

THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF THE GLOBAL SYSTEM OF MOBILE COMMUNICATION (GSM) ON THE STABILITY OF ROMAN CATHOLIC COUPLES IN KADUNA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This research examined the social impact of Global System of Mobile (GSM) Communication on the stability of Roman Catholic Couples in Kaduna State. The study aims to determine the social impact of GSM on the stability of Roman Catholic Couples in Kaduna State. To effectively carry out this research, a structured questionnaire was used and a total number of 1366 respondents completed the questionnaire and were used for the study. The data collected were analyzed, using descriptive statistics, and a t-test. On the social impact, the result revealed that GSM creates awareness among married couples through effective communication on the stability of the marital relationship and caused suspicions between married couples. It was recommended that couples should learn to be sincere, truthful and avoid keeping secrets that will always affect their relationship from each other. Couples should learn to use GSM wisely to have a healthy marital relationship and avoid any situation that will cause suspicion. GSM makes communication faster and easier. Couples should make effective and judicious use of it. They should communicate regularly especially when they are not always together to avoid loneliness.

Keywords: Global System Mobile Communication, Stability, Roman Catholic Couples

Introduction

A common saying on the lips of all and sundry today is that the world has become a global village. The reason for this saying is not farfetched because the method of communication across the globe has significantly improved through scientific and technological innovations. In a question of minutes, event(s) in any part of the world is/are made available to any other part through such means as internet services/social media platforms and wireless telephoning. Today, with a mobile handset, one can call any part of the world, browse the internet, connect to anybody, and get any kind of information in a matter of seconds on the same device without hassle. All these developments are a significant departure

from the last century ago (Wojuade 2005).

Social networking sites are one of the most visited sites on the Internet. People use them as an online communication medium to connect with their friends or make new friends. Facebook and Twitter, two of the most popular social media sites, each have over 100 million users (Gull et al 2019). Every user has a profile where they can include personal information such as their name, age, gender. Users may also send posts, comments, videos and images. The norm in social media is posting about personal life, thoughts, and perspectives. They validate users when their online friends give them feedback on their posts. This returns value expected of social media is not to fulfil information needs but to

meet social-emotional needs (Gull et al., 2019).

The development of communications in the world to have begun in the 1830s.

Ajayi (2008) recorded that Sir Charles Wheatstone constructed the first commercial electrical telegraphy, Sir William Fothergill Cooke and Samuel Morse on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, independently developed another version of electrical telegraphy that he unsuccessfully showed on 2nd September 1837. Soon after, Alfred Vail developed the register, and it was successfully shown on 6th January 1938. They completed the first transatlantic telegraphy label, allowing transatlantic communication for the first time on 27th July 1866. Alexander Bell invented the conventional telephone in 1876 and they set the first commercial telephone services up in 1878 and 1879 in both Haven and London (International Telecommunication Union, 1999).

The need to provide seamless telecommunications throughout Europe prompted further development of telecoms in the world. In the early 1980s, analogue mobile telephony expanded rapidly and operators found it increasingly difficult to interconnect with the various networks in Europe. Based on this, a study group called "Group Special Mobile" was formed and was tasked to provide a standardized system for mobile telephony, which was realized seven years later (Bakare & Gold Kafilah, 2011). However, Nigeria has not been left out of the race for rapid development, after years of gross under-development; the nation's telecom was liberated from the return of democracy in 1999 and the deregulation of the telecoms sector. This led to the granting of a Global System of Mobile Communication (GSM) license by the Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC) to three providers,

like Econet, MTN, and M-tel. Aigbinode (2008) stated that it was followed by the licensing of the Second National Operator (SNO), in 2003; Globacom and Universal Access Service licenses of 2006, which include fixed telephony, VSAT and internet service providers. Also, in March 2008, the NCC gave license to another GSM operator known as Etisalat, most of which are still in use until the present time.

Today, GSM is said to have affected every stratum of human endeavour. It enables one to communicate with others, on a real-time basis, saving time and money, among other conveniences. Facilitating access to up-to-date information to support real-time decisions increases efficiency in environmental monitoring, disaster control, and emergency management. Examples given to corroborate these assertions include traffic reports by some radio stations in Nigeria which communicate traffic situations to motorists and helps reroute vehicles in case of an unforeseen road blockage that may occur as a result of accidents or flooding. GSM is also believed to contribute to the improvement in the living conditions of people in both rural and urban areas by allowing them to communicate easily amongst themselves and with relatives, friends and business associates living elsewhere. The Christian home is not left out on the impact of GSM. This has contributed immensely especially the social aspect of it. GSM on homes brings about interpersonal relationships, and a host of other social engagements around which the social fabric of the society revolves and Roman Catholic Couples in Kaduna state is not left out.

Statement of the Problem

The dawn of the 21st century marks the revolution in Information and

Communication Technology (ICT), revealing that more people are becoming reliant on wireless communication systems. The Global System of Mobile (GSM) communication, for instance, is the commonest information technology device, which has become ubiquitous, its usage cuts across all races and social classes. By that token, its effect should also be enormous. On the social front, it has enhanced interpersonal communication as people irrespective of location can communicate freely with one another without hassle. Family members no longer have to be kept apart by distance as they can relate and chat on social platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Whatsapp, Skype among other platforms.

In Christian homes, Oyedele (2005) opines that communication is very important in every family and indeed the backbone of every marriage. Husbands and wives, adults and children need to inter-relate with each other. An atmosphere for discussion can be created through communication; GSM provides this opportunity especially where couples are separated by distance. The home being one of the most active units where communication plays an important role to sustain effective/strong family ties has been influenced by introducing GSM as members of the family are always in touch irrespective of distance. Romantic relationships may also be disrupted by the use of social media. Social media makes surveillance of one's partner easy. Monitoring a partner's behaviour online may lead to jealousy, anxiety and mistrust. Individuals with low self-esteem may find their partner's actions on social media as faults decreasing the level of satisfaction in the relationship [Farrugia, 2013].

Therefore, it can also be said that GSM affects the stability of people's lives,

even their marriage. Today, however, giant strides in science and technology have come to us in a mixture of blessings and woes. Using GSM will indeed go a long way in enhancing communication, ease relationship and improve mutual love and understanding among Christian couples, but one wonders to which extents this positive impact of GSM can cause confusion, conflicts and divorce and so on among couples.

Objectives of the Study

The primary aim of the research is to examine the social impact of GSM on the stability of Roman Catholic Couples in Kaduna State.

Research Questions

What is the social impact of GSM on the Roman Catholic Couples in Kaduna State?

Research Hypotheses

There is no significant difference between the opinions of urban and rural Roman Catholic couples in Kaduna State on the social impact of GSM on the stability of marital relations

History of Global System for Mobile Communication in Nigeria (GSM)

The History of Global System for Mobile Communication (GSM) in Nigeria is traceable to the deregulation of the Communication industry which gave birth to the GSM Revolution from the year 2001 till the present under the civilian administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo, GCFR (Stephen, 2012). The journey of GSM to Nigeria began in December 2000 with many locals and foreign telecommunications companies' competing for the coveted Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) GSM licenses. By January 2001, the Commission conducted an auction for Digital Mobile Licenses. They

acclaimed locally this auction and internationally as one of the best in the world because of the high level of transparency associated with the exercise. The auction brought about the emergence of three mobile Operators; ECONET Wireless now (AIRTEL), MTN and MTEL, a subsidiary of the incumbent operator. The Nigerian Telecommunications Limited (NITEL), which was also awarded an operating license as a National Carrier. In 2002 a fourth Digital Mobile License (DML) was issued to Globacom (Glomobile) through another transparent auction process. To further increase competition a fifth Mobile License (with GSM spectrum) was awarded to Emerging Market Telecommunications Services Limited (ETISALAT), in the year 2007. Since then, the Nigerian telecom market has been a haven for the GSM companies, competing for market shares. The transparent manner in which the Commissions handled the DML gave the impetus to other licensing auctions that followed. These include, the Second National Operator (SNO) granted to Globacom, Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) licenses granted to twenty-four companies regionally, the Unified Access Service Licenses (UASL), 3G Licenses granted to four companies. Through the award of these licenses, the NCC facilitated a phenomenal expansion of telephone lines in Nigeria, from about 450,000 connected lines in May 1999 to over 38 million lines by July 2007, boosting teledensity growth from 0.4% to 24% (Nigerianbrands, 2007).

The capacity for growth in the number of phone lines in the country over the next decade remains quite high, as some parts of the country are yet to be covered. Wojuade (2005), periscopes several things on the development of GSM in Nigeria. He explains GSM came

because of the choice of the operating companies who bided for the mobile licenses. The operating companies quickly adopted GSM because of the obvious economic advantage. He concluded that since then GSM has spread even to the United States and other places that traditionally did not have GSM at the beginning. And that it grew very fast and overtook fixed services within a short time and it is not just in Nigeria but all over the world.

Since then, the Global System for Mobile Communication (GSM) has witnessed a phenomenal growth in the number of subscribers from barely less than a million to over 100 million subscribers. Before introducing the Global System for Mobile Communication (GSM), Nigeria Telecommunication Limited was saddled with the responsibility of providing means of communication to the Landline which was bedevilled by gross inefficiency and corruption. The first GSM network provider that came on board was ECONET (now Airtel), formally launched on 6/08/2001, and MTN Nigeria follow suit almost immediately. They were launched under the 900 and 1800 MHZ spectrum. Making a call cost N50 per minute, there was no per second billing. It was when Globacom Nigeria Limited came on board that for the first time introduced per-second billing and other packages that brought healthy competition.

In his account, Stephen (2012: 9) wrote:

I remember buying my first MTN Sim for N13000 (about \$100), this was much cheaper than those purchased earlier. The industry was then highly monopolized by MTN who had several factors to its advantage. One of such factors which still hold till the present was a wider coverage early enough with high consistency in service delivery before others came in. The irony is though MTN seems to

be more expensive in tariff many still stick to them one for the sake of nomenclature and identification (most people prefer to maintain their old number). Secondly, they appear more consistent in terms of coverage and availability of network signals in most areas in the country. It is pertinent to mention that introducing other Global Systems for Mobile Communication Network providers such as Etisalat, Reformed ECONET (Airtel Nigeria) and Globacom Nigeria Limited brought about a huge transformation in the Telecommunication industry. Each of these Network providers has its peculiarity in terms of packages. Competition is very rife sometimes one could not help but tag it "tariff war". This has given a lot of value to subscribers' spending in the sector.

The Nigerian telecommunications industry is said to be the fastest-growing industry in the world. It represents the largest provider of job opportunities for Nigeria's teeming population directly and indirectly. It is worthy of note to state that the Global System for Mobile Communication is bisected with several challenges which are affecting optimum efficiency and performance. The Network providers complained of poor infrastructural base as a key factor inhibiting their ability to meet Key factors indicators as prescribed by the Nigeria Communication Commission (NCC) the regulatory authority. The four major GSM Network providers were therefore sanctioned recently to the tune of N1.17 billion naira as a fine for poor service delivery. In June 2012, The Network providers agreed to pay the fine but the condition that the government will improve on the current infrastructure has hitherto inhibited the smooth operation of the sector.

GSM and Marital Stability among Couples

Using GSM has contributed to a lot of instability in marriage. Life is not a bed

of roses. Things do not work smoothly the way we expected them sometimes. In such circumstances, we often change ways, ideas, make compromises, negotiate with the proceeding or sometimes, just stand stubbornly and let things fall apart. Marriage is an honourable relationship instituted by God. The Bible admonishes that marriage bed should be undefiled. However, because of our immature attitude, impatience and a kind of deviation from God's standard, most of the couples fails on those standard dictated from the Holy Bible. At the beginning of marriage, things might be very rosy and beautiful at the initial stages, but soon or later, you realize that marriage is not a platter of gold; you notice some kind of negativity in marriage. One needs to realize that problems in marriage are bound to come because two individuals must not have the same character. In such conditions, clashes are abounding to take place. You should also remember times are not the same always. When a person gets married, there are lots of added responsibilities one has to bear. Amidst the day that tensions, sometimes the person cannot keep up to the expectations of his/her partner's demand. However, this does not mean that he/she does not love his/her partner. People are interested in getting married by the advantages a marriage involves, such as safety, companionship, love, and emotional support and understanding. However, outside these positive outlooks on marriage, marital life also comprises many conjugal pressures, tensions, arguments and disagreements. A rising amount of research has inspected and studied the potential impact of using social media on marital relationships and conjugal lives. A study in America reported that 10% of

internet users believe social media had a "major impact" on their mutual rapport, and 17% say that it had a "minor impact." They reported that people felt closer to their partners because of online conversations and many could resolve an argument using social media that they were having trouble resolving in person. Some have felt that their spouse was often distracted by their cell phone when they were together and often got upset by the time they spent online or by what they were doing online (Gull et al 2019)

Nadir (2013) and Akinade (1997) have also summarized these factors as those things that led to marital instability in our societies. These include - poor communication gap, low educational status, financial problems, interference of in-laws, sexual relationship and so on.

The social effects of GSM have to do with how GSM enhances interpersonal relationships among people through effective communication, group activities and a host of other social engagements to which the social fabric of the society is centred (Salami and Usman, 2008). Salami and Usman see competence in communication ability as central to all issues relating to interpersonal relationships.

According to Duck (1998), a relationship is an interpersonal process that cannot be conceptualized as being fixed. Rather, it is continuous and growing. For this reason, relationships are always in a state of flux, continually going through the stage of change and maintenance, growth and retreat. This process is developed through communication; hence, as individuals define and redefine their relationship, they share their understanding of the needs to create a sense of mutual understanding (Acitellu, 1992; Fletcher and Finchman, 1991). It is a known fact that the GSM has revolutionized

communication and by extension interpersonal relationship hence influencing intimacy and the closeness that exist between people.

Ofonime (2009: 124) opines.

The recent development in communication has entirely changed the attitude of people. The shift from conventional two-way verbal communication with bells ring telephone to the recent mobile communication through GSM device has shown the impact of communication on human being and the marriage institution in particular.

The global system for mobile communication (GSM) helps in strengthening love, understanding and friendship among both married and unmarried youths. GSM usage helps in connecting marriage relationships among youths in our society. Couples enjoy the relevance of (GSM) to marriage life. The far-reaching family members, parents give directives and shared greetings among the family relation who are not living in the same environment. The Daily Trust Newspaper of March 18th, 2012 reports a story that explains how a young man and a woman through GSM communication came in to contact and subsequently got married and are living happily. In an interview, the woman said,

Even though she was reluctant to talk about her husband, she said; she met him through mobile phone and one thing led to another and they are now happily married. You know to get the phone numbers of actors is not difficult, that was how my husband got mine and he called and made his intentions known and we found ourselves suitable for each other. We then decided to be life partners and with the help of God, we are happily married today.

The marital partners shared love, resolve some grievances through GSM communication, which improved their wellbeing. More so, important messages

that call for urgent attention are being delivered through GSM use. GSM has provided the married partners with cheap services compared to what is before when there is no mobile phone and bridging the communication gap that existed between couples. GSM has reduced the rate of wastage in terms of constant transportation as in visiting the partners that are far from each other and also reduces some incidents of accidents that might occur on the road because of travelling often and on to visit other spouses.

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was employed in the study to collect the data. The population of this study comprises the Roman Catholic Couples in Kaduna State of Nigeria. From the Official Roman Catholic Directory (2017-2020), the Catholic Couples Population in Kaduna State is sixteen thousand, one hundred and seventy (16,170). Kaduna State Roman Catholic Mission comprised three Dioceses which are Kaduna, Kafanchan and Zaria. There are one

hundred and fifty-seven (157) parishes in all the three Dioceses of the State.

Random sampling technique was used to select twelve parishes in Kaduna Diocese, eight parishes in Kafanchan Diocese, and four parishes in Zaria Diocese, making a total number of twenty-four (24) parishes in Roman Catholic Dioceses of Kaduna State. The exercise was carried out in Kaduna Diocese. The sampling of the respondents was carried out in each of the parishes selected. Seven hundred (700) Catholic Christian Couples were sampled from 24 parishes, making a total number of 1400 respondents, but 1366 questionnaires were returned. The researchers used a structured questionnaire tagged GSM Communication on Social Stability Questionnaire (GSM-SSQ) for data collection.

Research Question

What is the Social Impact of GSM on the stability of Roman Catholic Couples in Kaduna State?

Opinions of respondents on the Social Impact of GSM on the Roman Catholic Couples by location in Kaduna State.

S/N	Statement	SA Freq	A Freq	D Freq	SD Freq	M	SD
1	GSM Social awareness among married couples through effective communication	586	390	195	195	3.00	1.07
2	GSM has a negative influence on married couples' relationships because it causes suspicious and jealousy	390	586	195	195	2.86	.99
3	Using GSM has exposed my relationship to negative values such as lies and deceit	586	195	195	390	3.00	1.07
4	GSM impact my marital relationship in	390	586	195	195	3.00	1.07

5	many ways through unnecessary communication even with people that the partner has never met	586	390	195	195	3.00	1.07
6	GSM made communication between me and my spouse better	586	195	390	195	3.00	1.07
7	GSM constant quarrels because of the use of GSM between couples leads to marriage dissolution	390	586	195	195	3.00	1.07
8	GSM causes disagreement between couples sending of messages with pictures and images to couples by their former lovers through GSM	586	390	195	195	3.00	1.07
Aggregate mean score 2.98							

The Table showed the results of the social impact of GSM on the stability of Roman Catholic Couples in Kaduna State. 976 respondents representing 71.5 percent agreed that Social awareness among married couples through effective communication while 390 respondents representing 28.5 percent disagreed. It implies that Social awareness among married couples through effective communication. 976 respondents representing 71.5 percent agreed that GSM has a negative influence on married couples' relationships because it causes suspicion and jealousy while 390 respondents representing 28.5 percent disagreed. It showed that GSM has a negative influence on married couples' relationships because it causes suspicion and jealousy.

781 respondents representing 57.2 percent agreed that the use of GSM has exposed their relationship to negative values such as lies and deceit while 585 respondents representing 42.8 percent disagreed. It means that the use of GSM has exposed their relationship to negative

values such as lies and deceit. 976 respondents representing 71.5 percent agreed that GSM impacts marital relationships through unnecessary communication even with people that the partner had never met while 390 respondents representing 28.5 percent disagreed. It implies that GSM affects marital relationships through unnecessary communication, even with people that the partner had never met. 976 respondents representing 71.5 percent agreed that Made communication between them and their spouse better while 390 respondents representing 28.5 percent disagreed. It showed that GSM communication between husband and spouse is better. 781 respondents representing 57.2 percent agreed that constant quarrels because of the use of GSM between couples led to marriage dissolution while 585 respondents representing 42.8 percent disagreed. It implies that constant quarrels as a result of the use of GSM between couples lead to marriage dissolution. 976 respondents representing 71.5 percent agreed that GSM caused disagreement

between couples while 390 respondents representing 28.5 percent disagreed. It indicated that GSM causes disagreement between couples. 976 respondents representing 71.5 percent agreed that sending off messages with pictures and images to couples by their former lovers while 390 respondents representing 28.5 percent disagreed. In essence, GSM communication has resulted in social awareness, enhanced

communication among couples. On the negative side. It has caused suspicion, telling of lies, communicating with strangers, and marriage dissolution, thus it has both positive and negative effects.

There is no significant difference between the opinions of urban and rural couples on the social impact of GSM on the stability of marital relationships in Kaduna State.

Summary of independent Sample t-test on the difference between urban and rural Roman Catholic couples on the social impact of GSM on the stability of marital relationship in Kaduna State.

Status	N	Mean	SD	t calculated	t critical	Df	Sig (p)
Urban Couples	850	23.81	8.47	.298	1.96	1366	0.766
Rural Couples	516	23.95	8.36				

The t-calculated value of .298 is less than the t-critical value of 1.96 at 0.05. This implies that there was no significant difference between the opinions of urban and rural couples on the impact of GSM on the stability of marital relationships in Kaduna State. Also, the mean scores of the urban couples of 23.81 and the mean score of the rural couples of 23.95 indicate no significant difference in their opinion of the social impact of GSM on the stability of marital relationships among Roman Catholic Couples in Kaduna State. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that there was no significant difference between the opinion of urban and rural couples on the social impact of GSM on the stability of marital relationships among Roman Catholic Couples was retained.

This agrees with Ofonime (2009) who says that the recent development in communication has entirely changed the social behaviour of people. The shift from conventional two-way verbal communication with bells ring telephone to the recent mobile communication

through GSM devices has shown the impact of communication on human beings and the marriage institution in particular. Borrelli's (2015) study failed to show a significant effect of smartphone use while in the presence of spouse partner upon partner positive communication or relational satisfaction. Clayton, Nagurney, and Smith, (2013) in their ground-breaking study, found that the usage of Facebook anticipated harmful relationship outcomes, such as breakups, divorces, and cheating. This research predicted these outcomes only when there was a clash on the usage of Facebook and only among those who had been part of a love relationship for three years or less

The findings of the study reveal the social impact of GSM on marital stability of Roman Catholic Couples as follows; social awareness among married couples is effective through communication, GSM has a negative influence on married couples' relationships because it causes suspicion and jealousy, the use of GSM exposes couples' relationship to negative

values such as lies and deceits, GSM impacted the marital relationship of Roman Catholic Couples through unnecessary communication such as gossiping, even with people that the partners have never met, GSM made communication among spouses better, GSM results to constant quarrels and subsequently marriage dissolution, GSM causes disagreement between couples and sending of messages with pictures and images to couples by their former lovers affected the social relationship among Roman Catholic Couples in Kaduna State.

Recommendations

1. The research shows that GSM creates suspicion and jealousy among couples which lead to constant quarrels and breakage of home, therefore, Christian Couples should learn to use GSM wisely to have a healthy marital relationship and avoid any situation that will cause suspicion.
2. GSM makes communication faster and easier. Couples should make effective and judicious use of it. They should communicate regularly especial when they are not always together to avoid loneliness.
3. The couple's show is open to themselves and allow their spouse to have access to their phones.
4. The church and its Priests should always caution families on the right use of GSM.

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