

Review

Facebook use among Nigerians in Houston Texas USA

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Social Media came into our world in the 21st century and changed the way things are done, knitting itself into the fabric of everyday living. It has opened the world in ways that was unimagined in previous decades, connecting people through time and space. Being one of the largest immigrant groups in Houston Texas, this study investigates how Nigerians have embraced the new medium as Diasporas. Two Hundred Nigerians were sampled in a survey in Houston, 62% of whom were males and 38% females. While results of the study confirmed a virtual community on Facebook for varied purposes, young adults between the ages of 23-30 years were found to be the most active. The most important reason for using Facebook was to identify with a religious group (88.4%), followed by keeping in close touch with family and friends at home in Nigeria and around the world (813%). The use of this social medium to promote one's business was third place with 74.3% of respondents in agreement. The least of these uses was for online dating with 31.9%. While approximately 65% of respondents also agree that Facebook has no effect on their romantic lives, 78.4% feel this social medium has impacted their friendships positively. There was significant difference in opinion between the genders on the effect of Facebook on relationships. Technology was vital in facilitating everyday use of Facebook. Results shows 98.4% of respondents have cell phones with internet access. 61% of respondents agree that the identity of being Nigerian is important to them. The study affirms the relevance of uses and gratification as a theory for the new media.

Key words: Facebook use, social media, Nigerians, Diaspora community, Houston.

INTRODUCTION

When Mark Zuckerberg created the concept of Facebook in the Harvard University campus as a tool for learning among his school mates, he had little idea this will transform into something greater than was intended. Today, Facebook and other Social Media networks have become alternative media in the 21st century which are a deviation from traditional mainstream media such as radio, television and newspapers which have been in

existence. The internet serves as a platform for social media websites which include others such as Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube and Snapchat. Facebook which is an integral part of social media is produced and patronized by the socially, culturally and politically conscious in society. Its uses are varied. It is a highly interactive medium used by friends, family, as well as in general networking. It may also include alternative uses

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for purposes of dissent and resistance to subjugation or the need to challenge an established ideology such as those in traditional media, in order to register an existence and be heard. Facebook builds, encourages and facilitates a cultural online community. According to Coyer et al. (2007), individuals not only share information and opinion about a passion, they also contribute, construct and share their own identities with each other. They authorize themselves to speak, validate their lives and make their voices public- at least the parts of those voices that otherwise would not get heard" (Coyer et al., 2007 p. 63). Facebook allows for divided consensus giving everyone liberty to participate, with divergent views, ideas and opinions.

Social Media requires little training to blog or tell a story and is not capital intensive. Facebook as a social medium could be accessed through the use of a desk top computer, laptop, smart phones, iPods, iPhones and other technological appliances. These devices are quick, easy to carry, operate, and communication is instant. This social medium is free to everyone 13 years old and above and for the most part, still unregulated as is on the World Wide Web. With a login requirement, Facebook has carved a niche for itself as a strong forum for people to network, and form strong identities. Originally dominated by the youth it has now spread to all demographic groups who may use it for everything from business promotion, community building, media engagement, etc.

Affirmatively, Africans are very community oriented and Nigerians are the largest African immigrant population in the United States. There are approximately 2 billion people active on Facebook (Pew Research center). As a medium with the largest web community in the 21st century, it would therefore, be interesting to find out how Facebook is utilized among Nigerians who live in Houston Texas. The Nigerian community in the United States has been identified as one of the most educated immigrant groups. According to Migration policy institute (MPI), in its June 2015 revised edition, "thirty-seven (37%) of Nigerians in the U.S. age 25 years and older, had bachelor's degrees, compared to 20% of the general U.S. population." Twenty-nine percent (29%) of the Nigerian diaspora age 25 years and older held a master's degree, Ph.D. or an advanced professional degree compared to 11% of the U.S. population overall." It is expected that the internet and social media would be of great relevance to them, to utilize and to keep abreast with political news and social activities in Houston, and particularly back home in Nigeria.

Significance of the study

The purpose of this study therefore, is to examine the many uses of Facebook among Nigerians in Houston as a community and how it enables them forge stronger

identity as people living outside their homeland. During the last century and beginning of the 21st century, the process of globalization brought about increased world travels; as well as occurrences of displacements through wars and natural disasters, bringing about migration and the establishments of refugee programs. Therefore, migrants utilize social media technology to sustain transnational social relations and networks more easily than was previously the case while Kurdish communities in Sweden use the internet as a forum for displaying their identities and interest" (Jaf, 2011) and the Nigerian diaspora for national development Wapmuk, et al, 2014

In addition to finding out the uses of Facebook within the Nigerian community, this study will also showcase its relevance in today's society and other ways to explore this social medium. Furthermore, it is hoped that this study will open up areas for further research work on diaspora communities who use Facebook and other social media to connect and bond with the rest of the world.

Research questions

1. How much do Nigerian adults in Houston use Facebook? What are the main reasons for using Facebook?
2. Does Facebook bring about a sense of belonging, brotherliness, and self-worth and increase self-esteem as a member(s) of the Nigerian Community in Houston?
3. Do internet and Facebook users within the Nigerian community view the social media-positively and (or) negatively?
4. Is there significant age difference in attitude towards Facebook between young and old Nigerians?

Theoretical framework of the study

The uses of social media like Facebook is expected to follow traditional reason people use the media- for information, entertainment, and other gratifications. "Uses and gratifications approach puts the function of linking need gratifications and media choice clearly on the side of audience members" (Uses and Gratification Theory Frankfurt School). Although this theory was primarily associated with traditional mainstream media, it seems only reasonable that we conceptualize the theory to include our current use of the internet simply because, the medium of Facebook and other social media, offer an interesting and interactive wide range of communication engagement to users (Papacharissi and Mendelson, 2010). The social, psychological and cognitive content base of the internet through which Facebook is accessed, to the needs and satisfaction derived from its usage, lends great credence to the theory of uses and

gratification.

Scope of the study

This study was limited to the use of Facebook among Nigerians resident in Houston, Texas United States of America. It does not include Nigerians who periodically come on visits to Houston.

LITERATURE REVIEW

History of social media

The internet became the platform for Social Media, by which social movements began to work with and thrived. According to Coyer et al. (2007), one of the earliest interactive networking on the internet began with the McSpotlight website, a social movement organization in 1996 which connected groups and individuals on the internet. The above authors also stated that, this site was set up “to raise awareness on the court case between the fast-food chain McDonalds, and the anarchist group London Greenpeace, for the latter’s alleged publishing of defamatory material which claimed that McDonald’s was responsible for the destruction of rainforests to provide land for beef cattle, therefore, infringing upon workers’ rights, cruelty to animals and promoting unhealthy eating.” The site was a library of information in its initial set up, but was later expanded beyond its scope. It developed into a site where information was created, exchanged and consulted and became a store house for communicating all of these among activists campaigning for ‘a number of anti-environmental corporations’ (Coyer et al., 2007). These struggles were reminiscent of Social Movements. The internet and social media have further enabled this process by opening up a wider forum for advocacy groups and everyone to collaborate, support and even champion a cause. The internet has offered a significant opportunity for networking beyond the limited uses of telephone call and fax paper, or any other form of gathering.

The new tools of social media have reinvented social activism (Gladwell, 2010). Twitter and Facebook have been great tools in changing the face of dictatorial regimes in Iran, Egypt, Libya and as we continue to see in Syria and hopefully around the world (Qadir and Afzal, 2017). However, today’s social media sites are as numerous as are human interest, with each user seeking enjoyment and gratification from engaging in them.

Development of social media

Social media have evolved to what we have in present

day and though there have been many social media sites in past years, the following -YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn, Snapchat and WhatsApp are considered some of the most popular ones.

YouTube is a video sharing website founded in 2005 by Chad Hurley, Steve Chen and Jawed Karim who were early employees of PayPal. Individuals, groups and media corporations can upload, view and share ideas. Alone and in distant places, they are able to share experience and enjoy the music all at the same time. This site offers sections for comments where shared experiences and feelings are written, bringing instant connection without necessarily knowing each other. (Statistic on YouTube, 2019).

Facebook was established by Mark Zuckerberg as a social networking site to Harvard University students in February 2004. Facebook quickly grew to other universities eventually including everyone from ages 13 years and older in September 2006 (Facebook.com 2009, Pew Research Study 2018). As an online site for networking and interaction among family, friends, classmates, colleagues, acquaintances and others, approximately over 2 billion active users log into Facebook daily. This dependence on Facebook for business growth are in the areas of advertisement by the media, for politics and various groups and sectors in society and has become prevalent and ‘a game changer’ in how things are done. This will constitute a major review of the subject in this paper. Facebook, YouTube continue to be the most widely used online platforms among U.S. adults (Pew Research Study, 2018).

Twitter was founded in March 2006 by Evan Williams, Jack Dorsey and Biz Stone. Twitter is an online networking and micro blogging service. Tweets are text messages not exceeding 280 characters (from its initial 140 characters) (Twitter.com), sent by only registered users. Unregistered users can only read but are not able to tweet. Users are encouraged to re-tweet, which is a reposting of someone else’s tweet (Twitter.com). This practice enables the message or information to pass around quickly. Many tweets are submitted every 2 to 3 days by more than 200 million active users across all ages and demographics in every major city in the world (Bennett, 2013). According to Pew Research Study (2018), twitter users are wealthier and more educated than the general public. Three years after its launch in 2006, Twitter published its billionth tweet on its network (Bennett, 2012). Twitter encourages one to pay attention to what is happening in society on social and political causes and enables quick information flow. It has been of great benefit to the media from which stories on human interest subjects all around the world, are drawn for broadcast. It is to this end Shea Bennett writes that “Twitter has established itself as an increasingly important platform- and source -for breaking news and information” (Bennett, 2013). Instagram was created by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger. Instagram applies

digital filters to pictures as well as short videos and sharing them on its website and other social networking sites. The format of pictures on Instagram is akin to the square shape feature of Kodak and Polaroid as distinct from the images of phone cameras. Barely two years after its launch in October 2010 it attracted over a 100 million active users. Its popularity continues to grow and in 2018, users had grown to about 200 million users listing 25 million business platforms (MacGraw, 2019 (Infographic: Instagram Statistics) Instagram is owned by Facebook, having acquired the site in April 2012 for approximately \$1 Billion in cash and stock, with a commitment by Mark Zuckerberg, founder of Facebook, to develop Instagram independently (Park, M, 2012).

LinkedIn is a professional, job related, career building networking website founded by Reid Hoffman, in December 2003. It has its headquarters in Mountain View, California, with offices spread across the United States, London, and an International Headquarters in Dublin, Ireland. It is reported that LinkedIn has 500 million users in more than 200 countries and territories. (LinkedIn.com, 2019). Users of this site can invite anyone within the same professional interest, but like most social networking services, the invitees have to be registered. LinkedIn does not invite anyone but the networking takes place among members of the groups. The website only encourages group formation for career building purposes. One of the most beneficial groups is the Alumni which is a platform to reconnect and network with classmates for work related opportunities. Others are corporate, academic, nonprofit organizations and special interest groups for research, employment, career growth and advancement (LinkedIn.com).

The uses of social media

The uses of Facebook have evolved from its original concept in Harvard University, and has become as varied as they come. These have become indispensable in the lives of some with diverse uses. From the individual's social and psychological fulfillment to corporate organizations, interest groups, politics and governments, religion and faith based groups, education and schools, small and large scale businesses and communities around the world, social media have become the yard stick on how things are done.

The importance of social media for news cannot be overemphasized both for the consumers of news and the digital and electronic media companies. Social media have influenced the way electronic media companies operate; a game changer for the industry with renewed opportunities for creative marketing, for advertisement and promotions, to develop and share content, do research, open up new avenues for revenue, and build relationship with audiences (Albarran, 2010). The television stations and their staff (presenters and

anchors), are engaged on Facebook and Twitter which enable them follow events happening around the world and get news in real time. A key benefit to an anchor's engagement on social media is that audiences seem to identify presenters and anchors with the station they work for. Putting themselves out there on social media and being 'friends' with scores of people will equally attract viewers and increase ratings for the networks. Social media are spontaneous in breaking news and this is very beneficial to the networks and cable system. What the public have witnessed in recent times is a healthy but fierce competition among the networks as to who breaks the news first. People use their social networks and social networking technology to filter, assess and react to news (Moller, 2013). News has become a shared and participatory experience for friends, friends of their friends, colleagues and families on social network. In a Pew Internet survey, fifty nine percent (59 %) of Americans say they get news from multiple sources and platforms, offline and online, and from four to six media platforms on a typical day. Thirty seven percent (37%) have contributed to the creation of news, commented on, shared or passed-on news on all of their social networking sites. This report states that the internet is now the third most popular news platform behind local and national television news (Pew Research Study, 2018). With the advancement and proliferation of digital technology, cell phones are readily affordable to most; and news can be accessed on the go. Thirty three (33%) of cell phone owners in this survey now get news on their phones through social network (Pew Report, 2010).

Social media communication is made easy in abbreviations and coded language especially among the youth. Friendship is more engaging when belonging to a clique with its own peculiar language. Language in this forum becomes a bonding tool for these preteens, teenagers and young adults. Abbreviated language has always been there but on social media, it is not just spoken but written. This brings a sense of belonging, one of popularity as to how many friends one can boast on Facebook or the number of followers you have on twitter. Interaction with friends on social media within a group, bring a sense of well-being, psychological upliftment and builds a high self-esteem and reduces feelings of "alienation and isolation" among young people (Regan and Steeves, 2010).

Social media is also used for academic and instructional purposes. Alumni of high schools and colleges and universities, including various professional and social interest groups are formed on Facebook, creating an identity for its members (Gruzd et al., 2018; Manca and Ranierib, 2016). The benefits are enormous as alumni groups are known to be extremely beneficial to the parent schools with an imbued sense of pride in their alma mater and a strong patronage in the school. Fundraising is paramount in this regard but other than keep the alumni connected with each other, helping them

get jobs is a novelty among colleges. LinkedIn and twitter are utilized by some universities to share job leads with its alumni. Albarran (2010) states that social media websites such as LinkedIn have been used to post jobs which helps to reduce cost considerably for employers. Facebook has been known as a site used to screen potential employees, and young people are to refrain from using foul language and posting obscenities on their page as this could possibly harm them. Students find social media a useful tool in their academic work, communicating with instructors and professors. The overall result is better grades and success which leads to great self-esteem, confidence and general well-being.

Since the emergence of social media, the business world has come agog, seizing the opportunity to market and promote its products, goods and services to its customers while reaping huge profits from doing so. Advertisement, blogging, voting on products and services with shares, likes, tweets, retweets, and feedback are all part of the effectiveness of marketing on social media. In the same vein, social media has become a formidable strategy for tourism (Kiráľová and Pavlíčka 2015). Holiday destinations and recreation have become competitive within local, national and international sites and so the use of social media has equally matched this competitiveness in the tourism industry (Jussilaa et al., 2015; Wamba and Carter, 2016).

In politics, social media are also used as campaign tools to mobilize and organize thousands of people. Whereas registrations in past elections were done in mundane and cumbersome fashion, social media enabled party affiliates and supporters an easy online registration during the previous United States Presidential elections. Facebook and twitter are mobilizing tools on any issue of human concern but especially for the politically and socially conscious. Social media as a campaign tool, all began when in 2009 “Obama for America campaign (OFA), drew on a database of approximately 13 million email addresses, an active community blog and a digital network of volunteers to raise money, encourage voter turnout and support a grassroots approach to election campaigning” (Clark, 2010). During that time, President Obama had 27.6 million Facebook friends and 207,000 YouTube followers (Rosentiel and Mitchell, 2012), Raine and Smith, 2012). There was no doubt that President Obama’s overwhelming success in the 2012 Presidential elections was due to his widespread use of social media. Citizens connect with each other, influence decision makers and hold legislatures and government officials to account with the use of social media (Clark, 2010). The interaction with those who govern, bring a sense of consciousness, connection and establishes true democracy and authenticity in the system (Bode, 2016; Boulianne, 2015).

Social media will get to where missionaries cannot go (Wayne, 2012). People post comments, share experiences (testimonies), ask questions and receive

answers on blogs. Pastors and evangelist all over the United States and the world, effectively use Facebook, twitter and other social media to give daily spiritual guidance and a sense of church family identity to its members. The largest church in the United States with followership all over the world- the Lakewood church, which is pastored by the charismatic young Pastor Joel Osteen, constantly keep its members and followers connected, sharing bible verses with his distinct message of hope on a daily basis and creating a sense of belonging, especially in a large flock such as Lakewood church. Facebook home page is rife with messages from other evangelicals such as Joyce Meyer, T.D. Jakes who equally have outreach and a large followership all over the world. The catholic Pope endorses “social networking as a powerful tool for evangelization” (McGuinness, 2013). In His Holiness message to Catholic Faithful on the occasion of the 45TH World Communications Day- titled Truth, Proclamation and Authenticity of life in the Digital Age, Pope Benedict XV1 called on the church known for being conservative, to embrace the “extraordinary potential of the internet and the complexity of its uses”. In reference to the use of social media for evangelism by the church, the Pope stated that “...the new communications technologies must be placed at the service of the integral good of the individual and of the whole of humanity” (Pope Benedict XV1, 2011). This was seen as a welcome development, but clearly the Holy Father still cautions that its use must be “safe, responsible and civil”(McGuinness, 2013).

Social media is also useful for public health information dissemination, advertisement, disease surveillance and notification activities, m-Health social interaction with patients including international health organizations like World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and also by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) (Fung et al., 2015).

Background to Diasporas as an identity

To define ‘Diasporas’, Rizvanoglu and Guney (2010) spelt out the following groups of people- expatriates, expellees, political refugees, alien residents, immigrants and ethnic and racial minorities as identities. International students to a country like the United States are inclusive as Diasporas because it is well known that most of them continue to build a life in the US after their studies. However many people also embark on emigrating voluntarily, with a desire “to enrich oneself with new experiences” (Lacroix, 2010). Suffice it to say, these are categories of people living outside their homeland, the circumstances notwithstanding. Travelling and adventures have always been a desirable past time or part of recreation activity of human life but only minimally so. However, writing on Globalization, the Stanford

Encyclopedia of Philosophy traced increased movements to other lands to the “proliferation of high-speed transportation, communication, and information technologies as the most immediate source for the blurring of geographical and territorial boundaries...” This is a pointer to the invention of jet planes and the World Wide Web as directly responsible for bridging a once spherical world to closer proximity with each other, therefore, leading to an increase in travel in the past decades. Goswami (2010) put it in simpler terms, “The intensification of globalization has resulted in an increased movement of population across borders and the subsequent emergence of diaspora communities which are far removed from their homelands.” pg.2 Time and space has been bridged by technology. The world today has been transformed to a ‘global village’, a term coined by Marshall McLuhan thirty years before the World Wide Web was invented but which is how the world is described today.

Uses of Facebook and other social media in Diaspora communities

In spite of globalization’s effect on immigrants and the desire to assimilate into the new culture, people still tend to gravitate towards the familiar. The formation of an online virtual community is an invaluable tool for people of different ethnicities living outside their countries. A cultural, social and political identity within one’s ethnic geography is part of ‘transformation of the self’ and contributes to the individual’s identity and self-esteem. Diaspora communities carry a “home land idealism which draws them sentimentally to stay connected and an attempt to recreate memories of the past through association with others of similar background or by keeping in contact with the homeland” (Rizvanoglu and Guney, 2010). The fact that Diasporas are immigrants in a new country puts them at a disadvantage of a minority group and that might carry implications for racism and prejudice (Lacroix, 2010). Being that sometimes immigrants are exposed to racism in their new homeland, at the day’s end, they seek the familiar and gravitate towards where they are most celebrated. To these ones and others in diaspora, Facebook is instrumental. Diasporas therefore seek out their own identity by bonding together as a community, online or even in traditional settings. Communication technologies carry out an important role by facilitating the relationship between diaspora and the homeland (Rizvanoglu and Guney 2010).

Increase use of the internet for social networking, strengthens social capital as well as bonding and bridging which are core ties to build stronger communities (Hampton, 2010). An example of this is taking care of the poor in our society. The essence is that people must stay connected, work as a team socially, and politically to build a stronger and better society. Social networking

On Facebook is key to building these bridges as (immigrants) send money for development, connect with their families and friends for social interactions and engage in political discourse to maintain relevance in their homeland and within their new community. The subject of Goswami’s study is the Indian Diasporas’ in the United Kingdom, which maintains strong affinity with the homeland and its immediate community through social media. Maintaining relationships with high school friends is important for young adults who move away to attend college outside their homeland in order not to erode on social capital (Ellison et al., 2007). These students who are found all over the world, and who in times past may have felt alone and homesick, obviously feel less so because of Facebook which remains one of the most popular websites for their generation. In spite of assimilation, other examples are the African, South American and Asian- (Chinese, Indian and Korean families as well as international students of all races) who as diasporas in the United States still have attachment to their homeland thousands of miles away. Instant letters and photos are uploaded through social media and accessible by friends and family. While Facebook is instant, traditional letter writing takes some time to go back and forth. It is free and therefore, economical in comparison to telephones or other forms of communication.

METHODOLOGY

Sampling/study design/instrument for data collection

A non-probability purposive sampling was utilized for the study, targeting Nigerians in South West (SW) Houston in the United States. Two hundred (200) questionnaires were distributed while one hundred and eighty three (183) were well completed giving a response rate of 91.5%.

A structured self-administered questionnaire with one open ended question and twenty seven closed ended questions was used, most of which had simple Yes or No answers. A five scale Likert format was used in one of the questions, all of which worked towards a quick and easy means to answer the questionnaires. The pilot and reliability testing of this questionnaire was done with thirty (30) participants, all Nigerians with 22 males representing 73.3% of respondents while 8 females in the study stood at 26.7%. After this pilot study, the disparity in gender representation and all other ambiguities were corrected before the full study was conducted.

Procedure

Twenty Eight (28) questions in the questionnaire was distributed to two hundred Nigerians at the following key locations; Nigerian restaurants and Food Stores, Nigerian churches, House parties organized by Nigerians, e.g. birthdays and wake keepings, social group meetings/community meetings and Nigerian students in one of the HBCU campuses in Houston Texas. The South West of Houston is the zone where most Nigerians resident in the United States have their business which include but are not limited to churches, restaurants and food stores. The study location is significant as these businesses have predominantly Nigerian members, worshippers or customers as may be the case.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the sample.

Variable	Categories	n	Valid (%)
Age	<23	40	22.2
	23-29	38	21.1
	30-39	44	24.4
	40-49	33	18.3
	50 or 50+	25	13.9
	Total		
Gender	Male	113	62.1
	Female	69	37.9
	Total		100
Marital status	Married	92	50.8
	Divorced	18	9.9
	Living with someone/single	71	39.2
	Total	100	100
Education	Some high school	8	4.5
	High school	12	6.8
	Some college/college student	18	10.2
	College graduate	75	42.6
	Post-graduate/professional degree	18	10.2
	Doctoral degree	45	25.6
Total			100
State of origin	North	8	4.7
	East	66	38.8
	West	73	42.9
	south	23	13.5
	Total	100	100

Participants in this study who were required to be eighteen years and above were individually approached at these locations where the purpose of the research was briefly explained. Those who were willing to participate were asked to sign the consent form which was attached to the questionnaire. The consent form emphasized anonymity and privacy.

Approval to conduct this research survey was granted by the Department of Research Enhancement and Compliance, Texas Southern University.

Data analysis

The data entry and analysis was performed using Excel spreadsheet and SPSS for Windows version 17. Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed. Descriptive statistics include; frequency, mean and standard deviation to summarize variables while inferential statistics (chi-square) was used to test the significance of associations between categorical variables. The level of significance was set at $p < 0.05$.

RESULTS

This study examined the sense of community that

Facebook as a social medium could create among communities in diaspora. A convenience survey was carried out on the Nigerian community in Houston Texas. This chapter highlights the demographic characteristics of respondents first. Then, each research question was examined and analyzed based on the data.

Sample description

Respondents were screened who must be Nigerians resident in Houston with a Facebook Account. They must be 18 years or older. 200 questionnaires were distributed but 180 were completed and found useful.

Table 1 lists demographic characteristics of respondents in this study. Sixty two percent (62.1%) of the respondents were males while approximately thirty eight (37.9%) were females. Respondents in the 30-39 age groups representing 24.4% were the largest in the study. Respondents who are married were recorded as 50.8%, close to 10% were divorced, and about 39% were

Table 2. Reasons for Facebook use among Nigerian Adults.

To get general info	n	Valid %
Yes	108	65.9
No	56	34.1
For socializing		
Yes	98	65.8
No	42	28.2
To post photos		
Yes	67	59.3
No	46	40.7
Identify with social/religious group		
Yes	108	86.4
No	17	13.6
keep in touch with family/friends		
Yes	122	81.3
No	28	18.7
Promote my business		
Yes	104	74.3
No	36	25.7
Online dating		
Yes	22	31.9
No	47	68.1
Possible partner		
Yes	24	14.0
No	147	86.0
Total	100	100

single or living with someone. The mean age of respondents in this study is 36.92. About 43% of the participants had college degree, while 25.6% have graduate degree. Nearly 43% of the respondents were from the western part of Nigeria and these constitute the largest ethnic group in the study. This is closely followed by people from the Eastern part of the country with 39%. The Southern part of Nigeria was represented by 13.5% while the least representation was those from Northern Nigeria with 4.7%.

RQ1. How much do Nigerian adults in Houston use Facebook? And What are the main reasons for using Facebook?

Table 2 revealed 8 major reasons Nigerians use Facebook. Identifying with a social or religious group

came up as #1 reason with 86.4%. This was closely followed by the need to keep in close touch with family and friends with 81.3%. Facebook as a tool to promote business was represented by 74.3% as the third major reason, while for socializing came up with 65.8%. Using Facebook to receive general information was 65.9% and using this social medium to post pictures for family and friends for viewing was nearly 59.3%. However, a combination of using Facebook to socialize and post pictures in order to keep in touch with family and friends around the world was represented with a huge 92%. The use of this social medium as a means for a possible partner and online dating came up at the bottom of the line with 14 and 31.9%, respectively.

This research revealed that 98.4% of respondents have cell phones with internet device. As a result, Table 3 shows significant access to Facebook throughout the day. While nearly 41% of respondents access Facebook

Table 3. Frequency of facebook use among Nigerians.

Frequency	n	Valid (%)
All the time	56	31.1
1-3 times a day	73	40.6
Once a week	34	18.9
Once a month	17	9.4
Total	100	100

Table 4. Time spent on Facebook yesterday.

Frequency	n	Valid (%)
Did not use at all	14	8.8
Less than an hour	82	51.6
2-3 hours	44	27.7
More than 3 hours	19	11.9
Total	100	100

1-3 times a day, 31% of other respondents allude to using Facebook all the time. Table 4 revealed that 51.6% of respondents individually used Facebook for less than an hour, while close to 28% admitted to using Facebook 2-3 hours (both groups), on the day preceding this survey.

RQ2. Does Facebook bring about a sense of community among Nigerian adults?

One third of the respondents in this study answered yes to being active as members of an online Nigerian organization as shown in Table 5. These range from ethnic gatherings, political affiliations as well as college and high school alumni associations.

Results of five variables in Table 6 show the importance of the respondents' identity as Nigerians and how it impacts their self-esteem. The researcher grouped the positives of strongly agree and agree together as 1, while the negatives of strongly disagree and disagree was coded as 3. The neutral of don't- know was coded as 2.

About 61% strongly agree/agree that being Nigerian is an important part of their self-image. While approximately 51% respondents in V43 strongly disagree/disagree that their identity is not tied to other Nigerians, 28% strongly agree/agree that their destiny is tied to the destiny of other Nigerians. 84% of respondents in V46 have a strong sense of belonging to the Nigerian people while 5.3% of respondents disagree. Nearly 80% of respondents strongly agree that they have a strong sense of attachment to other Nigerian people in V47. 79% of respondents agree that being Nigerian is an important reflection of who they are while testing V48. Table 7 illustrates the use of indigenous language to foster a

sense of community among Nigerians on Facebook. An open ended question was used to find out how much language plays a part to connect with family and friends on this medium. Results show that while 55.6% of respondents do not use language, nearly 45% of Facebook users agree to the constant use of some of Nigeria's 250 indigenous languages on Facebook in order to connect with family and friends. Most of these comments alluded to using an indigenous expression on Facebook to communicate effectively. The English language is sometimes believed to erode or take away aspects of what the sentence in an indigenous language would otherwise convey better.

RQ3. Do Nigerian Facebook users view the social medium negatively or positively?

The researcher primarily asked if respondents use Facebook for online dating. A total of 147 respondents answered no to this while 22 others answered yes. The results are indicative of the fact that this is not a favorite pastime of members of this community. Table 8 displays results of Facebook effect on relationships. About 65% say Facebook has no effect on their romantic life. 64.9% feel positive about the use of Facebook on their family life. 78.4% agree that Facebook has positively impacted their friendships. When asked if there was someone among their Facebook friends they could count on for advice, results show a significant 57% of respondents did strongly agree/agree

RQ4. Age and gender differences on Facebook

In Table 9, the ages of respondents are categorized in

Table 5. Online Membership of Nigerian Organizations.

Answer	n	Valid (%)
No	122	67.0
Yes	60	33.0
Total	100	100

Table 6. Identity of being Nigerian.

	1= Strongly agree or agree	2=Don't Know	3= Strongly disagree or disagree
Being Nigerian is important to my self-image	61.3	10.4	28.3
My destiny is tied to that of other Nigerians	28.3	20.8	50.9
I have a strong sense of belonging to the Nigerian people	84.0	10.7	5.3
I have a strong attachment to other Nigerians	79.9	10.9	9.2
Being Nigerian is an important reflection of who I am	79.1	11.6	9.3
Total	100	100	100

Table 7. Use of Indigenous Language on Facebook (open - ended question).

Answer	n	Valid (%)
No	95	55.6
Yes	76	44.4
Total	100	100

Table 8. Effects of Facebook use on relationships.

Parameter	Positive - 1 (%)	Negative - 2 (%)	No effect - 3 (%)
Romantic	25.9	7.8	64.7
Family Life	64.9	6.0	29.1
Friendship	78.4	2.9	18.0
Total	100	100	100

groups to the number of Facebook friends. Results show that young adults in their 20s have more Facebook friends of over a 100 friends (33%).

Table 10 displays results of gender differences on the number of Facebook friends among Nigerians. Males are shown to have more Facebook friends (65%) than females (50%). Clearly, this has cultural undertones as the Nigerian male is freer and therefore, more open to accepting more friends request on FB than the average Nigerian woman. It is even more of a constraint if the Nigerian female is married.

Table 11 displays results of the impact of Facebook on family life between the genders in this research. More Nigerian women feel Facebook effect on family life was negative (6%), a significant difference of 2% from the males. On that consistent note, 54% females (over the

average) believe this social medium did not impact the family in any way.

DISCUSSION

This research began with 200 questionnaires distributed to same number of Nigerians in a convenient sampling method in Houston Texas. Results of this study confirmed the presence of a new community forged online. It showed that Nigerians are a culturally integrated community, offline and online, and one of the most educated immigrant groups in Houston Texas. This community has a huge presence on Facebook. The young adults, those between ages 23-30 are shown as the most actively engaged on this medium. So do moms

Table 9. Age differences on Facebook.

Age	Number of Facebook Friends		
	1-50	51-100	100+
<23	2	1	31
23-29	2	1	33
30-39	9	1	25
40-49	6	5	16
50 or 50+	8	7	10

$\chi^2 = 34.19$, $df = 8$, $p < .05$.

Table 10. Gender differences on Facebook.

Gender	Number of FB friends		
	1-50	50-100	100+
Male	23	11	65
Female	5	5	50

$\chi^2 = 6.61$, $df = 2$, $p < .05$.

Table 11. Differences in Gender on the effects of Facebook on family.

Gender	Positive	Negative	No effect
Male	50	2	28
Female	37	6	54

$\chi^2 = 6.55$, $df = 2$, $P < .05$.

and dads who could no longer be left out of this phenomenon in the 21st century in order to stay connected with their children abroad as well as family and friends in Nigeria.

Available literature revealed that almost every aspect of human endeavor is involved with Facebook or other social media. From the individual looking for a sense of belonging and finding relevance within a cultural identity, to bonding among family and friends, the government and its many agencies, the education sector, the business community, the media and religion for purposes of evangelization, Facebook has engulfed human life in ways no one imagined. Therefore, this study strengthens Uses and Gratification theory, Acculturation and Identity theories of the media. In all of these, the advancement of technology with its many tools and devices further facilitates the use of this social medium to the benefit of everyone. 98.4% of respondents in this study own cell phones with internet access.

Limitations of the study

This study was targeted towards investigating Nigerians as a community in diaspora in Houston Texas and that

was a limitation. It would be ideal for future research to expand beyond Houston to other cities in the United States where Nigerians are predominantly resident and even to the home country. A few of the major cities representing the different regions in Nigeria should form the background for future research. A major constraint during this study was convincing respondents that this study was meant for academic research only and data would not be used for other purposes. This was important to avoid respondents withholding information that is vital in data collection.

Implications for future research

Because this research was a novelty among members of this community, it uncovered cultural inhibitions in the use of Facebook among Nigerian females. Recommendations for further research would be to investigate gender differences, constraints and perceptions among Nigerians in the use of Facebook and other social media.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare no conflict of interest in this study.

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