

Utilization of Facebook by Pedi's of the Capricorn District, Limpopo Province, South Africa

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Abstract

With the rise of internet usage amongst young people in the developing world, intercultural communication, via social platforms such as Facebook™, has been greatly enhanced, which has significantly impacted non-western cultures, more specifically, African cultures. This study investigated the utilization of Facebook by the Pedi tribe of the Capricorn District, Limpopo Province, South Africa. This was done via a semi-structured questionnaire that focused on the uses and adoption of Facebook, its influence on cultural stereotypes, as well as the satisfaction users derive from using this social platform. The age of the 60 participants ranged from 20 to over 60 years. Results indicate that 80% of participants use Facebook numerous times each day to communicate with friends and family, and to stay in touch with whom they cannot communicate face-to-face. Participants' use of Facebook enabled them to be prepared in adjusting to Western culture, especially the peculiarities of American culture. On whether Facebook had any impact on their culture, or helped them to better understand their culture, and to overcome stereotypes or biases towards their culture and other cultures, there were mixed answers. Some 28% of participants felt that Facebook both reinforced and weakened stereotypes. The analysis from the participants' responses revealed that they felt inherently satisfied and emotionally fulfilled after using Facebook, as this social platform kept people in touch with each other, and is very convenient for communication purposes.

Keywords: Communication, culture, cultural biases, Cultural impact, stereotypes.

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