



UNIVERSITY OF PORT HARCOURT POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TO OBSCENE IMAGES ON FACEBOOK

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Abstract

This study investigated the University of Port Harcourt post-graduate (PG) students' attitudes to obscene images on Facebook. The study made use of analytical descriptive survey design. The population of the study consisted all the 15,324 post-graduate students of the University of Port Harcourt of 2020/2021 session. The sample size for the study was 375, obtained using Krecie and Morgan formula. The data analysis was done using 365 copies of intelligibly completed and returned valid questionnaire which contained close-ended questions. The data analysis was done using percentages, frequencies and weighted mean score. Findings from the study revealed that the University of Port Harcourt PG students' thoughts towards obscene images on Facebook were very unfavourable and poor. Also, the finding showed to a high extent that the obscene images on Facebook evoked offensive feelings and elicited hatred for Facebook among PG students of the University of Port Harcourt. The study concluded that the dynamism inherent in long running social computing sites like Facebook can affect how the users use it as well as their attitudes towards the medium. The study recommended that Facebook should regulate its policy on obscene images and serve up to filter views to maintain the favourable attitudes among audience.

Keywords: Attitudes, Obscene, Images, Facebook, Social Media.



INTRODUCTION

From the period the world entered the information age till the present time, the traditional media audience have been the distributors of audio or video content to a dispersed audience via any electronic mass communication medium with a multitude of information. The emergence of what we now refer to as social media, which has fueled the human impulse to communicate and advance in digital technology. It is a story about establishing and nurturing personal connections at scale and it closes the gap created by distance. Social media newsfeed updates keep people in the loop of what is happening in their environments. Social media can also be referred to as Social Network Sites (SNSs) is just one type of social computing system (Newman, 2009). Powerful new two-way interactive internet tools such as message boards, blogs, wikis, twitter, YouTube and other social networks like Facebook are sometimes grouped by the phrase ‘Social Media’. These social media are often associated with ‘Web 2.0’, popularized by the internet entrepreneur Tim O Reilly. Tim and other strong advocates of Web 2.0 argued that the internet should not be just another form of distribution for big media companies but be an opportunity for a flowering of new creative expression - the read-write web (Newman, 2009). He added that social media is a shift in how people discover, read and share news, information and content is a fusion of sociology and technology, transforming monologue (one to many) into dialogue (many to many) and is the democratization of information, transforming people from content readers into publishers.

Andrew Keen (former Silicon Valley entrepreneur and author) referred to the social media as the ‘cult of the amateur’ (Newman, 2009). Keen argued that the advent of social media creates concern for the quality, reliability, accuracy, and trust placed on information got online. In Keen’s own words, “The Web 2.0 revolution has peddled the promise of bringing more truth to more people ... but every week a new revelation calls into question the accurate reliability and trust of the information we get from the internet” (Newman, 2009, p. 5). This shows a negative attitude towards information on social networks. Sociologist William Dutton at the Oxford Internet Institute (OII) on his own part argued that we are witnessing the emergence of powerful new voices and networks which can act independently of the traditional media and termed these developments the emergence of the ‘Fifth Estate’ (Newman, 2009). The social media are becoming an alternative source of news, as well as another option for politicians, businessmen or other public figures to bypass them and take their message – unmediated – to their supporters or followers.



Facebook is one of the SNSs that is becoming more popular across broad segments of Internet users. It has been said that the dynamism (e.g. possible changes in design, user population, individual user social context, etc.) inherent in long running social computing sites (such as Facebook) can affect how students of a site use it as well as members' attitudes towards it (Lampe, Ellison & Steinfield, 2008). Attitude can be seen as favourable or unfavourable evaluative reaction toward something or someone. Facebook has huge global database and traffic. Facebook grows at over 10 million users a month and currently sits at number two on the web traffic rankings. This SNS is said to be the third largest video website. More than 30 billion pieces of information in the form of news stories, web links, blog posts, notes, etc are reported to be shared on Facebook monthly (Bullas, 2014). This is not to say that social media like Facebook are replacing journalism or the traditional way in which information is shared among media audience. However, social media are creating an important extra layer of information and diverse opinion. Even though most people are still happy to rely on mainstream news organizations to separate fact from fiction and serve up to filter views, they are still increasingly engaged by information shared through social media, especially when recommended by friends or another trusted source (Newman, 2009).

The 21st century has been described as the age of social media. Social media came up in a big way and its influence on people is very powerful (Bullas, 2014). Social media platforms, especially Facebook is increasingly awash with obscene reports in words, photographs and videos. The power of Facebook messages rests majorly on the ability to instantly and simultaneously reach a wide, diverse audience, possibly shaping their thinking and their way of life. Everyone can observe ruins of good manners and prestigious values by some users of Facebook. Politeness, nobility and chastity have become unattainable while lawlessness, nakedness and obscenity are the order of the day. It is surprising that obscene publications still find their ways to our phones, computer system, online and by various social media and the appropriate authorities find nothing to prevent these in the public interest and morality, it requires a great concern why the appropriate authorities have not succeeded in blocking both local and international persons and their sources from publication of obscenity. Section 233 (2) of the Criminal Code Act further provides that the provision of this section shall extend to any article of two or more distinct items, the effect of which is to tend to deprave and corrupt. Obscenity in this context is the outrageous, offensive and indecent depiction of words or offensive images of victims of violence, murder, kidnapping or sex related details or a public act which depraves or corrupts the mind and which appeals to the



prurient interests or which is against the acceptable social media standards is obscene and vulgar.

Meanwhile, several scholars have done researches on Facebook use (Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe, 2007; Gross & Acquisti; Golder, Wilkinson & Huberman; Joinson cited in Lampe, Ellison & Steinfield, 2008) and a few have done works on perception of or attitude towards Facebook. The current study attempts to investigate the current attitudes towards obscene images on Facebook among Post-graduate (PG) students of the University of Port Harcourt who are Facebook users. Users' attitude towards obscene images on Facebook may affect how they behave within the site or use the information gathered from the site. To study this, it is important to know the categories of information that people are sharing and looking for on Facebook. Data gathered from Chikita research network (a network that surveys and researches trends and patterns) the five top categories of information that people share and seek out for on Facebook include: News, Community, How to do it yourself, Shopping, Celebrity/Entertainment with news topping the list. People also share and source for information on technology (Bullas, 2014).

Statement of the Problem

The growth and easy use of social media have provided people alternative means of sharing and finding information. People mostly share information they consider valuable and interesting. It is however not certain that the audience exposed to these pieces of information attach the same value to them as this may depend on whether or not the information serves the audience needs, especially, information that bothers on obscenity. There is no gainsaying the fact that social media such as Facebook encapsulate language of obscenity, vulgarity and indecency. Social media platforms are increasingly been awash with obscene reports in words, photographs and videos. Obscene Images according to National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) (2016) is a graphic presentation of lewd sexual activity, verbal or physical violence or bloodletting, portrayed in a socially offensive manner. Meanwhile, according to Okon (2004), the legislative provision on obscene and indecent publications is the obscene publication Act of 1961 and the children and young persons (Harmful Publication) Act 1961. A publication is obscene when it has the tendency to corrupt morals. Its elements are; it must be an article; it must be obscene and; it must be published.

In recent time, the Facebook has played a major role in promoting obscenity by way of semi-nude post, video-graphs, news in the form of soft-porn among others. In Nigeria, there are laws on obscene and harmful publications. For publication to be labelled obscene,



Section 233 (c) (1) of the Criminal Code Act provides that an article shall be deemed obscene for the purposes of the Act, if its effect taken as a whole is such as to tend to deprave and corrupt persons who are likely having regard to all relevant circumstances to read, see or hear the matter contained or embodied in it. This brings to question the obscene images on Facebook. How have the attitudes of Port Harcourt post-graduate students been for Facebook publications? With Facebook providing an avenue for the people to keep a close watch on the happenings in the public sphere about any significant event in Nigeria, are the University of Port Harcourt PG students finding Facebook as an effective medium for public communication presently. This study specifically sought to evaluate the University of Port Harcourt PG students' attitudes to obscene images on Facebook.

Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study was to investigate University of Port Harcourt PG students' attitudes towards (the different categories of) information on Facebook. Specifically, the objectives of the study were:

1. To examine the University of Port Harcourt PG students thoughts about obscene images on Facebook;
2. To ascertain based on University of Port Harcourt PG students, if the obscene images have elicited hatred for Facebook as a social medium; and
3. To find out the disposition of the University of Port Harcourt PG students to the obscene images on Facebook.

Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following research questions in order to achieve the purpose of this research work:

1. What are the University of Port Harcourt post-graduate students' thoughts of the obscene images on Facebook?
2. To what extent the obscene images elicited hatred for Facebook as a social medium?
3. What is the disposition of University of Port Harcourt post-graduate students to the obscene images on Facebook?

Review of related literature

Chris-Biriowu (2020) conducted a study on social media and the obscenity debate: conservatist, liberal and feminist perspectives. The purpose of the study was to discuss the



ongoing debates among conservatist, liberal and feminist thinkers on obscenity propagation and the law on how through the use of social media, potentially harmful content were disseminated. The study also highlighted the points of view of the discussants on the effects of obscenity on society and to propagate a contemporary position that uses the social media and the law to bring about a justification on our understanding of what constitutes an obscene material in societies where the term gives relatives meanings to different people. The study made use of cross-sectional survey design and the instrument used for data collection was interview guide. The data were analyzed using qualitative method. Finding from the study revealed that the debate on how obscenity harms individuals and the society is ongoing and different schools of thoughts have taken varying stands on it. The conservatist, liberal and feminist thinkers have debated on obscenity and how its dissemination through the instrumentality of social media affects users negatively. The study concluded by taking a stand on arguments for and against the effects of obscenity.

Owan, Ekpe and Eneje (2020) carried out a survey on undergraduates' utilization of social networking media and sexual behaviour in higher education: a case study. This study examined how social networking media influence the sexual behaviour of university undergraduates in Nigeria. The survey method was adopted and a sample size of 396 students was determined using the Taro Yamane's formula. The questionnaire was the instrument for data collection. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics with the aid of SPSS v25 software. Findings showed that undergraduates in Nigeria universities were largely exposed to a substantial amount of sexual contents on various social media networks; and that this exposure negatively influenced their psychology towards sex as manifested in the area of dating before marriage as a result of indulgence in interactive and romantic sites. The study recommended the introduction of social media education in higher institutions to help enlighten students on the responsible use of these technologies to minimize the inherent weakness and maximize the intrinsic values of utilizing these media platforms.

Theoretical Review

Technological Determinism Theory

The theory was propounded by Marshal McLuhan in 1964. The basic premise of the media technological determinism theory of Marshal McLuhan is that the media are extensions of the human body. The theory holds that the media not only alter their environment but the very message they convey. The media bring new perceptual habits while their technologies create new environments. The theory states that technology, especially the



media, decisively shape how individuals think, feel and act and how societies organize themselves and operates. The medium determines the content of communication. The medium has the power to manipulate our perceptions of the world. Mass communication has become the dominant form of interaction. Some examples of messages that are crafted to conform to the medium are: films and television action/violence, windows interface and multi-tasking, the hypertextbook, tool and audio recording. Marshall McLuhan said that inventions in technology invariably cause cultural change. Asemah (2020), McLuhan traced the emergence of Western civilization in stages, tied to the media available for human communication namely: tribal age, literate age, print age and the electronic age. Each age brought a new era with it.

- i. **The Tribal Age:** this was the age where man's perception of his environment was multi-sensory and his mode of communication was oral. Society was largely a recollection of the past.
- ii. **The Literate Age:** in this stage, McLuhan wrote that the phonetic alphabets fell into the acoustic world like a bombshell, installing sight ahead of the other senses. People who could read exchanged an ear for an eye. Literacy brought people out of collective tribal involvement into civilized private detachment. Literacy marked a step away from the tribal age and leave the tribe without being cut off from the flow of information. The age of literacy made visual dependence possible.
- iii. **The Print Age:** If the age of literacy made visual dependence possible, the print age made it widespread. Because the print age demonstrated mass production of identical product, McLuhan called it the forerunner of the industrial revolution.
- iv. **The Electronic Age:** This age is the ICT era. This is the stage at which communication now transcends, not only national, but even planetary barriers. This could be referred to as the age of cyberspace or superhighway. With the satellites stationed in geo-synchronous orbits. This stage overlaps the print age.

The sequence of invention and application of communication technology influences the direction and pace of social change, and communication revolutions leads to social revolutions. Relating this theory to the study, the theory aimed at drawing attention to the portent strength of digital media. This theory regards the wider dimension of information craze in the society, as a result of the information explosion fostered by digital era. It is therefore safe to assume that the social, historical, economic and cultural changes occurring



in human society today, could be linked to the invention and development of new technologies

The functionalist Theory of Attitudes

This theory of attitude was propounded in the 1950s when researchers developed the idea that attitudes served varying psychological needs and thus had variable motivational bases. The functionalist theory of attitudes was formulated by Daniel Katz (Williams, 2014). A fundamental question about attitudes that this theory puts forward concerns their purpose. That is what functions do attitudes serve? According to Katz attitudes are determined by the functions they serve for human. People hold given attitudes because these attitudes help them to achieve their basic goals. Katz distinguishes four types of psychological functions that attitudes meet (Williams, 2014). These functions are: **Instrumental (Adjustive or utilitarian function)** – This implies that people tend to develop favourable attitudes towards things that aid or reward them. A favourable attitude towards certain entertainment information is based on pleasant memories of that information. People always want to maximise rewards and minimise penalties and as a develop attitudes that help them meet this goal.

Knowledge - Attitudes provide meaningful, structured environment. In life people seek some degree of order, clarity, and stability in their personal frame of reference. Attitudes help supply people with standards of evaluation. Through such attitudes as stereotypes, people bring order and clarity to the complexities of human life. **Value-expressive** – Attitudes help people express basic values and reinforce self-image. For example, if one views oneself as a Catholic, one can reinforce that image by adopting Catholic beliefs and values. **Ego-defensive** - Some attitudes serve to protect people from acknowledging basic truths about themselves or the harsh realities of life. They serve as defence mechanisms. Those with feelings of inferiority may develop attitude of superiority. One common type of ego-defensive function is transference where an attitude adopted towards a person or event is not based on the reality of the situation (Williams, 2014).

Katz's functionalist theory also offers an explanation as to why attitudes change. According to Katz, an attitude changes when it no longer serves its function and the individual feels blocked or frustrated. That is, according to Katz, attitude change is achieved not so much by changing a person's information or perception about an object, but rather by changing the person's underlying motivational and personality needs. For example as one's social status increases or one becomes more enlightened about online shopping, one's attitudes toward one's method of shopping may change – one would need something that



better reflects ones new status (Williams, 2014). Relating this theory to the study, attitude can be influential on many processes such as being useful, social, relating to values. The current study wishes to investigate students' attitudes toward information on Facebook having in mind and trying also to prove that these attitudes are there due to certain benefits sought or disappointments experienced.

Concepts of obscenity

It has not been easy even at the international level to come up with a suitable meaning for the word "obscenity". A typical case was the confusion experienced by the General conference on the suppression of the circulation or traffic in obscene publication in 1964. So great was the confusion that the conference simply abandoned the search for a definition completely. Along the same lines Justice Potter Stewards in *Jacobllis v. Ohio* in 1964 when faced with issue of obscenity must have been close to despair when he admitted that he could not define obscenity "but I know it when I see it". Despite the acknowledged difficulties in finding appropriate definition of obscenity, some scholars have come up with some broad classifications of the subject in order to help one appreciate the scopes. According to Uwakwe (2003) "there are three district forms of obscenity namely (a) pornography (b) erotic realism and (c) the ambiguous classification of other erotica". (p.288).

Pornography is defined here as the explicit discussion of sex for purposes of sexuality stimulating the reader, viewer or listener. It is the most objectionable of these groups. Erotic realism is described here as sex in the context of reality. It presents a truthful description of man's sexual behaviour. Example is Cyprain Ekwensi's *Jaguar Nana* and Dilibe Onyeama's *Sex is a Nigger's Game*. Other erotica may come by way of non-literary obscenity. Example is obscene nudes. Meanwhile, Ewelukwa (2004) obscenity is the character or quality of a material, picture, act, etc of being obscene. It may in essence be a conduct, which tends to corrupt the public morals because of its indecency or lewdness. Any material which is shameful and is capable of corrupting public morals once disseminated, is obscene. Thus, molds, undeveloped photographs, printing places are also regarded as obscene notwithstanding that their processing has not been done to make the obscenity patent or to disseminate it. Also magazines, words, thoughts, picture and publications, which tend to corrupt public morals are said to be obscene. Obscenity means that something is indecent, offensive to modesty or decency. Whenever we talk of obscenity, the mind usually goes to sexual immorality. Thus, to construe it to be so will be to have a very narrow idea of the word. It is pertinent to observe that films that cause horror, wickedness or educate children in



robbery and other vices are obscene. Some of these publications, materials, utterances and the like when exposed to children corrupt them.

Concept of Attitude

Attitude refers to the general and enduring evaluative perception of some person, thing or issue (Cacioppo, Petty & Crites, 2001). It has also been described *as* a favourable or unfavourable evaluative reaction towards something or someone, exhibited in ones beliefs, feelings, or intended behaviour (Williams, 2014). It is also said to be a social orientation - an underlying inclination to respond to something either favourably or unfavourably. Chu (2011) sees attitude as a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some level of favour or disfavour. From the foregoing one can say that attitude is the tendency to respond or act favourably or unfavourably to a person, activity or object. Chu (2011) posits that attitudes influence behaviour by affecting intentions. One can therefore say that attitude toward a website or social media is a good indicator of audience reception of the sites or media's content. In other words, audience members are more likely to rely on the website/media's content as a source of information when they have favourable attitudes toward the site.

Methodology

This study adopted the analytical descriptive survey design. The analytical descriptive survey design can therefore be said to be that which basically attempts to identify and describe without manipulating or comparing any variable(s). It can also be said to be that which the researcher uses to find out for example what attitudes people have toward certain phenomena. The present study qualifies as an analytical descriptive survey design as it attempts to investigate what attitudes the University of Port Harcourt post-graduate students have toward information on Facebook. It has no intention of manipulating and comparing any variables. The population for the study comprised all post-graduate students of the University of Port Harcourt from 2020/2021 session. The figure from the graduate Officer as at the 2021 session was given as 15,324. From the entire population of 15,324, the researchers determined the sample size (n) using Krejcie and Morgan mathematical formula, which gave 375 as appropriate sample size for the study.

The sampling technique adopted by the study was the stratified sampling technique. The justification for stratification was based on the assertion of Ihejirika and Omega (2013) that "stratification of the universe assures for more representation of every segment of the population" (p.91). The stratification was done according to the twelve (12) faculties in the



University of Port Harcourt. Data were collected through the administration of copies of questionnaire. The researchers with the help of research assistants administered the questionnaire to the sample. A total of 375 copies of the questionnaire were distributed and only 370 copies were retrieved while (365) were found valid for data analysis. The study made use of quantitative methods of analysis, percentages and frequencies were employed in data presentation and analysis. In analyzing data from the four likert scale items in the questionnaire, responses to the items were weighted as follows: Strongly Agree (SA) = 4 points; Agree (A) = 3 points; Disagree (D) = 2 points; Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 point. The criterion weighted mean score was established at 2.50.

Data Presentation

Table 1: Obscene Image as a Graphic Presentation on Facebook

Options	Numbers of respondents	Percentage
Yes	323	88%
Neutral	42	12%
No	-	-
Total	365	100%

Table 1 showed that 88% of respondents accepted the definition of obscene image as a graphic presentation of lewd, sexual activity, verbal or physical violence or blood-letting portrayed in a socially offensive manner, 12% of the respondents were neutral, while none accepted ‘no’ response.

Table 2: Pornography, Erotic realism and Offensive nude as of Facebook Obscenity

Option	Number of respondents	Percentage
Yes	288	79%
Neutral	77	21%
No	-	-
Total	365	100%

Table 2 indicated that 79% of respondents agreed that pornography, erotic realism and offensive nude were categories of obscenity on Facebook, 21% of the respondents were neutral, while none accepted ‘no’ response.

Table 3: Number of Times Respondents saw Obscene Images on Facebook.

Number of obscene images	Number of respondents	Percentage
1 – 3	30	8%
4 – 6	42	12%
7 – 9	139	38%
Over 10 times	154	42%
Total	365	100%

Table 3 showed that 8% of respondents saw obscene images on Facebook 1-3 times in the past month, 12% saw obscene images 4 – 6 times in the past month, 38% saw the obscene images 7 – 9 times while 42% of the respondent saw obscene more than 10 times in the past month.

Table 4: Post-graduate Students’ Thoughts of Obscene Images on Facebook

Item	Nature of response	SA	A	UD	SD	Total	Total	W.M.S	Decision
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		4	3	2	1	365 (100%)	Weighted (fx)	Fx÷ Total	
7.	In my personal frame of reference, I see the obscene images of Facebook as meaningful	20	30	280	210	365	540	1.5	Rejected
8.	The obscene images on Facebook serve to provide users the basic truths and realities of the situation	8	39	300	130	365	700	1.9	Rejected
11.	The user-generated online content of obscene images, one holds the belief that Facebook is generally accepted and social media friendly.	52	66	318	151	365	587	1.6	Rejected
Average weighted mean score						365	609	1.7	Rejected

In table 4, the weighted mean score for items 7, 8 and 11 were rejected. The average mean score totals to 1.7 which is rejected. This points that the Post-graduate students' thoughts of obscene images on Facebook were unfavourable.

Table 5: Thoughts on Inclination of the Obscene Images on Facebook.

options	Number of respondents	Percentage
Highly favourable	-	-
Favourable	4	01%
Unfavourable	143	39%
Very unfavourable	218	60%
Total	365	100%

From the above information in table 5, none of the respondents established their thought on obscene images on Facebook as very favourable, 1% of the respondents agreed on favourable, 39% of the respondents accepted unfavourable, while 60% of the respondents said that obscene images on Facebook were very unfavourable.

Table 6: Evaluative Reaction towards Obscene Images on Facebook.

options	Number of respondents	Percentage
Very good	2	01%
Good	7	02%
Fair	29	08%
Poor	327	89%
Total	365	100%

Table 6, showed that 1% of the respondents' evaluative reaction towards obscene images on Facebook was very good, 2% of the respondents were good, 7% of the respondents were fair while 89% of the respondents were poor.

Table 7 Obscene Images elicited Hatred for Facebook as a Social Medium

Item	Nature of response	SA 4	A 3	D 2	S D 1	Total 365 (100%)	Total Weighted (fx)	W.M. S F _x ÷ Total	Decisio n
12	The affecting inventions of the obscene images on Facebook elicited hate.	592	594	30	5	365	1221	3.3	Accepted
13	I dislike the obscene images on Facebook because it was not censored.	810	560	16	7	365	1235	3.4	Accepted
Average weighted mean score						365	1228	3.4	Accepted



In Table 7, the weighted mean score for items 12 and 13 were accepted. The average mean score totals to 3.4 which is positive. This indicated that obscene images have elicited hatred for Facebook as social medium.

Table 8 Extent Obscene Images Evoke Feelings in a Socially Offensive Manner.

options	Number of respondents	Percentage
Very large extent	109	30%
High extent	227	62%
Moderate extent	18	05%
Little Extent	11	03%
Total	365	100%

Table 8 showed that 30% of respondents said the extent obscene images evoke feelings in a socially offensive manner to a very large extent, 62% of respondents said moderate extent, 5% said to a little extent, while 3% said not at all.

Table 9 Extent Obscene Images Deprave and Corrupt Public Decency.

options	Number of respondents	Percentage
All of the time	129	38%
Most of the time	209	57%
Some of the time	27	7%
Never	-	-
Total	365	100%

As indicated in Table 9, 38% of respondents said the extent obscene image depraved and corrupt public morals or outrage public decency was all of the time, 57% of respondents said most of the time, 7% said some of the time, while none responded to never.

Table 10 Disposition of Post-graduate Students to Obscene Images on Facebook.

Item	Nature of response	SA	A	U	SD	Total	Total	W.M.	Decision
		4	3	2	1	365	Weighted (fx)	S Fx÷ Total	
18.	The obscene images on Facebook make me quite indifferent to Facebook.	668	54	28	4	365	1240	3.4	Accepted
19.	Facebook enables me to articulate and make visible my social network but should censor obscene images.	472	681	28	6	365	1187	3.3	Accepted
20	In the light of the obscene images, my perception of Facebook as an intimate and private community have reduced.	444	687	32	9	365	1172	3.2	Accepted
Average weighted mean score						365	1199	3.3	Accepted

Table 10 indicated that the weighted mean score for items 18, 19 and 20 were accepted. The average weighted mean score totals to 3.3, which is positive. This signified that the disposition of post-graduate students to obscene images on Facebook were quite indifferent and their perceptions of Facebook as a private community have reduced.

Table 11 Evaluative Psychological Tendency of Obscene Images on Facebook.

Options	Number of respondents	Percentage
Very favourable	2	01%
Favourable	6	02%
Unfavourable	174	47%
Very unfavourable	183	50%



Total **365** **100%**

Table 11 showed that 1% of respondent in evaluating particularly the obscene images, their psychological tendency was very favourable, 2% were favourable, 47% were unfavourable while 50% were very unfavourable.

Table 12 Rate the Indicator of Audience Reception of Facebook Obscene Images.

Options	Number of respondents	Percentage
Very good	18	5%
Good	31	9%
Fair	89	24%
Poor	227	62%
Total	365	100%

Table 12 showed that 5% of the respondents rated the indicator of audience reception of Facebook as concerning the obscene image very good, 9% of respondents rated good, 24% of respondents rated fair, while 62% of respondents rated poor.

Data analysis and discussion of findings

Table 1 to Table 3 deal with the socio-demographic characteristics of respondent. Table 1, the definition of obscene images as a graphic presentation of lewd, sexual activity, verbal or physical violence or blood-letting portrayed in a socially offensive manner. Table 2 indicated the types of obscene images such as pornography, erotic realism and offensive nudes which 79% of the respondents said yes. Meanwhile, table 3 showed the number of times respondents have seen obscene images on Facebook, 42% of the respondents said over 10 times, 38% of respondents said 7 – 9 times, 12% of respondents said 4-6 times, only few respondents said 1 – 3 times. This is the indication of obscene images on Facebook. The media technological determinism theory by McLuhan, which this study is anchored, gives backing to the findings of this study. The theory stipulated that the sequence of invention and application of communication technology influences the direction and pace of social change, and communication revolutions leads to social revolutions. The theory aimed at drawing attention to the portent strength of digital media. Therefore the social, historical, economic and cultural changes occurring in human society today, could be linked to the invention and development of new technologies.

Research question 1: What are the University of Port Harcourt post-graduate students’ thoughts of the obscene images on Facebook?

From table 4 to 6, the study revealed that the university of Port Harcourt PG students’ thoughts of the obscene images on Facebook were not meaningful but very unfavourable and poor. The imputation here is that the post-graduate students’ thought on Facebook images were negative. Added to this is their evaluative reaction towards the obscene images on



Facebook in which 89% of the respondents accepted poor. This finding supports the findings of Owan, Ekpe and Eneje (2020) that that undergraduates in Nigeria universities were largely exposed to a substantial amount of sexual contents on various social media networks; and that this exposure negatively influenced their psychology towards sex as manifested in the area of dating before marriage as a result of indulgence in interactive and romantic sites. Also, the functionalist theory of attitudes adopted in this study buttresses these findings. This theory has it that, an attitude changes when it no longer serves its function and the individual feels blocked or frustrated.

Research question 2: To what extent those obscene images elicited hatred for Facebook as a social medium?

Table 7 to 9 showed the extent obscene images were capable of instigating hatred on Facebook. Table 7, showed that majority of the respondents agreed that the affecting inventions of the obscene images on Facebook elicited hate, and that they disliked obscene images on Facebook because the images were not censored. Table 8, revealed that the majority of the respondents concurred that the extent obscene images on Facebook evoke feelings in a socially offensive manner were to a very extent, while table 8, showed that majority of the respondents also accepted that obscene images on Facebook deprave and corrupt public moral or outrage public decency most of the time. These findings uphold the finding of Chris-Biriowu (2020) that the conservatist, liberal and feminist thinkers have debated on obscenity and how its dissemination through the instrumentality of social media, affects users negatively. Also, the functionalist theory of attitudes that underpinned this study supports these findings of the study. This theory proves that attitude change is achieved not very much by changing a person's information or perception about an object, but rather by changing the person's underlying motivational and personality needs.

Research question 3: What is the disposition of University of Port Harcourt post-graduate students in the light of the obscene images on Facebook?

Table 10, showed that the disposition of post-graduate students to the obscene images on Facebook. Majority of the respondents agreed that the obscene images on Facebook made it quite indifferent, obscene images to be censored and their perceptions of Facebook as a private community have reduced. Table 11, indicated that majority of the respondents also agreed that psychological tendency of obscene images on Facebook were very unfavorable. Finally, Table 12, revealed that majority of the respondents rated the reception of Facebook obscene images poor. Finally, these findings are in consonance with media technological



determinism theory used in this study. The theory holds that the media not only alter their environment but the very message they convey. The media bring new perceptual habits while their technologies create new environments. The theory states that technology, especially the media, decisively shape how individuals think, feel and act and how societies organize themselves and operate. The medium determines the content of communication. The medium has the power to manipulate our perceptions of the world. Mass communication has become the dominant form of interaction. Some examples of messages that are crafted to conform to the medium are: films and television action/violence, windows interface and multi-tasking, the hypertextbook, tool, video and audio recording.

Conclusion

The study concluded that Facebook is one of the social networking sites which is becoming more popular across broad segments of interest users. It has been noted that the dynamism inherent in long running social computing sites can affect how members of the site use it as well as members' attitudes towards it.

The affecting intentions of the obscene images on Facebook elicited fear, sympathy and hate on the students because it was not censored. Therefore, obscene images can easily deprave and corrupt public morals or outrage public decency. The rating of the indicator of audience reception of Facebook concerning obscene images is unfavorable. The disposition of Post-graduate students to the obscene images on Facebook were indifferent and the Facebook as an intimate and private community have reduced.

The study also concluded that Facebook obscene images though, complementing obscene images done in mainstream media, have certain disadvantages over obscene images in mainstream media. The government need to set up a regulatory measures to regulate, monitor and police the contents shared on the interactive platform Facebook offers.

Recommendations

In view of the findings from the study, the following recommendations have been made.

- 1) Facebook is an effective medium for publication, therefore should regulate its policy on obscene images and serve up to filtered view to maintain the favourable attitude among audience.
- 2) The mainstream culture for networking, socializing and information gathering especially the censorship of obscene images should be apply to the social media which are for social interaction.



- 3) Facebook administration should provide channels that users deem useful when passing on viral content and should certainly extend the ability of users to create and receive personalized news streams.



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