



Role of Communication Competence and Self-esteem in Predicting Facebook Addiction among University of Uyo Students

by

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Abstract

The study examined the influence of communication competence and self-esteem on students' facebook addiction. Five hundred and eighty-five (585) participants were drawn from nine departments of the University of Uyo Town Campus. They were made up of 270 males and 315 females with a mean age of 22.25 years and a standard deviation of 3.79 years. The participants were selected using purposive sampling technique, while the departments were selected using multistage sampling technique. Three instruments were used to generate data for the study; they were the Bergen Facebook Addiction Scale (BFAS) developed by Torsheim, Brunborg and Pallesen (2012), the Interpersonal Communication Competence Scale (ICCS) by Rubin and Martin (1994), and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) by Rosenberg (1965). A 2x2 factorial design was adopted for the study and independent t-test and two-way Analysis of Variance were used to test three (3) alternate hypotheses at .05 level of confidence. Results showed that students with poor communication competence scored higher on Facebook addiction than students with good communication competence (46.68 versus 40.54); students with high self-esteem scored higher on Facebook addiction than those with low self-esteem (41.01 versus 38.20). Result also showed that there was no significant interaction between communication competence and self-esteem on Facebook addiction [$F(1, 191) = 2.012, P > 0.05$]. Findings and implications of the study were discussed in line with existing literature and recommendations made.

1. Introduction

The use of Facebook to fulfill social needs has become the major communication strategy for most people these days. Using Facebook has, therefore, become a global channel and one of the commonest and easiest means of communication. Research evidence (e.g., Kuss & Griffiths, 2011) showed that more than 68.5% of young adults and teenagers used Facebook on a regular basis. Internet, which is the medium in which

different types of social media, including Facebook operates, is an inseparable part of human life and it involves a variety of routine activities. The internet has revolutionized corporate communications, rapidly changing the way public relations campaigns are distributed and measured (Matthews, 2010). Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and MySpace are the most popular social networking sites providing the electronic communication within society.

Facebook was developed in 2004 by Zuckerberg and his classmates – Saverin, Moskowitz and Hughes. Zuckerberg was himself a Harvard University undergraduate student at that time. Presently, Facebook is at the top of the social media race with more active users worldwide (Karaiskosm, Tzavellas, Balta, & Paparrigopoulos, 2010; Elphinston & Noller, 2011; Forest & Wood, 2012); hence becoming one of the most frequently accessed websites at the moment. Originally, Facebook membership was limited to Harvard students among whom the adoption rate was quite high (between 85% and 96%) (Lampe, Ellison, Stutzman, 2006). However, by 2006, the platform was opened up to the world, and anyone aged 13 or older, with a valid e-mail address, was allowed to join.

Facebook is basically an online social network site in which users can share thoughts, ideas, pictures and other contents with friends and family members, and to connect with former or new friends, making the platform very popular with university students (Alexander, 2006; Salaway, Caruso, & Nelson, 2008; Stutzman, 2006). Facebook is equally a communication tool for social media users. Furthermore, as like most other social networking sites, Facebook is a single-page application (SPA) which offers a well-organized web page where users can store their personal information and make connection with same type of users. With the disclosure of friends, not only each user views others' personal profile but also their whole networks. This functionality allows users to traverse from friends' profile to anywhere, so that individuals' social network grows rapidly across the world (Wilson, Fornasier, & White, 2010; Jin, 2013, Mazzoni & Lannone, 2014). This ability is the backbone of Facebook and became the only reason for its rapid growth, comparing with other social networking sites.

It is pertinent to note that amidst growing explosion of social network sites comes an observation of internet and social network addiction as a psychological disorder becoming rampant all over the globe, moreso in Nigeria. The mass appeal of social networks on the internet could potentially be a cause for concern, especially considering the amount of time adolescents and young adults spend online. According to Young (2009), from psychological perspective, it may be plausible to speak of Facebook Addiction Disorder (FAD) because addiction criteria such as neglect of personal life, mental preoccupation mood modifying experiences, tolerance and concealing the addiction behaviour appear to be present in some people who use social network sites excessively.

One variable believed to exert a lot of influence on Facebook addiction is communication competence. Communication competence involves a person's ability to manage interpersonal relationships in communication setting (Rubin & Martin, 1994). People judge behaviour by its appropriateness and how well an act fits situational rules

(Spitzberg, 1983). If behaviour is not normal, it is believed that the offender is either intentionally defying social rules governing a situation or unintentionally breaking misunderstood rules. Users of Facebook wish to establish relationship with other social media users. In the process, many things go awry. In an individualistic society like Nigeria, Facebook is a social and cultural norm and serves as a communication tool, which eventually demands some level of competence (Mckinney, Kelly, & Duran, 2012). Research evidence shows that using Facebook can enhance higher levels of perceived relatedness (Sheldon, Abad, & Hinsch, 2011). Using Facebook, thus, presents a coping strategy that may allow for the compensation of thwarted relatedness need satisfaction in the offline. Low levels of relatedness or poor communication competence in daily life seem to lead to increased Facebook usage, whereas greater usage, in turn correlates with a feeling of relatedness.

Self-esteem is equally believed to influence Facebook addiction. According to Wilson, Fornasier and White (2010), self-esteem is the subjective evaluation a person makes and maintains about himself or herself, and the extent of belief in his/her capability, worth and significance. An individual's sense of worth or personal value and how he or she perceives his/her value in the world, and how he/she sees himself/herself in the eyes of others are all described in self-esteem. Faroogi and Intezar (2009) opine that self-esteem is the feeling of being happy with one's character and abilities. It is a wonderful feeling of inner balance, grounded on self-acceptance, and a healthy, comforting self-respect towards one.

People exhibit either high self-esteem, meaning that they think very well of themselves and their abilities, or low self-esteem, meaning they doubt themselves and criticize their own abilities. Faroogi and Intezar (2009) stated that self-esteem is strongly related to happiness. They argued that people with high self-esteem report being more likeable and attractive; having better relationships and making better impressions on others than people with low self-esteem. Self-esteem is important because it is an essential human need that is vital for survival and normal healthy development (Schwartz, 2010). Abraham Maslow once opined that psychological health is not possible unless the essence of a person is fundamentally accepted, loved and respected by himself or herself and others. Self-esteem therefore, allows people to face life with more confidence, optimism and altruism, which enables them reach their goals easily and attain self-actualization (Mechdizadeh, 2010).

Although a number of previous studies have demonstrated the link between problematic Facebook use and personality traits for poor relations as sensitivity to rejection (Farahani, Aghamohamadi, Kazemi, Bakhtiarvand, & Ansari, 2011), shyness (Orr, Sisic, Ross Simmering, Arseneault, & Orr, 2009), social anxiety (Ebeling-Witte, Frank, & Lester, 2007), social safety (Uysal, 2015), social competence and psychological vulnerability (Satici, 2014), and interpersonal sensitivity personality traits (Eraslan-Capan, (2015), researchers have not done much work on the role of communication competence and self-esteem in predicting Facebook addiction. It is on the above identified concern that the importance of the present study is founded by focusing on the role of communication competence and self-esteem in predicting Facebook addiction of

undergraduate students in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. It is hypothesized that students with poor communication competence will be more addicted to Facebook than those with good communication competence. Also, that students with low self-esteem will be more addicted to Facebook than those with high self-esteem.

2. Aims and Objectives of the Study

Based on the above concern, the aims and objectives of the present study are to:

- i. Compare poor communication competence students with good communication competence students on Facebook addiction;
- ii. Compare low self-esteem students with high self-esteem students on Facebook addiction;
- iii. Establish the significance of interaction effect between communication competence and self-esteem on Facebook addiction;
- iv. Proffer solutions to the ugly trend of Facebook addiction among students – thus checkmating the psycho-social menace of Facebook addiction.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Participants

A total of 585 participants were sampled from a population of undergraduate students from nine (9) departments of the University of Uyo Town Campus. Two hundred and seventy (270) participants were males, while three hundred and fifteen (315) were females. Their ages ranged between 18 and 40 years, with a mean age of 22.25 years. 43.6% of the participants were Ibibio, 5.6% were Efik, 21.0% were Annang, 22.6% were Igbo, and 7.2% belonged to other ethnic groups. Also, 9.2% of the participants were married while 90.8% were single. The participants were selected using purposive sampling technique, while the departments were selected using multistage sampling technique.

3.2. Instruments

i) *The Bergen Facebook Addictive Scale (BFAS)*: The Bergen Facebook Addiction Scale developed by Torsheim, Brunborg and Pallesen (2012) was used in this study to measure overuse of facebook and presented in a 5-point Likert format (from 1: very rarely to 5: very often). It is an 18-item scale with six sub-dimensions, namely, salience, mood modification, tolerance, withdrawal, conflict, and relapse. Alpha reliability index of the scale is .83 (Torsheim et al., 2012) and .87 for Nigerian sample (Alabi, 2013).

ii) *Interpersonal Communication Competence Scale (ICCS)*: A short form of the scale was used in this study. This scale, developed by Rubin and Martin (1994) taps into the 10 dimensions of competence: self-disclosure, empathy, social relaxation, assertiveness, interaction management, alter centrisms, expressiveness, supportiveness, immediacy, and environmental control. The scale which is a 10-item measure has a Cronbach alpha reliability of .59.

iii) *The Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale (RSES)*: The scale was originally developed by Rosenberg (1965) to measure self-esteem. It is a 10-item scale that uses 4-point Likert format: Strongly Agree (3); Agree (2); Disagree (1), and Strongly Disagree (0). Rosenberg (1965) reported a Cronbach alpha reliability of .67. Later, Ojo and Kehinde (2013) reported a cronbach alpha of .81 for Nigerian sample. A sample item of the scale is “On the whole, I am satisfied with myself”.

3.3 Procedure

A multistage sampling technique was adopted to select the nine departments used for this study, while the students who participated in the study were selected using purposive sampling technique. Such departments were Psychology, Guidance/Counseling, Political Science, Geography and Natural Resources Management, Educational Technology, Political Science Education, English, Philosophy and Foreign Languages. Specifically, a total of 632 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to all the available students who indicated interest to participate, but only 601 were returned, representing 95.0% return rate. Out of the number returned, 16 copies were discarded due to improper completion, leaving a total of 585 that were used for data analysis.

3.4 Design/Statistics

The study adopted a cross sectional survey design and a 2x2 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for data analysis.

4. Results and Discussion

Table 1: Mean scores and standard deviation of Facebook addiction on communication competence and self-esteem

Factor	Group	N	\bar{X}	SD
Communication competence	Good	276	40.54	12.35
	Poor	309	46.68	16.25
Self-Esteem	High	300	41.01	13.47
	Low	285	38.20	12.19

Table 1 shows that poor communication competence had higher mean score on Facebook addiction ($\bar{x} = 46.68$, SD = 13.25) than good communication competence ($\bar{x} = 40.54$, SD = 12.35). Also students with high self-esteem had higher mean score on Facebook addiction ($\bar{x} = 41.01$, SD = 13.47) than those with low self-esteem ($\bar{x} = 38.20$, SD = 12.19).

Table 2: ANOVA summary of communication competence and self-esteem differences in Facebook addiction

Factor	Sum of squares	DF	Mean square	F	P
Communication competence (A)	.696	1	.696	14.004	<.05
Self-Esteem (B)	21.388	1	21.388	.130	>.05
A*B	331.064	1	331.064	2.012	>.05
Error	31428.828	582	164.549		
Total	353468.000	585			

Table 2 above shows that communication competence had a significant influence on Facebook addiction [F(1,191) = 14.004, p<.05]. More so, there was a non-significant main effect of self-esteem on Facebook addiction [F (1,191) = 130, P >.05]. Lastly, there was no significant interaction effect between communication competence and self-esteem on Facebook addiction [F(1,191) = 2.012, P >.05].

The present study was conducted to examine the influence of communication competence and self-esteem on Facebook addiction among university of Uyo students. The results of the study showed that poor communication competence significantly predicted Facebook addiction. This means that students with poor communication competence were predisposed to being addicted to Facebook. This result confirmed the hypothesis that poor communication competence would significantly predict Facebook addiction among undergraduate students. This finding is consistent with the finding of Sheldon et al (2011) who found that Facebook could cause higher levels of perceived relatedness and promotes higher satisfaction concerning relatedness. The result is, however, not consistent with the findings of Przybylski et al (2009) who found that high levels of basic psychological need satisfaction were positively related to harmonious passion for video game play, whereas low levels were associated with obsessive passion for video game play. A possible explanation for this finding is that there is significant difference between poor and good communication competence in predicting Facebook addiction. Student’s poor in communication competence devoted more time to surfing Facebook. People have inadequacies in different situations and can do anything to compensate for such inadequacies. For instance, the social compensation theory (Mckenna, Green, & Gleason, 2002) opines that lack of self-esteem and social anxiety people encounter difficulties in attaining a social life and establishing friendly relations. Heightened anxiety in people towards social relationships and inadequate social skill make individuals with interpersonal sensitivity feel uncomfortable in face-to-face communication. For this reason, such people prefer to refrain from social interactions to lessen the risk of negative evaluations of others (Davidson, Zisook, Giller, & Helms, 1989).

In Nigeria, irrespective of age, most university undergraduates now start the day first checking their Facebook accounts. This obsession trend, if left unchecked, can engender serious academic problem. According to Ojo and Omoyemiju (2014), the frenzy is gradually tending toward addiction as some students cannot do without accessing their Facebook accounts within every passing hour. They like to stay up-to-date with the

current trends and events in the viral world of Facebook. The time and attention that undergraduates give to this social network site is becoming increasingly alarming because they can access their Facebook accounts on their mobile phones even when lectures are going on. They do this at the detriment of their academic pursuit (Ojo & Omoyemiju, 2014). As observed by Toma and Hancock (2011), excessive use of Facebook interferes with important activities of a person's life, making Facebook to have a greater influence on the individual's daily life.

The result of this study failed to confirm the second hypothesis that students with low self-esteem would be predisposed to Facebook addiction. This means that low self-esteem is not one of the reasons students are addicted to Facebook, rather students with high self-esteem were predisposed to be addicted to Facebook. This finding is consistent with most previous findings (e.g., Echeburua & de Corral, 2010; Forest & Wood, 2012) who found that people high in self-esteem usually post positive updates and get positive responses. A plausible explanation for this finding, according to Tajfel and Turner's social identity theory is that people can increase their self-image by discriminating and holding prejudiced views against out-group members (McLeod, 2008), and that students belong to a group that is exposed to discrimination and prejudice and this may affect their self-esteem negatively.

Research evidence (e.g., Echeburua & de Corral, 2010) observed that Facebook usage had a significant negative relationship with self-esteem. Also, it is reported that people with high self-esteem usually post positive updates and get positive responses (Forest & Wood, 2012). Young people are also said to have more chances of falling victim of Facebook addiction (Karaiskos, Tzavellas, Balta, & Paparrigopoulos, 2010). The excessive use of modern technologies is specifically limited to young people and, as a result, addictive tendencies are more common among them due to their impressionable nature (Malik & Khan, 2015).

Alexander (2006) asserted that people with low self-esteem have been shown to experience more negative mood, less life satisfaction, more anxiety, more hopelessness, and more depressive symptoms than those with high self-esteem. Equally, Mckenna et al (2002) affirmed that low self-esteem has been linked to a number of psychopathologies, including schizophrenia, personality disorders, anxiety disorders, mood disorders, learning disorders, eating disorders, conduct disorders and substance abuse. In yet another study, Trzeniewski, Donnellan, Moffitt, Robins, Poulton and Caspi (2006) found that low self-esteem, during adolescence, was related to a high likelihood of future problems in adulthood, including depression, anxiety, poor physical health, increased tobacco use, increased criminal behaviours, and increased employment difficulties.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the influence of communication competence and self-esteem on Facebook addiction among University of Uyo students. It has been ascertained that students with low communication competence spend more time on Facebook exploration than students with high communication competence. This is because according to Ryan, Rigby, and Przybylski (2006), thwarted intrinsic needs can be satisfied through media

use. The media provide users with specific gratification which may compensate for lower need satisfaction. Focusing specifically on obsessive video game play, Przybylski, Weinstein, Ryan and Rigby (2009) were able to show that high levels of basic psychological need satisfaction were positively related to harmonious passion for video game play, whereas low levels were associated with obsessive passion for video game play.

It is evident also that low self-esteem was not one of the reasons students are addicted to internet surfing, instead with high self-esteem were predisposed to be addicted to Facebook. This is because according to social identity theory, people can increase their self-image by discriminating and holding prejudiced views against persons outside their own group (Young, 1998; McLeod, 2008), and that people belong to group that is exposed to discrimination and prejudice and this can affect their self-esteem negatively.

In summary, since poor communication competence predisposes undergraduate students to Facebook addiction, it is suggested that students spend more time studying to improve their communication competence than surfing the internet. It is always better to do first thing first. Face-to-face communication is mostly needed in interpersonal dealings with people such as job interviews. Many people fail job interviews because of poor communication, especially while trying to avoid eye contact. Since self-esteem is how we evaluate ourselves, the authors want to suggest that people should always attach positive values to themselves, never you reduce your self-worth. Future researchers can expand the scope of this study by bringing in more psychological variables.

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