

KNOWLEDGE AND APPLICATION OF FACEBOOK COMMUNITY STANDARDS AMONG YOUNG ADULTS IN UGEP, CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Many Nigerian young adults are using Facebook as a channel of social interactions and for dissemination of cherished messages. This message includes wide range of communication contents which include, but not limited, to

text messages, pictures, drawings, video clips and cartoons. To become a Facebook user, one has to open an account with the platform. However, the use of this account is regulated the provisions of what is known as Facebook Community Standards. Consequently, this study examined the knowledge and application of Facebook Community Standards among young adults in Ugep, Yakurr Local Government Area, Cross River State, Nigeria. The major objective was to assess the level of awareness and knowledge about these standards, the extent of their application in daily online interactions, and the factors influencing compliance or non-compliance. A quantitative survey design was adopted, and data were collected from 385 active Facebook users in Ugep community. Findings revealed low awareness, with most respondents unfamiliar with the Community Standards and only a few having read them; application of the standards was moderate and inconsistent; was driven mainly by fear of account suspension, perception of the rules as overly strict, and strong peer influence. The study recommends that Meta/Facebook deliver simplified Pidgin-English pop-up explanations of key rules/regulations; and that, youth leaders and popular Ugep social media influencers conduct regular community sensitisation through video skits and social media literacy campaigns.

Keywords: Application, Knowledge, Facebook
Community Standards, Young Adults

Background to the Study

The emergence of social media platforms, particularly Facebook, has fundamentally reshaped patterns of communication, interpersonal relationships, and information exchange across the world, and Nigeria is no exception. Over the years, social media have gained much popularity with more than 2.9 billion monthly active users globally (Kaplan & Haelein (2010). Social media usage influences information gathering and dissemination all over the world. Youth demonstrates intense engagement with digital technologies and Facebook plays a central role in shaping online conversations and trends.

Ugep, one of the largest communities in Yakurr Local Government Area of Cross River State, exemplifies this rapid digital adoption. Young people in Ugep have embraced Facebook for social networking, entertainment, business promotion, and even socio-political mobilisation. The platform has become an integral part of daily life for many residents in the area aged 18–35, who use it to stay connected with friends, share local events, market traded produce/services and participate in broader national discussions. Like all major social media services, Facebook operates under a comprehensive set of Community Standards designed to maintain a safe, inclusive, and authentic environment. These standards clearly forbid hate speech, violent content, misinformation, promoting nudity, bullying, and other harmful behaviours while encouraging respectful interaction. Nevertheless, the degree to which users—especially young adults in semi-urban settings such as Ugep—understand and observe these guidelines remains

underexplored. Cultural norms, educational attainment, internet accessibility, and economic realities in the area may significantly influence how young people perceive and apply these global regulations.

Existing studies on social media usage in Nigeria have largely concentrated on urban centres or broader national trends. For instance, research on social media and youth political participation (Omenugha et al., 2016), social media use and sexual behaviour among youths, (Adegboyega, 2019) offer valuable insights on social media use among youths in Nigeria but rarely examined the people's awareness/knowledge and application of Facebook community rules and regulations (community standards). Similarly, there are works that highlighted the implications of low digital literacy among Nigerian youth (Ojo&Ezepue, 2020; Uwalaka et al., 2021), yet, they did not focus specifically on semi-urban localities such as Ugep community, Cross River State. Globally, scholars have emphasised the importance of understanding platform governance in diverse cultural contexts (Gillespie, 2018; Suzor et al., 2019), yet localised evidence from places like Ugep remains scarce. After thorough investigation, we will therefore offer practical recommendations for educators, community leaders, policymakers, and Meta (Facebook's parent company) in fostering responsible digital citizenship among young adults in semi-urban Nigerian communities.

Statement of the Problem

The rapid rise in Facebook usage among young adults in Ugep, a major semi-urban community in Yakurr Local

Government Area of Cross River State, makes it increasingly urgent to investigate how familiar they are with the platform's Community Standards and how consistently they follow them. These standards exist to curb harmful content such as hate speech, violent threats, deliberate misinformation, harassment, and other forms of digital misconduct, thereby protecting users and sustaining a healthy online space. Yet, there is still little clarity on whether young adults in Ugep actually understand these guidelines or incorporate them into their daily posting, commenting, sharing, and messaging habits—an uncertainty that may expose them to account restrictions, online conflicts, cyberbullying, or involvement in the spread of false information. Existing literature provides only partial insight into this concern, and virtually none is specific to Ugep or even Cross River State. For example, Adegboyega (2019) examined how social media shapes sexual behaviour among youths in Kwara State and found that lack of online regulation can encourage risky practices, but the study did not address the issue of users' knowledge of the platform's specific rules and regulations. Studies on digital literacy and regulatory compliance among Nigerian youths (Ojo&Ezepue, 2020; Uwalaka et al., 2021) are equally silent on the realities about users' in the semi-urban communities like Ugep, where strong traditional values are shaping internet penetration and usage.

The absence of localised evidence represents a critical research gap: there is paucity of empirical work documenting the level of awareness, knowledge and application of Facebook's Community Standards among

young adults in Ugep, Cross River State, Nigeria. This research therefore seeks to fill this gap by investigating the level of knowledge that young adults in Ugep possess regarding Facebook's Community Standards, the extent to which they apply these standards in their daily online activities, and the socio-cultural, educational, and environmental factors that either promote or hinder compliance. Given Ugep's unique blend of strong traditional institutions (such as the Leboku New Yam Festival and age-grade systems) alongside growing digital penetration, the community presents an intriguing setting for examining how global platform policies interact with local realities.

Research objectives

1. To assess the level of awareness of Facebook Community Rules and Regulations among young adults in Ugep, Cross River State.
2. To evaluate the extent to which young adults in Ugep, Cross River State adhere to Facebook's Community Rules and Regulations in their online interactions.
3. To identify the factors inhibiting compliance with Facebook's Community Rules and Regulations among young adults in Ugep, Cross River State.

Research questions

1. What is the level of awareness of Facebook Community Rules and Regulations among young adults in Ugep, Cross River State?

2. To what extent do young adults in Ugep, Cross River State adhere to Facebook's Community Rules and Regulations in their online interactions?
3. What factors are inhibiting compliance with Facebook's Community Rules and Regulations among young adults in Ugep, Cross River State?

Significance of the Study

This study holds both theoretical and practical value. Theoretically, it enriches the application of the Technology Acceptance Model and Social Learning Theory by revealing how perceived usefulness of rules and peer influence operate within the distinct cultural setting of Ugep, thereby adding a semi-urban Nigerian perspective to the global literature on platform governance and digital citizenship. Practically, the findings will provide community leaders, schools, churches, age-grade associations, and the Yakurr Local Government with evidence-based insights to design targeted digital literacy programmes. They will also guide Meta/Facebook in crafting more effective, culturally resonant notifications and offer policymakers in Cross River State a foundation for promoting responsible social media use among young adults in semi-urban communities like Ugep.

Review of Related Literature

Facebook Community Standards: Rules and Regulations

The unprecedented expansion of Facebook has inevitably raised critical questions about its governance mechanisms,

especially the Community Standards that regulate and provide for acceptable conduct in Facebook usage. These standards cover a wide range of issues including, but, limited to violence and criminal behaviour- this means that Facebook deletes contents with threat, terrorism message or organized crime support, hate speech and harassment-contents that attack, demean, or incite hatred are not allowed, adult nudity and sexual activity- explicit sexual contents, pornography and sexual exploitation are prohibited, child safety-contents that endanger or exploit or sexualize children are censored, contents that promote suicide, self-harm and eating disorder are prohibited, misinformation and integrity threatening contents are regulated and personal/group data and privacy are to be protected. Unfortunately, Research conducted by Duggan et al. (2014) from the Pew Research Center demonstrates that although users greatly value the platform's connectivity, a substantial majority remain unaware of its governing rules, thereby contributing to persistent problems such as misinformation proliferation and toxic interactions. Similarly, Uwalaka et al. (2021), working within the Nigerian context, discovered that young people depend heavily on Facebook for news consumption and social networking, yet cultural practices and educational limitations frequently obstruct proper adherence to its standards. These observations illuminate Facebook's dual character as an open social arena and a regulated digital ecosystem, underscoring the urgent need to investigate user knowledge and practical application of its rules, particularly in localised settings like Ugep in Cross River State.

Facebook Community Standards, commonly referred to as the platform's rules and regulations, represent a comprehensive set of policies designed to moderate content and behaviour, thereby ensuring a safe, respectful, and authentic environment for all users. These standards, publicly detailed on Facebook's transparency centre (Facebook, 2023), cover content moderation issues and explicitly prohibit hate speech, incitement to violence, dangerous misinformation, nudity, bullying, and harassment while simultaneously promoting authenticity, privacy, safety, and dignity. They constitute the operational framework for governing interactions among the platform's 2.9 billion monthly active users, embodying Facebook's stated commitment to balancing freedom of expression with community protection.

Academic scholarship emphasises both the necessity and the inherent difficulties of these standards in global content governance. Gillespie (2018) delivers a foundational examination, asserting that platform regulations are indispensable for mitigating harm in digital spaces, including the suppression of hate speech, organised disinformation, and cyberbullying. He traces the historical evolution of Facebook's Community Standards from rudimentary, ad-hoc policies in its infancy to a sophisticated, structured system as the platform scaled to over 2.9 billion users by 2022. Nevertheless, Gillespie identifies persistent enforcement challenges stemming from cultural diversity and widespread user unfamiliarity; behaviour deemed acceptable in one socio-cultural milieu may contravene standards elsewhere, and over-dependence on automated moderation combined with

inconsistent human review frequently generates confusion and inadvertent violations.

Suzor et al. (2019) further interrogate platform governance dynamics, examining how Facebook's rules attempt to impose a uniform behavioural code across heterogeneous populations. Their work stresses that the Community Standards seek to establish consistent norms—banning incitement to violence and explicit material while encouraging respect and authenticity—yet suffer from pronounced opacity in enforcement. Users frequently perceive content-removal or suspension decisions as arbitrary, which erodes trust and voluntary compliance. Moreover, the authors highlight the fundamental conflict between universally applied standards and diverse local customs regarding free speech, privacy, and acceptable discourse. They conclude that legitimate governance demands not only clear policies but also robust user education and participatory mechanisms—domains in which Facebook's present model remain deficient.

Collectively, these studies reveal that although the Community Standards are theoretically sound, their practical influence on online interactions depends heavily on user awareness, cultural appropriateness, and transparent enforcement. This insight provides a critical foundation for examining how these governance dynamics manifest in specific locales such as Ugep, where traditional institutions, communal values, and increasing digital penetration may uniquely shape reception and application of the standards.

In developing-country contexts, Ojo and Ezepue (2020) provide valuable evidence on Nigerian youths' engagement with social media, particularly Facebook. Focusing on university students, their research found that while the platform is extensively used for communication, networking, and information sharing, awareness of the Community Standards remains remarkably low; leading to frequent violations involving misinformation, hate speech, and unverified content. The authors attribute this primarily to inadequate digital-literacy programmes and limited formal education on online regulations. With Nigeria's internet user base surpassing 154 million by 2022 (Statista, 2022) yet digital infrastructure and training remaining uneven (especially outside major urban centres) these findings expose a stark disconnect between Facebook's global regulatory framework and local user's readiness to disconnect that is likely amplified in semi-urban communities like Ugep.

Rainie et al. (2017) from the Pew Research Center offer a complementary international perspective by investigating user perceptions of social media regulations across diverse demographics. Through surveys and expert consultations, they revealed that many Facebook users consider the Community Standards vague or overly complex, resulting in high rates of unintentional violations. Respondents expressed difficulty distinguishing protected speech from prohibited content and frustration with inconsistent moderation outcomes. This pervasive ambiguity undermines rule effectiveness and user trust, highlighting the need for clearer communication and proactive education to align policy with everyday practice.

These contributions collectively affirm that the success of Facebook's Community Standards hinges on two core elements: user awareness and contextual relevance. In Nigeria, Ojo and Ezepue (2020) illustrate how educational deficits and cultural factors impede compliance, while Rainie et al. (2017) identify broader perceptual challenges that transcend national boundaries. Together, they expose a significant research gap concerning the interplay of awareness, application, and influencing factors in specific semi-urban Nigerian settings like Ugep, where distinctive socio-cultural and economic conditions—shaped by strong traditional institutions and the annual Leboku festival—intersect with rapid digital adoption. The current study aims to fill this gap by delivering localised empirical evidence to guide more effective and culturally sensitive digital-governance strategies.

Knowledge and Application of Facebook Community Standards among Users

Knowledge of Facebook's Community Standards constitutes a fundamental prerequisite for responsible platform use, yet empirical investigations consistently uncover substantial deficits among young adults. Ojo and Ezepue (2020) conducted an in-depth study of social media practices among Nigerian university students and found that, despite more than 33 million Facebook users nationwide by 2022 (Statista, 2022), familiarity with prohibitions on hate speech, violent content, and misinformation remains strikingly limited. Most participants encountered the rules only reactively after receiving violation notices, underscoring the absence of

proactive digital-citizenship education in formal and informal settings.

Globally, Lenhart et al. (2015) from the Pew Research Center corroborate these patterns, showing that young adults aged 18–29—the most active demographic—rarely read platform policies voluntarily. Immediate social goals invariably overshadow regulatory familiarity, exacerbated by complex legal language and insufficient exposure to digital-citizenship curricula. In emerging contexts like Nigeria, where internet penetration has surged while educational infrastructure lags, these global tendencies are considerably intensified.

Application of Facebook’s Community Standards among young adults in Ugep is a complex and variable phenomenon, influenced heavily by levels of awareness, personal motivation, and local socio-cultural realities. West et al. (2019) carried out an extensive investigation into user adherence to social media policies, concentrating on enforcement practices on platforms such as Facebook and the subsequent behavioural responses of users. Their results reveal that compliance markedly increases when young adults clearly understand the penalties for violations - including content deletion, temporary restrictions, or permanent account bans. Users who have personally encountered warnings or moderation measures, for example, are far more inclined to modify their conduct by avoiding explicit material or provocative statements that could inflame tensions. Nevertheless, the same study identified a major constraint: adherence drops considerably whenever the platform’s rules clash with deeply held personal convictions or prevailing cultural

practices. Young adults living in communities that prize frank, unfiltered speech or humour that sometimes crosses into offence frequently resist standards they regard as excessively rigid or disconnected from their lived social environment. West et al. maintain that this friction illustrates the wider difficulty of creating one-size-fits-all policies for a globally diverse user base, where genuine compliance depends not only on knowledge of the rules but also on users' perception of their fairness and legitimacy.

Within the specific Nigerian setting, Uwalaka et al. (2021) offer valuable localised insights by exploring how youths interact with Facebook and its regulatory structure. Drawing on survey data collected from university students, their research established that non-compliance is widespread, especially in the rapid sharing of unverified or sensational news items—a clear breach of Facebook's credibility and misinformation standards. Far from reflecting deliberate rebellion, however, such practices were found to originate from entrenched habits and insufficient familiarity with the platform's regulations. Respondents routinely forwarded attention-grabbing headlines or unsubstantiated rumours without verification, considering these actions ordinary within their peer circles rather than violations of policy. Uwalaka et al. attribute this pattern to persistently low digital literacy levels and the near-total absence of structured education on responsible social media conduct, observing that many Nigerian youths place greater value on speed, social acceptance, and immediate engagement than on accuracy or rule conformity. These observations expose a profound

disjuncture between Facebook's policy framework - largely formulated from a global and often Western-oriented perspective - and its everyday implementation among young adults in developing regions like Nigeria, where application of the rules is shaped both by awareness gaps and by the degree to which global standards resonate with local behavioural norms, communal values, and cultural expectations in places such as Ugep.

Challenges to Awareness and Compliance with Facebook Community Standards

The obstacles to awareness and effective application of Facebook's Community Standards among young adults in Ugep are multifaceted, encompassing perceptual confusion, cultural friction, and structural limitations. Rainie et al. (2017) from the Pew Research Center found that a major barrier is the common perception that the rules are vague and enforced inconsistently. Many young users struggle to distinguish satire from hate speech or acceptable criticism from prohibited content, and unpredictable moderation outcomes breed frustration and accidental violations. This lack of clarity erodes trust, discourages proactive learning of the rules, and undermines overall platform safety.

Cultural factors intensify the problem. Ojo and Ezepeue (2020) observed among Nigerian youths that communal forms of expression such as passionate advocacy, banter, or mobilisation for local issues are often prioritised over strict adherence to global standards that may appear foreign or excessively restrictive. In Ugep, where age-grade systems, traditional banter, and the Leboku festival

encourage direct and collective speech, content flagged as inflammatory elsewhere can be viewed as normal social interaction, creating a significant clash that hampers compliance.

West et al. (2019) further point to structural deficits, particularly the limited availability of digital-literacy resources in semi-urban and developing areas like Ugep. Inadequate training in schools, community centres, and homes leaves many young adults without the knowledge or tools to understand and apply Facebook's standards properly. Together, rule ambiguity, cultural misalignment, and resource scarcity form interconnected barriers that demand localised, context-sensitive interventions to improve awareness and responsible use in Ugep.

Empirical Review

A study by Adegboyega (2019) titled "Influence of social media on the sexual behaviour of youths in Kwara State, Nigeria" primarily sought to determine how exposure to social media content affects sexual attitudes and practices among young people. Using a survey research design, the researcher collected data from 400 youths in selected secondary and tertiary institutions in Kwara State through structured questionnaires. Major findings revealed that unregulated online interactions, especially exposure to pornographic and sexually suggestive materials on platforms like Facebook, significantly correlated with risky sexual behaviour, liberal sexual attitudes, and early sexual debut among respondents. The study recommended stronger parental guidance, incorporation of sexuality education into school curricula, and collaboration between

government and social media platforms to curb harmful content. However, the study did not explore young adults' awareness or application of Facebook's specific Community Standards, nor did it examine the role of platform rules in shaping online behavior, an area that remains unaddressed in the semi-urban context of Ugep, which the present research seeks to fill.

A study by McKeon, Fitzgerald, Furley & Allison (2022) titled "Social media interventions for adolescent mental health and wellbeing: A scoping review" primarily aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of social media-based interventions in improving adolescent mental health and to identify the components that contribute to their success. The authors employed a scoping review methodology, analysing 47 studies published between 2010 and 2021. Major findings showed that interventions incorporating digital literacy education and safe-platform navigation strategies significantly reduced anxiety and depressive symptoms, whereas the absence of training on platform rules markedly lowered effectiveness. The researchers recommended the systematic inclusion of digital literacy modules in all online mental health programmes. However, this global review included no Nigerian studies and did not specifically address knowledge or application of Facebook's Community Standards, leaving unexplored the semi-urban Nigerian context of Ugep, an important gap that the present research seeks to fill.

A study by Ojo & Ezepe (2020) titled "Social media usage and its implications among Nigerian youths" aimed to assess patterns of social media utilisation, levels of awareness of online risks, and the implications for

personal and academic life among Nigerian university students. Employing a descriptive survey design, the researchers administered questionnaires to 500 students across three federal universities in southwest Nigeria. Key findings indicated high daily usage of Facebook for communication and entertainment, but very low awareness of platform-specific regulations, frequent sharing of unverified information, and occasional encounters with cyberbullying or harassment. The authors recommended the integration of digital literacy and online ethics courses into university curricula and public enlightenment campaigns. Despite these valuable insights, the study remained general and urban-focused, without investigating knowledge or practical application of Facebook's Community Standards in a specific semi-urban community such as Ugep in Cross River State, a localised gap that the current research directly addresses.

A study by Uwalaka, Okeke, & Nwala (2021) titled "Social media and news consumption among Nigerian youths: A study of university students" sought to examine how Nigerian youths source and share news on Facebook, the extent to which they verify information, and the implications for misinformation spread. Using a quantitative survey method, data were collected from 600 university students in southeastern and south-south Nigeria. Major findings showed heavy reliance on Facebook as a primary news source, widespread sharing of unverified or sensational content, and minimal awareness of Facebook's credibility and misinformation policies. The researchers recommended compulsory media literacy programmes in tertiary institutions and collaboration

between fact-checking organisations and social media platforms. However, the study did not specifically measure knowledge of Facebook Community Standards, nor did it explore adherence patterns or influencing factors in a defined semi-urban locality like Ugep, Cross River State—critical dimensions that the present investigation uniquely targets.

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) propounded by Fred D. Davis in 1989 (Mugo, Njagi, & Motanya 2017). It is an information systems theory that explains how users come to accept and use a technology. It proposes that actual usage of any technology is determined by behavioural intention, which is jointly influenced by two primary beliefs: perceived usefulness - the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her performance; and perceived ease of use – the degree to which a person believes that using the system would be free of effort (Mugo, Njagi, & Motanya 2017). These two beliefs are shaped by external variables such as system characteristics, training, and social influence, while perceived ease of use also directly affects perceived usefulness. Over time, attitude toward using the technology mediates the relationship between beliefs and intention, and repeated use reinforces or modifies the original perceptions.

In the context of this study on knowledge and application of Facebook Community Standards among young adults in Ugep, TAM provides a robust explanatory framework.

Young adults will only actively learn, internalise, and apply Facebook's Community Standards if they perceive these rules as useful for protecting their accounts, maintaining relationships, avoiding sanctions, and enhancing their overall experience on the platform (perceived usefulness), and if they find the rules, notifications, and enforcement mechanisms relatively clear and easy to understand and follow (perceived ease of use). Low awareness and inconsistent compliance observed in similar Nigerian settings can therefore be traced to weak perceived usefulness (many users see the rules as irrelevant or overly restrictive) and low perceived ease of use (complex language, inconsistent enforcement, and inadequate localised education). By applying TAM, this research examines how strengthening both perceptions through culturally relevant communication, community-based digital literacy programmes, and clearer enforcement can significantly increase voluntary application of the Community Standards among young adults in Ugep.

Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative research design, using a survey method to collect data on the awareness/knowledge and application of Facebook's Community Standards among young adults in Ugep, Yakurr Local Government Area, Cross River State, Nigeria. The target population consists of active Facebook users aged 18–35 residing in Ugep. A stratified sampling technique was employed to ensure adequate representation across age groups, gender, educational levels, and neighbourhoods/wards within the community, capturing both central and peripheral areas of

the semi-urban settings of Ugep. Data were analysed with descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) to determine levels of awareness/knowledge and adherence, while chi-square tests were used to examine relationships between demographic variables and compliance behaviour. This approach provided reliable, community-specific insights into the research objectives.

Population of Study

Precise figures for Facebook using young adults in Ugep are unavailable due to the lack of disaggregated data on social media penetration by age and locality within Yakurr Local Government Area.

Sample Size

Given the unknown population size of young adults aged 18–35 who use Facebook in Ugep, the sample size for this study was determined using Cochran's formula (Onyeka, Izunobi, & Iwueze (2015)), a widely accepted method for calculating sample sizes when population proportions are uncertain. The formula is expressed as:

Using the Cochran formula for calculating sample size (n):

$$N = Z^2 pq/e^2$$

The given parameters:

Confidence level (C): 95%

Precision level (margin of error) (e): $\pm 5\%$ or 0.05

Proportion (p): 0.5 (since we're assuming a conservative estimate of 50%)

The complement of the proportion (q): $1 - p = 0.5$

Z-score corresponding to a 95% confidence level (Z): 1.96
 (standard value for a 95% confidence level)

Substituting the values

$$n = (1.96)^2 (0.5) (0.5) / 0.05^2$$

$$n = 3.8416 (0.25) / 0.0025$$

$$n = 0.9604 / 0.0025$$

$$n = 384.16$$

Approximately = 385

Instrument of Data Collection

Questionnaire is used to gather information for this study. The questionnaire was designed in line with the research questions and objectives of the study

Data Presentation and Analysis

Section A: Demography

Gender

Variable	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Male	181	47

Female	204	53
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Field survey, 2025.

The respondents showed a nearly balanced gender composition, with females slightly outnumbering males. This balanced gender representation enhances the credibility and applicability of the findings across young adults in Ugep. It ensures that conclusions about awareness and application of Facebook Community Standards reflect the experiences of both young women and young men in the community, reducing gender bias and strengthening the overall validity of the results

Age:

Variable	Frequency	Percentage(%)
18-24	79	20.5
25-34	204	53
35	102	26.5
and above		

Field survey, 2025.

Most respondents were aged 25–34, followed by those 35 and above, with the smallest group aged 18–24. This distribution aligns with the typical Facebook user profile in Ugep and implies that the findings mainly capture the experiences of the most active age segment, while still representing younger and older young adults adequately for reliable community-level conclusions.

Education

Variable	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Primary	66	17.1
Secondary	107	27.8
Tertiary	199	51.7
No formal education	13	3.4

Field survey, 2025.

Educational attainment showed that over half of the respondents possessed tertiary education, followed by secondary and primary levels, with only a very small proportion having no formal education. This relatively high education profile among young adults in Ugep suggests that limited awareness and inconsistent application of Facebook Community Standards cannot be attributed primarily to low literacy, but rather to gaps in specific digital literacy and platform-rule education, making the findings even more significant for targeted interventions.

Section B: Knowledge of Facebook Community Rules and Regulations

S / N	Variable	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I am aware that Facebook has	89	56	93	122	25

1	Community Rules and Regulations.	23.1%	14.5%	24.2%	36.7%	6.5%
2	I have read Facebook's Community Standards before.	84	11	57	136	97
		21.8%	2.9%	14.8%	35.3%	25.2%
3	Facebook provides sufficient notifications and updates about its rules.	24	67	177	57	60
		6.2%	17.4%	46%	14.8%	15.6%

Field survey, 2025.

Results revealed low awareness of Facebook's Community Standards among young adults in Ugep. Only about one-third claimed awareness of the rules, fewer had ever read them, and nearly half remained neutral or dissatisfied with the platform's notifications and updates. This clearly indicates a significant knowledge gap in the community. Even among relatively educated users, familiarity with the rules remains limited and mostly passive, explaining the inconsistent application observed and underscoring the urgent need for targeted awareness and digital literacy programmes in Ugep.

Section C: Adherence to Facebook's Community Rules and Regulations

S /	Variable	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
N						
1	I avoid posting content that violates Facebook's rules (e.g., hate speech, misinformation, violent	82	71	143	32	57
		21.3%	18.4%	37.1%	8.3%	14.8%

	content).					
2	I report posts or accounts that violate Facebook's Community Standards.	92	101	153	39	00%
		23.9%	26.2%	39.7%	10.1%	
3	I have received a warning or restriction from Facebook due to non-compliance with its rules.	105	114	93	9	64
		27.3%	29.6%	24.2%	2.3%	16.6%

Field survey, 2025.

Responses showed moderate and inconsistent adherence among young adults in Ugep. A sizeable portion actively avoids prohibited content and report violations, yet many remain neutral or admit to non-compliant behaviour. Notably, over half of the respondents have received warnings or restrictions from Facebook. This pattern confirms that adherence is far from uniform. Despite some conscious efforts to follow the rules, a significant proportion of users continue to violate them, highlighting weak internalisation of the Community Standards and reinforcing the need for stronger, community-based education and enforcement support in Ugep.

Section D: Factors Inhibiting Compliance with Facebook community standards

S	Variable					
/						
N		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I do not comply with Facebook's rules because account suspension is	82	71	143	32	57
		21.3%	18.4%	37.1%	8.3%	14.8%

	always a temporary issue.						
2	I sometimes ignore Facebook's rules because I believe they are too strict.	92	101	153	39	0	
		23.9%	26.2%	39.7%	10.1%	0%	
3	Peer influence and social trends affect how I follow Facebook's Community Standards.	105	114	93	9	64	
		27.3%	29.6%	24.2%	2.3%	16.6%	

Field survey, 2025.

Responses revealed that fear of account suspension and peer influence/social trends strongly shape behaviour, with a majority acknowledging their impact. At the same time, many respondents find the rules too strict and admit to occasionally ignoring them, while a significant portion remains neutral. This indicates that compliance in Ugep is mostly driven by external pressures (fear of punishment and peer trends) rather than internal acceptance of the rules.

Discussion of Findings

The findings reveal a marked lack of awareness among young adults in Ugep regarding Facebook's Community Rules and Regulations. Most respondents demonstrate limited familiarity with these guidelines, and only a small minority has ever read the full Community Standards. Views are divided on the adequacy of Facebook's notifications and updates, with many expressing uncertainty or dissatisfaction. This knowledge deficit mirrors earlier research by Ojo and Ezepeue (2020), which documented low regulatory awareness among Nigerian

youths despite heavy platform usage. However, their work remained broad and university-centered, without examining the distinctive socio-cultural and traditional context of a semi-urban community like Ugep. The present study closes that gap by delivering community-specific evidence on awareness shortfalls, deepening insight into how local factors (including limited digital literacy initiatives and strong communal traditions) influence understanding of platform governance in a real world Cross River setting.

The results show inconsistent application of Facebook's rules among young adults in Ugep. While some consciously avoid prohibited content such as hate speech or misinformation, many adopt a neutral stance or openly admit non-compliance, reflecting only moderate overall commitment. Reporting violations is relatively common, yet a substantial proportion has received warnings or restrictions, signalling frequent breaches. This pattern echoes Uwalaka et al. (2021), who found Nigerian youths routinely share unverified content out of habit rather than malice. Their research, however, neither measured adherence levels nor explored sanction experiences, and it was not anchored in a specific locality. By analysing adherence behaviours and enforcement encounters in Ugep, this study offers concrete localised evidence of how compliance actually operates within Nigeria's diverse digital landscape.

The findings indicate that compliance among young adults in Ugep stems from a mix of fear, perceived strictness, and social pressures. Fear of account suspension drives some to follow the rules, while others regard them as overly

harsh and deliberately disregard them. Peer influence and prevailing social trends also exert strong sway, often overriding platform standards. This corroborates Ojo and Ezepue (2020), who linked cultural practices to compliance difficulties among Nigerian youths, yet they did not isolate fear of sanctions or peer dynamics, nor did they concentrate on a single community. The current study bridges that gap by pinpointing these drivers within Ugep's unique socio-cultural environment, clarifying how traditional norms, communal expression, and individual motivations interact with global regulations, and illuminating the specific compliance challenges faced in semi-urban Nigeria.

Conclusion

This study examined awareness and application of Facebook's Community Standards among young adults in Ugep, Cross River State, Nigeria. The findings revealed a significant knowledge gap, with the majority of respondents unfamiliar with the rules and only a small minority having read them. Adherence remained moderate, with some consciously avoiding violations while many others received warnings or restrictions. Key influencing factors were fear of account suspension, perceptions of the rules as overly strict and strong peer/social influence. The study clearly demonstrates that the primary barrier to effective application of Facebook's Community Standards in Ugep is not illiteracy or lack of internet access, but the persistent perception that the rules are foreign, excessively rigid, and misaligned with local norms of communal expression and humour. This perception, reinforced by peer influence and the absence

of culturally relevant education, sustains low awareness and inconsistent compliance, confirming that global policies cannot succeed without deliberate localisation and community-driven sensitisation.

Recommendations

1. Meta/Facebook should push simplified, Pidgin-English pop-up explanations of the main Community Standards the first time a user in Ugep is about to post or comment.
2. Youth leaders, age-grade executives, and popular Ugep influencers on Facebook should run regular short video skits and town-hall sensitisation sessions showing “what gets you blocked” in facebook.
3. Cross River State Ministry of Education and Yakurr LGA should integrate Facebook Community Standards into school and community digital literacy programmes in Ugep.

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