

An Analysis on the Contribution of Social Media in Social Growth

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Abstract: *The term “social media” refers to a group of online communication platforms that focus on user-generated content, collaboration, and community involvement. This analysis’s main objective is to give detailed information regarding how social media affects society. Several researches suggested that social media might have both positive and positive effects. Positive results include improved learning opportunities, socialization and communication, as well as access to health-related information. Some of the negative effects of social media on societies include terrorism, criminal activity, cat fishing, depression, anxiety, and cat fishing. The outcome will typically be favorable when people utilize social media for the right reasons and set goals, and the opposite is true for bad side effects. To lessen and protect communities from its harmful aspects.*

Keywords: Society, Contribution, Growth, Activity

I. INTRODUCTION

Merriam-Webster (2019) described social media “Forms of electronic communication (such as websites for social networking and micro blogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos)”. Ajijola (2022) posits that it is a portal that attracts so many internet users for the purpose of entertainment, dissemination of news, sending messages and other forms of expression through the media.

Social media are the interactive media of mass communication that gives chance for the two way communication process and defeats the one way (incomplete) communication process that is available on the Print and Electronic media whereby the feedback is delayed, slow or is not received. However, social media gives room for immediate feedback from the receiver of the message (Information, culture, tradition e.t.c) sent. Social media is a useful networking service for young people when used purposively. For instance, According to Faudree (2009) as cited by Damota (2019) lists the following five advantages of Facebook: (1) Facebook is a social networking site that students frequently use when they are bored, (2) Facebook is a way for students to communicate with other members, (3) Facebook is a place where students can unwind, (4) Facebook enables students to support one another and discover their individual identities.

Social media can be also a source of mutilation. Sander and Thomas (2013) cited in Mulugeta (2019) in their study identified two types of mutilation: Cultural, social-psychological and cognitive: forms of “Attention Deficit (Disorder)” and Business and macro-economic: forms of “Financial Deficit”. Nowadays, the majority of teenagers across all age groups are quickly switching from using electronic media like television and radio to social media. Adolescents who use and experiment with social media run some danger due to their low ability to self-regulate and vulnerability to peer pressure. Recent studies show that offline behaviors like bullying, clique formation, and sexual experimentation are frequently expressed online. This has led to issues like cyber bullying(Ige & Adewale, 2022b), privacy concerns as data could be mined from the cloud(Ige & Adewale, 2022a) for malicious use, sexting, Internet addiction, and sleep deprivation. (Patchin et al., 2006).



OBJECTIVES

The general purpose of this analysis is to provide detail information about the Contribution of Social Media on Societal Development.

The general objective

1. To analyses the influence of social media on society
2. To identify the positive and dark sides of social media
3. To recommend some measures for proper use of social media

Concept of Communication

According to Aioli Isaac (2022) Communication is the transfer of ideas, opinion and information from one person to another. it is dual in nature , on one hand is the speaker and on the other is the receiver. Akande (2022) sees communication as a process of transferring information, ideas, knowledge, emotions, beliefs or perception from one person to another. Similarly Sheikh Shariq Vohra sees it as the process of sending information from one person to another. It is the act of sharing ideas, facts, opinions, thoughts, messages, or emotions to others, both inside and beyond the organization, through a channel to foster mutual understanding and trust.

Richard Nordquit (2021) Speech, or oral communication; writing and graphical representations (such as info graphics, maps, and charts); and signs, signals, and behavior are all examples of communication. Communication can be defined as “the formation and interchange of meaning.”

Concept of Social Media

According to Kietzmzn (2011) Social media are interactive digital channels that allow people to share information, ideas, and other kinds of expression through virtual communities and networks. Merriam- Webster (2019) described social media “Forms of electronic communication (such as websites for social networking and micro blogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos)”. It is also seen as “s group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content”, (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; 61). “Social media uses mobile and web-based technology to build highly interactive platforms where people can share, co-create, discuss, and alter user-generated content.” Given the widespread coverage of social media in today’s news, it appears that we are in the midst of a completely new communication landscape.” (Kietzmann, et al, 2011; 241) Ajijola (2022) posits that it is a portal that attracts so many internet users for the purpose of entertainment, dissemination of news, sending messages and other forms of expression through the media, and the mind behind this portal is a brilliant one who is ever innovative, always coming up with new ideas to keep the audience glued.

There are three types of media

1. The ones people don’t notice
2. The ones people go to once because of one juicy information
3. And the ones that keep people glued to their screen because it has all the things to keep its audience occupied for example TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter e.t.c.

There is also an option of Mobile use of social media which entails the use of social media on mobile devices such as smart phones and tablet computers. Because the creation, exchange, and circulation of user- generated content can help organizations with marketing research, communication, and relationship development, mobile social media are important applications of mobile marketing. Mobile social media differs from other forms of social media in that it takes into account the user’s current location (location- sensitivity) as well as the time between sending and receiving messages. (Kaplan 2012)

Types of Social Media

- Social Networks: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Whatsapp
- Media Sharing Networks: Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, TikTok Discussion Forums: Reddit, Quora, Digg
- Bookmarking & Content Creation Networks: Pinterest, Flipboard Consumer Analysis Networks: Yelp, Zomato, TripAdvisor



- Blogging & Publishing Networks: WordPress, Tumblr, Medium, Blogger Social Shopping Networks: Kara, JiJi, Jumia
- Interest-Based Networks: Goodreads, Houzz, Last.fm

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Agenda Setting Theory

The agenda-setting theory of media, in contrast to the extreme views of the direct effects model, states that mass media define the topics that interest the public rather than the population's views. According to this hypothesis, the problems that receive the greatest media coverage are the ones that the public debates, discusses, and demands action on. This implies that the media shapes public perceptions of topics and stories. As a result, when the media fails to discuss a topic, it becomes marginalized in the public's perception (Hanson).

This theory is used by critics who claim that a particular media outlet has an agenda. Agendas can range from the spread of cutthroat capitalist ideals in films to a perceived liberal slant in the news media. The agenda-setting hypothesis, for example, explains occurrences like the growth of anti-smoking sentiment. Smoking was considered a personal health concern before the media took an anti-smoking position. The mass media made smoking a public health concern rather than a personal health issue by spreading antismoking emotions through commercials, public relations initiatives, and a variety of media channels (Dearing & Rogers, 1996).

Natural catastrophe coverage has become more prominent in the news recently. However, when news coverage decreases, public interest decreases. Media scholars who specialize in agenda-setting research look at an issue's salience, or relative significance, and then try to figure out what makes it so. The relative importance of an issue affects its location on the public agenda, which influences the development of public policy. Agenda-setting study follows public policy from its inception as an agenda, through mass media promotion, and eventually to its final form as a law or policy (Dearing & Rogers, 1996).

Cultivation Analysis

According to the cultivation analysis hypothesis, persons who are exposed to a lot of media acquire an illusory sense of reality based on the medium's most recurrent and consistent messages. Because of the pervasiveness and repetition of Social Media Network, this theory is most typically applied to its analysis. According to this hypothesis, someone who spends a lot of time on social media platforms may build an image of reality that isn't accurate. Violent or Degrading comments and the popular fake lifestyle on these platforms, much exceed violence, degrading and fake lifestyle acts that most people witness in their everyday lives. As a result, someone who is always glued to their social media may come to believe that the world is more violent and dangerous than it really.

Cultivation analysis studies include a variety of study topics, including as the variations in perception between heavy and light media consumers. To use this theory, an individual's usual media consumption must be examined for various sorts of messages. Then, researchers must analyze the cultural background of the particular media consumer in order to accurately establish additional aspects that are involved in his or her view of reality.

METHODS OF RESEARCHING MEDIA EFFECTS

There are various ways of researching Media Effect, they include Content Analysis, Archival Research, Surveys, Social Role Analysis, Depth Interviews, Rhetorical Analysis, Focus Groups, Participant Observation and others.

These Methods are further spited into two for more clarifications

Media research methods are the practical procedures for carrying out a research project. These methods include content analysis, surveys, focus groups, experiments, and participant observation.

Research methods generally involve either test subjects or analysis of media. Methods involving test subjects include surveys, depth interviews, focus groups, and experiments. Analysis of media can include content, style, format, social roles, and archival analysis.



BENEFITS

The use of social media is prevalent among teenagers. A 2018 Pew Research Center study of roughly 750 13- to 17-year-olds revealed that 97% of them use social media sites like YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat, and that 45% of them spend practically all of their time online.

But what effect does teen use of social media have?

Social media benefits

Teenagers can develop social networks, engage with others, and construct online personas thanks to social media. Social networks can be a great resource for youth, especially for those who struggle with marginalization, impairments, or chronic diseases.

Teenagers also utilize social media for self-expression and entertainment. Additionally, the platforms can inform teenagers about current events, enable cross-border communication, and impart knowledge on a range of topics, including good habits. Teenagers may even benefit from using social media that is amusing, entertaining, or that offers a meaningful connection to peers and a large social network. Teenagers can develop social networks, engage with others, and construct online personas thanks to social media.

Social media harms

So far, kids' usage of social media can also have a detrimental contribution on them by diverting their attention, preventing them from sleeping, and exposing them to bullying, rumors, unrealistic expectations of other people's lives, and peer pressure.

High levels of social media usage have been linked in studies to depression or anxiety symptoms. More frequent social media usage, nocturnal social media use, and emotional involvement in social media, such as being upset when you can't log on, were all associated with poorer sleep quality and higher levels of anxiety and despair, according to a 2016 study of more than 450 teenagers.

The contribution of social media among teenagers could also vary. A 2015 study discovered a connection between teen use of social media and cellphones for social comparison and feedback seeking and depressive symptoms. However, a tiny 2013 study discovered that the life satisfaction of older teenagers who used social media passively—for example, by only browsing others' photos—declined. These declines didn't affect people who utilized social media to communicate with others or upload their own content.

Experts contend that kids who post content on social media run the risk of disclosing intimate images or extremely personal stories due to their impulsive natures. Teenagers may experience bullying, harassment, or even blackmail as a result of this. Teenagers frequently post online without thinking about these repercussions or privacy issues.

Social Media's Contribution on Societal Issues

Social networking and social media play such a significant role in contemporary societal concerns that we witness today, such as the black lives matter protest, Missouri massacre, the End Sars Movement, #OccupyNigeria, #BringBackOurGirls, Sex for Grades, and the popular ALS Ice Bucket Challenge fundraising. With all of the societal challenges that we encounter in today's society, social networking and social media assist in bringing all of the current concerns to our attention. According to current research, social networking sites (SNS) provide "a mechanism for individuals to communicate in any manner they think suitable with the online community" (Saini and Moon, 2013, p. 3).

The three most popular SNSs in today's society are Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, and they supply everyone of us with our general understanding of our present social difficulties. Facebook has ensured its long-term viability by evolving with the times (Saini and Moon, 2013). On a typical day, 15% of Facebook users post their own status on the platform (Hampton, Goulet, Rainie, & Purcell, 2011). Twitter has also grabbed our contemporary SNS users by storm by allowing many people to voice their problems and ideas about social issues in only 140 characters. Instagram has enabled its users to swiftly post images, instantaneously allowing all of its users to share photos that, often times, may add to the understanding of our social concerns more quickly in today's culture rather than waiting for pictures from a major news article. Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are all substantially responsible for raising social awareness and effecting change for all of our daily professional, personal, and public societal challenges.



Facebook and Social Connections

Mark Zuckerberg founded Facebook in 2004 as a social networking tool for the Harvard community. Since then, it has grown to become one of the largest social networking sites, with over 400 million visitors per month. As the number of visitors on Facebook has increased, it has become a powerful tool for the organization and coordination of groups seeking social change. During the Arab Spring uprisings in Tunisia, one example may be observed. In 2008, there were less than 30,000 Tunisians on Facebook. There were nearly 2 million, or one-fifth of Tunisia's population, at the time of the uprising in December 2010. During the revolt, protest footage, photos, and locations were uploaded to the internet. One Tunisian resident referred to Facebook as the "GPS for this revolution," implying that it offered direction for the movement.

In 2012, Facebook group sites were established to mobilize Nigerians worldwide in opposition to the regime of gasoline subsidy elimination. One of these, titled "Nationwide Anti-Fuel Subsidy Removal: Strategies & Protests," was founded on January 2, 2012, and had over 20,000 members by January 9, 2012. Student websites and blogs are reporting on the Occupy Nigeria events, and student delegates are giving live photographs of the continuing demonstrations.

Twitter: The Power of the @ and hashtag(#)

There are several methods for communicating what is going on in our environment. Twitter is another famous social networking platform that has revolutionized the way many people interact. With a modest restriction on how much you may say, this website allows for rapid and ongoing contact. Individuals have 140 characters to publish in each distinct tweet, and with the capacity to do this frequently, information may be transmitted quickly to millions of people in a short amount of time.

Twitter was created in March 2006 by Evan Williams, Noah Glass, Jack Dorsey, and Biz Stone, all of whom had similar ideas about providing a free and speedy means to transmit messages to people all over the world.

Another example of the contribution Twitter had on society can be seen by the #OccupyNigeria protest, it began on January 1, 2012, and Nigerians were greeted with a stunning start to the year when Nigeria's former President, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, announced the withdrawal of the gasoline subsidy. Following this news, the price of gasoline at the pump surged instantly from 65 to 141 cents per litre, and on the black market from 100 to 200 cents. The next day, the entire nation was stirred up, and Twitter's #OccupyNigeria became a significant igniting point where grievance torches were kindled. The government responded by lowering the price of gasoline at the pump by 30%, bringing it down to 97 cents. Nigerians, like the renowned Oliver Twist, demanded more. Some saw the Occupy Nigeria protest as more than just a campaign for gasoline subsidies.

Another contribution can be seen during the #BringBackOur Girls This is undoubtedly the most significant and well-known Nigerian fad that originated on Twitter. On the night of April 14, 2014, only 24 hours after the Abuja bombings, around 276 female students were forcibly removed from the Government Girls Secondary School in Chibok, Borno State. The terrorist organization Boko Haram claimed responsibility for their kidnapping. With the first hectic and frantic speed of the adventure, about 57 of them escaped from the vehicles, while the terrorists abducted 219 pupils. However, like the people of ancient times who ate and drank ignorant to the impending flood, the then-President, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, was at a campaign rally in Kano, and subsequently, images of him at a birthday celebration in Ibadan were circulated on Twitter. Nigerians' reactions were obviously filled with shock and fury at the government's apparent insensitivity. Then followed a tweet ascribed to Oby Ezekwesili, former minister of education during the Olusegun Obasanjo government, by Ibrahim M. Abdullahi, a two-time Nigerian minister during the Obasanjo regime. In solidarity, world leaders like Wife of the Former American President Mitchell Obama, celebrities (Ellen DeGeneres of the The Ellen Show, Mary J. Blige and the host of others), and international organizations joined the movement. According to an investigation, the hashtag #BringBackOurGirls was tweeted in six languages, including English and Spanish. Don't forget the First Lady, Dame Patience Jonathan's, dramatic emotional collapse. As of October 2019, 107 females had been reported found, with 112 remaining missing. Five years later, the hunt is still ongoing, with many unsolved questions.

Another example is also the #ENDSARS movement, The Nigeria Police Force established the Special Anti- Robbery Squad (SARS) in 1992 as a crime-fighting organization. However, by 2017, there has been a steady stream of instances



of brutality, extortion, high-handedness, and illegal arrests. What occurred on Twitter: The End Special Anti-Robbery Squad (#ENDSARS) movement, spearheaded by the famous Segun Awosanya (@segalink), began on Twitter in mid-2017, with calls for the government to abolish SARS. As Segun's segalink Awosanya gave a venue for individuals to voice their tales, an internet petition calling for the reform of the Nigeria Police was launched. There were significant effects as the government signed a number of legislation into law to assist combat the threat.

#SexForGrades At the month of October, the topic of rape and other types of sexual harassment moved from the holy grounds of the church to the citadels of learning in West African colleges. On October 7, 2019, BBC Africa Eye, the BBC's investigative arm in Africa, aired an hour-long video documenting allegations of sexual harassment by academics at two West African institutions, the University of Lagos and the University of Ghana. The documentary's contribution, which implicated four academics at these universities, was felt immediately. The movie brought to light the ubiquitous threat of sexual harassment at most Nigerian campuses, and Nigerian Twitter erupted, with some claiming that the documentary was only the top of the iceberg. And the ramifications for the professors were virtually immediate.

Dr. Boniface, the pastor of Foursquare and #UNILAG, has been suspended from ministry until the outcome of an inquiry. #BBCAfricaEye #SexForGrades pic.twitter.com/sDcrYObo79

— Charlie Northcott (@CNorthcott1) Saturday, October 7, 2019

On November 16, 2019, the Nigerian Senate began work on a bill for an Act to prevent, ban, and remediate sexual harassment of students in tertiary educational institutions.

II. CONCLUSION

As Kietzmzn earlier identified social media as interactive digital channels that allow people to share information, ideas, and other kinds of expression through virtual communities and networks which include Whatsapp, Facebook, Youtube, Linkden, Jiji, Nairaland etc. Social networking and social media play such a significant role in contemporary societal concerns that we witness today, such as the Ferguson, Missouri massacre, the End Sars Movement, #OccupyNigeria, #BringBackOurGirls, Sex for Grades, and the popular ALS Ice Bucket Challenge fundraising. With all of the societal challenges that we encounter in today's society, social networking and social media assist in bringing all of the current concerns to our attention. According to current research, social networking sites (SNS) provide "a mechanism for individuals to communicate in any manner they think suitable with the online community" (Saini and Moon, 2013, p. 3). The roles that were stated in this research has showed how much the social media has been doing on the path of social development.

RECOMMENDATION

Instead of Government banning the use of social media like in the case of Nigeria with twitter, the government should find a way to work with the social media expert to make use of the trends to carry the youths along with the social development process.

1. It is advisable for the youths that Although everyone have a reason to be online they should find and engage in more educative trends so they can be more useful to the society instead of using it to while away precious time.
2. The programmers should find a way to restrict adult content to adults users by verifying the user's identity.
3. The programmers should also try to make the platform more social and educative.

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