

SOCIAL MEDIA AND MARITAL CHOICES: ITS IMPLICATIONS ON CONTEMPORARY MARRIAGE

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Abstract

Human beings are faced with numerous choices every day. These choices vary from the most trivial ones to the most important ones. One important choice (probably after the choice of becoming born again) is the marital choice, especially the choice of whom to marry. One phenomenon that is influencing people's choices in this modern age is the social media in particular and the Internet in general. The social media and the Internet have influenced many facets of human endeavours. The contemporary marriage is not exempted from this influence. As a matter of fact, many people are now using social media to meet and connect with others and some of such connections have led to marital choice and marriage. This article aims at looking at social media and the Internet and how they are affecting the contemporary marriages both positively and adversely.

Key words: social media, marital choices, family life, contemporary marriage, social network

Introduction

Human beings are faced with numerous choices every day. These choices vary from the most trivial ones to the most important ones. One important choice (probably after the choice of becoming born again) is the marital choice, especially the choice of whom to marry. One phenomenon that is influencing people's choices in this modern age is the social media in particular and the Internet in general. The social media and the Internet have influenced many facets of human endeavours. The contemporary marriage is not exempted from this influence. As a matter of fact, many people are now using social media to meet and connect with others and some of such connections have led to marital choice and marriage. This article aims at looking at social media and the Internet and how they are affecting the contemporary marriages both positively and adversely.

The Internet and Social Media

The Internet came in to existence because of advancement in information and communication technologies and the need to share information globally. It has become a powerful means of communication because it is broad, fast, and grows quickly. It has turned the world into global village with more connection to transmit information at speeds almost instantaneously.¹ People are using the Internet through many ways. These ways include: e-mail, instant messaging (IM) or online chatting, online discussion forums, blogs, websites, social media, and web-based SMS. The Internet as an international network is used for research, commerce, education, entertainment, and so on. It is indeed a “place” where people come together to buy and sell; exchange ideas and philosophies; discuss political and social issues; and, access a wide range of information.²

This information revolution has been seen as both “a blessing and a vice to the modern man and woman alike.”³ It is a blessing because it has not only transformed how people work, play, search, shop, study, and communicate⁴, but it has also transformed how people think and act, and this has affected the choices and decisions of many people in life. It is a vice because many people have been addicted to it. These addictions include: undue preoccupation with the Internet, loss of control of time spent on the Internet, inexplicable sadness or moodiness when not online, dishonesty in regard to Internet use, creation of virtual intimate relationships with other Internet users, loss of a significant relationship due to Internet use, lack of sleep, and the likes. The use of the

¹ See Adebayo Ola Afolaranmi (2009). *Ministering through the Internet: An Essential Guide*. (Ibadan: Charisa Books & Publishing).

² Aemen Khalid (2017). Impact of Internet on Social Connections in Family System: A Survey Study of Residents in Lahore. *Arts and Social Sciences Journal*. Volume 8 • Issue 3 • 1000270. Retrieved November 20, 2018, from <https://www.omicsonline.org/open-access/impact-of-internet-on-social-connections-in-family-system-a-survey-study-of-residents-in-lahore-2151-6200-1000270.pdf>, 1.

³ M. Saleh and J. I. Mukhtar (2015). Social Media and Divorce Case Study of Dutse L.G.A. Jigawa State. *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*. Volume 20, Issue 5, Ver. II (May. 2015). Retrieved November 27, 2018, from <http://www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jhss/papers/Vol20-issue5/Version-2/I020525459.pdf>, 54.

⁴ John T. Cacioppo, et al (2012). Marital satisfaction and break-ups differ across on-line and off-line meeting venues. *PNAS*. June 18, 2013. Vol. 110. No. 25. Retrieved November 20, 2018, from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3690854/pdf/pnas.201222447.pdf>, 10135

Internet in accessing the Scriptures and other biblical and Christian materials, even during worship experiences, has been seen as a blessing and a distraction.⁵

Social media or online social network services focus on building online communities of people who share interests and/or activities, or who are interested in exploring the interests and activities of others.⁶ Some online services offer the opportunity of having social networks with other people of similar interests. This has encouraged new ways to communicate and share information. One can sign up and have a sort of quasi-website where one can create a network of friends. These quasi-websites are in form of forums, groups, blogs and the likes. They are the tool that have been created to engage people, motivate and encourage them to be better people and create better livelihoods for themselves.⁷ This has made the present generation to have easy access to any kind of information they want through the Internet and especially social media.⁸ In fact, the emergence of social media has tremendously changed the face of communication throughout the world.⁹ In the world today, "four out of five people who have access to the Internet use social media."¹⁰

Online Social Network Services (SNS)

Social media can be grouped into online social network services (SNS) and instant messaging (IM) apps. "Geocities" was one of the first social media sites created in 1994,¹¹ but the first recognizable social network site (SNS) was

⁵ Chris Stokel-Walker (2017). How smartphones and social media are changing Christianity. Retrieved November 27, 2018, from <http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20170222-how-smartphones-and-social-media-are-changing-religion>

⁶ Emmanuel Akanni Olasinde (2014). AN ANALYSIS OF THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA SITES ON NIGERIAN UNDERGRADUATES. *Education and Science Journal of Policy Review and Curriculum Development*. Vol. 4 No 1. pp. 53-65 <http://www.internationalpolicybrief.org/images/journals/Edu4.1/Edu5b.pdf>, 54.

⁷ Chiemela Queen Adaugo, Ovute A.O., Obochi Charles I. (2015). The influence of the social media on the Nigerian youths: Aba residents experience. *Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science*. Volume 3, Issue 3 (2015). Retrieved November 27, 2018, from <http://www.questjournals.org/jrhss/papers/vol3-issue3/C331220.pdf>, 12.

⁸ Olasinde, 56.

⁹ P. White, Tella, F. & Ampofo, M.D. (2016). "A missional study of the use of social media (Facebook) by some Ghanaian Pentecostal Pastors". *KOERS – Bulletin for Christian Scholarship*, 81(2). Retrieved November 27, 2018, from <http://www.scielo.org.za/pdf/koers/v81n2/01.pdf>, 3.

¹⁰ Audrey Lim (2017). EFFECTIVE WAYS OF USING SOCIAL MEDIA: AN INVESTIGATION OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA. *CEJ: Series 3*, Vol. 14, No. 1. Retrieved November 27, 2018, from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/073989131701400103>, 23.

¹¹ Adaugo, 13.

SixDegrees.com.¹² It was launched in 1997 and allowed users to create profiles and list their friends. However, in spite of the fact that this SNS attracted millions of users, it failed to become a sustainable business, so, in 2000, the service closed down.¹³

Amongst other examples of social network services online are:

- 1) **Facebook:** Mark Zuckerberg and a group of fellow Harvard University students founded Facebook as a social network service in 2004, primarily, to get to know their classmates.¹⁴ It has since evolved dramatically and grown to over a billion users worldwide.¹⁵ In fact, it has become the mostly widely used social media today.¹⁶
- 2) **Twitter:** Twitter is a social network and micro-blogging service created by Jack Dorsey in 2006.¹⁷ Users can send and receive messages (called *tweets*) of up to 140 characters. Pictures and videos can also be sent through Twitter. Twitter members can broadcast tweets and follow other users' tweets by using multiple platforms and devices.
- 3) **YouTube:** This is a video-sharing website created Jawed Karim, Steve Chen, and Chad Hurley who were employees of PayPal in 2005 before Google bought it was over in 2006.¹⁸ Users can upload and share videos on YouTube. While unregistered users can view the videos, only registered users can upload as many videos as possible.
- 4) **Google+ (or Google Plus):** This is a social networking project designed by Google to replicate the way people interact offline more closely than is the

¹² For more, visit <http://www.sixdegrees.com/>.

¹³ Adebisi Marion and Ogunlade Omotayo (2011). Development of a Social Networking Site with a Networked Library and Conference Chat. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Computing and Information Sciences*. Volume 2 No.8, AUGUST 2011. Retrieved December 1, 2018, from <http://eprints.covenantuniversity.edu.ng/7864/1/10.1.1.302.760.pdf>, 396.

¹⁴ Timeline: Key dates in Facebook's 10-year history (2014, February 4). Retrieved November 28, 2018 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-02-timeline-key-dates-facebook-year.html>.

¹⁵ E. Kross, Verduyn P, Demiralp E, Park J, Lee DS, Lin N, et al. (2013). Facebook Use Predicts Declines in Subjective Well-Being in Young Adults. *PLoS ONE 8(8): e69841*. Retrieved November 28, 2018, from <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article/file?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0069841&type=printable>, 1.

¹⁶ Ayala Arad, Ohad Barzilay and Maayan Perchik (2018). The Impact of Facebook on Social Comparison and Happiness: Evidence from a Natural Experiment. Retrieved November 28, 2018, from <https://m.tau.ac.il/~aradayal/Facebook.pdf>.

¹⁷ Amanda MacArthur (2018). The Real History of Twitter, In Brief. Retrieved November 28, 2018, from <https://www.lifewire.com/history-of-twitter-3288854>

¹⁸ The Brief But Impactful History of YouTube. Retrieved November 28, 2018, from <https://www.fastcompany.com/1514469/brief-impactful-history-youtube>.

case in other social networking services.¹⁹ This service will be shut down on April 2, 2019.²⁰

- 5) **LinkedIn**: LinkedIn is a social network service that focuses on building **business** or **professional** relationships. It was founded in 2002. The goal of the service is to allow registered members to establish and document networks of people they know and trust professionally.²¹
- 6) **Instagram**: Instagram is an online mobile photo sharing, video-sharing and social networking service that enables its users to take pictures and videos, and share them on other social networking platforms.²²
- 7) **Ning**: Ning makes it easy to launch your own social network in a matter of minutes. It gives you the tools and expertise to nurture and engage your own community on the largest, most scalable, and integrated social platform of its kind.²³
- 8) **Wikipedia**: This is a free, open content online encyclopaedia created in 2001 through the collaborative effort of a community of users known as *Wikipedians*. Anyone registered on the site can create an article for publication. Registration is not required to edit articles.²⁴

This list is not exhaustive as there are other social network services like Hi5.com, Pinterest.com, and Multiply.com. There are also numerous **dating sites** like Match.com, OurTme.com, Hinge, Hitch, HowAboutWe.com, OkCupid.com, Grindr.com, Down Dating (downapp.com), Bumble.com and others.

Instant Messaging (IM) Apps

There are other forms of social media that have unique ways of sharing information in form of text messages, pictures, audio and video clips. Some of them even over free calls! Examples of these are

¹⁹ Read more here: <http://www.t5a.com/social-media/beginners-guide-google-plus/>.

²⁰ See <https://support.google.com/plus/answer/9195133> (retrieved February 1, 2019).

²¹ Read more here: Daniel Nations (2018). What Is LinkedIn and Why Should You Be on It? Retrieved November 28, 2018, from <https://www.lifewire.com/what-is-linkedin-3486382>.

²² Fore more, visit Jenn Herman (2014). The Ultimate Beginner's Guide To Instagram. Retrieved November 28, 2018, from <https://jennstrends.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/The-Ultimate-Beginners-Guide-To-Instagram.pdf>.

²³ For more, visit Goran Buba, Ana Coriç, Tihomir OrehovaĚki (n.d.). Evaluation of the Use of the Online Community Tool Ning for Support of Student Interaction and Learning. Retrieved November 28, 2018, from <https://jennstrends.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/The-Ultimate-Beginners-Guide-To-Instagram.pdf>.

²⁴ For more, visit What is Wikipedia? Retrieved November 28, 2018, from <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e8/Wikipedia-leaflet-en.pdf>.

- 1) **Yahoo Messenger:** this was an advertisement-supported instant messaging client and associated protocol provided by Yahoo!. It was no longer supported after July 17, 2018,²⁵ but has been replaced with other instant messaging apps.
- 2) **BlackBerry Messenger (BBM):** this is a branded data-based instant messenger and videotelephony application that allows messaging (and videocalls for some smartphones) between BBM users. The manufacturer of the BlackBerry, that is, BlackBerry Limited (formerly known as Research In Motion Limited [RIM]) developed it. BBM used to be the best way to connect and share instant messages, pictures and more for free, in real time. Until recently, only people that own BlackBerry smart phones could exclusively use BBM. However, as announced during BlackBerry Live 2013, BBM officially has gone cross-platform on Android and iOS since October 21, 2013. With this, people with Android phones, Galaxy Tabs, iPhones and even iPads can now use BBM application on their devices. Unlike other instant messaging apps that use one's phone number or email addresses as one's identifier, BBM uses a PIN (personal identification number) so that one is always in control of who can contact him/her. This means that one can share one's PIN while maintaining one's privacy and always being in control of who can contact him/her. BBM automatically comes with every BlackBerry smartphone with a unique PIN. When one installs BBM on Android or iPhone, one will be assigned a new PIN. One's PIN is unique to one's device.²⁶
- 3) **WhatsApp Messenger:** WhatsApp Messenger is a cross-platform mobile messaging app that allows you to exchange messages, images, audio or video without having to pay for SMS but using the Internet. WhatsApp Messenger is available for iPhone, BlackBerry, Android, Windows Phone and Nokia.²⁷ It can also be used on computer by simply going to the Whatsapp website and download it to Mac or Windows. It is becoming the most popular IM app.
- 4) **Telegram Messenger:** this is similar to WhatsApp Messenger. It is super-fast, simple and free, and it can be used on any Internet-enabled device.²⁸

²⁵ Yahoo Messenger will be discontinued. Retrieved December 1, 2018, from <https://help.yahoo.com/kb/SLN28776.html>.

²⁶ For more, visit <https://www.bbm.com/en/> and <https://www.webwise.ie/parents/explainer-what-is-bbm/>.

²⁷ For more, visit <https://www.whatsapp.com/> and <https://www.webwise.ie/parents/explainer-whatsapp/>.

²⁸ For more, visit <https://telegram.org/faq#q-what-is-telegram-what-do-i-do-here>.

- 5) **Skype**: this is a telecommunications application software product that specializes in providing video chat and voice calls between computers, tablets, mobile devices, and smartwatches via the Internet and to regular telephones. Skype additionally provides instant messaging services.²⁹
- 6) **FaceTime**: this is a video-calling application designed by Apple for use on the iPhone, iPad, and Mac. It exclusively supports one-on-one calling (i.e., no group calling) and can only be used to call someone with a compatible Apple device. Unlike other similar video-calling applications, it will not work on Windows or Android phones.³⁰ Its IM app is known as iMessage and it replaces text message features on iPhones.
- 7) **Zoom**: this is video communications platform with an easy, reliable cloud platform for video and audio conferencing, chat, and webinars.³¹
- 8) **Imo Messenger**: this is another instant messenger app and communication tool developed by imo.im for computers and mobile devices.³²
- 9) **2go**: 2go is a mobile messenger that allows you to communicate for free with your friends. It is a network of millions of people where you can setup your profile, talk to friends, share files and pictures, and meet new people.³³
- 10) **Viber**: Viber is a mobile application that allows you to make phone calls and send text messages to all other Viber users for free! Viber is available over WiFi or 3G. Once you and your friends install Viber, you can use it to talk and message as much as you want.³⁴

Uses of Social Media (especially Facebook)

Because Facebook has become the most popular online social network service in Nigeria, if not in the whole world, it will not be unfair if more attention is given to it than the other social network websites. Facebook has affected the social life and activity of people in various ways. It can be used in many ways.

²⁹ For more, visit <https://www.skype.com/en/>.

³⁰ For more, visit <https://support.apple.com/en-ng/HT204380> and <https://www.digitaltrends.com/mobile/what-is-facetime/>.

³¹ For more, visit <https://zoom.us/>.

³² For more, visit <https://www.lifewire.com/imo-instant-messenger-review-3426876>.

³³ For more, visit <http://www.2go.im/about>.

³⁴ For more, visit <https://www.viber.com/>.

These are some of the uses of Facebook³⁵ (most of these highlighted ways can also be explored through other social media apart from Facebook):

- 1) One can have a *personal page* where one's personal information like email address, phone number, birthday, and the likes can be found. The homepage of this website is called wall page. There are other pages like the info page, photo page and friends' page in this personal page.
- 2) One can have a *group page* for group of people that share similar interest, or that are pursuing the same goal. One can add other people that are on Facebook to the group. People on Facebook can join or request to join the group. Members of the group will have access to the activities on the group through their email boxes and Facebook mailboxes. Depending on the settings of the group, the owner and moderators of the group as well as other members of the group can send messages to the group or post messages directly on the wall page of the group. The group will have a wall page as its homepage and other pages like the info page, message page, photo page and members' page.
- 3) One can have a *page for a celebrity, cause, etc.* created for a celebrity, cause, etc. that one wants to promote. People can join this page by "liking" the page. The page will have a wall page as its homepage and other pages like the info page, message page, photo page and members' page.
- 4) One can add other people on Facebook as *friends* to one's page. One can do this by inviting such people, and the people will have to accept the invitation. One automatically becomes a friend of such people that have accepted one's friendship invitation on their Facebook pages.
- 5) One can *write or post messages* on one's page. These posted messages will appear on the homepages of one's Facebook's friends. People on Facebook, especially one's Facebook friends can comment on and/or "like" the posted message through their homepage or one's wall page.
- 6) One can *write or post notes* on one's page. A note on Facebook is a longer message that is more than 500 words posted on one's page through a special page - note page. One can tag other friends, celebrities or causes that have Facebook pages on this note and the note will appear on the wall pages of such people/causes.
- 7) One can *write or post on friends' pages*. If a Facebook friend permits, one can write or post messages on his/her page. These messages will appear

³⁵ This an adaptation of the eBook, *Uses of Facebook* (Adebayo Ola Afolaranmi [2012]. *Uses of Facebook*. [Raleigh, Lulu Press, Inc.]).

with one's name and picture on the friend's page and the homepages of his/her friends. There will be a notification on one's page about this action.

- 8) One can *send personal messages to people*. Like ordinary email, one can send messages to people's Facebook message boxes that they will also get through their email boxes.
- 9) One can *chat/communicate instantaneously* and simultaneously with other Facebook friends that are online. If the friend goes offline, the chat will be delivered as a message to the friend in his/her message box. One can also chat/discuss with people in a Facebook group. This affords people in a Facebook group to have a sort of online conference.
- 10) One can post as many *memorable photos and video clips* as possible on one's Facebook page. These will be stored in one's photo page. One can tag one's Facebook friends on these photos and the photos will automatically be placed on the wall page and photo page of such friends. One can create as many albums as possible and organize these photos on one's photo page. One can also give description and comments to each of the photos, and one's Facebook friends can also comment on the photos. Instagram in particular is devoted to posting of memorable pictures and video.
- 11) One can *broadcast live* through Facebook. One can record live broadcast through Facebook and one's friends on Facebook that are online will be viewing live this as one records it. These recorded events will be stored on one's page and can be viewed later.
- 12) Since Facebook is a sort of search engine like Google and other online search engines, one can *find people and other relevant information* through Facebook. Facebook will firstly list people and groups, institutions or/and causes that are associated with what one is trying to find before Facebook links one with another search engine like Bing.com that will give other Internet findings.

Use of Instant Messaging Apps

Now that more and more people are joining millions of people throughout the world that are making use of instant messaging applications, how are they making use of these instant messaging apps?

- 1) One can *chat individually* with any person in one's contact list. This chat will be left as a message for a contact that is not online.
- 2) There is opportunity of creating *groups* or joining existing ones.

- 3) There is opportunity of creating *broadcast list* also where one can send a message to all the people in the list at the same time.
- 4) One can have a *display name* that can be one's real name, nickname, or combination of characters or even smiley. One can use this to give a specific info like phone number, website address, and so on. There is even an opportunity to use a short profile as one's display name. Undoubtedly, this will give one's contacts or anyone that sees one's display name in one's contacts' lists a message about him/her.
- 5) One can have a *display picture* that can be the image that is placed beside one's display name. It can be one's picture or any other image.
- 6) One can use *emoticons/smiley* to communicate expression on social media. The word "emoticon" is derived from two words: emotions and icons. Emoticons are a shorthand method of explaining a feeling (smiles, frowns, winks, and the like) on the Internet. Emoticons can be used in any communication over the Internet but are particularly popular with chat rooms and instant messaging. They can be used in email also. They grew from clever combinations of punctuation marks that now are usually translated by a software into an actual face.
- 7) One can *send information/images* through other means like pictures, voice notes, files, locations, contacts, and appointments.
- 8) There is opportunity of creating *channels*, a new social networking feature that extends the sharing experience beyond one's friendship circle. It allows channel creators to amass an unlimited number of followers.

Marital Choices

In spite of the fact that marital choices vary from one couple/family to the other, it is certain that every couple/family will have to make choices and decisions on daily, if not hourly, basis. These choices and decisions will have to do with their relationships, children, extended family members, religious activities, and the society in general. Making good and right choices is one of the God-given responsibilities of every human being and a primary ingredient for a good and healthy marriage.

Implications of Social Media on Contemporary Marriage

Marital choices are influenced by a variety of factors.³⁶ However, the social media indeed has many implications on the contemporary marriage. These

³⁶ Cacioppo, 10139.

implications are both positive and negative. Among them are explained briefly below:

- 1) ***Access to Information and Communication:*** since “communication is a veritable instrument that helps in creating and sustaining a conducive atmosphere in any society... [and] information is an essential ingredient that makes human beings survive and interact meaningfully with one another”³⁷, information and communication are not only essential in marital relationships but in any other human relationship. Undoubtedly, social media and the Internet have given more access to information and communication. People now have access to what they do not and/or cannot easily have access to in the past or through other means. Social media and the Internet are readily available to provide needed information before any choice can be made. Likewise, communication has been made easier as people can easily communicate with others regardless of distance between them.³⁸ This has had positive impact on the contemporary marriage.
- 2) ***Reliance on Social Media:*** access to information and communication online has made more people to rely on social media for many things ranging from news to other necessities of life.³⁹ It is just unfortunate that the more people rely on social media and other online platforms, the less they trust other conventional means and even real-time people.
- 3) ***Learning Opportunities:*** access to more information online has given people many learning opportunities.⁴⁰ This is a good development, but it also has its disadvantages as people, even married couples, learn bad things through social media and other online platforms.
- 4) ***Change in Worldview and Way of Life:*** social media has tremendously changed the worldview and way of life of many people as it has exposed people to the worldview and way of life of people of different culture and

³⁷ Olasinde, 53-54.

³⁸ Siobhan McGrath (2012). THE IMPACT OF NEW MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES ON SOCIAL INTERACTION IN THE HOUSEHOLD. Retrieved November 27, 2018, from <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/sites/default/files/assets/document/SiobhanMcGrath.pdf>, 8-9.

³⁹ Tang-Mui Joo and Chan-Eang Teng (2017). Impacts of Social Media (Facebook) on Human Communication and Relationships: A View on Behavioral Change and Social Unity. *International Journal of Knowledge Content Development & Technology*. Vol.7, No.4, (December, 2017). Retrieved December 1, 2018, <http://ijkcdt.net/xml/12711/12711.pdf>, 41.

⁴⁰ Olasinde, 57-58.

backgrounds.⁴¹ In a country that has relegated the views of women to the background, “because of social media, females [in Saudi Arabia] have become more open minded and more aware of the wider characteristics of men within their society.”⁴² In fact, “social media has given Saudi families the confidence to express themselves online and stand [to] respect others' opinions.”⁴³ This has affected how people think and behave, and it has had great impact in people’s choices as well. This impact is both positive and negative.⁴⁴

- 5) **Socialization:** another positive impact of social media is the fact that it helps people to socialize with others.⁴⁵ This has enable people to meet new people and/or old contacts. It also enable them to communicate, share and/or exchange ideas and feelings online.⁴⁶ It is noteworthy that while there is a significant limit on the number of people one can talk to or interact with at any given time in the real world,⁴⁷ social media has provided platforms to interact with more people, people that one may never meet face-to-face in one’s life time.⁴⁸ This has encouraged “long-distance relationships”.⁴⁹ However, this access to huge network of people from diverse backgrounds has exposed users of social media to new habits

⁴¹ Joshua Ebere Chukwuere and Precious Chibuike Chukwuere (2017). THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON SOCIAL LIFESTYLE: A CASE STUDY OF UNIVERSITY FEMALE STUDENTS. *Gender & Behaviour* 2017. pp. 9928-9940. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Joshua_Chukwuere/publication/323014365_The_impact_of_social_media_on_social_lifestyle_A_case_study_of_university_female_students/links/5ad468f5aca272fdaf7ba61e/The-impact-of-social-media-on-social-lifestyle-A-case-study-of-university-female-students.pdf, 9937.

⁴² Norah Alanazi (2015). "A study of the influence of social media communication technologies on family relationships in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia". *ETD Collection for AUC Robert W. Woodruff Library*. Paper 3133. Retrieved November 20, 2018, from <http://digitalcommons.auctr.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4066&context=dissertations>, 10.

⁴³ Alanazi, 10.

⁴⁴ Chukwuere, 9938.

⁴⁵ Dunbar RIM (2016). Do online social media cut through the constraints that limit the size of offline social networks? *R. Soc. open sci.* 3: 150292. Retrieved November 28, 2018, from <http://rsos.royalsocietypublishing.org/content/royopensci/3/1/150292.full.pdf>, 2.

⁴⁶ Kehinde Oyesomi, et al (2014). How Sociable are women on Social Media? An experiential Study on Nigerian women. *International Journal of Research in Social Sciences*. Volume 4, Issue 2. Retrieved November 27, 2018, from <http://eprints.covenantuniversity.edu.ng/2660/1/paper%20on%20social%20media%20and%20nigerian%20women.pdf>, 2, 6.

⁴⁷ Dunbar, 2-3.

⁴⁸ Olasinde, 57.

⁴⁹ Joo, 34.

that can have negative consequences on their behaviour.⁵⁰ Furthermore, having more friends on social media does not necessarily mean one has a better social life.⁵¹ In fact, “social media is in effect turning us into one of the most antisocial generations.”⁵²

- 6) **Change in the Familial Relationship:** social media in particular and the modern civilization in general have changed the understanding of familial relationship from communal life to individualistic life. People tend to see themselves more from individualistic point of view than the communal point of view, and they tend to treat other people in this regard.⁵³ Likewise, studies have now shown that the Internet is reducing family influences over young people in searching for their partners.⁵⁴ This is an adverse implication on the contemporary marriage.
- 7) **Entertainment:** social media has been a source and means of entertainment as it has helped people to escape from emotional problems, find ways to relax, and enjoy oneself.⁵⁵
- 8) **Empowerment:** a study has shown that “social media have the possibility of empowering individuals who adequately engage in it and judiciously use the medium for that purpose.”⁵⁶ It has also helped in knowledge acquisition and connection with professionals.
- 9) **Spending Less Time in Real-Time Relationship:** since more and more time is being devoted to the use of social media these days, couples are having less time to be together.⁵⁷ This has led to decline in marital relationship. A study shows that “over use of Social Networking Sites leads to the decline

⁵⁰ White, 5.

⁵¹ Alice G. Walton (2017). 6 Ways Social Media Affects Our Mental Health. Retrieved November 28, 2018, from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/alicegwalton/2017/06/30/a-run-down-of-social-medias-effects-on-our-mental-health/#51e099b62e5a>

⁵² Jacob Amedie (2015). The Impact of Social Media on Society. *Advanced Writing: Pop Culture Intersections*. Retrieved December 1, 2018, from https://scholarcommons.scu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1002&context=engl_176, 3.

⁵³ McGrath, 6-7.

⁵⁴ Sajid A. Noor et al (2016). The Role of Social Networking Websites: Do They Connect People Through Marriage or Are They Responsible for Divorce? *Journal of International Social Issues* (November 2016) Volume 4 Number 1 Page 40-49. Retrieved November 20, 2018, from <https://www.winona.edu/socialwork/Media/Noor%20etal%20The%20Role%20of%20Social%20Networking%20Websites.pdf>, 42.

⁵⁵ Oyesomi, 6.

⁵⁶ Oyesomi, 13.

⁵⁷ Adanma C. Eberendu (2015). NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF TECHNOLOGY IN NIGERIAN SOCIETY. *International Journal of Business and Management Review* Vol.3, No.2, December 2015. <http://www.eajournals.org/wp-content/uploads/Negative-Impacts-of-Technology-in-Nigerian-Society.pdf>, 23, 28.

of family relationship by decreasing the time youth spend with their parents, by decreasing their social circle and by weakening of their cohesion with their parents.”⁵⁸ This is applicable to married couples also. Even when some couples are in the same room, and at times on the same bed, they may be engrossed in social media neglecting their spouses. This choice to be online or be on social media has affected the communication sphere of many marriages.⁵⁹ In fact, a concern has been raised about social media “that people may be spending too much time on these [social media] sites, creating problems in their family life and making it difficult to maintain good relationships with their spouses.”⁶⁰

- 10) **Lack of Privacy:** because of its lack of privacy, social media has exposed many people unduly to the world that is not secured. This has led to identity theft, fraud, blackmail, and at times death of some people.⁶¹ Many marriages have collapsed because of this.
- 11) **Free Expression:** Social media allows people to say anything without suffering the consequences as expressions that are difficult to make during face-to-face communication can easily be said online.⁶² This on many occasions has led to cyber bully (to be discussed below).
- 12) **Limitation to Express Non-verbal Signs and Social Presence:** in spite of many emoticons available online, social media has a limitation in expressing non-verbal signs. It also deprives many people of face-to-face social connections. ⁶³ In fact, many people that involved themselves in social media live fake lives and many people are deceived into believing them or aspiring to be like them. This, at times, has led to jealousy, rivalry and/or depression.
- 13) **Meeting Future Partner Online:** Many people have met their future partners online or through social media. These people met online may be total strangers or people/childhood contacts that one has lost contact with. This has led to online dating/courtship and some eventually “long-term, healthy, marital relationship... [but this has also] increased the possibility

⁵⁸ Saida Sultana (2017). Social Networking Sites (SNS) and Family Relationship. *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*. Volume 22, Issue 4, Ver. II (April. 2017). Retrieved November 20, 2018, from <http://www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jhss/papers/Vol.%2022%20Issue4/Version-2/G2204024652.pdf>, 52.

⁵⁹ McGrath, 4, 8.

⁶⁰ Noor, 41

⁶¹ Eberendu, 24.

⁶² Eberendu, 25.

⁶³ Lim, 37.

of physical and emotional cheating, dissatisfaction, lower commitments and conflicts between couples.”⁶⁴

- 14) **Political awareness and participation:** social media is taking a prominent role in creating awareness about politics, and it is enabling people to make choices of what and who to follow politically.⁶⁵
- 15) **Online Dating:** this was a strange phenomenon before. However, with the advent of the Internet and social media, many young ones are now getting involved in online dating.⁶⁶ It is a pity that most of the relationships built out of online dating end in frustrations and catastrophes.⁶⁷
- 16) **Online Sex or Cyber Sex and Sextexting:** this is when two people text each other through their cellphones, saying dirty things or sending sexually explicit messages to each other. It is similar to online sex, but through texting instead. This can also be done through instant messaging social media like WhatsApp, Telegram, Imo, and even in private messages through Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and the likes. This could be done with one's spouse or any other person met online/offline. It can lead to masturbation. Some people only use text, while others will take pictures or videos of themselves using webcams.⁶⁸
- 17) **Sextape:** *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus* defines this as “a video recording of sexual activity, often one that is intended to be private but is made available for other people to see, for example on the internet.”⁶⁹ This is a sort of pornography. In most cases, people that involve themselves in this activity did not have the intention of allowing others to see the sextape, but, occurrences have shown that on many

⁶⁴ Noor, 43.

⁶⁵ Olasinde, 58, 61.

⁶⁶ Aaron Smith and Maeve Duggan (2013). Online Dating & Relationships. Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project. Retrieved November 28, 2018, from http://www.pewinternet.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/media/Files/Reports/2013/PIP_Online-Dating-2013.pdf, 2.

⁶⁷ Christina Masden and W. Keith Edwards (2015). Understanding the Role of Community in Online Dating. Retrieved November 28, 2018, from <https://www.cc.gatech.edu/fac/keith/pubs/chi2015-online-dating.pdf>, 9.

⁶⁸ Read more about this at Sexting and online sex. Retrieved November 28, 2018, from <https://www.sexualhealthscotland.co.uk/sex-relationships/types-of-sex/sexting-and-online-sex> and elsewhere online.

⁶⁹ sex tape. Retrieved November 28, 2018, from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/sex-tape>

occasions, one of the parties involved usually use the sextapes to blackmail the other when there is disagreement between them.⁷⁰

- 18) **Cyber-cheating:** also known as online cheating is a situation whereby a husband/wife is having a romantic and/or sexual affair online with another person other than his/her spouse through social media, email, instant messaging, or other Internet platforms.⁷¹ It is related to cyber sex. The difference between the two is that cyber sex can be done with one's spouse while cyber cheating is done with someone other than one's spouse. This will definitely lead to lack of trust in the relationship.
- 19) **Perversion:** social media has encouraged all sorts of sexual perversion like oral sex and anal sex even between married couples. Another sexual perversion is multiple sex. Incest has become a rampant occurrence in our society.⁷² Masturbation – the sexual stimulation of one's own genitals for sexual arousal or other sexual pleasure – has become a controversial issue with some people claiming that it has some health benefits!⁷³ Using of sex toys is another sexual pervasion that is gaining prominence through social media. Another sexual perversion is homosexuality (gay and lesbianism).
- 20) **Cyber Bully and Online Harassment:** this is an act of using social media to harass, abuse, embarrass, and/or cause disaffection to other people.⁷⁴ This can lead to depression, anxiety and/or isolation on the part of the person(s) at the receiving end.⁷⁵ Unfortunately, cyber bully is gradually generating into cyber terrorism!⁷⁶
- 21) **Infidelity and Divorce:** experiences and studies have shown that social media is causing a lot of infidelity in marriage and eventual divorce in the present-day society.⁷⁷ Examples of such infidelities are cyber sex and cyber

⁷⁰ For a recent case, visit "Lekki Pastor, Ex Lover at war over leaked sex tape." Retrieved December 1, 2018, from <https://news.fashionstyle.ng/2018/11/01/lekki-pastor-ex-lover-at-war-over-leaked-sex-tape/>.

⁷¹ Betül Aydın, Serkan Volkan Sarı, Mustafa Şahin (2018). The Effect of Social Networking on the Divorce Process. *Universal Journal of Psychology*. 6(1): 1-8, 2018. Retrieved December 1, 2018, from <http://www.hrpub.org/download/20180228/UJP1-19410224.pdf>, 1.

⁷² See "Incest, Offence Against Morality." Retrieved December 1, 2018, from <https://leadership.ng/2018/04/28/incest-offence-against-morality/>.

⁷³ See "Is masturbation good for you?" Retrieved December 1, 2018, from <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/teens/sex/masturbation/masturbation-good-you>.

⁷⁴ Amedie, 12.

⁷⁵ Olasinde, 58.

⁷⁶ Amedie, 14.

⁷⁷ Saleh, 58; Noor, 48; Alanazi, 10; Sebastián Valenzuela, Daniel Halpern, and James E. Katz (2014). Social network sites, marriage well-being and divorce: Survey and state-level evidence from the United

cheating mentioned above. Many marriages have not hit the rock, but all is not well with them as couples are living as strangers in the same home because of the bad influence of social media.

22) **Lack of Trust:** closely related to infidelity is lack of trust among couples caused by the use of social media. This can also cause jealousy and rivalry in marital relationship. A couple may be suspecting his/her partner due to the partner's activities on social media.

Conclusion

Social media has been likened to food that any living organism cannot live without. "The right choices of food in the right amounts keep people healthy and satisfied, while poor choices and excess consumption can lead to significant, potentially life-threatening health conditions."⁷⁸ Likewise, the right or wrong uses of the social media can lead to right or wrong marital choices. Therefore, the church in particular and the society must orientate young people and adults on proper use of the social media. By this, the church will be able to prevent the bad impacts the social media is having on people's choices.

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⁷⁸ The Good, Bad, and In-between of Social Media. Retrieved November 20, 2018, from <https://carrierclinic.org/resources/good-bad-in-between-of-social-media/>.

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