

The Positive Aspect of Social Media Use by Youth of Kaduna North Local Government, Nigeria

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Abstract: Online classes are increasingly being adapted by colleges and universities worldwide as the need for the expansion of opportunities for acquiring higher degrees become necessary for youths and young adults. Social media as a tool for furthering education however is something being debated, as some scholars argue for its adaptation as one of the means to change the habits of the youths positively. Other positive uses include associations and interest groups collaborations on sports, and other interest for youths to keep busy and out of trouble. This study explored the possibility of turning around some habits of youth towards positive uses of social media. Using survey method to collect data from 382 youth of Kaduna North Local government area of Kaduna State, Nigeria, findings were mixed as high frequency use was documented at a little over 50%, while however, some professional uses disclosed at 39% of respondents were impressive. Recommendations include the need to have parents, as first point of contact with children to set limits and monitor social media use as they grow, to instil positive and controlled habits; some regulations by the government; and further studies on other ways to harness social media for positive applications. This study's contribution holds key promise for a turn-around of negative thoughts into positive action for African youths uses of social media.

Keywords: Social media and youth, youth clubs and associations, Kaduna youth, positive social media uses.

1. Introduction

Social media has both positive and negative effects on youths, as studies continue to support. In trying to enhance other colleges' social media engagement

with students, for example, two researchers (Chen and DiVall, 2018) stated their findings thus; "Effectively utilizing social media as a tool to fulfill marketing, recruitment, and student engagement initiatives is contingent on having a fully developed social media strategy that is well-positioned for success. Developing a sustainable social media strategy involves the following important components: establishing goals and objectives, identifying target audiences, performing competitive and channel analyses, developing content strategy, activities planning, identifying roles, budget and resources planning, and analyzing ongoing performance." Other studies, such as a 2016 research (Rowan-Kenyon et al, 2016) finds half of all surveyed students were using social media to access information about prospective universities and colleges they may choose to attend, and that about 80% took into account conversations with current students carried out through social media. In Nigeria, and Kaduna in particular where the survey occurred, several youth groups exist on social media, such as "Youth Fan Club, Lere" on Facebook, where their motive is stated thus; "our focus is to generate in young people a sense of responsibility for their projects and to support them to progress." Several others on sports also exist on Facebook on state-wide level, such as "Young star's football club of Kaduna State." A comment on the site posted by its founder, Hussaini Suleiman, on April 24, 2021, and seen by 35 users at that time states; "Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is a very nice attempt to succeed; together we will build our societies."

Kawo Youth Football Club (Facebook), in particular, falls within the area where the respondents were selected, i.e. Kaduna North Local Government Area. The Facebook club was created on October 17, 2019,

according to its 'about' page. Currently, it has followership of about 1530 youth. Inter-wards matches are regularly held after school, for high school students, and other youths in the ward also participate, while regular practice sessions are also announced with venues and timing for use by all members on the Facebook forum. These activities tend to keep youth busy and out of trouble as expressed by some of the respondents in the focus group discussion. The Kawo Youth Football Club in particular, encourages the posting and sharing of artwork by youths, products of other artisan and skills, and also business promotions.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

From the advent of new media, social media in particular has been a subject of various studies that mainly focus on its negative effects on youths most especially, and also the ways it has impacted the traditional media, i.e. radio, television, newspapers and magazine. While it is normal to resist change and see more of its negativity out of anxiety and other factors as popularly argued by management scholars (Gibson & Groom, 2020), some of the ways new media, and social media in particular has been adapted also need attention. The two scholars of management, in their article in *Journal of Change Management Study*, found that "managing expectations and influencing significant others, through skilled micro-political activity, was central to successfully negotiating the ambiguity and vulnerabilities of organizational life during change." This study seeks to understand alternative ways that social media can be adapted for positive outcomes.

Rather than the track of blanket condemnation, at a time when social media applications only appear to become increasingly popular with the youths, it may be worth the while if we seek to emphasize the positive application of those networks, just as other studies concentrate on mitigating the negative effects.

1.2 Research Questions

- Is there any positive impact of social media on the life and habits of city youths?
- Are city youths addicted or depend highly on social media use?

1.3 Methodology

The study involved youths between the ages of 18-29 purposively selected from the different wards and cities located in the Kaduna North local government area. A combination of survey instrument of close

ended questions for quantitative data, as well as a focus group for qualitative data were employed for this study. The sampling method was purposive. Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekharefo & Okpanachi, (2012) posit that the purposive sampling relies on the judgment of the researcher in choosing the respondents who meet the criteria for the study. The researcher made use of purposive sampling in the 12 wards in Kaduna North L.G.A. to select thirty-two (32) respondents from each ward and administer questionnaire using the convenience sampling technique which is a method in which a researcher selects respondents that are readily accessible and administer the questionnaire to them.

The Focus Group Discussions involves eight (8) participants comprising four male, and four female youth from Kaduna North Local Government Area.

2. Theoretical Framework

Uses and Gratification theory is deemed appropriate for a framework that makes it easier to analyse any findings from the study. In their study of social media (Williams and Whiting, 2013), the study identified ten uses and gratifications for using social media, which includes: social interaction, information seeking, pass time, entertainment, relaxation, communicatory utility, convenience utility, expression of opinion, information sharing, and surveillance/knowledge about others. Uses and Gratification is an older theory of mass communication that has remained relevant over the years. The theory founders, Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch introduced the theory of active audience, while discussing how users deliberately choose media that will satisfy given needs and allow one to enhance knowledge, relaxation, social interactions/companionship, diversion, or escape. In 1969 Jay Blumler and Denis McQuail studied the 1964 election in the United Kingdom by examining people's motives for watching certain political programs on television. By categorizing the audience's motives for viewing a certain program, they aimed to classify viewers according to their needs in order to understand any potential mass-media effects. By 1974, Elihu Katz, Michael Gurevitch joined in a collaborative research on the subject. With the advent of the internet, the theory identified three main categories of gratifications: content gratification, process gratification, and social gratification (Stafford et. al., 2004).

3. Literature Review

Several research across the globe continue to show that an overwhelming number of social media users

are the youth. According to Kaplan & Haenlein (2010), the introduction of social media as a newer communication in the group of new communication technology has redefined the concept of “new” in new media. These social media platforms and artefacts have become an integral parts of the world, especially among young individuals who can almost not do anything without thinking of communicating with social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Google+, Twitter and a host of others.

As regards the effect of their utilization, Abdullah, Elias and Jegak (2009) submit that social media contents influence people’s opinions and significantly sway other people’s choices when seen online. In same vein, Kathleen and Auhea (2010) submit that social media had changed the behaviour of the millennium generation in no small measure. To them, the old culture of paying much attention to local environment and mainstream media contents (programmes, news, etc.) on the television, or radio is over, while business transactions and making friends in parties can be done easily on social media platforms.

Despite the plethora of studies on social media usage and exposure among young people, its ability to engineer social change among groups remains empirically contestable (Pantic, 2014). In recent time, a growing number of researchers have investigated the pros and cons of social media, that is, whether using social networking sites (SNS) and social networking technologies (SNT) have positive or negative consequences. In fact, a passing overlook at the existing literature points to the fact that scholarly effort have raised more questions than provided concrete answers to the issue of social media and young people (Strasburger, Jordan, & Donnerstein, 2010).

4. Youths and Social Media

Studies on the negative as well as positive uses of social media by city youths and students in particular abound. For example, a study by Fezile (2013), examines the utilization of social media networks in education of two private schools in North and South of Cyprus. The focus of the study was given to comparison of the students’ activities of the two schools regarding usage of social media. The study revealed the privacy concerns of teachers belonging to both schools. The conclusion of the study was that teachers should have training on safe and secure utilization of social media in order to have the competency and comfort necessary for using social networks effectively.

Owusu-Acheaw & Larson (2015) conducted an investigation to evaluate students' utilization of social media and its impact on academic performance of tertiary institution students in Ghana, with an emphasis on Koforidua Polytechnic. Survey was utilized for gathering information. The study uncovered that the utilization of social media had influenced scholarly activities of the respondents adversely. Yusop & Sumari (2012) examined the use of social media among Malaysian youth. The study which adopted a quantitative survey method elicited data from 379 youth from public Malaysian university. It concluded that the most preferred actions of students online are communication and socialization, followed by the researching of specific information for the aim of doing assignments. It was also revealed that the least activity carried out on social media was buying things such as books and academic materials online.

Kolan & Dzandza (2018), equally study the use of social media among students in Ghanaian universities with specific focus on the University of Ghana, Legon. It was also discovered that majority of the students use social media for chatting with peers and downloading of pictures/videos. However, the study concluded that social media contribute greatly to students’ academic life if used judiciously. Berson & Berson (2005) examine the use of social media among youth, positing that social media is very helpful in developing business relationships among young entrepreneurs, and also have positive effects in developing and understanding cultural relationships among youth from different parts of the world.

Another study, Njoroge (2013) carried out on the use of social media by youth in some select universities in Nairobi, Kenya revealed that majority of the youth in Kenya use social media to a very great extent and spend a high percentage of their time on computer and mobile phones. The study recommended among other things that youth need to be trained on how to better utilize social media so as to minimize time wastage on chatting and other irrelevant engagements that are not of significance to their lives.

Among city youths generally, Asif and Khan (2012) submit that parents are concerned on what will happen to their children as a result of this social media technology and its contents, knowing that adolescence is a period of transition where identity formation, peer relationships, sexuality and self-worth are exploited. Wilcox and Stephen (2012) observe that social media can affect self-control, which is an important mechanism for maintaining social order and well-being. To other scholars (Bayindir & Kavanagh, 2018), social media gives various freedoms to share content, banter with others,

plan a private and public gathering, create and develop connections, foster understanding, and communicate with others.

Baker & Oswald (2010) found that social or web-based media produces a conducive climate to communicate with others without up close and personal connection for bashful individuals who often crave friendly experiences, and are in need of social help because of their modesty. Utilizing social media improves relationship quality since it is easier to express oneself on the web; it makes agreeable zone for individuals who lack social abilities. Correa, Hinsley & Zuniga (2010, p.247-248) explain social media as advanced instrument which empowers users to "interface, convey and communicate" with companions and outsiders.

Junco, Heiberger & Loken (2011) in their joint study, describe social media technologies as taking on many different forms in use today including, business networks, blogs, forums, microblogs, photo sharing, products/services review, social bookmarking, enterprise social networks, social gaming, social networks, and video sharing. Vadim (2010) opines

that social media service is an online platform or site that focuses on facilitating social relations among people who, for example, share interests, activities, backgrounds or real life. Chen & Bryer (2012) posit that social media covers messaging (instant web-based messaging), chat (real time text-based interaction), discussion groups (delayed text-based interaction), wikis (modifiable collaborative web pages), podcasting (subscription-based broadcast over the web), vodcasting (video podcasts broadcast over the web), linkedin, skype, plaxo plus facebook and myspace.

5. Data Presentation and Discussions

As presented earlier, this study involves 382 respondents from Kaduna North Local Government Area of Kaduna State purposely selected to respond to close ended multiple choice questions for quantitative analysis; as well as a focus group of eight (8) youths of both sexes for qualitative data. The data retrieved are displayed using two tables as below (table 1 and 2).

Table 1.

Professional gratification for the use for social media	N	%
Advertisement of product and services	45	11.8%
Accessing advertised and trending materials to buy	59	15.4%
Enhancing career	37	9.7%
Getting job opportunities	92	24.1%
Provides professional networking opportunities for me	149	39.0%
Advertisement of product and services	45	11.8%
Total	382	100%

Table 1. displays the results for professional gratification from the use for social media. From this options, 45 respondents representing 11.8% said they use the social media for advertisement of product and services, 59 respondents representing 15.4% said for accessing advertised and trending materials to buy, 37 respondents representing 9.7% said for enhancing career, 92 respondents representing 24.1% said for Getting job opportunities, while the remaining 149 respondents representing 39.0% said for provision of professional networking opportunities for them, entrepreneurial. Therefore, it can be submitted from the response that the professional gratification for the use of social media is hinged on its provision of professional networking opportunities for the youth.

Table 2: The Frequency of Social Media Use by Youth in Kaduna North LGA.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Frequency of Access	N	%
Very Often	192	50.3%
Often	67	17.5%
Sometimes	62	16.2%
Rarely	31	8.1%
Never	18	4.7%
Uncertain	12	3.1%
Total	382	100
Social Media Type Accessed	N	%
Facebook	48	12.6%
Instagram	78	20.4%
TikTok	37	9.7%
WhatsApp	156	40.8%
Twitter	35	9.2%
YouTube	28	7.3%
Total	382	100%

Table 2 above shows the frequency of social media use by the youth in Kaduna North LGA, Kaduna State. It reveals that majority of the respondents, 192 in number, representing 50.3% access social media very often, 67 respondents representing 17.5% access social media ‘often’, 62 respondents representing 16.2% access social media ‘sometimes’, 31 respondents representing 8.1% rarely or hardly access social media, 18 respondents representing 4.7% never access or visit social media while the remaining 12 respondents representing 3.1% were uncertain. It can be deduced that majority of the youth access as well as are familiar with social media and marked as heavy users of social media products and services.

Below that data, is an inquiry into the type of social media used by the respondents. Out of 382 respondents, 48 respondents representing 12.6% use Facebook, 78 respondents representing 20.4% use Instagram, 37 respondents representing 9.7% use TikTok, 156 respondents representing 40.8% use WhatsApp, 35 respondents representing 9.2% use Twitter, while the rest of 28 respondents representing 7.3% use YouTube. It can be seen that WhatsApp is the most popularly utilized social media among the respondents.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

From the results of the survey conducted, as displayed in tables 1 and 2, answers to both research questions posed is a yes. Question one seeks to know if there are any positive uses of social media by youths, and it was discovered that, among other things, it has been successfully used by 39% of the respondents for entrepreneurial activities to earn, while another 15% use it to buy items online. Further research in addition to focus group data shows that the youth resident in the area studied have several online group presences on social media, used mainly to socialize, as sports club, and in the words of one of the founders, to instil a sense of social responsibility and foster social development.

As for question 2, which sought to know the frequency of use or addiction to social media prevalent among the youth, the study confirmed that no less than 50% of the respondents are hooked on social media at the highest level of response inquiring how often they check activities as ‘very often.’ As to the most popular social media application in use, 156 respondents corresponding to 40% of the respondents prefer and use WhatsApp, followed by Instagram with 78 respondents at 20.4%. Facebook, is found to be used by these youths in Kaduna State to form sports clubs mainly, however its popularity appears

to be declining in recent years, with 48 respondents as its most popular social media application, representing 12.6%.

Other studies cited (Chen & DiVall, 2018) show that universities in the developed countries continue to adapt social media, integrating it in their processes to gain access to students and potential students alike. While the youths by themselves use social media applications to socialize meaningfully for community cohesion and development, friendly matches in sports, and other activities that keep youths occupied and out of trouble.

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