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## CHALLENGES ON THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AS A CONTEMPORARY ISSUE TOWARDS EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

By

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### Abstract

The paper examined challenges on the use of social media as a contemporary issue towards educational development in Nigeria. The paper discussed some concepts of Social media, Features of social media networking, Social media and social network. Other issues explained were Classes of social media; Impact of social media on education, Challenges faced by social media and way-forward on social media. Conclusively, it was observed that social media plays a vital role in education, entertainment, business and other sectors of human endeavours; quite sure anything that has advantage there must be a lot of challenges, that is why social media users engaged in so many activities which were not really concerned with human endeavours. It was been suggested that there is need for limiting the time spent on social media networking in order to have the opportunity for family interaction.

**Keyword:** *Challenges, Social Media, Contemporary issue, Educational Development.*

### Introduction

Social media is a worldwide connection that has become a global instrument for communication for the diverse people of the world, which has tremendously improved general human needs, developments in human social settings as well as measuring up with universal standard and best practices. The Internet arrived with many sides to its uses. Kahn and Cerf (2000:15) cited in Udende and Azeez (2015) argued that as we were approaching the new millennium, the Internet was revolutionizing our society, our economy, and our technological system (Ezeah, 2013). Social media usage is one of the advents of technology. The evolution of internet and computer technologies has influenced the dissemination of information. People across the globe can access news, data,

information, pictures etc as fast as possible via social media. In education, social media facilitates lesson delivery, assignments and examination conduction. Moreover, the introduction of social media networking sites has equally facilitated the sharing of information between and among institutions, students, departments and faculties (Njorose, 2012).

Social media is a phenomenon that has transformed the interaction and communication of individuals throughout the world. However, social media is not new concept it has been evolving since the dawn of human interaction. In recent time, social media has impacted many aspects of human communication in which has become daily practice in some user's lives (Cohn, 2017). The 21<sup>st</sup> century has





created advanced technological knowledge with the help of powering social media platforms. Our world today is filled with advanced technological knowledge and skills that have redefined human communication and interaction in modern society. Social media can be regarded as a 21<sup>st</sup> century technological invention and innovation. Social media with its attributes bring knowledge, skills and event closer to the people and have revolutionized access to information. Social media can be defined as internet-based services that allow a person to connect to the general public, to understand what others are doing and thinking as well as their connections (Trottier and Fuchs, 2018). Social media is an online-based application built on the platform with the idea to create and share individual contents (Sajithra and Patil, 2013). Web 2.0 can be seen as a platform through which individuals create content and allow the continuous sharing of information modifications by others (Sajithra and Patil, 2013).

To many who do not use various social media sites on a daily basis, the term "social media" may be considered fairly new. In reality, its roots date back more than thirty years to technologies that would seem arcane to the vast majority of current social media users. While it took social media decades to gain traction as a viable communication and business tool, the pace at which the technology has developed and advanced in recent years is difficult to fathom (Kietzmann, 2016).

Educational development programmes in Nigerian right from the colonial era through the post-colonial years till date are designed specifically to bring about

the much desired development in the Nigerian polity. More so, when education is perceived as the panacea to the myriad of problems nations are faced with as encapsulated in the cliché that "No nation can develop beyond the level of education of its citizen" (Gabriel, 2012). Hence the priority of education can contribute policy of government in Nigeria at all levels is guided by the principle that good education can contribute significantly to economic growth and income generating opportunities for sustainable development (FRN, 2013).

Education has remained a weapon for acquiring skills, relevant knowledge and capacity building and described as an instrument for achieving genuine national development (FRN, 2013). In the southern part of Nigeria; the expansion of formal education since independence is unparalleled when compared to other sectors; from one percent, enrolment has skyrocketed to over a thousand percent from nursery to tertiary institutions in the last four to five decades. Local indigenous education system has been integrated into the mainstream of western education. Similarly, both the public and private sectors have invested massively in the development of educational infrastructure and facilities due to the importance associated with formal education in modern development (FRN, 2013).

Education development programmes are put in place to improve the educational system and to bring the level of illiteracy to the barest minimum as well as create opportunities for access. Successive Nigerian governments have always had good intentions in coming up with



education development programmes, particularly at the lower- primary and secondary. However, the benefit of these programmes which lay the foundation for further learning and useful living in the society is contestable, particularly in the face of poor policy implementation which is the bane of most laudable programmes in Nigeria (Cohn, 2017). This paper examines the Challenges on the Use of Social media as a Contemporary issue towards Educational Development in Nigeria.

### Conceptual Framework

#### Social media

Social media can be used for the rapid spread of useful information, but can also be used for the proliferation of disinformation and harmful ideas. Social media can influence the communication of health messages, specifically assessing the proliferation of messages during Covid-19 pandemic through varieties of social networks like Whatapp, Facebook, Blogs, Tweet and other broadcasting station either radio station or Tv station in which many of the theoretical ideas and videos can be applied to other platforms (Boyd, 2018).

Social media is becoming more crucial that students rely on their education or source of information delivered to them, either online or offline. User reviews and comments are experiential in nature and highly trustable. On the other hand, the development of Internet technologies has lowered the barrier for contributing information online. Almost anyone with Internet access could easily blog, tweet, review, comment, and update his or her current information on Covid-19 pandemic. These communication tools have led to an explosion of social media content.

Social media has revived more ancient types of decision-making prevalent before the emergence of mass media, when the exchange of opinions between one's families, relatives, friends, and neighbors was the basis for product purchase (Udende & Azeez, 2015). Social media was believed to have bridged communication gap among students, but due to its frequent and excessive patronage among secondary school without control, it creates a serious gap between the students and their studies which consequently affects their academic performance in school (Isah, 2019). Within the social media, facebook, Whatsapp, 2go and Twitter are the most patronized social media among secondary school students (Isah, 2019). Youths nowadays have shifted their attention from visible to invisible friends through social media, making important activities like reading, writing and research are affected in the process (Karpinski, 2018). Kietzmann (2016:10) argued that "there is no single recognized definition for social media". However, some scholars have defined it differently as follows:

Kaplan and Haenlein (2017) defined social media as a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Boyd (2018) also defined social media as "websites and applications used for social networking". Another definition of social media is that "it is a communication channel which is very popular, extremely fast and broad, has proven to be highly effective, as well as trusted by billions of people, to share and discover content concerning individuals, brands, information,





entertainment and knowhow" (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2017). On theme that all these definitions underpin is that social media involves some form of communication between individuals over the internet.

Therefore, the concept of social media should be seen as a growing institution in society where people heavily rely on to exploit information communication use and application. We can safely conclude that social media has provided the long awaited opportunity to visit the universe through the social media network service. Khan and Kellner (2016) defined it as a communication opportunity between two or more people relate with each other via separate computers through the internet or network connection using social software.

#### **Features of social media networking**

It has become a societal harm for people and users who glorify social media as a means of fulfillment of personal desires and interest. This would be discussed to examine how these different networks consume the time and energy of users as these are mentioned in terms.

##### **i. Facebook**

Facebook is a social networking website launched and it is privately operated by Facebook, Inc. (Karpinski, 2018). Facebook was founded by Mark Zuckerberg and others when he was a student at Harvard; though when the site was initially launched, it was restricted to Harvard students only. Later the privilege was extended to high school students and later to everyone that is 13 years or older (Karpinski, 2018). Facebook has more than 500 million active users which

were ranked as the most visited social network worldwide (Karpinski, 2018). Karpinski (2018) viewed that users may create a personal profile; add other users as friends, and exchange messages, including automatic notifications, photos and comments when they update their profile. Facebook allows anyone who is at least 13 years old to become a registered user of the website (Karpinski 2018). Additionally, Facebook users may join common interest user groups, organized by workplace, school, college, or other characteristics.

##### **ii. Whatsapp**

Whatsapp is another frequently used aspect of social media that youths find very fascinating like facebook. It also provides a massive room for communication of information, messages, videos, texts, pictures, etc, among users. This has become the cultural traits of youths in their schools that solely spend more time and effort on it than their studies. These students see it as an opportunity to explore the world through contracting relationships and exchanging youthful compliments based on interest and desires away from educational goals.

On the basis of the distracting activities of these youths, this study finds the findings of Karspinkin and Duberstein (2018) relevant and valid. In the said study, students who were using social media were found to have significantly lower grades in their academic pursuits than those who do not engage. It can be deduced from the strength of this study and the general consequences of distractions from studies that engagement in social media compromised nobler educational goals.



**iii. Twitter:**

Twitter: This is another social networking site which enables users to post and share text messages called "tweets" containing a limited number of characters up to 280. This provides opportunity for information and message exchange which could cover business activities as well as political interest. Its acceptance has given a growing statistics of users where 316 million use it monthly, 80% of active users on mobile phones (Andre-Michel, 2015). 2006 was the year for Twitter to exist while Facebook began to open its doors to everyone. Twitter gained a lot of popularity first because it offered more different options such as micro blogging and secondly because it was used by some celebrities (Boyd, 2018). There was several social media created which was to consolidate the updates from social media and social networking websites acquired by Facebook (Karpinski, 2018). Ping.fm was created in 2008 and was defined as "the auto magic" micro blogging and networking web service that enables users to post to multiple social networks simultaneously (Andre-Michel 2015). In 2009, Net log formerly known as Facebox and Bingbox, was launched and is a Belgian social networking website specifically targeted at the European youth demographic and Google buzz was born in 2010.

**iv. Instagram:**

Instagram is another popular site for social media users where sharing of photos and videos dominates the activities of active users. This can be used for positive ends where the camera could serve the work of a purposeful art. This is possible where Instagram allows the use of multiple filters to photos which can be posted to most

sites. It equally has its defects regarding distracting and wrong application for purpose (Boyd, 2018).

**v. MySpace**

MySpace is a social networking website, has its head office in Beverly Hills, California, where it shares a building with its owner, News Corporation (Andre-Michel 2015). In 2006, MySpace became the most popular social networking website in the United States but was overtaken in 2008 by its competitor facebook that internationally became the most popular social networking site worldwide. Approximately 43.2 million users visit MySpace on a monthly basis where the company employs approximately 1000 employees (Boyd, 2018). A unique feature of MySpace is the ability for users to customize their profile information to give detailed information about themselves and what they are interested in. MySpace also has a special profile for musical artists where they can download their entire music into mp3 songs.

**vi. YouTube**

YouTube is the world's most popular online video community, where millions of people can discover, watch and share originally created videos (Andre-Michel 2015). YouTube provides a forum for people to connect, inform, and inspire others across the globe and acts as a major distribution platform for original content creators and advertisers, large and small. YouTube is based in San Bruno, California and uses Adobe Flash Video technology to display a wide variety of user-generated video content, including movie clips, TV clips, and music videos, as well as amateur content such as video blogging and short original videos (Andre-Michel 2015).



### Social Media and Social Networks

According to Andre-Michel (2015), social media is hard to define and is a two-way street that gives you the ability to communicate. These are; does that mean that a social media is an instrument of communication, just like any other social network? Do any differences exist between these two concepts? Social Media can be called a strategy and an outlet for broadcasting, while Social Networking is a tool and a utility for connecting with others (Cohn, 2017: 12). Furthermore, Cohn (2017) reports that, "the difference is not just semantics but in the features and functions put into these websites by their creators which dictates the way they are to be used".

Google buzz is a social networking and messaging tool that integrates a web-based email program which will work through the popular Gmail service, will allow users to post status updates, photos and links to members of their network, as well as pull in their activity on other sites like Twitter or Facebook (Andre-Michel, 2015). Social Media has been defined as websites which allow profile creation and visibility of relationships between users (Boyd, 2018); web-based applications which provide functionality for sharing, relationships, group, conversation and profiles (Kietzmann, 2016).

### Impact of Social Media on Education

Kaplan and Haenlein (2017) stated that social media has increased the quality and rate of collaboration for students. With the help of social media students can easily communicate or share information quickly with each through various social sites like Facebook, Whatsapp, and Instagram etc. It is also important for students to do some

practical work instead of doing paper work. They can also write blogs for Teachers as well as for themselves to enhance their knowledge skills. Social networking sites also conduct online examination which plays an important role to enhance the students' knowledge.

### Challenges Faced by Social Media

Adolescence is a period of transition between childhood and adulthood whereby identity formation, peer relationships, sexuality and self-worth are exploited. It is sometimes referred to as the period in human development between the beginning of puberty and the attainment of adulthood (Lawal, 2011). Today, for adolescents, the internet is acting as a new social environment where their issues are being explored. A transformation is being noted in how they communicate, establish and maintain relationships and find social support. Mikaye (2018) conducted studies to explain why children, adolescents have motives for using internet and come up with a conclusion that people's interaction online shaped their offline way of living. Using social media becomes a risk to adolescent more often than adult realize. These risks fall into the following categories; peer to peer, inappropriate content, lack of understanding of online privacy issues and outside influence of third party advertising groups stated by Isah (2019) under the following:

- a. **Cyber bullying and online harassment:** This is a process of using digital media to communicate false, embracing or hostile information about another person. It is the most common online risk for all teens and is a peer-to-peer common and can cause profound



- psychological outcomes including depression, anxiety, severe isolation and tragically suicide.
- b. **Sexting:** It is a sending, recording or forwarding sexually explicit messages, photographs or images via cell phones, computer or other digital devices. Most times, these images are distributed through cell phones, computer or the internet. Some teens who have engaged in sexting have been threatened or charged with felony child pornography charges even though some states in Nigeria have started characterizing such behaviours as juvenile-law misdemeanors and conditional consequences including school suspension for perpetrators and emotional distress with accompanying mental health conditions for victims. In many circumstances however, the sexting incident is not shared beyond a small peer group or a couple.
  - c. **Facebook Depression:** Researchers on excessive chatting on facebook accessed have proposed a new phenomenon defined as depression that developed when pre-teens and teens spend a great deal of time on social media sites such as facebook and then begin to exhibit classic symptoms of depression (Karpinski, 2018). Acceptance by and contact with peers is an important element of adolescents life. The intensity of the online world is thought to be a factor that may trigger depression in some adolescents. As with offline depression, preadolescents and adolescents who suffer from facebook depression are at risk for social promote substance abuse, unsafe sexual practices or oppressive or self-destructive behaviours.
  - d. **Defective social relationship:** Spending countless hours on the internet, children spend very limited with family and actual friends. This weakens the family bond and limit interaction with actual people. These children miss out on real life interaction with different relatives which results in distorted social skills and limited real life on social network leading to social isolation. O'keeffe and Pearson (2018) are of the view that adolescents who do not have close friendships consistently have lower levels of self-esteem and psychological symptoms of maladjustment. When people have more social contact, they are happier and healthier both physically and mentally.

#### Way-forward on Social Media

Based on what were discussed in the paper, the following will serve as way-forward toward addressing challenges explained (Isa, 2019):

1. Social media gives a way to the students to effectively reach each other in regards to class ventures, bunch assignments or for help on homework assignments.
2. Many of the students who do not take an interest consistently in class might feel that they can express their thoughts easily on social media.
3. Teachers may post on social media about class activities, school events, homework assignments which will be very useful to them.
4. The access of social media provides the opportunity for educators to teach good digital citizenship and the use of Internet for productivity.

#### Conclusion

Conclusively, it has been observed that social media plays a vital role in





education, entertainment, business and other sectors of human endeavours; quite sure anything has advantage there must be a lot of challenges that is why social media users engage in so many activities which are not really concern with human endeavours.

Social media are significant channels for information dissemination and communication around the world today. Internet and social media users are increasing at alarming rate. With internet technology, social media platforms have made the communication process faster, interactive, user friendly and enabling user-generated contents.

### Suggestions

Based on what were explained in the paper, the following will serve as suggestions toward addressing challenges indentified;

1. There is need of privacy on the utilization of social media platform.
2. Government should enact a law for the online social harassment and cyber bullying.
3. There is need of reduction on facebook depression upon the utilization of social media among the users.
4. There is need of limiting the time spend on social media networking in order to have the opportunity for family interaction.
5. Social media users are needed to take their position to be neutral in sending un-authorized information.

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