New Media and Crime among Adolescents in Anaocha LGA of Anambra Nigeria

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. Authors CCA and POUA designed the study, performed the statistical analysis, wrote the protocol, and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Authors HNC and CFU managed the analyses of the study. Authors AFC and CCN managed the literature searches. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Original Research Article

ABSTRACT

New media use has been recently understood as an important issue to be looked into among adolescents, parents and others who deal with adolescents. This study sought to examine the new media and crime among adolescents in Anaocha Local Government Area of Anambra State. The study employed the cross-sectional descriptive design method involving a quantitative approach which included a survey of 224 adolescents between the ages of 13-19 years selected by cluster and simple random sampling techniques from five communities in the LGA. The instrument for data collection was interviewer-administered questionnaire while the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used in analyzing the data. Findings revealed that phones were the most prevalent new media in use among adolescents particularly the male ones. Also, majority expressed

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negative view about the influence of the new media on adolescents, with sexting and cyber-bullying as the most common crimes associated with new media. Furthermore, psychological trauma was identified as the major effect of cyber-bullying on adolescent victims. This study recommended enlightenment of adolescents and other stakeholders in order to curtail the level of crimes committed through the new media. Parents and significant others are advised to keep a close watch on their adolescent children and wards while they are browsing the internet, and this will hopefully control criminal activities associated with new media use among adolescents in Anaocha LGA in particular and Nigeria in general.

1. INTRODUCTION

The new media most commonly refer to content available on demand through the internet accessible on any digital device usually containing interactive user feedback and creative participation, common examples of new media include websites such as online news-papers, blogs, wikis, video games and social media, characterized by dialogue [1]. An adolescent is a child whose body is transforming into those of sexually and physically mature adults [2]. Crime was defined as an intellectual mistake or an offense against the community rather than a private or moral wrong. It is an act or omission done by a person that goes contrary to the code and conduct of the society [3]. Globally, the new media which is a means of mass communication using digital technologies such as the internet, is used on computers, MP3 players, hand-held video players and cell phones, as well as on television set [4]. The speed of internet has helped the way people receive information by combining immediate broadcast with the in-depth coverage of the handsets making it perfect sources for information.

Adolescents immerse themselves in these new media with social networking sites which play major roles in their lives. This is linked to developing sexual attitudes and behavior and it often affects sexual risk-taking and health [5,6]. The use of the new media is such that the anti-social behavior among adolescents is eliminated, hence fostering friendship among individuals of different communities. In the Nigerian context, the new media has thus far added features including blogs and social networks. The most popular extra features include music, video selection which include every member generating video from hundreds of subjects to TV clips and you-tube. This has in turn given room for specific kinds of communication.

The focus of this study is however to examine the problems and crimes that can be associated with the new media and how best the rate of crime among adolescents who use the new media could be controlled. The new media has led the adolescents into various delinquent behaviors like cyber bullying [7]. This was defined by Swearer et al as a type of bullying that involves spreading rumors and information to others who then continue the cycle online which eventually produces psychological consequences to the victim [8]. These seqelae include suicide, helplessness, academic problems, delinquency, depression and so on. Adolescents socialize, learn new things, have fun and, unfortunately encounter unpleasant situations whereby they become victims of theft and deceit by reason of the fact that they give out crucial information about themselves which in the end causes havoc [8].

Sexting, a vice associated with new media has been described as a 21st century neologism and portmanteau of sex and texting that refers to the interpersonal exchange of self-produced sexualize texts and above all images through cell phones or the internet [9]. Cell phones and other mobile devices today are ubiquitous and usually come with a camera as well as a picture messaging services or even a full internet connection. It is easier than before to produce and distribute self-made pictures including self-sexualized portraits. This creates a scenario where new nude or semi-nude pictures are sent to the other party. This spectrum of expression is relatively large and this in most cases leads to sexual activities like masturbation [10]. It has also been shown that sexual harassment, transgenerational and transactional sex are some vices found among adolescents [11]. Sadly, McKinney CL in his thesis posited that sexting is one of the main causes of these vices among young people and in most cases when the sexually harassed refuses to comply, the evidence of her chats and nudes are portrayed for the entire public to see, and this, on the side of the victim, causes depression, inferiority, rejection and loneliness, separation from peers among others [12].

Furthermore, Tramontana RC in his book titled "controlling internet content won't work", observed that between 1995 and 2000, approximately 135 adolescents were abducted and molested as a result of internet contact [13]. Although those numbers may not be alarmingly high, it shows that communication through the internet can potentially lead to abduction. The methods with which predators communicate with their victims have increased. Internet bulletin boards, chartrooms, private websites, and social networks have been used by sexual predators and pedophiles in attempts to exploit the youths. With the increasing amount of time that teens spend online, they face the risk of meeting the wrong person online and therefore standing the chance of being abducted or blackmailed. Although not all solicitations on the internet leads to child abduction, the internet is still a potentially dangerous place for adolescents as it heightens the chance of abduction to occur because youths are increasing the amounts of communications they have online. Adolescents who date online and go through courtship without fully understanding whom they are dealing with, can be badly exploited with attendant onset of severe depression.

Most parents have lesser access to mobile technologies than their children, and so are not able to control such children with their online personalities [14]. This explains why the youths, display what they are not on the social media, hence drawing all sorts of attention without knowing its implication. This digital divide can also be seen in situations where rich children have more access to mobile technologies than their poor counterparts, and so indulge in greater crime acts. In Nigeria, most children from the upper class make use of smart phones, laptops and other appliances that could connect an individual to the outside world and so get involved in criminal acts more than the children from the lower class. In this case, parents are not aware of some activities their children engage in online, while ignorantly believing that their children are way too young to understand criminal acts. This false sense of belief and wellbeing foster increased rate of online crime among adolescents. It is against this background that the study examines the new media and crime among adolescents with particular reference to Anaocha LGA.

About 90% of adolescents in Africa use cell phones every day, and 75% use social networking sites most days [15]. Between texting, social media and online gaming, many youths spend more time engaging online than they do interacting in person. As technology continues to revolutionize the way we communicate, it also presents new areas of concern. Cyber bullying affects any age and makes the victims totally overwhelmed by feelings of embarrassment. Affected youths are often unable to confide in an adult because they feel ashamed and sometimes afraid of being judged or counselled to ignore the assault or to close their internet accounts which they might not want to do. Such negative effect of cyber bullying includes low self-esteem, withdrawal from family and spending a lot of time alone, reluctance to let parents or other family members anywhere near their mobiles or laptops, finding excuses to stay away from school or work, including school refusal, weight loss, or changing appearance and personality [15].

Similarly, the act of kidnapping can occur through the use of the new media. Young people interact freely and as such uncover vital information about themselves, thus giving room for the other party to devise better strategy to strike. Kidnappings can cause deep emotional and mental scars that leave victims to battle through issues of trust, friendship and respect. It can cause loss of interest on the part of the adolescent, including fright, dependence and regressed behavior.

Ali Hedayati summarized the problems that could arise as a result of the use of the new media to include online victimization of youth, whereby the youth gets himself or herself endangered by exposing his or her vital identities to an enemy thought to be a friend, issues of identity theft, where the adolescent poses with an identity he or she does not actually bear, hence making the online criminals have the need to strike [16]. Yet another is the issue of emergence of digital gap between parents and the adolescents. This gap makes it impossible for parents to control the behaviors of their children online and so these children stand the risk of being endangered even as they get involved in some of these online deviant acts. In the Nigerian context, particularly Anaocha LGA, Anambra state, most parents are ignorant of the manner in which their children communicate and disclose certain information online, some of which are due to illiteracy on the side of the parents towards the use of phones to communicate with people on the outside world, hence, they don't feel the need or remember to

checkmate the personality their children bear online' The new media has therefore drastically increased the rate of crime in all societies, particularly in Anaocha LGA, Anambra state.

The general objective of this study is to examine the new media and crime among adolescents in Anaocha LGA, Anambra state. Specifically, it sets out; 1) to determine the nature of the new media and use among adolescents in Anaocha LGA, Anambra state. 2) to determine the crimes associated with the new media among adolescents in Anaocha LGA, Anambra state. 3) to evaluate the extent sexting encourages crime among adolescents. 4) to investigate the effect of cyberbullying on the rate of crime among adolescents. 5) to proffer possible measures to control crime rate among adolescents in Anaocha LGA, Anambra state.

This study has both theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, the findings of this study may add to the existing body of knowledge in the area of criminal sociology, particularly on the issue of crime rate among adolescents. It could generate data to support and sustain the interest of researchers across disciplines on current issues affecting the rate of crime among adolescents in Anambra state. Practically, this study could bring to limelight the rate of crimes among adolescents and how negatively it has affected them thus, enable the government to enact effective policy and strategies that will help to control the crime rate in the new media in Nigeria, especially in Anaocha LGA, Anambra state. It will also enable the criminal justice system to carefully and strictly protect the rights of the adolescents and the society at large.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Study Design

This study was a descriptive cross-sectional design.

2.2 Study Area

The area of this study was Anaocha Local Government Area of Anambra state. It is made up of ten(10)towns namely: Adazi-Ani, Adazi-Enu, Adazi –Nnukwu, Agulu, Agulu-Uzoigbo, Akwaeze, Ichida, Neni, Nri and Obeledu. Anaocha Local Government Area is one of the twenty one (21) Local Government Areas which make up Anambra State. There are sixteen (16) secondary schools in Anaocha LGA, Anambra state, two (2) general hospitals, twenty (20) maternity hospitals, eleven (11) maternity homes,

and twenty-two maternal health centers for the health facilities. In terms of the medical institutions, twenty-six (26) of them are owned by the state government, nine (9) are owned by the missionary, and twenty (20) are private owned. The Local Government headquarter of Anaocha is situated in Neni. Anaocha has six (6) small-scale manufacturing agro-based and construction industries, fifteen (15) sub post offices and postal agencies. It also has six (6) police posts. Anaocha LGA was chosen as the study area for this research because of the strategic mature of the area in terms of high population density and high number of youths, particularly adolescents.

2.3 Study Population

According to the National population Commission of Nigeria [17], Anaocha LGA has a projected population of three hundred and sixty-five thousand and hundred (365100), the males make up 49% of the population, while the females make up 50.3% of the population. However, the target population of this study was residents of Anaocha LGA with total population of 51,302 residents in the area. The study population constituted of adolescents aged between 13-19 years who were chosen because they fall within the population group that can contribute meaningfully to the aims of the study.

2.4 Scope of Study

The scope of this study was limited to the relationship of new media and crime among adolescents in Anaocha Local Government Area.

2.5 Sample Size

The sample size of this study was 204. The sample size was considered adequate in view of the resources available and time factor. However, in determining the sample size, the Taro Yamane sample size formula was used.

n= N/1 + (e)^2, where n =sample size, N=population of study, e = Tolerable error (7%) n=51,302/1 + 51,302(0.07)^2, n=51,302/1 + 51,302(0.0049), n=51,302/1 + 509.4579

n=51,302/510.4579, n=204 (the minimum sample size). To take care of attrition, 10% of the minimum sample size is added to it to give a sample size of 224.

2.6 Sampling Techniques

The sampling technique for this study was multi-stage sampling technique incorporating the cluster and simple random sampling (SRS) techniques. First, the ten autonomous communities in Anaocha LGA, were grouped into two clusters of five communities each. By means of simple random sampling technique (SRS), one cluster was selected. The cluster is made up of five communities namely Neni, Aguluzigbo, Akwaeze, Nri and Ichida. Secondly, the villages in each selected community were numbered to form the sampling frames respectively. The SRS was then employed to select the required number of adolescents in proportion to size of each autonomous community. There was an estimated total of 200 adolescents in Neni, 150 in Aguluzigbo, 480 in Akwaeze, 100 in Nri, and 60 in Ichida. In using the proportional sampling technique, adolescents in Neni was assigned adolescent sample size of 45, Aguluzigbo (34), Akwaeze (109), Nri (23) and Ichida (13). This gives a total sample size of 224 adolescents.

From each of the selected autonomous community, the World Health Organization (WHO) modified cluster sampling technique was used to select the assigned number of adolescents as follows: The center of each community was identified, and an empty bottle was spun and allowed to rotate for a minimum of 5 spins. Wherever the neck of the bottle was pointed when at rest, the compound nearest to it was entered to recruit and interview (using questionnaire) every adolescent that met the inclusion criteria. Following the clockwise direction, the same data collection process continued in subsequent compounds until the total sample size was completed for each community.

2.7 Instruments for Data Collection

The study used structured questionnaire as an instrument for collecting quantitative data. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. Section A was the consent section or the introductory part where the researcher states its mission, telling the respondents the respondents the reasons for the study and also solicits for support. Section B dealt with the socio demographic variables of the study. Section C dealt with substantive issues of the research as derived from the research questions and specific objectives. The in-depth interview guide was structured to get the needed qualitative data from the respondents.

2.8 Administration of Instruments

The researchers administered the questionnaires to be able to get first hand accurate information from the respondents especially when the sensitive questions were asked. Interviewer-administration encourages a high return rate of the questionnaire. It also helped in clarifying some questions which the respondents found difficult to understand.

In the in-depth interview of key informants (Some school Principals and Parents) the research assistants also served as the note takers and the operator of the tape recorder. They helped the researchers in conducting the in-depth interviews. The respondents were interviewed while the note taker wrote the proceedings of the interview. A tape recorder was used to record information from the in-depth interviews. The in-depth interviews were conducted during the break period when the respondents were available to answer questions willingly.

2.9 Data Analysis

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used in processing and analyzing the data from the questionnaire. Also, the data collected were presented using frequency tables. The chi-square inferential statistics (x^2) test of significance was employed while the level of significance was set at 5% (p< 0.05). Furthermore, content analysis was used to analyze the in-depth interview using thematic method. It emphasized pinpointed, examined and recorded patterns (or themes) within data. Hence, the thematic method helped the researchers to capture and address the research objectives after thorough editing in line with the objectives of the study.

2.10 Limitations of Study

The authors acknowledge the limitation of small sample size that tended to reduce the power of this study. Also, a multivariate analysis (as obtained in path analysis) was not carried out in this study to eliminate effects of confounding variables.

3. RESULTS, TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the study sample. As at their last birthdays, 14.8% were within the age of 13 years, 11.0% were within the age of 14 years, 22.4% were within the age of 15 years, 19.4% were 16 years,

11.0% were 17 years. Also, about 15.2% was 18 years, while 6.2% belonged to the 19 years of age. The table shows that the 15-year olds made up the majority of the respondents, 99.0% was single, 1% was married, none was separated, widowed or divorced. Furthermore, 1.9% of the respondents had no formal education, 21.4% had primary education, 25.7% had junior secondary school education (JSS), and 41.5% had senior secondary school education. Also majority of the respondents 95.2% were Christians, 1.9% were Muslims, and 2.9% were traditionalists.

Table 2 shows that the overwhelming majority of respondents 200 (95.2%) used phones as a new media in Anaocha LGA. Further responses about respondents' use of new media are: 205 (97.5%)

respondents said they made use of new media while only 5 (2.4%) did not. Of the 205 that used new media, 190 (92.7%) of the respondents used phones as a form of new media, 5 (2.4%) used televisions to enable them to obtain relevant information across the globe. Furthermore, 10 (4.9%) used laptops to chat, as well as obtain relevant information needed at any point in time. Also 172 (81.9%) of the respondents believed the use of new media negatively influenced adolescents, while 35 (16.7%) felt that the use of the new media had positive influence on adolescents of the LGA. Furthermore, 172 (81.9%) of the respondents believed that there were crimes associated with the new media among adolescents in Anaocha LGA.

Table 1. Respondents' socio-demographic characteristics

Socio-demographic variables	Frequency	Percent
Sex		
Male	98	46.7
Female	112	53.3
Total	210	100
Age in years (at last birthday)		
13	31	14.8
14	23	11.0
15	47	22.4
16	41	19.4
17	23	11.0
18	32	15.2
19	13	6.2
Total	210	100
Educational attainment		
No formal education	4	1.9
Primary education	45	21.4
JSS	54	25.7
SSS	87	41.5
Others*	20	9.5
Total	210	100
Marital status		
Married	2	1.0
Single	208	99.0
Separated	0	0
Divorced	0	0
Religious affiliation		
Christian	200	95.2
Muslim	4	1.9
Other (trado-religion)	6	2.9
Parent's(father) occupation		
Professional	30	14.3
Trader	154	73.3
Artisan	20	9.5
Other**	6	2.9

*Source: Field survey 2016. *Vocational school. **driver, farmer etc*

Table 2. Respondents' views and thoughts on new media in Anaocha LGA

Views and Thoughts	Frequency	Percent
Nature of new media used by adolescents		
Phones	200	95,2
Laptops	10	4.8
Total	210	100
Their new media use status		
Make use of new media	205	97.6
Do not make use of new media	5	2.4
Type of new media used		
Phones	190	92.8
Laptops	10	4.8
TV	5	2.4
Total	210	100
Influence of new media on adolescents		
Positively	35	16.7
Negatively	172	81.9
Indifferent	3	1.4
Total	210	100
Adolescents commit crime via new media		
Yes	172	81.9
No	38	18.1
Total	210	100
Crimes committed with new media among adolescents		
Cyber-bullying	64	1.9
Kidnapping	52	24.8
Sexting	84	40
Advance fee fraud	10	4.8
Extent to which sexting encourages crime among adolescents		
Mild	18	8.6
Moderate	70	33.3
Great	120	57.1
Cyber-bullying affects the rate of crime among adolescents		
Yes	64	30.4
No	146	69.5
Total	210	100

*Source: Field survey 2016. *Vocational school. **driver, farmer etc*

The table also shows that 84 (40.0%) of the respondents believed that sexting was the highest crime associated with new media among adolescents in Anaocha LGA, 52(24.8%) believed that the crime of kidnaping was associated with the new media among adolescents in Anaocha LGA. Furthermore, 64 (30.4%) considerer cyber-bullying as one of the crimes associated with new media among Adolescents in Anaocha LGA. A small proportion (4.8%) of respondents believed that adolescents in the LGA committed advance fee fraud through new media. Finally the table depicts that 122 (58.1%) of the respondents believed that sexting, to a great extent, encourages crime among adolescents in Anaocha LGA, 70 (33.3%) had a moderate view on how sexting encourages crime among adolescents in Anaocha LGA, 18 (8.6%) had mild view on how sexting encouraged crime among adolescents in the area.

Fig. 1 shows that 165 (78.7%) of the respondents agreed that psychological trauma was the commonest effect of cyber-bullying on the adolescent victims in the LGA. Furthermore, 163 (77.6%) pointed out that image of the victims was tarnished as a result of cyber-bullying. Also, insecurity and low esteem among the adolescents were the other identified effects of cyber-bullying.

Fig. 2 shows that 178 (84.8%) of the respondents saw enlightenment as the greatest measure taken by the government to control new media induced crime rate among adolescents in Anaocha LGA, 120 (57.1%) considered the act

of cyber-surveillance as one of the measures taken by the government to control the rate of crime among the adolescents. Also, 80 (30.1%) of the respondents saw arrests and punishment as one of the measures taken by the government to control crime rate via the new media. However, 23 (11%) believed that crime via the new media cannot really be controlled.

Table 3 shows a significant relationship between educational level and use of new media and crime among adolescents in Anaocha LGA. The higher the educational level, the greater the likelihood of using new media for crime among adolescents in Anaocha (X^2 = 8.32; p=0.02). Similarly, male adolescents were significantly more likely than their female counterparts to use new media for crime ($X2$=4.4, P=0.04).
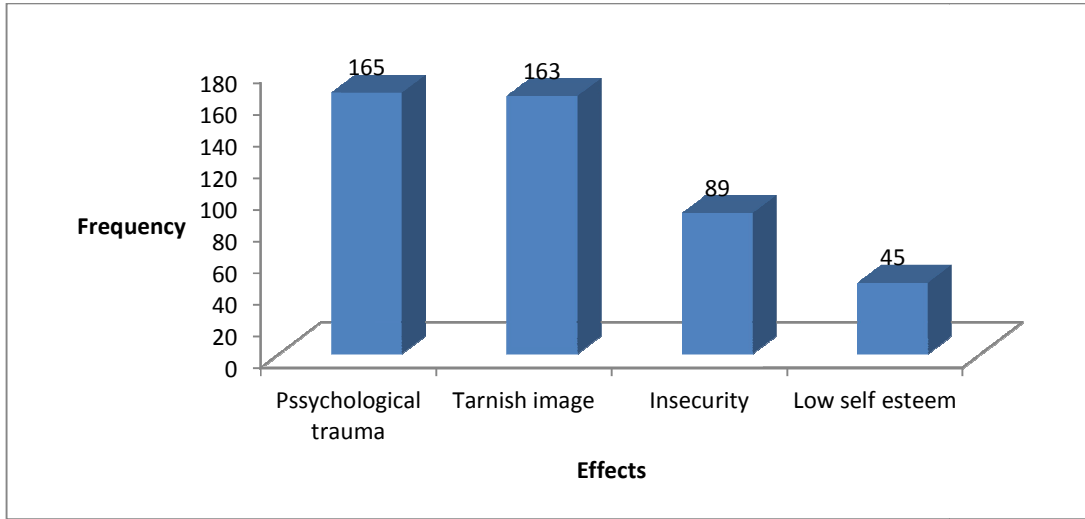

Fig. 1. Respondents' view on the effects of cyber-bullying on the adolescent victims
*Source: Field survey 2016. *Multiple responses allowed*
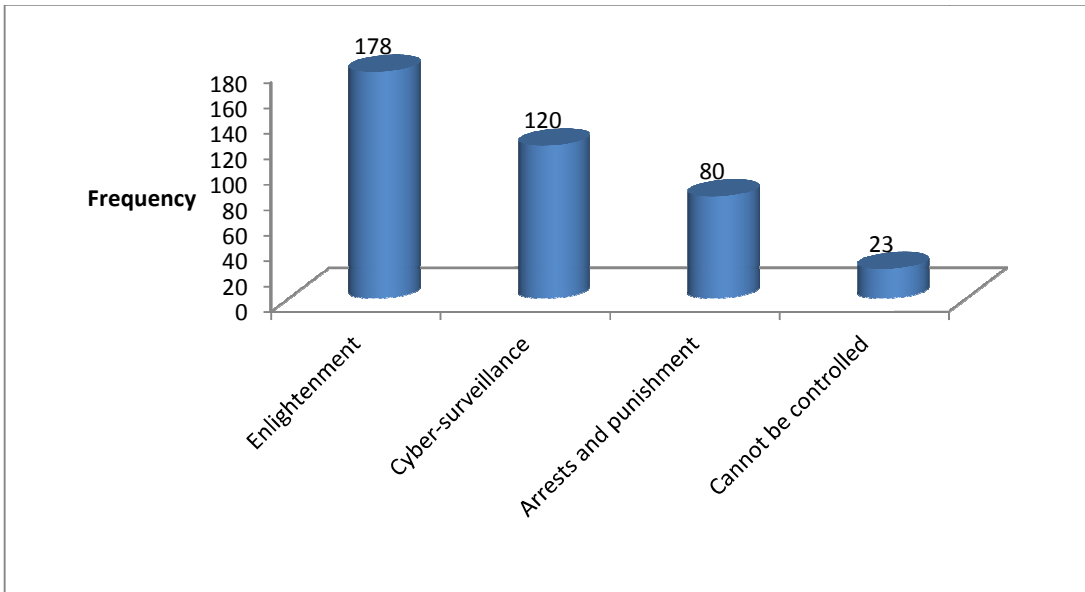

Fig. 2. Respondents' view on measures by government to control new media crime among adolescents in Anaocha LGA
*Source: field survey 2016. *Multiple responses allowed*

Table 3. Relationship between new media and gender/education of the adolescents

Use of New Media	Response			X^2	P-value
Education	**Yes**	**No**	**Total**		
No formal education	2	2	4		
Primary education	43	2	45		
Vocational education	19	1	20	8.32	0.02
Secondary education	141	0	141		
Total	**205**	**5**	**210**		
Gender					
Male	98	0	98		
Female	107	5	112	4.4	0.04

Source: Field survey 2017

4. DISCUSSION

This study found that 200 (95.2%) of the respondents considered phones as the major kind of new media, only 10 (4.8%) said that laptops are considered as new media. This finding is in agreement to what Hampton KN et al. [18] found earlier that phones were more frequently used for online communications than laptops and other devices. This is pointer to the fact that parents ought to be vigilant and fully in control of the affairs of their children regarding phone communication with peers to avoid falling victims of circumstances that might arise.

Next, this study found that 190 (92.7%) of the respondents used phones to make online communications and obtain information. Furthermore, 10 (4.9%) of the respondents considered television as new media, while just 5 (2.4%) regarded the laptop as new media, an indication that only a few of the adolescents had laptops, while majority had phones, and the remaining minority viewed television as new media. This is in agreement with what Hofferth propounded regarding the issue of young people making use of phones. He found that a very high percentage of students, even very little children owned phones [19]. This further substantiates the fact that phones were commonly used as new media particularly in Anaocha LGA. Furthermore, the study revealed that 172 (81.9%) regarded the use of new media negatively, while only 35 (16.7%) regarded the new media positively. This was so because of erosion of cultural values which were meant to uphold and physically unite individuals especially the young ones. Such traditional beliefs and values are gradually going into extinction and so it is almost difficult for adolescents to fit into the settings of values upheld in the past.

Again, 172 (81.9%) agreed that there were crimes associated with the new media. Agarwal

had noted that crimes like sexting, kidnap, cyber bullying were all associated with the use of new media, and adolescents were mostly victims because of their inexperience and desire to have fun [20]. In a similar vein this study has indeed revealed that 84 (40%) of the respondents believed that sexting is one of the crimes associated with new media, 52 (24.8%) agreed that the act of kidnap was a crime associated with new media among adolescents. Also they agreed that psychological trauma, image tarnishing, insecurity and low self-esteem were identified effects of cyber-bullying which was in fact considered another crime associated with new media by 64 (30.4%) of the adolescents. Something similar was found in a Californian study where approximately 23% of teens reported being threatened by a peer [21]. Again cyber-bullying has been shown to cause higher levels of psychological trauma like depression and anxiety for victims than even traditional bullying and has also been connected to cases of youth suicide with teens known to engage in reading hurtful comments days before their suicide attempts; and sexting which has been defined as an act of sending sexually explicit materials through mobile phones [22]. A Nigerian study posited that a female adolescent could find herself the target of unwanted sexual advances or even acquaintance rape [23]. This could easily result from innocent exchanges of images or texts with a male. It is important for a parent to spell out the rules regarding the use of phones and the consequences of sexting to their teens once the smartphone is handed over to them. Cyberbullying and sexting can have serious sequelae to the victim of these actions including severe depression, suicidal ideations, suicide attempts, suicide, low self-esteem and poor academic performance [24].

Again, 122 (58.1%) of the respondents in our study agreed that sexting greatly encourages

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crime. This is similar to another study which found that almost half of teen cell phone owners reported regret over a text message they have sent [25]. An embarrassing or upsetting image or video can quickly be transmitted or uploaded to an online video sharing site like YouTube via cell phones or the internet. Because sexting is a form of texting where individuals send or receive sexually suggestive nude or nearly nude images or messages, as many as 20% of teens reported that they have posted nude or semi-nude pictures or videos of themselves [26]. Furthermore, online sexual predation occurs when an adult makes contact with a minor with intent to engage in sexual activities that would result in statutory rape. Youth are much more likely to receive sexual solicitation between same-age youth than sexual predation and most of these solicitations come from same-age peers who are known offline [27]. The sexual solicitation rate for teens is estimated at between 13-19% [28]. This coupled with adolescent sexual risk-taking behavior rate of (38-50%) [5], and unwanted adolescent pregnancy and criminal abortion rates of (28%) [29], constitute crimes that potentially originate from sexting and cyberbullying, further corroborated by another study which revealed that 16% of teens using the internet had considered meeting someone they have only talked to online and 8% have actually done so [30].

The study also revealed that 178 (84.8%) of the respondents online crimes could be controlled through enlightenment, 120 (57.1%) agree that new media crimes could be controlled through cyber-surveillance, which ought to be mounted by parents, spouses, as well as government of the state so as to help control crime rate in society. Similar solutions were suggested in other studies which recognized the dire need for parents and caregivers to educate themselves about social media and the ways their teens may use them, as well as the common risks involved, in order to help them understand and navigate the technologies and engage their teens in positive discussions that can result in less risky online behaviors [31]. Parents and caregivers are also enjoined to show greater concerns about their adolescents' online safety and sharing of personal information and photos, via the internet, lower incidence of public online profiles, and lower incidence of meeting people they only know from online. However, parents are encouraged to discuss media content with their teens, as an effective strategy to reduce the amount of personal information disclosed—more

so than prohibiting access, as teens often perceive monitoring as a violation of their privacy [32]. Teens are more receptive to user empowered strategies or even some form of industry protection.

This study also showed that adolescents with high educational level were more likely to engage in new media use for crimes online than the less educated adolescents in Anaocha LGA, and that male adolescents significantly engaged more in new media use for crime than their female counterparts in Anaocha LGA. The influence of these two factors (education and gender) on new media use for crime are hardly surprising as similar studies have established that female teens in relationships receive nude pictures or be pressured to send nude pictures of themselves to a male partner [33]. Relationship abuse can also include sending nonstop text messages or posting cruel comments on a girlfriend's Facebook or My Space page [33]. Also cell phones, instant messaging, and social networking websites are all increasingly being used to monitor, threaten, and harass female relationship partners. One in three female teens in relationships has been text messaged up to 30 times an hour by a male partner to find out where they are, what they are doing, or who they are with [34]. It was observed that majority of the respondents, in a bid to fit into what is called societal modernity; they tend to engage in all sorts of crimes, especially online criminal acts so as to achieve their desired goals.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The study found that there was high level of knowledge about new media as well as crimes associated with its use especially by adolescents in Anaocha LGA of Anambra state. It was also found that the new media most often used by adolescents in the study area were phones which they used for communications and browsing. The study also found that respondents regarded the use of new media mostly negatively despite the positive effects it could have on the adolescents. This is because the respondents had revealed that there were crimes such as cyber bullying, kidnapping and sexting associated with new media. However, the research has shown that of all crimes, the act of sexting was most rampant among adolescents in Anaocha LGA. It was found that enlightenment, especially on the side of the government and significant others on the importance of new media can actually help to control the crime rate predominant by reason of

the new media use among adolescents. The result also showed that adolescents with high educational standards were more likely to engage in online crimes than adolescents with low education, and that adolescent who resided in the rural areas were less likely to engage in online crimes than their urban counterparts in the study area.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. For Parents and Caregivers: a) Parents and caregivers need to educate themselves about social media and the ways their teens' access the internet via the new media, as well as the common risks involved. This will help parents understand and navigate the technologies. b) Family discussions and engagement should be encouraged as they are positive for adolescents and can result in less risky online behavior. c) Greater concerns should be shown about online safety and sharing of personal information and photos. d) Respect for privacy and empowerment for parents and caregivers in discussing media content with their teens is an effective strategy to reduce the amount of personal information disclosed by adolescents.

2. For Community: a) Greater resources need to be allocated to Anaocha LGA schools, libraries and community organizations to assist them in adopting new media risk management strategies and to provide education about online safety issues to adolescents. b) Mental health professionals are needed to identify at-risk youth and intervene before risky behavior like new media use for crime results in negative outcomes. c) Internet providers such as Google and Yahoo, and social networking sites, such as Facebook and YouTube, need to start and continue to work with parents and policymakers to create awareness and opportunities for privacy protection of youth and to develop technologies that can assist adolescents in staying safe. d) Medical and mental health providers need to routinely screen adolescents for risk of depression by asking about an adolescent's social media use. For example, assessing the amount of time spent using new media including online activities or inquiring about online contacts (close friends, strangers, teen's willingness to meet someone offline,

incidence of being harassed, harassing others). Tools should be developed to help providers engage in these conversations. e) Schools in Anaocha LGA need to include explicit information on new media forms, online risks, and education about consequences of new media use, including laws that pertain to them. f) Non-profit organizations need to maximize the opportunity to reach adolescents in Anaocha LGA through social networking that adolescents are already using (e.g. social networking sites, video and gaming sites, and blogs) to share their own content. g) Evaluation research is needed on the success of social media-based interventions, particularly those focusing on educated male adolescents.

FURTHER RESEARCH

A Cohort study to determine the effect of new media on crime among adolescents. This will incorporate better designs and multivariate analyses to eliminate confounders.

CONSENT

As per international standard or university standard, Participants' written consent has been collected and preserved by the authors.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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