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Patterns of *Facebook* Utilization among Students of Tertiary Institutions in Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria

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Abstract

With the emergence of digital media, individuals now have ways of social networking like the use of Facebook. There was a time when friendship was limited to face-to-face situation only, whereby people meet and interact at conferences, meetings, dates but now friendships and networking are now over the virtual network. With this development, little has been known on the pattern of relationship that exists among social networkers, especially in this part of the world, and how this relationship affects their offline relationship. This study therefore seeks to find out how young people establish virtual relationships through Facebook, the forms and the strength of social ties young people form through Facebook, and the effects that Facebook has on offline socialization among young people. A survey research method was adopted to study 300 young people between the age of 15 and 25 who are on Facebook. The findings show that young people spend considerable time on Facebook purposely to find new friends and maintain existing relationship. Besides, Wall is the most popular of all the tools on Facebook followed by Photos. While the ties formed on Facebook is strong, most respondents still show preference for offline relationships.

Key Words: Digital Media, Virtual Network, Socialization, Young People, Social Change

Introduction

The advent of modern technology has brought about different communication channels which have in turn brought about in-depth changes in the way we communicate. Communication has been made easier as man no longer communicates face to face but digitally through different social networks. Individuals make friends by joining these social networks that connect them together. This modern technology has allowed different people from all over the country to interact globally, form social ties and also form virtual relationships online. It has made it possible for individuals to send messages to their friends through these social networks.

With the emergence of digital media, individuals now have ways of social networking like the use of *Facebook*. There was a time when friendship was by face-to-face situation only but now friendships and networkings are now over the virtual

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network. There are so many digital devices which enabled social networking. However, little has been known on the pattern of relationship that exists among social networkers and how it affects their offline relationship, especially in this part of the world. This study therefore seeks to find out how young people establish virtual relationships through *Facebook*, the forms and the strength of social ties young people form through *Facebook*, the strength and the effect *Facebook* has on offline socialization among young people.

The objective of this research is to examine how *Facebook* serves as a means of digital socialization among young people. It intends to find out how often they use *Facebook*, what they use it for and the forms of social ties young people form through *Facebook*. The study also intends to find out the strength of social ties formed on *Facebook* and how the use of *Facebook* effects offline socialization among young people.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on technological determinism theory. Most interpretations of technological determinism share two general ideas. The first is that the development of technology **itself** follows a predictable, traceable path largely beyond cultural or political influence, and two, that technology in turn has effects on societies that are inherent, rather than socially conditioned or produced because that society organizes itself to support and further develop a technology once it has been introduced. The communication theory of technological determinism was molded by Marshall McLuhan. It is believed that all the effects of a technology can be deduced from its form (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009). In other words, our culture is molded by how we are able to communicate. To understand this, there are a few main points one must comprehend. First, an invention in communication technology causes cultural change (Baran 2004:22). Secondly, changes in modes of communication shape human life. Thirdly, 'We shape our tools, and they in turn shape us' (McLuhan and Powers 1989; Jones, 1997).

According to technological determinists, particular technical developments, communications technologies or media, or, most broadly, technology in general are the sole or prime antecedent causes of changes in society, and technology is seen as the fundamental condition underlying the pattern of social organization. Technological determinists interpret technology in general and communications technologies in particular as the basis of society in the past, present and even the future. They say that technologies such as writing or print or television or the computer 'changed society'. In its most extreme form, the entire form of society is seen as being determined by technology; new technologies transform society at every level, including institutions, social interaction and individuals. At the least, a wide range of social and cultural phenomena are seen as shaped by technology. 'Human factors' and social arrangements are seen as secondary (Chandler, 1995).

Technological determinism has been defined as an approach that identifies technology, or technological advances, as the essential element in the processes of social change. As a technology is stabilized, its design tends to dictate users' behaviors, consequently diminishing human agency. This stance however ignores the social and cultural circumstances in which the technology was developed. Rather than acknowledging that a society or culture interacts with and even shapes the technologies that are used, a technological determinist's view holds that the uses made of technology are largely determined by the structure of the technology itself, that is, that its functions follow from its form.

The basic idea behind the theory is that changes in the way humans communicate are what shape our existence. This theory tries to explain the fact that individuals have left the print age for the new era which has brought about the digital communication. Modern technology has made communication easier and this has brought a lot of innovations in

the society. Technology has brought about changes in the society and the way we behave is affected by technology. Modern technology has brought about digitalization, individuals now socialize digitally and this has led to the creation of online communities.

The concept of socialization

Ferrante (2006) defines socialization as a process by which 'people develop their human capacities and acquire a unique personality and identity and by which culture is passed from one generation to generation' (p.108). This type of definition suggests that individuals actively participate in the socialization process rather than simply adjust and adapt to an existing group culture. Besides, the survival of culture across generations is made possible through socialization. According to Schaefer (2008), socialization is the process by which people learn the attitudes, values and behaviors appropriate for members of a particular culture. Here socialization is a learning process whereby group members use verbal and non-verbal messages to create a new and unique culture. The interaction among members allows them to establish rules and roles, make decisions and solve problems, and reach both individual and goals. Furthermore, the interaction helps members reduce their levels of doubt about how to complete tasks, get along with each other, and meet each other's interpersonal communication purpose.

Elkin and Handel (1989) say that through socialization we learn the ways of a given society or social group so that we can function within it. That means for the individual, socialization provides the skills and habits necessary for acting and participating within their society. For the society, inducting all members into its moral norms, attitudes, values, motives, social roles, language and symbols is the "means by which social and cultural continuity are attained. Additionally, each group's culture changes when a member joins the group because s/he might influence the existing members to adopt new ways of communicating and functioning together. Thus, consider socialization as a process affecting both individual members as a whole.

Berger, cited in Margaret and Howard (2006:84), pointed out that not only do people live in society, but society also lives in people. Socialization is therefore a mode of social control. Socialized people conform to cultural expectations; socialization gives society a certain degree of predictability, establishing patterns that become the basis for social order. To understand how socialization is a form of social control, imagine that the individuals in society are surrounded by a series of concentric circles. Each circle is a layer of social controls, ranging from the most subtle, such as the expectations of others, to the most obvious, such as physical force and violence.

Socialization is the basis for identity, which is how one defines oneself. Identity could be both personal and social. It is bestowed by others because people come to see themselves as others see them. Socialization also establishes personality which is defined as relatively consistent pattern of behavior, feelings and beliefs of an individual. Socialization experience differs for individuals depending on factors such as race, gender and class as well as more subtle factors such as attractiveness and personality.

Human infants are born without any culture yet. When a baby is born, socialization takes place in order for him to have a culture based on what his parents and his environment would teach him (Sarah, 2011). During socialization, people learn the language of the culture they are born into, as well as the roles they are to play in life. In addition, they learn about the roles that their society has in store for them. They also learn and usually adopt their culture's norms through the socialization process. Norms are the formation of proper and expected behavior that is held by most members of the society (O'Neil, 2009). While socialization refers to the general process of acquiring culture, anthropologists use the term enculturation for the process of being socialized to a particular culture (Aseka, 2007). Examining the socialization process helps reveal the

degree to which our lives are socially structured, meaning that the organization of society and the life of people within it are the result of social definitions and processes.

Socialization is important in the process of personality formation. While much of human personality is the result of our genes, the socialization process can shape it in particular directions by encouraging specific beliefs and attitudes as well as selectively providing experiences. This likely account for much of the difference between the common personality types in one society in comparison to another. Successful socialization can result in similarity within a society. If all humans receive the same socialization, it is likely that they will share the same beliefs and expectations. Those who internalize the norms of society are less likely to break the law or to want radical social changes. In all societies, however, there are individuals who do not conform to culturally defined standards of normalcy because they were "abnormally" socialized, which is to say that they have not internalized the norms of society. These people are usually labeled by their society as deviant or even mentally ill.

Socialization Agents

Socialization agents are those who pass on social expectations. Every one is a socializing agent because social expectations are communicated in countless ways and in every interaction people have, intentions or not. When people are simply doing what they consider "normal", they are communicating social expectations to others. The family is responsible for determining one's attitudes toward religion and establishing career goals. For most people, the family is the first source of socialization (Schaefer, 2008: 96). Through families, children are introduced to what the society expects of individuals. As important as the family is in socializing the young, it is not the only socialization agent.

Education is another agent of socialization. Education in its broadest sense is any act or experience that has a formative effect on the mind, character, or physical ability of an individual. In its technical sense, education is the process by which society deliberately transmits its gathered knowledge, skills and values from one generation to another through institutions. Peer group is another agent of socialization that is very important. Education enlarges children's social world as they gather in school. They meet people with background different from their own and in the process come to understand the importance of factors such as race and social positions (Macionis, 2009). Peer groups are people who are roughly of the same age and or who share other social characteristics (e.g. students in a secondary school). It could also mean a group of friends that a certain person will try to impress to get their bond, social status, and interests. Interaction techniques like making fun of people maintain group boundaries and define who's in and who's not (Adler 1998, cited in Margaret & Howard, 2006: 86).

School is another socializing agent. School is designed to allow and encourage students or pupils to learn, under the supervision of teachers. At home, parents are the main source of socialization. In school, teachers and other students that encourage children to think and behave in particular ways. The expectations encountered in schools vary for different groups of students. These differences are shaped by a number of factors including what the teacher's expect from different groups and the resources that different parents can bring to continue in the educational process. Apart from school, most people perhaps think of sports as something that is just for fun or perhaps to provide opportunities for college scholarships and athletic careers, but sports are also an agent of socialization. Through sports, men and women learn concepts of self that stay with them in their later lives. Sports are also where many ideas about gender differences are formed and reinforced (Messner 2002, cited in Margaret & Howard, 2006:89).

their family's religion are deeply affected by the attitudes, self-images, and beliefs gotten from early religious training. Religious socialization shapes the beliefs that people develop; religious socialization also influences a large number of beliefs that guide adults in how they organize their lives, including beliefs about moral development and behavior, the roles of men and women (Ellison 2002) cited in Margaret & Howard (2006:88). Mass media are equally very important agents of socialization. The average person (age 8-19) spends six and three-quarter hours per day engrossed in media in various forms. Television is the dominant medium, although half of all youth use a computer daily (Roberts 2000:8). The media is a term used to indicate a section of the media specifically designed to reach a very large audience such as the population of a nation state. The socializing role of the media has become expanded in recent times due to digitalization and social networking sites that give opportunity to people to connect with others without any spatial or time barrier.

Consequences of socialization

Socialization is a life-long process with consequences that affect how we behave toward others and what we think of ourselves. Socialization establishes **self concepts**: how we think of ourselves is the result of the socialization experiences we have over a lifetime. Our self concept is established through the socialization process. Socialization creates the ability for role taking or for seeing ourselves the way others see us. Socialization is fundamentally reflective; that is, it involves self-conscious human beings seeing and reacting to the expectations of others. The capacity for reflection and the development of identity are ongoing. Furthermore, socialization creates the tendency for people to react in socially acceptable ways; through socialization, people learn the normative expectations attached to social situations and the expectations of society in general. Socialization makes people bearers of culture. Socialization is the process by which people learn and internalize their beliefs, and behaviors of their culture. At the same time socialization is a two-way process. A person is not only a recipient of culture but also a creator of culture who passes cultural expectations on to others (Margaret & Howard, 2006:89)

Virtual Community or Social Networking

Lindlof and Schatzer (1998:170) defines a virtual community as one founded purposely by people who share a set of similar interests, often revolving around certain texts. However, some features of real communities can be attained, including interaction, a common purpose, a sense of identity and belonging, various norms and unwritten rules, with possibilities for exclusion or rejection. Virtual communities or online communities are used for a variety of social and professional groups interacting through the internet (Jankowski 2002). It does not necessarily mean that there is a strong bond between the members. Virtual communities form "when people carry on public discussions long enough, with sufficient human feeling, to form webs of personal relationships". Online communities depend upon social interaction and exchange between users online. This emphasizes element of the unwritten social contract between community members (Rheingold, 1994).

Neelamalar and Chitra (2009) identified early social networking websites to include Classmates.com (1995), for ties with former school mates, and SixDegrees.com (1997), focusing on indirect ties. They allowed user profiles to be created; one could send messages to users held on a friends list and other members could be sought out who have similar interests to the users-which could be found out from their profiles. Despite these new developments (that would later catch on and become immensely popular), the websites (Classmates.com, SixDegrees.com) simply were not profitable and eventually shut down. It was even described by the websites owner as simply ahead of its time. Two

different models of social networking that came about in 1999 were trust-based, developed by *Ipinions.com*, and friendship-based, such as those developed by Jonathan Bishop and used on some regional UK sites between 1999 and 2001.

There are various social networking sites catering to different languages and countries. The number of social networking users has doubled since 2007 (Ostrow, 2009). As pointed out by Neefamalar and Chitra (2009: 127), there are many features that attract the users towards the social networking sites. The chief among them are:

- **Scrapping:** This is similar to instant messaging but the text is also available to public view. Though there are privacy options to show scraps only to friends, they are not a personal means of communication like e-mail or instant messaging. Youth use these sites to satisfy their socialization needs to participate/ join in communities with likeminded users and also to extend and nurture their friends' network which symbolizes their socializing personality.
- **Profile setting:** This is a means of exhibiting the profile users' personality/identity as they want themselves to be perceived by the profile viewers.
- **Photo sharing:** User has options such as photo sharing only with friends and also specifically can choose individuals who can view the shared photos while it is not visible to others accessing the profile. Social networking sites use such strict privacy settings to avoid unwanted breach of individuals' virtual space.
- **Wall:** Writing about daily experience and allowing the people within the network to see and make comments in response.

One of the current virtual communities is *Facebook*, which is a social utility that connects people worldwide. It was launched in February 4, 2004 by Mr. Zuckerberg and was originally known as "The facebook". The name was taken from the sheets of paper distributed to freshmen, profiling students and staff. The website currently has more than 200 million active users worldwide. *Facebook* is known as the seventh most trafficked website in the U.S. from September 2006 to September 2007. It is also the most popular website for uploading photos, with 14 million uploaded daily (Wikipedia, n.d.). This social network enables users to choose fan pages according to their interests so as to connect and interact with other individuals. *Facebook* allows close friends to send messages and to add users as friends; people can also update their personal profiles to notify their close friends about themselves. By default, the viewing of detailed profile data is restricted to users from the same network. More so, users can set their profiles on private as to prevent acquaintances from contacting them or set their profiles on public in order to allow any acquaintance to contact the user which results in lack of privacy.

Method of Research

This study adopted survey research design. The study population for this research comprised young people who are between the ages of 15 and 25 years in three tertiary institutions, namely: Covenant University, the Bells University and Allover polytechnic, all in Ota Ogun state, Nigeria. The age group was chosen because that is the socialization age and they are also more exposed to the use of internet. Another reason for selecting this group of people is that they are youths with different age ranges, from different backgrounds and also from different parts of the country.

A total number of 300 samples were drawn from the population. The sampling technique adopted for this study is purposive sampling. This is because the three chosen schools have internet facilities hence the students have access to *Facebook*. Thus, being on the *Facebook* was a condition for being included in the sample. The data collected

through the administered questionnaire were presented in form of tables and charts showing their percentages.

Results

Our data show that 56.3% of the respondents were females while 43.7% were males. Also, 53.3% of the respondents were within the age brackets of 19-22, 28% of the respondents were within the age brackets of 23-25, while 18.7% were within the age brackets of 15-18.

Table 1: Frequency of Facebook Usage by Respondents

Responses	Percentage
Very Often	47
Occasionally	39
Seldom	9
Rarely	5
Total	100% N = 300

Table 1 shows that 47% of the respondents used Facebook very often, 39% answered occasionally, 9% seldom used Facebook and 5% answered rarely. This means that most young people used Facebook very often. Other data collected tried to find out the length of time that the respondents spend on Facebook. This result shows that 27% spent less than 1 hour, 45.7% of the respondents spent 1-2 hours on Facebook, 21% spent 3-5 hours on Facebook, and 6.3% spend 7-8 hours on Facebook. Thus, most of the respondents spent between 1 to 2 hours on Facebook.

Table 2: The purposes for which Facebook is used

Responses	Percentage
To maintain existing friends	45
To find new friends	23
For business	3
Networking	21
Others	8
Total	100% N = 300

Table 2 shows the distribution of responses on reasons for joining Facebook. This result shows that 45% of the respondents joined Facebook to maintain existing friends, 23% of the respondents joined to find new friends, 3% joined for business, 21% joined Facebook for networking while 8% of the respondents joined Facebook for other reasons which includes: to find old friends, for leisure hours, to look at pictures, to chat and also because it is the social networking site that is in vogue. Here we see that the main reason why the respondents joined Facebook is to maintain existing relationship.

Table 3: Tools mostly used by Respondents on Facebook

Responses	Percentage
Wall	58.7
Photos	22.0
Tags	11.7
Pokes	5.0
Others	2.7
Total	100% N = 300

This table shows the tools mostly used by respondents on *Facebook*. It shows that 58.7% mostly used Wall. 22.0% used Photos the most. 11.7% used Tags. 5.0% mostly used pokes and 2.7% mostly used other tools such as chats, hugs, status, updates, links, games and adverts. We can say that the respondents mostly use Walls on *Facebook*.

Table 4: Activities engaged in on *Facebook* by respondents

Responses	Percentage
Profile Setting	21
Communities	10
Photo Sharing	16
Accessing others' profile	15
Friends Network	33
Others	5
Total	100% N = 300

Table 4 shows the activities engaged in by respondents, 21% of the respondents engaged themselves in profile setting, 10% of the respondents engaged themselves in creating communities, 16% engaged themselves in photo sharing, and also 15% accessed other people's profiles, 33% of the respondents which is the majority engaged themselves in establishing friends' network. while 5% of the respondents engaged in other activities such as interacting, messages, feeds, chatting, keeping in touch with friends on updates and information. Therefore, most respondents engage themselves in establishing friends' network on *Facebook*.

Table 5: Social bond engaged-in by respondents

Responses	Percentage
Friendship	75
Dating	6
Chatting mates	18
Others	1
Total	100% N = 300

Table 5 shows the social bonds engaged/established by respondents; 75% of the respondents engaged in friendship, 6% engaged in dating, 18% formed chatting mates and 1% of the respondents engaged in other social bonds like soul mates, intimate friends and acquaintances. Here we see that the dominant social bond engaged in on *Facebook* by respondents is friendship.

Table 6: Sstrength of the social ties formed on *Facebook*

Responses	Percentage
Very strong	8.3
Strong	33.3
Fairly strong	35.3
Averagely strong	17
Can't say	6
Total	100% N = 300

Table 6 shows the strength of relationship maintained by respondents; 8.3% said their relationship with online friends was very strong. 33.3 % said their relationship with

online friends was strong, 35.3% rated their relationship with online friends as fairly strong, 17% said their relationship with online friends was average and 6% did not express opinion. Here, we see that respondents rate the strength of their relationship with online friends as fairly strong.

Table 7: That Facebook limits Interaction with people in real life

Responses	Percentage
Strongly Agree	2.7
Agree	2.7
Undecided	9.3
Strongly Disagree	55
Disagree	30.3
Total	100% N = 300

Table 7 shows respondents' opinion whether *Facebook* limits interaction with people in real life: 2.7% strongly agreed that their use of *Facebook* limits their interaction in real life, 2.7% agreed that their use of *Facebook* limits their interaction in real life, 9.3% were undecided if *Facebook* limits their interaction in real life, 55% strongly disagreed that *Facebook* limits their interaction in real life and 30.3% disagreed that *Facebook* limits their interaction in real life. Therefore, most respondents' real life socialization is not affected by the use of *Facebook*.

Other data collected show that majority of the respondents spent more time with offline friends than online *Facebook* friends, . 2.7% strongly agreed that they spend more time with their friends on *Facebook* than with offline friends, 12.3% agreed that they spend more time with their friends on *Facebook* than with offline friends, 9.3% were undecided: 49% strongly disagreed that they spend more time with their friends on *Facebook* than with their offline friends while 26.7% disagreed that they spend more time with their friends on *Facebook* than with their offline friends.

We also gathered that respondents were more comfortable with discussing some issues with friends in normal offline interaction than *Facebook* friends; 14% Strongly agreed that they are more comfortable discussing some issues with friends on *Facebook* than in normal offline interaction, 20.7% agreed and 11% were undecided. However, 30.3% strongly disagreed and 24% simply disagreed that they are more comfortable discussing some issue with friends on facebook than on normal offline interaction. Nonetheless, most respondents said *Facebook* has increased their number of friends in offline interaction, with 19% and 33% respondents who strongly agreed and agreed to this. While 10.3% were undecided, 18.3% strongly disagreed and 19.3% disagreed.

Table 8: Preference for Facebook friends above Offline friend

Responses	Percentage
Strongly Agree	7.7
Agree	7.7
Undecided	10.7
Strongly Disagree	38
Disagree	36
Total	100% N = 300

Table 8 shows whether respondents prefer *Facebook* friends to normal friends: 7.7% strongly agreed that they prefer *Facebook* friends to normal friends, 7.7% agreed, 10.7% of the respondents did not decide whether they prefer *Facebook* friends to normal friends.

38 % strongly disagreed and 36 %disagreed. It follows then that respondents do not prefer their *Facebook* friends to normal offline friends.

Discussion

The level at which young people log on to *Facebook* is high. As shown in the data, 27% spend less than 1 hour, 45.7% spend 1-2 hours on *Facebook*. 21% spend 3-5 hours and 6.3% spend 7-8 hours on *Facebook* from this, we can deduce that most of this young people spend 1-2 hours when they are on *Facebook*. This draws attention to the role that *Facebook* plays in the lives of young people and the consequent influence of this. The implication of this is that *Facebook* has become indispensable to the cultural lives of youth and thus has the potential of bringing about significant change in things that concern them.

Most respondents use *Facebook* to maintain existing relationship, followed by those who find new friends. This underscores the human nature of seeking out friends for stimulation- human beings are stimulotropic. So, *Facebook* has become an instrument to get into contact with people who can offer this stimulation. This proves the strength of technology, as announced in technological determinism theory, in shaping our existence. Since youths have to relate sometimes online, the physical contacts reduce and consequently social vices that they engage in. This is because the online engagement has a way of reducing online interaction, to a great extent, to purely discussion as against physical contact where decision can easily be reached to participate in events that can be inimical to the society.

Our data also show that Wall is mostly used among the tools on *Facebook*. Wall offers the opportunity of sharing information, thoughts and experiences with *Facebook* friends. As little as this is, it makes possible sharing of information to a whole lot of people. Since most young people on *facebook* use this often, information that are of social benefit can be shared using the *Facebook* tool. Information about health, education and campaign on development issues can be relayed on Walls and Newsfeeds. The use of Photos followed Walls on *Facebook*. Youths are fond of placing new pictures on *Facebook* and sharing their experiences about these pictures. Friends networks see these pictures and make comments about them. *Facebook* photos have become another powerful instrument of reaching out to people on any issues. Images are great means of communication; exploring this with the youths access on *Facebook* makes pictures very useful in propagating ideas that can bring about change in the society.

We also observe that of all the activities young people engage in on *Facebook*, friends networking is the highest. This indicates further that interpersonal relationship still remains the best approach in effecting social control and change in the lives of people. The dimension of virtual friendship means more people could be influenced by their friends because of the limitless access to many friends without the constrain of time and space. This is also significant against the background that beyond making these friends, young people establish bond with them and such bonds are quite strong (See Tables 5 and 6).

However, we see that the online friendship network does not limit the interaction of young people with real life, offline friends. As a matter of fact, our data show that young people still spend more time with their normal friends than with online *Facebook* friends. A number of reasons could be accounted for this: It could be because of limited access the youth have to the internet. The use of internet in this part of the world is limited by its cost as well as availability. It takes a lot of money to have limitless access to the internet. Even with the emergence of Blackberry services, the amount charged is still on the high side. Besides, internet is not always available to everyone. Not only this, one challenge with online friendship is that it lacks the warmth of interpersonal relationship which most

young people may expect to derive in their friendship relationships. Finally, most respondents felt that some discussions can **only** be discussed with friends who are physically present with them; so some subjects of discussions cannot be discussed with online friends. Hence, majority of the respondents still prefer offline, physically present friends to online friends.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In this paper, we have seen that *Facebook* has become part of most young people's lifestyle especially in their quest for socialization. They express their identity through pictures and comments and share their experiences as they write on the Walls and NewsFeeds. Not only do they seek out new friends through this medium, they use it to reconnect with and maintain their existing friends: establishing such friendship bond that could be described as fairly strong. However, young people believe that their use of *Facebook* does not in any way affect their socialization in real life. In fact, most of them said they spend more time with offline friends than online *Facebook* friends and are more comfortable discussing some issues with friends in normal offline interaction than *Facebook* friends. Though *Facebook* has increased their number of friends in offline interaction, they still prefer their real offline friends to *Facebook* friends.

It does follow that *Facebook* has come to stay as part of young people's experience, and its use will continue to grow as access becomes more expanded. *Facebook* has potential to bring about change in people's lives, young people especially. It thus means that this medium can be used to communicate change to the people. It can also be used for educational purposes such that relevant educational materials that will add value to people, as well as serve as a means of educating people can be sent in form of messages to young people through *Facebook*. It could also be a means of curbing the negative vices of young people as well as transform the society when right information is shared through this platform. Such information could be on pieces of advice to the youths on engaging in good activities that will help them live right in the society. For example, campaigns and adverts on HIV/AIDS can also be relayed through *Facebook* communicated via Walls and NewsFeeds. Finally, political transformation can be achieved by educating young people to take the right decisions in the choice of who to vote for and protecting their votes to ensure that the votes count, as well as warn them of being used for political thuggery.

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