



## SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKS AND ASSOCIATED VULNERABILITY TO SEXUAL RISK BEHAVIOURS AMONG UNDERGRADUATES

Etodike, Chukwuemeka E.<sup>1i</sup>,  
Ojiakor, Ifeoma C.<sup>2</sup>,  
Nkwam-Uwaoma, Adeline O.<sup>2</sup>,  
Okalla, Fabian<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Psychology,  
Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka,  
Anambra State, Nigeria

<sup>2</sup>PhD, Department of Mass Communication,  
Imo State University, Owerri, Nigeria

### Abstract:

This study explored web 2.0 popularly called Social media network and the associated vulnerability of sexual risk behaviours of undergraduates. 422 undergraduates served as participants in the study. The participants; 199 males and 223 females were drawn from the population of undergraduates in Nnamdi Azikiwe University and Imo State University. The age of the participants ranged from 17 to 26 years, with a mean age of 22.50yrs and standard deviation of 1.30yrs. The participants were selected through simple random sampling technique. Two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study while correlation design and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient were the adopted design and statistics for the study respectively. Two instruments: Social Media Use/Abuse Scale and Associated Vulnerability to Sexual Risk Behaviour Scale both developed by Ifeakandu (2011) were used to collate data. After analysis, the result confirmed that there is a significant correlation between use/abuse of social media networks and associated vulnerability to sexual risk behaviours of undergraduates at  $r = .62, p < .05$  ( $n = 422$ ). Also, the study confirmed that females had more associated vulnerability to sexual risk behaviours than their male counterparts at mean score of 73.44 with standard deviation of 1.106 for females and  $M = 71.29$  and  $SD = 1.859$  for males. The study therefore recommended that stakeholders should sensitize and regulate the youths on the positive use of the social media networks while all hands must be on deck to discourage youths from abuse of social media keeping in mind that there are associated sexual risk behaviours with explicit social media consumption.

---

<sup>i</sup> Correspondence: email [nelsonetodike@gmail.com](mailto:nelsonetodike@gmail.com)

**Keywords:** associated sexual risk behaviours, gender, social media networks, vulnerability

## 1. Introduction

Human communication reached its golden era in the 20<sup>th</sup> century owing to advancement in science and technology. The last few decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century witnessed a hyper-advancement in Information Communication Technology (ICT) notably the digital and electronic telecommunication. Without these advancements, what is today known as Web 2.0 popularly called Social Media Networks would have been elusive; notably the affordable smart-phones called Android which has made the hosting of social media accessible to the cheapest phones. These historical events have forever changed the communication system, channels and speed of information dissemination but not without disadvantages. The nature, (including, texts, audio, and video) quality and quantity of information being able to be shared have also advanced rapidly, making possible for anything to be shared and communicated between persons several millions miles away. This fit is the joy of modern day communication in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a smile to many and cry to others.

Regrettably, the versatility of Android smartphone in its use in social media networking has won the heart of the global appetite such that both officially and parochially, the application of Web 2.0 has been deployed at almost all walks of life for ease of daily communication and information sharing (Lanre-Babalola, 2018). This is where the attention of the authors has been drawn especially as it concerns its use/abuse by undergraduates since virtually every student can afford an android smart phone (Eleuteri, Saladino, & Verrastro, 2017; Mangwere, Wadesango, & Kurebwa, 2017).

Statistically, comparative data from the Nigerian Communication Commission (2012) suggests that Nigerians are the highest users of mobile technology and mobile social networking on the continent' compared to other countries such as South Africa, Egypt, Kenya, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Namibia, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia (Wusu, 2011; USAID; 2010). Against the growing trend, Bleakley, Hennessy and Fishbein (2008) asserted that young people especially students acquire technological skills more rapidly than adults, leading the way in the daily use of information and communication technologies (ICTs). In Nigeria, like in most of other African countries, mobile telephony comes with a lot of enthusiasms and fantasy especially with the freedom it offers for opening the world at the palm of the user. This endless ability has necessarily enthralled its users to a captivity level. There are various search engines such as Goggle, 4shared, Ask.com which provide information virtually on anything. There are also Social Media Networks where one is free to subscribe and connect to friends all over the world or make new ones such as Facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram, Badoo etc.

The extent to which these features have been deployed for the good of the undergraduates remains a problem especially among African youths who are lost to its

real advantage in use/abuse (Lanre-Babalola, 2018; Oladeji & Ayangunna, 2017; Olubunmi, Fadeke, & Osore, 2017). The use of these features for other personal aggrandizement other than the original intentions of the creators has become problematic as many undergraduates abuse almost all the social media networks for fraud, illicit relationships and explicit sex (Ahonsi, 2013). Consider that in Nigeria, young people are generally reluctant to seek sexual health information for a variety of reasons, including stigma, lack of interest, lack of services, cost, and denial of risk (Ifeakandu, 2013; Ifeakandu 2011; Janssen & Davis, 2009; Sorenson & Brown, 2007; Pitts, Dowsett, Couch, Keys, & Dutertre, 2003). This has been gaining popularity because; its anonymity is the users' appeal. This anonymity is the bane for associated vulnerability to sexual risk behaviours such as unprotected sex, sex with persons with unknown identity, induced or forced risk sexual practices such as oral, anal or group sex (Lenhart, Purcell, & Smith, 2010). This vulnerability is a consequence of the fact that most social media networks contain explicit sexual exposure without control whatsoever. Therefore there is a theoretical understanding (e.g. information theory and digital age by Aftab, Cheung, Kim, Thakkar, & Yeddanapudi, 2001) that the abuse of the networking platform in reality may likely expose the abused to greater danger of being exposed and eventually compromised to soliciting to these explicit sexual contents from the unknown provider, e-partner or e-friend.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

The proliferation of mobile devices in all forms, sizes and shapes which is truly affordable to the students has increased youths' exposure and vulnerability to sexual risk behaviour because the youths hide under the anonymity which social media provides to exhibit behaviours which ordinarily they would not if they knew they are being watched. This has created lots of problems for them, their guardians and their families. More students (undergraduates of higher institutions viz: Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges) have been lost to abortion due to unwanted pregnancies, sexual deviance, prostitution, and other related consequences of sexual risk behaviours. The anonymity and the convenience of social media and the feeling of not been easily monitored by guardians is the greatest undoing of social media. In Nigeria, tangible instances among which have buttressed this problem for instance the murder of one Cynthia Ekogu in 2012 by his Facebook friends is one of the several bad incidences. With an internet connected device, it is so easy to be lost to these sexual risk behaviours than before. Also, the media has also increased youths' experimentation of sexual risky behaviour. Most youths have been exposed to explicit sexual content to the extent that they have lost their innocence and sense good and evil. Sadly, in most cases, greater number of youths have become hardened and addicted to sexual experimentation and destructive sexual practices; the reason for the current immorality and unethical display of false lifestyle by the youths of today.

### 3. Literature

#### 3.1 Social Media Networking and Associated Risk Behaviours

Social media networking is an online service focusing on reflecting and building of social networks or relations among people sharing same interests, activities or backgrounds. These services or sites allow the user to create a virtual representation or profile showcasing one's likes, dislikes, interests, activities etc and also providing some additional services. Most of these services are internet based thus providing the users to interact with other fellow users easily. Wikipedia (2012) states that in 1994, the first social networking site was developed and the AOL messenger service was amongst the first popular instant messaging services evolved in 1997. These social networking sites have evolved and now have become extremely popular worldwide. Some of the popular networking sites are: Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Friendster, Hi5, Orkut, Hyves etc. Geocities was the first web-based social networking site developed in 1994.

In 2004, Facebook was launched at Harvard University as a way of connecting all the U.S. college students. In 2006 Twitter was launched which has been a huge success with 300 million users presently. In 2008, Facebook overtook MySpace to become the leader among the social networking sites. These sites in order to remain at the top of social networking continuously add new features and applications to make it more user-friendly and appealing to the youths e.g. chatting features, dating, audio and video sharing (Chandler, 2008; Choi & Hague, 2002).

[Eleuteri](#), [Saladino](#), and [Verrastro](#) (2017) contended that the identity, relationships, sexuality, and risky behaviors of adolescents of nowadays are the consequences of hyper-technology in the context of social media which have proliferated all human endeavour. In Nigeria, Lanre-Babalola (2018) asserted that Media Use and Sexual Behavior of adolescents especially the undergraduate are correlates as supported previously by the study by Lenhart, Purcell and Smith, (2010) on Social media and mobile Internet use among teens and young adults. Aftab, Cheung, Kim, Thakkar, and Yeddapanudi (2001) asserted through their theory on Information Theory that the digital age constituted a big challenge on the prevalence of risk behaviours among youths. Equally, Mangwere, Wadesango and Kurebwa (2017) noted that the influence of the electronic media on the behaviour of children/teenagers in Zimbabwe is devastating ranging from subtle juvenile deviance to bizarre moral conflicts. The authors further opined that the causes stem from the effects of disorientation of values and loss of true essence of life. It should be noted that exposure to explicit sexual material through digital device alters the sexual and reproductive health of the adolescent and young people in Nigeria (Ahonsi, 2013).

There is also evidence that when one is exposed to explicit sexual content either the abuse of it or proliferation through unconscious prevalence, that one sexual health is also compromised (Wusu, 2011). In the study carried out by Wusu (2011), he asserted that today's sexual health is a product of sexual health content of mass media which has become too cheap and affordable. Bleakley Hennessy and Fishbein (2008) contended

that sexual health works both ways: the relationship between exposure to sexual content in the media and prevailing adolescent sexual behavior.

#### **4. Theoretical Framework**

##### **4.1 Uses and Gratification Theory (Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955)**

The uses and gratifications (U&G) approach is complimentary to mass communication and most communication research (Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955). At the core of the theory is the aim to understand how, why, and with what purpose people use media in their everyday lives. The theory provides numerous insights into how television, the radio, and print resources (e.g. newspapers, magazines, and books) have been adopted by mass audiences as much as the current use of social media networking. While some scholars have dismissed the value of the U&G approach, Ruggiero (2000) argued that the future of mass communication relies on U&G approach which provides the reason and the expected satisfaction for adopting new technologies in communication world. With the large proliferation of social media in particular among young people, the approach seems to regain interest among scholars, as it can provide valuable insights into (1) what social media are adopted, (2) the uses of social media, and (3) what motivates adoption of different sites and services. Also of great relevance is to investigate what factors of these social media sites and services keep users engaged and encourage them to devote large amounts of time and effort to communicating in digital space (Boyd and Heer, 2006; Sundén, 2003). The answers above may equally collaborate the application of Technological determinism theory by Veblen (1857-1929).

Technological determinism is a reductionist theory that presumes that a society's technology drives the development of its social structure from its cultural values. Thorstein Veblen (1857–1929) emphasized in line with Karl Max principles that specifically productive technology is the primary influence on human social relations and organizational structure, and that social relations and cultural practices ultimately revolve around the technological and economic base of a given society. Marx's position has become embedded in contemporary society, where the idea that fast-changing technologies alter human lives is all-pervasive.

In view of the theoretical underpinnings, there is truism that social life and societal values are agents of technological advancement which ultimately alter the way we live. In the emergence of social media networking, one cannot imagine life without mobile phones, without internet services and without a window of connection to the outside world. The reality of this is that it has shaped the way we live as proposed by technological determinism theory. However, among the youths (undergraduates), the problem is that instead of societal values determining the use of the technology, it has regrettably been the opposite with the technology in this case the proliferation of social media networking determining the societal values of undergraduates. It is not uncommon to see patterns of youths' behaviour mirroring what they see and observe in the social media platforms such as in fashion, sexual misdemeanor and other deviant

behaviours. Therefore, technology determinism theory is deemed applicable in explaining the relationship between use/abuse of social media networks and associated vulnerability to sexual risk behaviours.

#### **4.2 Hypotheses**

1. There will be a significant relationship between the use/abuse of social media networks and associated vulnerabilities to sexual risk behaviours among undergraduates.
2. Females will have more associated vulnerabilities to sexual risk behaviours than their male counterparts.

### **5. Method**

#### **5.1 Participants**

A total of 422 undergraduates served as participants in the study among who are drawn from the population of undergraduate students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University and Imo State University Owerri all in Nigeria. There were 199 males and 223 females in sample. The age of the participants ranged from 17 to 24 years, with a mean age of 23.50yrs and standard deviation of 1.30yrs. The participants were selected through simple random sampling technique. Simple random sampling using balloting technique was used to select four (4) Faculties. The same method was used to select four (4) departments (one from each faculty). For the students in the departments, cluster sampling was used to select the student participants.

#### **5.2 Instruments**

Two instruments were used for the study namely; Social Media Use/Abuse Scale and Associated Vulnerability to Sexual Risk Behaviour Scale both scales by Ifeakandu (2011). In addition, demographic variables such as gender, age, educational background were included in the overall instrument used in the study. Social Media Use/Abuse scale is a 4-item scale developed by Ifeakandu (2011) that measures use/abuse of the social media in the internet. It is organized in five point Likert format scale consisting of four items which were used to measure social media use/abuse by undergraduates. This scale was based on measurement of most frequent Internet activities of students and the response format ranged from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (5). Validity/Reliability was ascertained through a pilot study conducted by the researcher and analysis of data gathered revealed that a reliability coefficient of the scale for Nigeria samples is .64. Associated Vulnerability to Sexual Risk Behaviour Scale is a 3-item scale by Ifeakandu (2011) that measures impulsive and risky use of the social media in the internet for explicit sexual purpose. The response format ranged from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (5). Validity/Reliability was ascertained through a pilot study conducted by the researcher and analysis of data gathered revealed that a reliability coefficient of the scale for Nigeria samples is .69.

### 5.3 Pilot Study

The researchers before proceeding to the main study, 51 sample copies of the questionnaire for the pilot study was shared to undergraduates of Anambra State University Igbariam Campus to ascertain the validity and reliability. The choice of the sample is because they share similar characteristics with the main study population. Participants for the pilot study were drawn from three departments from faculty of social sciences viz; Psychology (19 participants), Mass communication (22 participants) and Political science (10 participants). A cover letter from the department was included to seek the consent of school authorities and the participants before carrying out the study. The participants were assured of the genuine purpose of the inquiry research which is for academic purposes and that there is no right or wrong answers. The coded data from the pilot study were thereafter used to analyze the validity and reliability coefficients of the instrument using appropriate statistics. The pilot study revealed the following internal consistency for the scales: Use/Abuse of Social Media = .64 and Associated Vulnerability to Sexual Risk Behaviour = .69.

### 5.4 Main Study

In the main study, the researchers distributed surveys to obtain data for the relationship among the variables of the study. The questionnaire for the main study was distributed among student-participants from Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Nigeria. Simple random sampling was used for selecting the faculties, the Departments and the participants for the study. The participants were assured of the genuine purpose of the research which is for academic purposes and that there is no right or wrong answers. The participants were given the questionnaire with written instructions on it on how to answer the questions and they were advised to do so candidly for academic purposes. After distribution of the questionnaire, the researchers went round and collected the filled copies of the questionnaire. On the whole and after 2 weeks of fieldwork, a total of 439 questionnaires were administered while only 430 were collected back. Only 422 that were correctly filled and responses were used for the data analyses in the study.

### 5.5 Design and Statistics

The study employed the survey research approach and correlation design was adopted while Pearson product moment correlation coefficient statistics was used as the appropriate statistics in analyzing the data.

## 6. Result

**Table 1:** Summary table of the descriptive statistics for the variables of the study

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Associated Risk HIV Vulnerability	71.295	1.859	422
Social media Use	55.464	1.245	422
Associated Risk HIV Vulnerability			
Males	71.295	1.859	422
Females	73.442	1.106	422

**Table 2:** Pearson Correlation Matrix between social media use/abuse and Associated Vulnerability to Sexual Risk Behaviours

N	Factor	Associated Vulnerability to Sexual Risk Behaviours	
		R. cal	P. value
422	Social-media Use/Abuse	.62	.04

The result from the correlation table above (table 2) confirmed that there is significant correlation between social media use/abuse and associated vulnerability to sexual risk behaviour among undergraduates at  $r = .62, p < .05$  ( $n = 222$ ); hence, hypothesis I which stated that there will be a significant correlation between social media use/abuse and associated vulnerability to sexual risk behaviour among undergraduates is confirmed. Also, the descriptive statistics in table 1 equally confirmed that females had more associated vulnerability to sexual risk behaviour than their male counterparts at mean score of 73.44 with standard deviation of 1.106 for females and  $M = 71.29$  and  $SD = 1.859$  for males; therefore, hypothesis II which stated that females will have more associated vulnerability to sexual risk behaviour than their male counterparts was confirmed.

## 7. Discussion

This study investigated social media networking and associated vulnerability to sexual risk behaviour among undergraduates. The fear of being left out has lured many youths into abusive use of social media which has taken a center grip of most undergraduates' lives. The outcome is not palatable as many online chats ends in online dating and sexual promiscuity with high rate of exposure to many sexual risk behaviours notably; addictive pornography, prostitution, homosexuality and sexual transmitted diseases. The dangers of vulnerability to these has directed the focus of the current study and to find out if there are gender differences on associated vulnerability to sexual risk behaviour.

The finding of this result can be linked to the principles of technological determinism theory which presumes that a society's technology drives the development of its social structure and cultural values. Here the relationship of technological development with social media is what is shaping the way young adults live their lives in many aspects including abusive social media networking with its attendant vulnerability to sexual risk behaviour. This theoretical foundation is also supported by the empirical study carried out by Ifeakandu (2011) which found that social networking is becoming part of young people's everyday life and if not properly utilized could lead to high sexual risky behaviours including HIV/AIDS. Also, the current finding of this study is supported by [Eleuteri, Saladino, and Verrastro \(2017\)](#) study which found that young people in Nigeria prefer to access sexual information through their preferred social networking platform. [Eleuteri, Saladino, and Verrastro \(2017\)](#) contended that sexual risky behaviors of adolescents highly correlate exposure to explicit sexual content in the social media. Lanre-Babalola (2018) also found that social media use or abuse and sexual behavior are related as supported previously by the study by Lenhart,



Purcell and Smith, (2010) on Social media and mobile Internet use among teens and young adults.

### **7.1 Implications of the Study**

Social media and the internet may so far be the most relevant technology of this age thus far because of the way it connects people effortlessly and seamlessly. The speed of interaction and meeting new friends at almost no cost is something which has captured the heart of the people. However, there is a significant amount of risk associated with its exposures especially for young adults such as undergraduate students whom without guidance become an easy prey to various predators roaming the internet every second. One of them is being lured into sexual experiences with people whose health backgrounds are unknown. Besides, there is also the danger of being harmed in various other ways prelude to the actual sexual escapade such as accidents, robbery and even murder. The finding of the current study found significant relationship between use of social media and associated vulnerability to sexual risk behaviour; which implies one's chance of being a victim of associated vulnerability to sexual risk behaviour increases with the use of social media networking sites such as Facebook, 2go, Twitter, LinkedIn etc. This is so because ones exposure to these sites triples chances of having sexual experience with so many tempting invitations from these sites and the chance of persons with infections infecting their unsuspecting friends knowingly or unknowingly increases.

### **7.2 Limitations of the Study**

Although the study findings suggest that exposure to social media increases the chance of associated vulnerability to sexual risk behaviour however, there is a number of factors which may have limited the finding. One of such factors includes the individual differences and the personality background of people who surf the net. Another factor which may limit this finding is morality and religious inclinations of the undergraduates. Without moderating the effects of these two significant variables in a study like this, it is a limitation.

### **7.3 Recommendation**

In view of the findings of the study stated above, we therefore offer the following recommendations:

1. NGOs and development agencies as well as civil society organization should as a matter of urgency critically pay attention to Social Network Sites in an attempt at exploring its potential for effective health communication and mobilization.
2. Donor agencies should fund projects/programmes that aim at empowering people to be Internet savvy.
3. Universities and colleges should encourage students' positive use of the internet and networking sites especially ones that can help students in particular courses

for students to engage in scholarly discourse since majority of users on these platforms are youths.

4. Associated vulnerability to sexual risk campaigns should be repackaged and taken to the social networking sites to educate the youths and engage their attention.

#### 7.4 Suggestion for Further Study

Further research into the potentials of the usage of Social Network Sites should be encouraged as this will further help determine the extent of its capabilities to bring about development through effective communication. There is need to see the influence of religious affiliation and personality in subsequent study of social media and associated vulnerability to sexual risk behaviour.

#### 8. Conclusion

The study - Social media and associated vulnerability to sexual risk behaviour among students in selected Nigerian Universities was carried out to explore how exposure to social networking is associated with higher associated vulnerability to sexual risk behaviour among young people in Nigeria. Social networking platforms have features/chat rooms for flirting, adult-hook ups and sex chat. Moreover, pornographic images shared and accessed via the social media increase their sexual desire and in their quest to quench their sexual desire, increases associated vulnerability to sexual risk behaviour. The major objectives of this study are to: to assess relationship between social networking impacts on undergraduates' associated vulnerability to sexual risk behaviour and which sex is more vulnerable to its effects. After analysis, the findings revealed that there is positive relationship between social media use/abuse and vulnerability to sexual risk behaviour. Also, it was found that females are more vulnerable than males.

#### References

1. Aftab, O., Cheung, P., Kim, A., Thakkar, S., and Yeddanapudi, N., (2001). Information Theory and the Digital Age. Institute of Technology, Massachusetts.
2. Ahonsi, B. (2013) Sexual and Reproductive Health issues of Adolescent and Young people in Nigeria. Abuja: ARHF.
3. Chandler, D. (2008). *Technological or Media Determinism*. Retrieved September, 25 from <http://www.aber.ac.uk/./tdet08.html>
4. Choi, Y., & Hague, M. (2002). *Internet Use Patterns and Motivation of Koreans*. *Asian Media Information and Communication*, 12(1), 126-140.
5. [Eleuteri, S.](#), [Saladino, V.](#), & [Verrastro, V.](#) (2017). Identity, relationships, sexuality, and risky behaviors of adolescents in the context of social media. *Journal of Sexual and Relationship Therapy* 32(3-4), 354-365

6. Ifekandu, C. (2013) Mapping Hard to reach community: Think New Media. Nairobi HIVOS Publications.
7. Lanre-Babalola, F. O. (2018). Media Use and Sexual Behavior: A Study of Adolescents in Selected Secondary Schools in Ede, Osun State. *Arts Social Science Journal* 9, 319-328. doi:10.4172/2151-6200.1000319
8. Lenhart, A., Purcell, K., & Smith, A. (2010). Social media and mobile Internet use among teens and young adults. Pew Internet and American Life Project, USA.
9. Mangwere, A., Wadesango, N., & Kurebwa, M. (2017). Influence of the Electronic Media on the Behaviour of Children/Teenagers in Zimbabwe. *Journal of Communication*, 4, 101-109
10. National Population Commission [Nigeria] and ICF International. 2014. Nigeria Demographic
11. Oladeji D. & Ayangunna J. A. (2017). Media Influence as Predictors of Adolescent's Sexual Risky Behaviour in Nigeria. *MOJ Womens Health* 5(1): 00112. DOI: 10.15406/mojwh.2017.05.
12. Olubunmi, A. G., Fadeke, O. E. & Osore, A. F. (2017) Online Social Networking and Sexual Risk Behaviour among In-School Adolescents. 30<sup>th</sup> IBIMA Conference, Madrid, Spain
13. UNAIDS 2010. We can empower young people to protect themselves from HIV, Joint action for results, UNAIDS outcome framework: Business case 2009-2011. Geneva: UNAIDS.
14. Wusu, O. (2011). Sexual Health Content of Mass Media in Nigeria: An Exploratory Study. *Journal of Health and Communication* 3(1-4): 157-168.
15. Ybarra M. L., Mitchell K. J. (2005): Exposure to internet pornography among children and adolescents: A national survey. *CyberPsychology & Behavior* 8(5):473-486.

## Appendix I

### Questionnaire

The following are questions you are very familiar with; respond in affirmation to Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Undecided, Agree, Strongly Agree. This is not a test or an examination, there are no right or wrong answers, leave no question unanswered; your responses is strictly for academic inquiry and will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

#### Social Media Use/Abuse Scale instruction

(Tick/only One)

S/N	Item	5	4	3	2	1
1	Social media is young people's preferred medium for socialization					
2	Students spend many hours on social networking daily					
3	Social networking sites (Facebook, 2go, WhatsApp, Badoo) are addictive and distractive					
4	Young people exchange photos and videos (sexting) with their virtual friends/partners					

#### Associated Social Media Sexual Risk Behaviour Scale

S/N	Item	5	4	3	2	1
1	Young people source/negotiate for sexual partners through social media					
2	Young people had sex with a social networking peer through frequent networking					
3	Many of students' social networking (sexting) partners were actually met in the physical space.					

#### Social Media Sexual Health Awareness Scale

S/N	Item	5	4	3	2	1
1	Social networking can be utilized for health promotion that is youth-friendly					
2	Students get HIV information through the social networking sites compared to other media forms					
3	Social networking sites have helped in improving young people's basic knowledge about HIV/AIDS					

Creative Commons licensing terms

Authors will retain the copyright of their published articles agreeing that a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0) terms will be applied to their work. Under the terms of this license, no permission is required from the author(s) or publisher for members of the community to copy, distribute, transmit or adapt the article content, providing a proper, prominent and unambiguous attribution to the authors in a manner that makes clear that the materials are being reused under permission of a Creative Commons License. Views, opinions and conclusions expressed in this research article are views, opinions and conclusions of the author(s). Open Access Publishing Group and European Journal of Open Education and E-learning Studies shall not be responsible or answerable for any loss, damage or liability caused in relation to/arising out of conflict of interests, copyright violations and inappropriate or inaccurate use of any kind content related or integrated on the research work. All the published works are meeting the Open Access Publishing requirements and can be freely accessed, shared, modified, distributed and used in educational, commercial and non-commercial purposes under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).