Is this Love? A Study of Deception in Online Romance in Nigeria

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Abstract: This work is a study of the interplay of online romance and deception among the users of social networking sites (SNS) in Nigeria, with a focus on how to avoid fake Internet love. The Interpersonal Deception theory underpinned the work while 369 copies of questionnaire were administered online to a sample drawn from a list of friends of four individual Facebook accounts, totaling 8763 participants. Findings exposed the prevalence of online romance deception and showed that users relied on a number of cues to detect deception, including verification from online friends. Inconsistencies during interactions have proved to be a good way of detecting fake lovers but it appears face-to-face meetings still hold the ace for genuine love.

Keywords: Online romance, Deception, Prevalence, Cues, Nigeria.

Introduction

Social networking websites, traceable to two decades, have proliferated and become very popular (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). They are built on the

ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. These sites have multimedia features including blogs, content communities, games, video and audio. Users can create personal information profiles and invite friends and colleagues to have access to these profiles as well as send emails and instant messages. *Facebook* and *MySpace* are examples of social networking sites.

The instantaneous nature of communication on social networking sites, coupled with increased media literacy and explosive growth of software applications, has revolutionized the way we interact with one another on daily basis. These sites have become an integral part of the lives of humans across the world. Pew Research (2014) reports that there has been an increase in the use of social media by adults in the United States.

Teenagers and young adults have also embraced this technological innovation using their computers or mobile devices to connect with their peers, share information, reinvent their personalities and showcase their social lives (Boyd & Ellison, 2008).

However, while positive affordances are being utilized, some users resort to social networking sites to exert negative motives such as deception and cyber-bullying. The case of deception is highly visible in the area of online romance.

The Problem Statement and Objective of the Study

Buller & Burgoon (1989) assert that people in general tell lies daily. History records that deception has been used in various contexts along technology to enhance attacks. The increasing reliance on social media as a dominant communication medium for current news and personal communications has created new opportunities for deception with relative ease.

Studies (Waugh, Abdipanah, Hashemi, Rahman & Cook, 2013; Birnholtz, Guillory, Hancock, & Bazarova, 2010) have focused on deception that involves a sender creating text-based messages in an attempt to affect the beliefs of the receiver through the use of deceit.

A well-crafted deceptive message is difficult to detect - a difficulty compounded by the fact that many people are generally naive believers of information they receive especially at the initial stage of communication. Several forms of deception exist on social media. They manifest as lottery rip-offs, financial scams and online dating swindles.

Online romance creates a platform where people get to meet those they

admire through their profiles (usually pictures) on the internet via social media websites. As a feeling of love is developed through frequent chats, intimacy is built with effective communication (Adeyemi, 2018) and a relationship is established with someone the individual has not physically seen. Some users wait to see the individual before eventually agreeing to a proposal (Lenhart & Madden, 2007).

Online romance is booming in Nigeria with several websites created including *sexynaija.com*, *Nigerianchristainsingles.com*, *lifecomrade.com*, *friendnite.com* and *naijapanet.com* to facilitate potential dates. This is apart from such heavily subscribed sites as *Facebook*, *2go*, *Badoo*, *Instagram* which people also use for love communication.

While some use the online platform genuinely to seek romantic partners, it is a commonplace fact that deception is inevitable even on the part of genuine seekers of potential dates as several studies – Alkai, 2016; Tsikerdekis & Zeadally, 2015; Jimenez, 2014; Smith, 2013; Jiang, Bazarova & Hancock, 2011; Toma & Hancock, 2010; Wang, Chen, Xu & Atabakhsh, 2006) - have shown.

Romance deception involves lying, telling half-truths, exaggerating,

withholding information, cheating, stealing, or hiding behavior from a prospective date or a lover. Budd & Anderson (2009) describes it as a particular type of consumer scam that involves initiating a false relationship through a dating website, a social website or email. The intention of these scams is to defraud the victim. Budd & Anderson (2009) posit that the use of electronic communication makes it relatively easier to reach potential victims and further allows the scammer to operate anonymously.

Several studies (Alkai, 2016; Toma, 2016; Whitty& Buchanan, 2012; Chen & Li, 2011; Jiang, Bazarova & Hancock, 2011; Ellison, 2008; Wang, Chen, Xu & Atabakhsh, 2006) have also looked at online romance deception with a focus on its prevalence, nature of deception, purpose of deception, likely deceivers, potential victims, deception detection techniques in India, Australia, Brazil, Britain and America. But very little efforts have been made to investigate online romance and deception with regard to Nigeria. This study covers that gap.

Significance of the Study

Deception is a way of gaining a strategic advantage over an unsuspecting individual. Researchers have studied online romance deception, focusing on its

prevalence (Whitty & Secur 2015; Lenhart & Madden, 2007), nature, purpose, likely deceivers, potential victims (Whitty & Buchanan, 2012; Ellison, 2008; Buller & Burgoon, 1996) as well as detection techniques in India, Australia, Brazil, Britain and America (Toma, 2016; Alkai, 2016; Toma, Hancock & Ellison, 2008). Nigeria is not visible yet in online romance research even though Whitty & Buchanan (2012) had come up with an unverified claim that internet love scam had some roots in Nigeria and Ghana. This study unveils the dynamics of online dating and proffers ways people can avoid the scam associated with it.

Review of Literature
Prevalence of Deception on Social Media
Derczynski & Bontchva (2014) identify rumours, disinformation, misinformation and speculations - on the web in real time – in online relationships and conclude that the trustworthiness of a site user depends on the authenticity of past content. In a related study, Alkai (2016) shows that deceptive attacks were viral on social media due to the likelihood of a contagion effect where perpetrators took advantage of connections among people to deceive.

Lenhart & Madden (2007) investigate the prevalence of online

dating in America. Findings show that one out of ten Americans has been involved in online dating and three out of four Americans have used the internet for at least one dating-related activity. Flirting ranked highest among those who were searching for someone online for love.

Whitty & Buchanan's (2012) study covered Great Britain, asserting that an estimated 230,000 British citizens might have fallen victim to online romance crime, far above what had been reported in previous studies. They argued that the discrepancy indicated that the crime was under-reported, and further suggested it was incumbent upon the law enforcement community to make it easier for victims to report the crime. Had their reports featured in-depth interviews with victimized online daters findings would have been more robust.

Birnholtz, Guillory, Hancock & Bazarova (2010) examine the practice of lying in text messaging. Findings reveal that lies in SMS are used to manage social interactions while *butler lies* (used to initiate or terminate text messaging) are especially common with relative consistency. Participants frequently draw on the ambiguities inherent in the SMS medium for telling lies about their activities, location or availability.

Participants equally use lies to account for social misbehavior. Their study focuses more on a predominantly female student population, which makes their results ungeneralizable across gender lines. Toma, Hancock & Ellison (2008) examine self-presentation in online dating profiles using a novel cross-validation technique. Findings depict how users overrate their personalities. Males tell lies more about height and females about age and weight. In some cases, interpretation or subtitling is carried out if a desperate scammer targets a victim who understands a different language Daramola et al., 2014).

Singh & Jackson (2015) explore online dating sites as an e-business model. They posit that online dating is a big, lucrative business and still growing. However, the loose regulation of the industry has left it open to scams with serious ramifications for users. Whitty & Secur (2015) identify distinct stages of online romance scam. First, the criminal creates a fancy profile to attract victims. Secondly, he grooms and primes them up for requests. At the third stage, he begins to actually request for funds, leading to the fourth stage of sexual abuse and finally the stage of exposition.

Whitty & Buchanan (2012) summarize a study that identifies the psychological characteristics that raise the risks of a scam, amongst other objectives. The outcome shows that people high in romantic beliefs are at risk of online dating fraud. Men are more at risk than women. Furthermore, most online dating scammers have experienced highly abusive relationships earlier in their lives and victims are attracted because of the unconditional positive regard displayed by the scammer. Results of the study also show that victims can experience double hit: loss of money and relationship and are most likely to fall for a future scam.

Deception Detection Cues

On cues for identifying deception, Tsikerdekis & Zeadally (2014) assert that deceivers are likely to use multiple accounts to reach target victims. Kopp, Layton, Sillitoe & Gondal (2015) assume that scam techniques appeal to strong emotions, which characterize romantic relationships. Their findings also show that scam profiles used are fairly basic with attractive pictures and relatively general details on a site about hobbies and interests that provide clues for the presented love story. It is important to know that how well the images and stories are placed on web pages is germane to the perpetration of the act (Odiboh, et al, 2017).

The authors also assert that poor knowledge of ICTs is a promoter of a successful online deception. They identify lack of identity control and verification mechanisms as factors that make impersonation easy, suggesting that these sites should give users more permission to investigate friends based on some specified criteria, including how old their subscription is.

Besides these, biometric authentication may be used in the future for deception prevention especially with recent advances in the field of virtual reality. They advise site developers to incorporate tracking devices that monitor whoever is viewing one's profile.

Huang, Stringhini & Yong (2015) provide insight into how online dating scammers operate. Their findings show that, in general, a scammer has two strategies while trying to attract victims: he can contact users on the dating site himself, or he can make his account so appealing that a number of potential victims will contact him themselves, leading to interaction of both parties (Morah and Omojola, 2014).

Findings also reveal that scammers are generally stoic in behavior and in many cases their perseverance and long-suffering do pay off. They typically have a long exchange of messages with the potential victim until the actual scam is performed.

Gibbs, Ellison & Lai (2011) conceptualize interaction among strangers around uncertainty reduction. As such, communication plays a key role in reducing people's uncertainty in getting to know each other by gaining greater knowledge and mutual understanding. Drawing from a web-based survey data from a sample of online dating participants, findings ascertain that online daters do engage in a variety of uncertainty reduction strategies, including some with high warranting value, such as checking public records and using Google to search for self-presentational discrepancies. Also, they do gather information from both online and offline domains to reduce uncertainty about potential romantic partners.

Chen & Li (2011) investigate the distribution and patterns of deception tactics. They test how the identity of a potential victim and purported identity of a deceiver affect the selection of a specific deception tactic. Their discovery is that the selection of deception tactics is significantly influenced by the characteristics of the deceivers and their targets. Deceivers are more likely to use masking, labeling and inventing tactics against an individual.

Fiore (2008), in his review, argues that although users sometimes allege deception is pervasive in online society, some willful deceptions occur and much of what appears to be deception actually results from effects of the media and peculiarities of the process of self-presentation online. Alkai's (2016) findings have shown that the sites do not use any solid full proof identification mechanism, thereby paving the way for fraud on social networking sites. The deceivers also use phishing via phony profiles to friend victims or solicit personal information from them. The authors propose agent-based deception model for performing background checks.

Toma, Jiang & Hancock (2016) investigate whether deception in online dating profiles can be detected through a linguistic approach. Part of the results is that liars produce fewer rather than more negative emotion-laden words which could be due to the fact that people who tell lies are eager to give good impression about themselves and avoid sounding negative.

A limitation to this study is that its correlational design does not preclude alternative explanations for what causes the occurrence of linguistic cues. Appling & Hayes' (2014) findings show that shorter sentences tend to be employed more by deceivers. However, participants do not perceive deception as a function of sentence length.

Newman, Pennebaker, Berry & Richards (2003) probe into the features of linguistic styles that distinguish true and false stories. Using the content analysis method, they study five independent samples. Findings show that compared to truth-tellers, liars show lower cognitive complexity, use fewer self-references and other-references, and use more negative emotional words.

Gibbs, Ellison, & Lai (2011) assert that warranting principle addresses the link between online and offline identity claims, and the ways in which individuals verify these claims in online contexts. Drawing from a web-based survey data from a sample of online dating participants, findings expose several communicator-related factors of uncertainty reduction activity among online dating participants, including individual privacy concerns and the self-efficacy of these factors. Security concerns and self-efficacy play the greatest role in influencing uncertainty reduction behavior.

Participants who use uncertainty reduction strategies tend to disclose more personal information in terms of revealing private thoughts and feelings. This suggests a process whereby online dating participants

proactively engage in uncertainty reduction activities to confirm the private information of others, which then prompts their own disclosure.

Toma (2014) examines how information contained in profiles on Facebook or profile cues shape interpersonal impressions. Drawing on uncertainty reduction theory, warranting theory, and hardwired perceptions of facial displays, she analyzes some pages of Facebook. Results show that six profile cues (number of friends, number of tagged photographs, number of "about me" categories filled out, number of comments and "likes" received from friends and smiling profile photographs) explain about a third of the variance in Facebook users' perceived trustworthiness. The number of photographs has negative effect on perceived trust worthiness with more photographs decreasing trustworthiness. She concludes that people are quick to draw dispositional inferences about others even from little non-interactive information.

Theoretical Framework

Interpersonal Deception Theory (IDT) was adopted as a framework for this study. IDT was introduced by David Buller and Judee Burgoon in 1996 in an effort to examine the multifaceted nature of deception in the context of relational interactive communication.

The theory underscores the complexity of deception when people talk and respond to each other physically. It is hard to know for sure when someone is not telling the truth. Deception is defined as an intentional act in which senders knowingly transmit messages intended to foster a false belief or interpretation by the receiver (Buller & Burgoon, 1996; Ekman, 1992; Knapp & Comadena, 1979). To accomplish this, senders engage in three classes of strategic or deliberate activity information, behavior and image management. The three classes of strategic activity work hand in hand to create an overall believable message and demeanor. This theory is based on several core concepts which include:

i. Interpersonal communication is interactive. Both parties are active participants with each other constantly adjusting to behavior in response to feedback from each other. Interaction, rather than individuality, is at the core of this theory.

ii. Strategic deception demands mental effort. A successful deceiver must consciously manipulate information to create a plausible message, presents it in a sincere manner, monitor reactions, prepare follow up responses and get ready for damage control of a tarnished image all at the same time.

iii. Deception is influenced by the context of the communication and the relationship that it occurs in.

These broad principles offer some explanation into the multifaceted and complex nature of deceptive communication. What deceivers and victims think and do vary according to the amount of interactive give-and-take that is possible in the situation and how well they know and like each other. With increased interaction, deceivers are likely to make more strategic moves and leak more non-verbal clues than truth tellers. What is more, deceivers' and respondents' expectation for honesty (truth bias) is positively linked with interactivity and relational warmth.

Deceivers' fear of being caught and the strategic activity that goes with that fear are lower when truth bias is high, and vice versa. The way respondents first react depends on the relative importance of the relationship and their initial suspicion. As relational familiarity increases, deceivers become more afraid of detection, make more strategic moves, and display more leakage.

Skilled deceivers appear more believable because they make more strategic moves and display less leakage than unskilled deceivers. A deceiver's perceived credibility is positively linked to interactivity and

the respondent's truth bias with the deceiver's communication skill. It goes down to the extent that the deceiver's communication is unexpected.

On the other hand, a respondent's accuracy in spotting deception goes down with interactivity while the respondent's truth bias and the deceiver's communication skills go up. Detection is positively linked to the respondent's listening skills, relational familiarity, and the degree to which the deceiver's communication is unexpected. Respondents' suspicion is apparent in their strategic activity and leakage. Deceivers perceive suspicion when it is present.

Perception of suspicion increases when a respondent's behavior is unexpected. Any respondent reactions that signal disbelief, doubt, or the need for more information increase the deceiver's perception of suspicion. Real or imagined suspicion increases deceivers' strategic activity and leakage. The way deception and suspicion are displayed within a given interaction changes over time.

In deceptive interactions, reciprocity is the most typical pattern of adaptive response. When the conversation is over, the respondent's detection accuracy, judgment of deceiver's credibility and truth bias depend on the

deceiver's final strategic moves and leakage as well as the respondent's listening skill and suspicion. The deceiver's judgment of success depends on the respondent's final reaction and the deceiver's perception of respondent's suspicion.

Existing research indicates that as a general proposition, the greater the quality of interaction between the sender and receiver, the greater the probability for successful deception.

Interpersonal communication is no longer just face-to-face communication. Numerous technologies exist today that lessen the boundaries of face-to-face interpersonal communication.

The Internet has brought exponential increase to communicative prospects. There are social media webpages, applications, and chat rooms, instant messaging, voice-over internet protocol (VoIP), video-over internet protocol (video conferencing), vlogs, segmented video clips (snap chats), and one-way live feeds. All of these mediums can be used for deceitful purposes. Caspi & Gorsky (2006) reveal that frequent Internet users, young users and competent users are deceived more online than their counterparts (infrequent users, old users, and non-competent).

Lu (2008) assesses the effects of sensation-seeking personalities on online interpersonal deception and finds that high sensation seekers are more prone to deceiving others in online chats. These studies support the idea that deception is not only alive and well, but that it is digital. Phishing for information has cost email users countless hours, lost revenue and lost identities over the years. Phishing is a classic example of IDT's definition of deception.

IDT is broad as it captures various complexities of deception in face to face interaction. It has piqued new lines of inquiry that have applicability beyond face-to-face deception. The theory can be used to maintain interpersonal relationship as it helps when evaluating the verbal and non-verbal communication behaviors to determine if someone has lied. It draws attention to the dynamic nature of deception as well as the mutual influence between sender and receiver that occurs in conversations.

However, IDT has some drawbacks. It does not really explain why people lie. The theory provides a static approach to deception and ignores its communication dynamics. It instead focuses on internal thoughts and processes behind liars' manipulative behavior and the naïve acceptance of gullible listeners. It is mostly a humanistic theory. It predicts that humans attempt to deceive, but that

predictive power is limited. It cannot, for instance, predict truthfulness in a specific instance between two specific people because such a unique event is contingent on so many things. Contingencies include whether the deception was premeditated, if there was time available to plan, the consequences of being detected, and the anticipated success of escaping deception.

IDT mostly explains the different types of deceptive acts, motives for deception, and describes the factors that measure whether or not an attempt at deception will be a successful act.

Although IDT emphasizes face to face interactions, it can also be applied to SNS interactions. It is evident that SNS provides certain affordances that are similar to that of face to face communication, such as instantaneous interpersonal interaction via text messaging (chats). Users engage in video calls and voice calls. Therefore, signs attributed to both verbal and non-

verbal behavior can be identified when detecting deception on SNS.

In this case the environment is more secluded as individuals can be in the midst of many and still hold private conversation with one another. The theory's functional approach on the relationship between deceivers and the deceived makes it an appropriate foundation for examining deception within the romantic relationships formed through online dating services.

Methodology

In this study, online survey using questionnaire was used to harvest data in line with similar studies (Toma, Jiang & Hancock, 2016; Toma & Hancock, 2015; Jimenez, 2014; Whitty and Buchanan, 2012; Gibbs, Ellison& Lai, 2010; Madden and Lenhart, 2006). The population was drawn from friends' lists of four individual accounts on *Facebook* totaling 8,763 participants. The identities of the account owners were confidential. The population figures are displayed on Table 1 below:

Table 1: Account owners and their friends (Population for the study)

Personal Account	Number of Friends
Account 1	894
Individual 2	1689
Individual 3	1993
Individual 4	4187
Population	8763

The study relied on multistage sampling technique; using the fishbowl method, to select 369 samples (via the survey monkey online calculator at a confidence level of 95% and error of margin of 0.5). The samples were spread proportionally over the four accounts. The Facebook friends of each of the account owners were invited via a link through which they accessed the questionnaire. The survey was available on the web for four weeks.

Analysis of Results

The population was a good mix of both male and female, though a little more of male. Majority of the respondents were within the age bracket of 18-30 years; only a few of the respondents were within the age brackets of 31-40 years and 41-50 years, who were young and technologically knowledgeable. Majority of the respondents were also single. This may be a reason for their involvement in online dating.

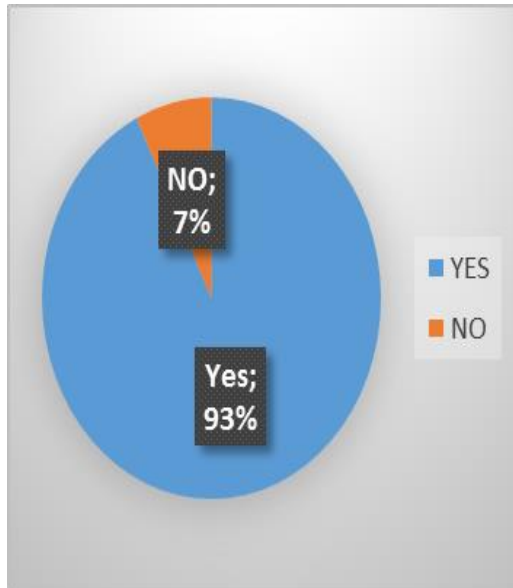***Chart 1: Respondents awareness of the growing trend of romance on social network sites among respondents***

Chart 1 indicates that majority (93%) of the respondents are aware of online romance. SNS users are not ignorant of happenings in the online space; many may have been approached at some point in time.

Chart 2: Social Networking Sites Used by Respondents in Seeking Potential Dates
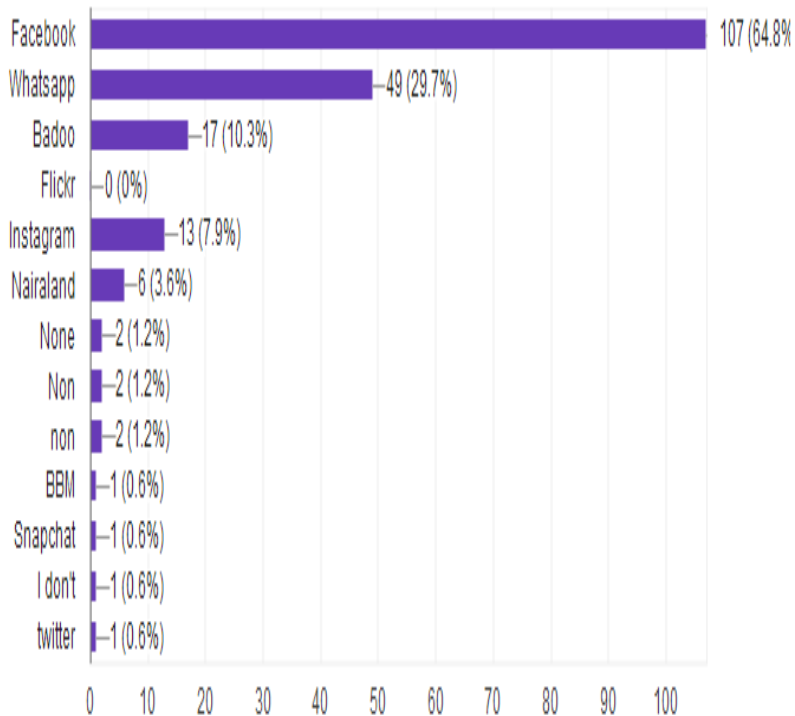
Majority of the respondents, as indicated in chart 2, use Facebook in seeking potential dates. This is followed by WhatsApp. This may be due to the fact that Facebook has wider reach to people across the world than WhatsApp. However, only a few use other networks. The ubiquity of Facebook and WhatsApp has been corroborated in countless studies.

*Chart 3: Respondents as Victims of Online Romance Deception*
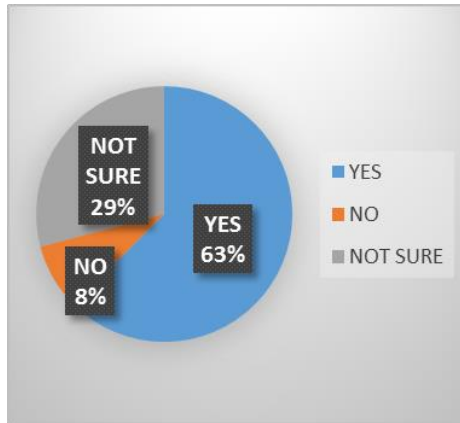
Results in chart 3 reveal that majority (63%) of the respondents were victims of online love deception. A few (29%) were not sure. Some of those who said "No" were the lucky few whose love relationship in the world transformed into real life love affair.

The possibility exists that they (or at least some of them) will be happy for it.

The next set of charts is on cues in detecting online love deception. The responses of those who agreed to have been victims of online love deception were relied on.

Chart 4: Detecting deception by checking potential date's profile
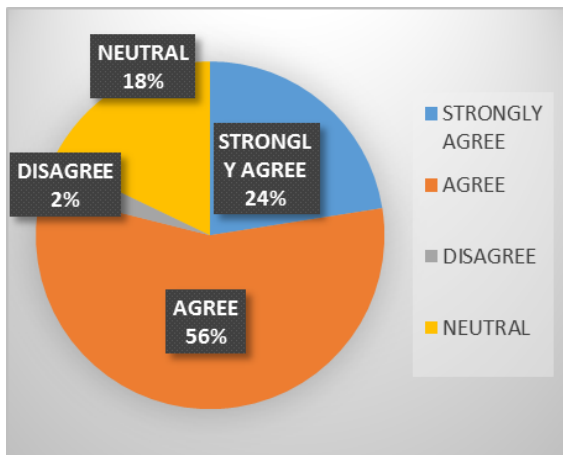
The results in chart 4 indicate that most of the respondents check potential dates' profile when interacting online. Interest in a particular user may spur an individual to check a potential date's profile across multiple platforms which may be instrumental in revealing the truth.

Chart 5: Deception detection through self-description of the potential date
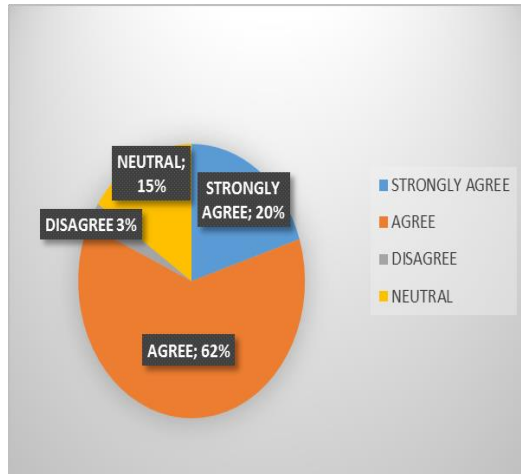
Most respondents (62%) detected deception through self-description of a potential date. Some of them could identify inconsistencies identified in speech or character during charts with dates.

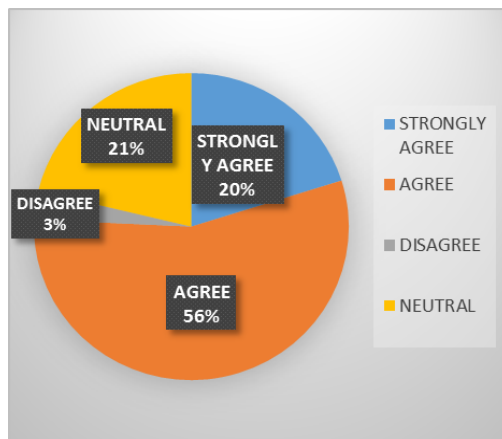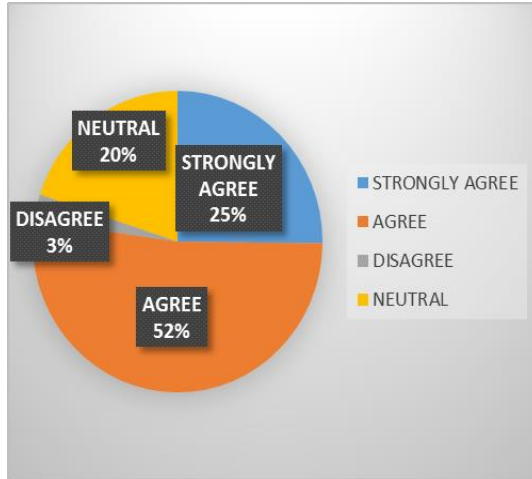**Chart 6: Detecting deception through verification from friends online**

Chart 6 shows that majority of the respondents (76%) verified potential dates from friends online. Facebook, amongst other sites, allowed access to friends and family online who might be instrumental in finding out more information about a potential date.
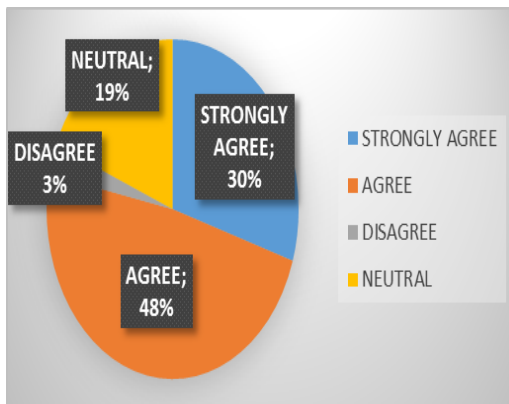
Chart 7: detecting deception from photographs of potential dates online

Deception can also be detected through online pictures of dates.

This was agreed to by majority of the respondents constituting 77%.

Chart 8: Detecting deception through body language during voice and video calls date(s) online

The results in chart 8 reveal that most of the respondents detect deception by picking up cues from body language during voice and video calls. Even though it is a virtual world, interpersonal communication via body language has remained a potential cue to detecting deception.

Findings and Discussion

Results in Chart 1 show that respondents were aware of the growing trends of online romance, meaning that online romance was gaining popularity among Nigerians while Facebook and WhatsApp were engaged the most as presented in Chart 2. Facebook, especially, allows individuals to connect to others online including high-status individuals who may be targets of deceivers. It is easy running search queries using location or name tags, in seeking potential dates. Facebook shares features with WhatsApp like easy accessibility, and unrestrained communication with potential dates.

A study reported in Toma (2014) reveals that Facebook is mostly used by youths in the global south to seek potential dates. Chart 3 indicates that majority (63%) of respondents were victims of online love deception. This is in line with Alkai's (2016) findings that deceptive attacks are viral on social media owing to the likelihood of

contagion effect where perpetrators take advantage of connections among people to deceive them.

Chart 4 shows that deception can be detected by checking potential date's profile. This supports the findings of Alkai (2016) that deceivers use phony profiles to find victims or solicit personal information from victims. Similarly, findings of Toma (2014) show that information contained in profiles on Facebook or profile cues shapes interpersonal impressions.

As seen in chart 5, romance deception can also be detected through self-description of the potential date. This finding is reflected in the work of Kopp, Layton, Sillitoe & Gondal that (2015); that scam profiles used by deceivers are fairly basic with relatively general details about hobbies and interests and as such help to provide clues for the love story presented by the deceiver. It is also reflected in the finding of Gibbs, Ellison & Lai (2010) that individuals search for self-presentational discrepancies when interacting with strangers.

Similarly, Fiore (2008) opines that much of what appears to be deception actually results from peculiarities of the process of self-presentation online. Thus, respondents' use of inconsistencies in self-presentation to detect

deception is not out of place. However, there is a downside to this cue as deceivers can revise their messages and take more time to compose them.

On Chart 6 respondents detected deception by verifying from friends online. This finding is in line with Toma's (2014) that people look out for profile cues such as number of mutual friends online when detecting deception. More mutual friends do increase trustworthiness. Chart 7 shows love deception can also be detected via photographs. This is in consonance with the findings of Tsikerdekis & Zeadally (2014) that using images can be successful in detecting online deception. Toma (2014) counters that the number of photographs is a poor way of detecting deception. This view is supported by Kopp, Layton, Sillitoe & Gondal (2015) on the grounds that successful scam profiles used are usually fairly basic with lots of attractive photographs.

Chart 8 shows that body language during voice and video call is another way to detect online love deception. This finding aligns with Alkai's (2016), Tsikerdekis & Zeadally's (2015), Toma & Hancock's (2015) and Briscoe, Appling & Hayes' (2014). These studies show that in the course of interacting with potential dates, individuals use linguistic and non-linguistic cues. The linguistic cues

cut across less negative emotive words and short sentences as online liars showed lower cognitive complexity and used fewer self-references. Non-linguistic cues applicable to video calls will include eye contact, gaze aversion, shrugs, posture shifts and computer vision. Therefore, observing video and voice calls for the aforementioned cues is useful in detecting deception.

The findings, as revealed in charts 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 fall within the IDT context. A successful deceiver consciously manipulates information using the cues contained in the listed charts to create a plausible message, present it in a sincere manner, monitor reactions, prepare follow up responses and get ready for damage control of a tarnished image all at the same time.

Closing Remark

Social networking sites are important tools in seeking potential dates among Nigerian youths even though romance deception is now prevalent. This is because daters are trying to obtain a favorable impression but may also be dishonest, thereby harming the chances for a successful romantic relationship. Sometimes, online daters go in with predetermination to scam others. To avoid being deceived online, individuals can use a number of verbal and nonverbal

cues to detect deception. These include:

- Inconsistencies: Online daters should look out for inconsistencies when interacting with their dates.

- Face-to-face meeting: As much as possible, online daters should meet face -to- face subsequently after online interaction. This will reduce chances of deception.

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