

A Survey of Facebook Usage in North East of Nigeria

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Abstract

The study is on a survey of Facebook usage in the North Eastern Nigeria. The objective of the research is to find out the level of usage of Facebook in the North Eastern States of Nigeria. The study find out that majority 198(66.00%) of the respondents said they accessed their Facebook account daily. Minority 2(0.67%) of the respondents said they accessed their Facebook account monthly. Majority 105(35.00%) of the respondents said they used their Facebook account for communicating with friends only. While minority 16(5.35%) of the respondents said they used their Facebook accounts for communicating with friends and for relationship. The findings further revealed that majority 118(39.33%) of the respondents said the type of people they meet on Facebook were friends, college mates and family members, while minority 4(1.34%) of the respondents said the type of people they meet on Facebook were close friends and people that are not known to them. Majority 149(49.67%) of the respondents said the challenges they encountered in the use of Facebook was low internet speed. The study recommends among otherthings that, government should mandate the internet providers to switch over from G3 to G4, This way the problem of low internet speed would be a thing of the past. The study then concluded that, all Facebook users no matter their age, sex, and cultural background have one thing in common, that is, they use the platform to communicate with their friends and loved ones.

Keywords: Communication, Facebook, Friendship, Internet & Social media

INTRODUCTION

Facebook is the most popular social media network on the planet earth today. Recently Facebook celebrated her tenth year anniversary. Facebook today is said to be worth about \$153billion dollars.(CNN.com/international,2014) Facebook like many other social media networking sites is a platform for communicating and interacting with family members, colleagues and friends around the globe. According to Ronse (2009) "Facebook is a popular social networking site that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and video, and send messages and keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues." Membership of Facebook comprises mainly youth between the age of 16 and 30years (Dwyer, Hilts & Passerini (2007)

Majority of Facebook members are youths, but are not limited to age between 16 and 30, even people who are above 50years of age are on facebook. (Griggs, 2014) Facebook today has gone beyond just connecting to friends and love ones but also to businesses and organizations that matters to them.

One of the reasons people use Facebook, is that they are looking for intimate relationship among friends. According to Zhao, Grasmuck&Martin (2008) Facebook users are looking for friendships as well as romantic relationships among two types of people; those they know in person, and those they do not know in person."

Facebook membership is 1.2 billion people (Griggs,2014). Membership of Facebook consists of people from different countries and from different cultural background. These people use facebook for different purposes. It is on the basis of this that a survey is being conducted to find out about Facebook usage in the North East of Nigeria.

STATEMENT OF PROPLEMS

Internet penetration in developing countries, especially Africa is low when compared to those in developed countries, like United States, Japan and countries in Western Europe. In Nigeria the problem is compounded by lack of electricity or erratic power supply and low internet speed. (Mathew, Ogedebe&Adeniji(2013)

Facebook and other social media sites have been used by people to lure unsuspecting young girls into prostitution. Some others have used the social networking sites to defraud and kill their victims, others have used it to introduce youths to the use of hard drugs. Rodman (2008:18) simply put it this way, "Young people tend to treat social networking sites as though they are youth-only worlds-and of course they are not. Parents have read about drug use and sex on their children's' pages... and at some college campus, police have raided parties that they have read about on Facebook"

The question then is what should be done that has not been done by Facebook to make the site a safer place for everyone?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This research is intended to achieve the following:

1. find out the level of Facebook usage in the North East of Nigeria
2. find out what members used Facebook for in the North East of Nigeria
3. find out the type of friends members meet on Facebook in the North East of Nigeria
4. find out the challenges encountered in the use of Facebook by members in the North East of Nigeria.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research will attempt to address the following questions:

How often do you use Facebook per week in the North East of Nigeria?

What do you use Facebook for in the North East of Nigeria?

What type of friends do you meet on Facebook in the North East of Nigeria?

What are the challenges encountered in the use of Facebook in the North East of Nigeria?

LITERATURE REVIEW

A study to determine social network usage conducted by RapLeaf in 2008 reveals that while the overall rates of use of and participation ... are roughly equal between young men and women, young women far outnumber young men ... Facebook (Sterin, 2012).

Ronse, (2009) defined Facebook as a popular social networking site. According to Ronse, "Facebook originally was restricted to people with edu.e-mail addresses. Facebook is now available to anyone with a valid e-mail address".

Cassidy, (2006) opined that "Facebook, was created in 2004 by Harvard student for intra-campus socializing. According to Cassidy, Facebook quickly spread to other university campuses and soon became the most popular social networking site among college students in the US".

Debatin& et al (2009) were of the view that, "student life without Facebook is almost unthinkable. They went further to say, since its inception in 2004, this popular social network service has quickly become both a basic tool for and a mirror of social interaction, personal identity, and network building among students".

Evans, Martin &Poatsy(2010) were of the opinion that, "Facebook is popular among students, they are easy place to hang out, meet new people, and share common interests. They also provide ways for members to communicate with their friends by voice, chat, instant message, video conference, the blogs so that members don't need separate communication account".

Zhao, Grasmuck and Martin (2008) observed that "Facebook expanded to include high school campuses in 2005, and commercial organization in 2006. Facebook is in many ways similar to another popular online social networking site, MySpace". According to Zhao, Grasmuck and Martin, "like MySpace, Facebook enables users to present themselves in a number of ways. Users display pictures in their online albums, describe their personal interests and hobbies, and list their friends and social networks. There is also a communication function on Facebook that allows users to interact with one another through comments and messages. However, Facebook differs from MySpace in one aspect: it is nonyinous and intuitionally bound".

Campbell, Martin &Fabos (2013:46) were of the view that "Facebook is now the most popular social media site on the internet". According to Campbell, Martin &Fabos, "Facebook started at Harvard in 2004 as an online substitute to the printed facebook the school created for incoming freshmen, Facebook was instantly a hit. Facebook grew at a rate of more than two million global users a month, and by 2011 it had more than 750 million active users". Guffey& Loewy (2008:227) describes Facebook as the web's dominant social network. According to Guffey and Leovy, "a recent study by public relations giant Burson-Marsteller suggests that social media, Facebook foremost among them, offer huge research and brand-building opportunities. Media-savvy businesses face public that wants to be heard. If they listen to and engage with users, companies can positively affect their customer' beliefs as well as counter potentially negative perceptions".

Biagi (2009:198) sees Facebook as a fast-growing "social utility" website. According to Biagi, "Facebook platform allows any user to develop information-sharing platforms from any computer".

Rodman, (2008:10) describes Facebook as a "social networking site that combines traditional yearbook with community web sites, e-mail, blogs, bulletin boards, audio, and video".

Baldauf and Stair (2011:233) stressed that"Facebook is a social networks that provides members with their personal web page and allow them to post photos and information about themselves. Social networking sites allow members to send messages to each other and post comments on each other's pages. Members accumulated friends through an invitation process".

Sterin (2012:330) reported that "Facebooks' open-Graph initiative allowed users to comment on things they like on the web-from blog they have read, to a YouTube video they have watch, to a product they have noticed on Amazon.com. According to Sterin, Facebook default settings have always called for maximum exposure to other Facebook users, this latest change enabled even non-Facebook members to see users' personal profiles and interest..."

Dominick (2009:34) sees the educational benefit of Facebook when he says "Facebook obviously has

many educational uses, students studying Beowulf can chat about the deeper meanings of the text. Those who were absent from class can get notes and a general updating from classmates. News about what professor to avoid is quickly shared.”

Farkas(2007:113) noted that “young people see sites like---and Facebook(www.facebook.com) as spaces designed for them, where they can express themselves freely and connect with friends online”.

METHODOLOGY

Survey research method was used for this study. The instrument for collating data is questionnaire. A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed in the six states that made up the North Eastern Nigeria. The six states are Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe states respectively. The capitals of the six states were used to conduct the survey. The reason for this is that internet facilities are only available in these areas. Respondents were asked whether they are registered users of Facebook before they were given questionnaires to fill. 50 questionnaires each were distributed randomly among respondents in the six state capitals, with the help of 5 assistants. All the questionnaires were completed and returned. The questionnaires were then analyzed using frequency and simple percentage.

DATA ANALYSIS

Table 1: Distribution by Gender, Age and Educational qualification

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
male	154	51.33%
female	146	48.67%
Total	300	100.00
AgeRange	Frequency	Percentage
15-25 years	107	35.67%
26-35 years	156	52.00%
36-45 years	24	8.00%
46-55 years	13	4.33%
56and above	-	-
Total	300	100.00
Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Senior Secondary Certificate Examination(S. S.C.E)	96	32.00%
National diploma/National Certificate of Education	70	23.33%
Higher National Diploma (HND)	15	5.00%
First Degree	105	35.00%
Postgraduate Diploma	5	1.67%
Masters and above	9	3.00%
Total	300	100.00

Source: Survey 2014

Table 1 shows that majority 154(51.33%) of the respondents were males, while minority 146(48.67%) of the respondents were females. Majority 156(52.00%) of the respondents were between the age range of 26-35years. 105(35.67%) of the respondents were between the age range of 15-25 years. Another 34(8.00%) of the respondents were between the age range of 36-45 years. Minority 13(4.33%) of the respondents were between the age range 46 -55 years. Majority 105(35.00%) of the respondents said they had first degree as their highest qualification. 96(32.00%) of the respondents said they had Senior Secondary School Certificate (SSCE) as their highest educational qualification. 70(23.33%) of the respondents said they had National Diploma/National Certificate of Education as their highest educational qualification. Another 15(5.00%) of the respondents said they had Higher National Diploma (HND) as their highest educational qualification, while 9(3.00%) of the respondents said they had Masters and above as their highest educational qualification. Minority 5(1.67%) of the respondents said they had Postgraduate Diploma as their highest educational qualification. This shows that all members of Facebook have one form of education or another.

Research Question 1: How often do you access your Facebook account?

Table2: Level of access to Facebook account

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	198	66.00%
Twice a week	65	21.89%
Weekly	20	6.67%
Fortnightly	15	5.00%
Monthly	2	0.67%
Quarterly	-	-
Total	300	100.00

Source: Survey 2014

Table 2, shows that majority 198(66.00%) of the respondents said they access their Facebook accounts daily. 65(21.89%) of the respondents said they access their Facebook accounts twice a week. Another 20(6.67%) of the respondents said they access their Facebook accounts weekly, while 15(5.00%) of the respondents said they access their Facebook accounts fortnightly. Minority 2(0.67%) of the respondents said they access their Facebook accounts monthly.

Research Question 2: What do you use your Facebook account for

Table 3: Usage of Facebook account

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Communicating with friends & family members	92	30.67%
Communicating with friends	105	35.00%
Communicating with friends, family members & for making new friends	87	29.00%
For communicating with friends & for flirting with the opposite sex	-	-
For communicating with friends & for relationship	16	5.33%
Total	300	100.00

Source: Survey 2014

Majority 105(35.00%) of the respondents said they used their Facebook accounts for communicating with friends only. 92(30.67%) of the respondents said they used their Facebook accounts for communicating with friends & family members. Another 87(29.00%) of the respondents said they used their Facebook accounts for communicating with friends, family members and for making new friends. Minority 16(5.33%) of the respondents said they used their Facebook accounts for communicating with friends and for relationship.

Research Question 3: What type of people do you meet on Facebook?

Table 4: Types of people met on Facebook

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Close friends& family members	103	34.33%
Close friends, college mates& family members	118	39.33%
Close friends &business partners	65	21.67%
Close friends, business partners & college mates	10	3.33%
Close friends &people that are unknown	4	1.34%
Total	300	100.00

Source: Survey 2014

Majority 118(39.33%) of the respondents said the type of people they meet on Facebook were close friends& college mates and family members. 103(34.33%) of the respondents said the type of people they meet on Facebook were close friends and family members only. Another 65(21.67%) of the respondents said the type of people they meet on Facebook were close friends and business partners, while 10(3.33%) of the respondents said the type of people they meet on Facebook were close friends, business partners and college mates. Minority 4(1.34%) of the respondents said the type of people they meet on Facebook were close friends and people that are not known to them.

Research question 4: What are the challenges encountered in the use of Facebook in North East of Nigeria.

Table 5: Challenges encountered in the use of Facebook in North East of Nigeria

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Erratic power supply	18	6.00%
Lack of access to internet	40	13.33%
Low internet connectivity	93	31.00%
Slow internet speed	149	49.67%
Total	300	100.00

Source: Survey 2014

Majority 149(49.67%) of the respondents said challenges encountered in the use of Facebook was slow internet speed. 93(31.00%) of the respondents said challenges encountered in the use of Facebook was low

internet connectivity. Another 40(13.33%) of the respondents said challenges encountered in the use of Facebook was lack of access to internet. Minority 18(6.00%) of the respondents said challenges encountered in the use of Facebook was erratic power supply.

FINDINGS& DISCUSSION

Table 2, shows that majority 198(66.00%) of the respondents said they access their Facebook accounts daily. This agrees with Campbell, Martin&Fabos (2013) that users spend an average of 5hours 18 minutes per day. Minority 2(0.67%) of the respondents said they access their Facebook accounts monthly.

Table 3, shows that majority 105(35.00%) of the respondents said they used their Facebook accounts for communicating with friends only. This supported the position of Biagi (2009), Rodman (2008) and Dwyer, Hiltz and Passerini, (2007) that people use Facebook and other social media sites as their primary medium of communicating with friends. Minority 16(5.33%) of the respondents said they used their Facebook accounts for communicating with friends and for relationship.

Table 4, shows majority 118(39.33%) of the respondents said the type of people they meet on Facebook were close friends, college mates and family members. Minority 4(1.34%) of the respondents said the type of people they meet on Facebook were close friends and people that are not known to them.

Table 5, shows that majority 149(49.67%) of the respondents said challenges encountered in the use of Facebook was low internet speed. Minority 18(6.00%) of the respondents said challenges encountered in the use of Facebook was erratic power supply. Erratic power supply is a serious problem confronting Nigeria today. (Mathew, Ogedebe &Abaya, 2013)

CONCLUSION

People from age 16 and above, and from different cultural background can be found using Facebook. Facebook like any social networking sites is seen by young people as a place where they can hang out with their friends. Members of Facebook no matter their age, sex and cultural background have one thing in common, and that is, they use the platform to communicate with their friends and love ones.

RECOMMENDATION

- Many months after the Federal Government liberalized the power sector, Nigerians cannot boast of constant electricity supply. The government should invest more in power infrastructure especially renewable energy and also ensure that companies that have been mandated to produce and supply electricity fulfill their contractual agreement. This will help in no small measure to reduce or eliminate the problem of inadequate electricity supply witnessed daily by Nigerians.
- Government should remove or reduce import duties on all internet equipments. Apart from this, government should also invest more in internet infrastructure, especially in internet cloud. This will make internet access readily available to Nigerians who before now were denied access.
- The government should mandated internet providers to switch over from G3 to G4. This way the problem of slow internet speed would be a thing of the past.

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