Research Paper

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Pornographic Contents through Social Networks: A Case of Western Ethiopia

Communication

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ABSTRACT

Social networks, for more than the last two decades, have been reshaping the entire behavior of youths' communication. It has reduced their distances; strengthened their relationships; and has increased their volume of communication. This study explores how the Ethiopian youths are using porn materials through social networks. The objective of this research is to analyze the age and gender dynamics of youths regarding threats of using social networks. There are three target population of this study from where the sample is drawn: teen cyber café visitors, cell phone using older youths and laptop using professional youths. For the first target population, systematic random sampling is used whereas for the second and third snowball sampling is applied. The sample size (264) comprises of questionnaire (n=252) supplemented by interview from key respondents (n=12). The data is collected and analyzed keeping in view the age and gender dynamics and the result is presented.

INTRODUCTION

Pornography (often abbreviated as "porn" or "porno" in informal usage) is the portrayal of sexual subject matter for the purpose of sexual arousal. The term applies to the depiction of the act rather than the act itself, and so does not include live exhibitions (Hyde, 1964). Pornography got its boom among youths after the arrival of Social networking platforms where they can instantly share text, audios and videos. The porn industry generates billions of dollars annually. Commercialized pornography accounts for a nearly US$100 billion worldwide (Chris, 2014). Rates of unwanted exposure are higher among youth who are older, suffered from depression, and reported being harassed or solicited online or victimized offline (Wolak et al. 2007).

"Social networks" are online communities that give opportunities to connect with, or provide resources to, clients, colleagues, family, and friends who share common interests. There are many different types of social network sites, many of which are free, and they range from general to those tailored for a specific demographic or interest area. Examples include Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, Skype etc. In each social network, a profile is created that describes a person or organization, and then people are invited to join as "friends." (boyd and Ellison, 2007).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objective of this paper is to assess and compare the age and gender dynamics of youths regarding risks of pornographic contents on social networks.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of this research is to understand the Ethiopian youths' adoption of social networks, their online behavior at present and foreseeing their future trends. Attempt is made to understand gender (male and female) and age (younger and older) dynamics of social networks usage among youths. The study has attempted to grapple with the ethical contours of social networks usage to promote ethical thinking and ideal conduct. The study is also intended to know what is embedded in youths' online recreational and social activities and how they craft a unique culture using social networks.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research has been accomplished through mixed design wherein both quantitative and qualitative tools have been employed.

PARTICIPANTS

The subjects of this research study are social networks users of Nekemte, an Ethiopian town of Africa, falling under teen and youth category. An individual who has used social networks through Internet at least once in the last 1 month is the participant of the research. The participants are the desktop user teens from five cyber cafes, cell phone user youths from five universities and laptop user professional youths of different organizations of the Nekemte town.

INSTRUMENTATION

As different researches employ different data collecting tools to gather information in order to make the research meaningful, this study has employed mixed method (questionnaire and interview) to collect the appropriate inputs. The tool used for quantitative data is self administered questionnaire consisted of four sections. The first section contains respondent profile; the second section contains access and use of social networks. The third section encompasses the opportunities and fourth covers risks from social networks. The questions are of both open and close ended types. In order to get better response, both single and multiple choice questions are included in the questionnaire. For knowing the addiction level, an addiction scale is used in the questionnaire. A pilot study coupled with a preliminary study of 5 cases has been done to add value in the questionnaire. 12 qualitative interviews have also been carried out from key informants for complementing the quantitative data.

STUDY AREA

The study is conducted in Nekemte city. Situated at the elevation of 2088 m, the location of this city is 9 degree 50 north latitudes and 36 degree and 330 east longitudes. Historically, Nekemte was a glorious city and the capital of former Wollega province. It is a market town in western Ethiopia located in East Wollega zone of Oromia region. Nekemte is a burial place of Onesmous Nesib, a famous Oromo who translated the Bible into 'Afan-oromo language' for the first time, in collaboration with Aster Geno. It is also seat of an Apostolic Vicariate of the Roman Catholic Church. Nekemte is at the center of the road network for south western Ethiopia. The town is fairly developed having about 10 cyber cafes, 200 EVDO connections and 500 CDMA users through which social networks is used on the internet (ETC, 2012).

SAMPLE SIZE

The sample size of this study is 264. A total sample size of 252 is determined for quantitative survey using the assumptions of desired precision 5%, confidence level 95%. The sample includes both male (n=126) and female (n=126) youths and early (n=111) and matured (n=141) youths. The size of the sample is statically

derived. 12 In-depth interviews have been conducted from key informants.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

There are three target population of this study from where sample is drawn. They are teen cyber café visitors, cell phone using older youths and laptop using professional youths. For the first target population i.e., teen cyber café visitors, systematic random sampling is applied. For the second (cell phone using older youths) and third (laptop using professional youths) target group snowball sampling is applied. Snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling technique that is used by researchers to identify potential subjects in studies where subjects are hard to locate.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Mixed method is used in data collection. Questionnaire is used for quantitative data which is supplemented by interview with key respondents. The questionnaire is piloted before the main study for greater accuracy in data collection. In order to get better response, the questionnaire is translated into Afan-Oromo (the first language of respondents) seeing the majority of respondents belonging to the same language. The survey sample includes teen desktop users in 5 different cyber cafes of town; cell phone using older youths in 5 different universities of the town, and laptop (EVDO/CDMA) using professional youths of the town. For collecting qualitative data as complementary, 12 key informants were selected e.g. cyber café owner, university instructor, government official, doctor, health professional, engineer, foreigner/expatriate, church administrator, merchant, NGO officer, addicted teen, and addicted older youth. After the appropriate data is gathered through questionnaire, it was sorted, edited, tabulated and frequency was drawn out. Afterwards, it is analyzed in terms of proportion and percentage. Results and discussions have been drawn out. Based on the results, conclusions and recommendations are made to give a meaning to this research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data gathered through questionnaire and interview are discussed and interpreted in terms of gender and age.

TABLE – 1
INCIDENCE OF PORNOGRAPHY

Responses	Age and Gender					
	Male Teens	Female Teens	Total Teens	Male Older Youths	Female Older Youths	Total Older Youths
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	27.8	26.3	32.5	29.2	23.2	22.0
No	72.2	73.7	67.5	70.8	76.8	78.0

Source: Computed by the researcher

Regarding sharing of pornographic materials 27% youths quoted 'yes' they shared 'porn' and 73% said 'no' they didn't. Surprisingly, females (29%) share pornographic materials more than males (24%). Further, teens (33%) share more pornographic materials than matured youths (22%) on their profiles.

FORMS OF PORNOGRAPHY

Pornography is presented in a variety of forms, including books, magazines, postcards, photographs, sculpture, drawing, painting, animation, sound recording, film, video, and video games (Hyde, 1964).

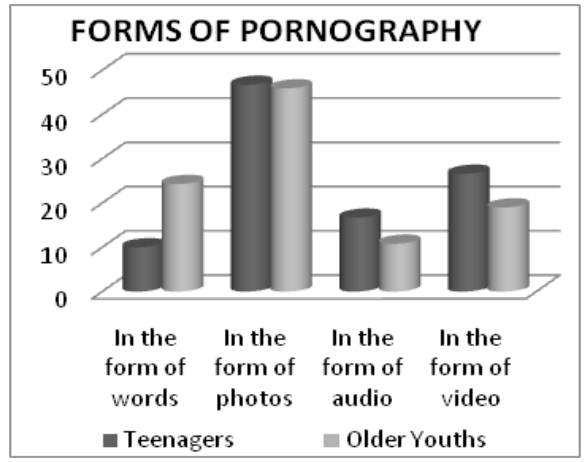

Figure 1: Pornography on social networks by age

The figures display that photo is the most used form of pornography and audio is the least used form of pornography among males and older profiles. On the other hand, for teens and females the most used forms of sharing porns is photo and the least is in the forms of words.

REACTION TO PORNOGRAPHY

Often porn materials penetrate in the user's account and youths are perturbed differently. Sometimes porn materials also appear suddenly on the screen through pop-ups and youths react unpredictably on these occasions. More than 70% of male internet users from 18 to 34 visit a pornographic site in a typical month (Safefamilies.org, 2011).

TABLE – 2
REACTION TO PORNOGRAPHIC CONTENTS

Responses	Age and Gender					
	Male Teen	Female Teen	Total Teen	Male Older Youth	Female Older Youth	Total Older Youth
	%	%	%	%	%	%
I turn it off from my screen immediately	43.6	76.2	60.5	76.5	79.2	77.9
I become curious for a while and watch it briefly	41.0	11.9	25.9	21.5	18.8	20.1
I watch it and search out more	15.4	11.9	13.6	2.0	2.0	2.0

Source: Computed by the researcher

The tables present that irrespective of gender and age, the spontaneous reaction against pornography on profile is "turning off the screen immediately" by 70% youths. "Being curious and watching briefly" is the second reaction (23%) whereas the third reaction of youths is "watching and searching out more" (7%). Females lead in turning off the screen immediately while teenagers lead in both "curious and watching briefly" plus "watching and searching out more".

CONCLUSION

The findings of this survey pertaining to on social networks reveal that most of the Ethiopian youths claim that they don't share pornography. To surprise, gender-wise females and age-

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wise teens exchange more porn materials than their counterparts. They share "photos" as the most practiced porn material and switch off the screen of computer/mobile as a reaction to sudden porn exposure.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Researches show that the Internet is not the only place where youth get access to the problematic content, suggesting that an Internet-only approach will not eradicate the problem. Research also consistently highlights a connection between the practices of seeking access and being exposed, suggesting that an effective intervention needs to account for the motivations that youth have when they seek access. Blocking access certainly has its place, but if we fail to address those who are seeking access, we will not curtail the most problematic outcomes.

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