X
- iii. Facebook, was considered the most used social media platform followed by instagram, Tik Tok and Snapchat in that order by the university of uyo undergraduate
- iv. Comparison, Online Bullying and Lack of validation from online media users were factors responsible for lowering self-esteem of undergraduates
- v. Undergraduates agreed that their self-esteem were affected negatively when they used various social media platforms. They also agreed that usage of social media platforms can negatively impact one's perception of themselves.

Conclusion

Social media sites have become a central part of everyday life. Most social networking sites facilitate the creation of profiles by users who give details about their life experiences. Many people on these platforms have been pressured into sharing positive experiences while hiding the less glamorous parts of their lives. As a result, social media has been linked to outcomes such as social comparisons, self-evaluation, and the need for self-enhancement.

When users compare their lives to others, issues of self-esteem are bound to emerge. Social media's impact on self-perception and self-image is primarily negative, whereby users who compare themselves to others are likely to feel inadequate and have poorer self-evaluations. However social media can affect people's mental health both positively and negatively. Undergraduates should focus on the positive aspects and should desist from comparing their lives with people's lives on social media, almost everything on social media is a faux.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were put forward following the findings gleaned from the study namely:

- i. Undergraduates should avoid excessive usage of social media platforms as it is detrimental to their self-esteem and mental health.
- ii. Undergraduates should desist from comparing their lives with others while using social media platforms.
- iii. Social Media Platforms should put policies to curb excessive flaunting of wealth and also Online Bullying.
- iv. Social Media platforms like Instagram should put preventive measures in place to curb user's self-esteem being affected negatively.
- v. Undergraduates should focus on the positive aspects of social media and avoid comparison in order to reduce their self-esteem being affected negatively

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