The Place of Social Media and its Impact in Nigeria

Maria Kisugu Obun-Andy
M.Sc., B.Sc. CMIMIM
Department of Mass Communication
The Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro
Tel. 08177663219
Email: maria76kisugu@gmail.com

Abstract
The study investigates the place of social media and its impact in Nigeria. The major objective of this study is to determine how the use of social media impact on Nigeria with specific emphasis on the strength, weakness, threat and opportunities. The study used survey research design with one hundred and eighty six respondents randomly selected from the community area where the research was carried out. The paper adopted purposive random sampling techniques and selected (200) respondents. The respondents were given questionnaire to fill in order to determine their perceptions. The findings of this study seem to confirm the assumption that social media impact on Nigerians in more positive ways though, has some negative effect. The study therefore recommends that Nigeria should focus on the opportunities available in social media and do away with the negative aspects. Concerned global regulatory bodies should do more at ensuring that social media content is being censored. Parents should engage their children in discussions that disabuse their mindset from thought of engaging in wrong activities on social media.

Key words: Social media, Networking sites, Global Village, SWOT Analysis

Introduction

Human communication has evolved over time. During the oral traditional stage, human developed his ability to speak and communicate face to face with one another. This was followed by the stage of images during which period they communicated through signs and symbols. Later, the writing tradition evolved pioneered by the Chinese and Europeans. The revolutionary age of the mass media followed, characterized by the emergence of photography and electronic images. The radio, television and filming technologies evolved during this stage in the evolution of human communication. This last stage which started around 1814 with the release of the first photographic image by

Joseph Nicephore Niepce and through the 1950s with the emergence of television sets was where we were before the digital age was born.

The digital age is where we are now. It is believed to have started in 1994 with the US government's liberation of the use of the internet and the World Wide Web. That was twenty five years ago. But with the great milestones so far recorded in digital communication since then, it seems to most of use like a lifetime ago. Today, we wonder how we ever survived those decades without the use of digital communication tools, popularly described today as the Social Media or the Social Network.   No doubt, the arrival of social media has greatly enhanced human communication. The new technology due to it participatory, interactive and cost effective nature has made everyone who can use it as a mass communicator. modern technology in communication has turned the entire world into a "Global Village". This brings to fruition the prediction of Marshal McLuhan in 1964 that the world would someday become a "global village" where what happens in one of the world would be known instantly and simultaneously worldwide.

Statement of the Problem
Since the advent of social media sites in the 1990s, it is assumed in some quarters that the social media has been in the centre of attraction to the extent of causing deviation, distraction and divided attention between families and worst still affecting even student's academic performance. On the other side, many have talked of its usefulness to the society at large. On this note, the researcher is set to find out the extent of how social media has impacted or affected the society at large in terms of its strength, weakness, threats and opportunities.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of this paper is to assess how social media impact on Nigerians. The specific objectives are to:
1. Determine the strength of social media on the Nigerian society
2. Ascertain whether the social media has any weakness on the Nigerian society

Research Questions

The research questions are as follows:

1. What is the Strength of Social Media to Nigerian?
2. What is the Weakness of Social Media to Nigerian?

Literature Review
Concepts of social media
\Social media is an offshoot of modern digital communication. The term is used to describe a set of electronic tools (including web based and mobile based applications) that promote interaction and the sharing of information on real time basis. One of the biggest advantages of today's social media is the ease of sending messages to billions of people in different parts of the world at the speed of a heartbeat. Social media applications include blogs, Facebook, twitter, You Tube, Flicker, LinkedIn, Yahoo, Myspace, Google, WhatsApp among several others. Social media engines help people

around the world to establish build and nurture relationships through a two-way, real time digital communication interface. It is argued that the social media has helped man to close all geographic and temporal barriers to communication. It could be said that man has never had it this good in the ease and speed with which he generates, processes, sends, receives, stores, retrieves and disseminates information and messages, some of which are critical and life-changing. As it implies to individuals, so it does to nations, firms, communities and diverse organizations and social groups.

Interestingly too, the advent of the social media has helped us to overcome another major barrier to communication –costs. Before now, it cost an arm and a leg to deliver messages and documents from one end of the earth to the other, not to mention the number of weeks and months it took to achieve same. But today, vital documents are delivered at the touch of the button and at little or no cost to the sender or receiver. Moreover, when the social media started evolving almost two decades ago, not all could afford to use it.

With the new digital age, the need for physical presence before humans can receive messages and information has been eradicated forever. Also gradually on its way out is the need for printed documents and information. Since we can now send and receive information digitally, it is no longer expedient that such information be printed. Rather, printing is now discretionary. To the excitement of environmentalists around the world, a completely paperless world is looking very possible and it won't be too long before we get there.   But as it is technology like two sides of a coin, bring with it both the negative and positive sides. It helps people to be better informed, enlightened and keeping abreast with world developments. Technology exposes mankind to better way of doing things Sampson, (2013).

Social Media and Networking Sites
Human nature by default has been programmed to be socially active to a certain extent. Some people are more active, while others are less so! However, people have always been looking for ways to connect and network with each other. And, in this age of digitization, people have found ways to be socially active on the internet, which is possible with the advent of the numerous social networking platforms and apps. Now, even relationships begin, grow and end on social media. People no longer need a personal handshake or face-to-face meeting.

Social media sites have also grown in numbers by leaps and bounds. It is one of the most popular online activities. In 2018, an estimated 2.65 billion people were using social media worldwide, a number projected to increase to almost 3.1 billion in 2021. Social network penetration is constantly increasing worldwide and as of January 2019 stood at 45 percent (Clement, 2019). So, in this study, the researcher tends to discuss some of the most popular social media sites that are being explored today in Nigeria such as:

Social Media Statistics in Nigeria
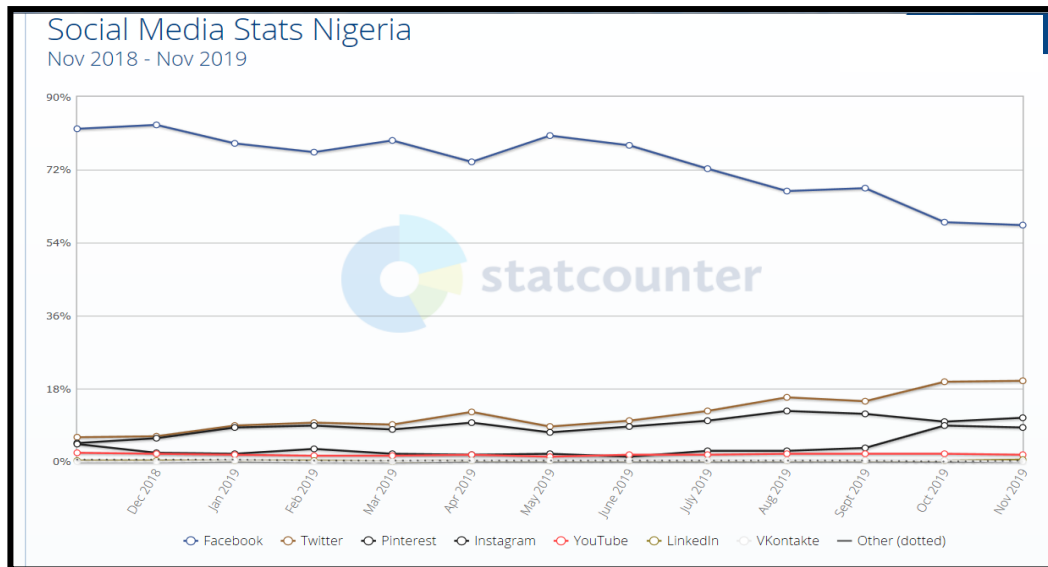
Source: Statcounter Global stats, 2019

- **Face book:** This is easily the largest social networking site in the world and one of the most widely used. And, Facebook was perhaps the first that surpassed the landmark of 1 billion user accounts. Apart from the ability to network with friends and relatives, you can also access different Facebook apps to sell online and you can even market or promote your business, brand and products by using paid Facebook advertising.

- **WhatsApp:** Despite having been acquired by Facebook in 2014, this instant messaging platform exists as an independent entity. It arrived on the scene much later than Facebook, but has been able to capture the imagination of millions of people across the world by giving them the ability to communicate and share instantly with individuals and groups. The WhatsApp call feature is just the icing on the cake.

- **Wechat**: This is an all-in-one communications app for messaging and calling (similar to WhatsApp) that enables you to connect with the people of your choice. In addition to text messaging, users can send each other images, video and audio media messages as well as their location using integrated mapping features.

- **Instagram:** Instagram was launched as a unique social networking platform that was completely based on sharing photos and videos. This photo sharing social networking app thus enables you to capture the best moments of your life, with your phone's camera or any other camera, and convert them into works of art. This is possible because Instagram allows you to apply multiple filters to your photos and you can easily post them to other popular social networking sites, such as Facebook and Twitter. It is now part of the Facebook Empire.

- **Twitter:** This social networking site enables you to post short text messages (called tweets), containing a limited number of characters (up to 280), to convey your message to the world. With the growing craze for online shopping, Twitter

also makes it possible to promote your businesses and even shop directly through tweets.

- **Skype:** This is owned by Microsoft, is one of the most popular communication-based social networking platforms. It allows you to connect with people through voice calls, video calls (using a webcam) and text messaging. You can even conduct group conference calls. And, the best part is that Skype-to-Skype calls are free and can be used to communicate with anyone, located in any part of the world, over the internet.

- **You Tube**: This is a video sharing website on which users can upload, view and share videos. It uses the Adobe Flash video and Hypertext Markup Language. (HTMLS) technology to display a wide variety of user-generated video content, including movie clips, and music videos, while registered users can upload and unlimited number of video. Note the Hypertext Markup Language is a system of codes for producing documents for the internet.

- **Snapchat:** This is an image messaging social platform that enables you to chat with friends by using pictures. It allows you to explore news and even check out live stories that are happening around the world.

- **LinkedIn:** LinkedIn is easily one of the most popular professional social networking sites or apps and is available in over 20 languages. It is used across the globe by all types of professionals and serves as an ideal platform to connect with different businesses, locate and hire ideal candidates, and more. It boasts over 400 million members.

- **Telegram:** This instant messaging network is similar to WhatsApp and is available across platforms in more than eight languages. However, Telegram has always focused more on the privacy and security of the messages you send over the internet by using its platform. So, it empowers you to send messages that are encrypted and self-destructive. This encryption feature has only just been made available for WhatsApp, whereas Telegram has always provided it.

- **My Space:** This is a music-focused social networking site and provides an interactive and user-submitted network of friends. It also provides blogs, groups, personal profiles, pictures, videos and so on. Group could be created by anyone, and the moderator of the group has the right to allow or deny anyone membership of the group); "MySpace IM" (instant message or notification or new MySpace message friend requests, and comments amongst other features **(**Jamie, 2019).

The SWOT Analysis Approach to Social Media in the Society
Strengths of Social Media

Social media promote interaction and the sharing of information on real time basis. One of the biggest advantages of today's social media is the ease of sending messages to billions of people in different parts of the world at the speed of heart beats. Information sharing has become instant, and especially with the advent of Facebook which is the most popular that allows people to send messages, post pictures and videos and interact with the public; twitter, which is used to send short and targeted messages

to thousands of followers and to interact with people; You Tube is used to post videos etc.

Weaknesses of Social Media

Social media despite its numerous advantages in terms of sharing information also has its downsides. Social media is addictive in nature, making work/life balance hard to achieve. With the new technologies, we got more than we bargain because of their information overload and social network overload. There is also the problem of continuous partial attention which removes us from the real world and many others like:

Pornography: For parents around the world, proliferation of pornographic sites is perhaps the biggest headache presented by the social media among the youths. Uncensored proliferation of pornos constitutes of the leading moral irritants arising from the advent of the social media.

Distractions: Parents have complained that the social media constitutes a distraction to the performance of academic activities of their children. Even employers of labour have complained that the social media constitutes a distraction to the productivity, performance and efficient deployment of the man-hour of their workers.

Proliferations of junk data: Although research is now remarkably easy, thanks to the advent of the social media, not all data published on them is accurate. Individuals are able to post information to websites without any expert reviewing them. It is often a challenge to separate the credible information from the dubious ones, to the detriment of trusting internet users.

Moral decadence: Some have also argued that the social media contributes significantly to perceived immorality and worsening social behaviours, especially among the youths. Promiscuity, infidelity, prostitution, among others are believed to have been fanned by the advent of the social media which allows uncensored, unregulated and perhaps too easy access to different sites around the world.

Also, these technologies depend on power with the issue of epileptic power supply in Nigeria today becomes a problem

Opportunities of Social Media

The much potential in the use of social media in Nigeria today is its opportunities in spite of the threats associated with social media used. Today information sharing is greatly enhanced as everyone can now create his own messages.

Business: The social media offers a whole new way for corporations to conduct their businesses. Today, the social media is use by firms and institutions as a platform through which they advertise their products and services.

Education:- School and students have found in the social media a convenient tool to receive impact and share knowledge. Hundreds of Universities around the world now offer certificate, degree and postgraduate programmes run strictly online.

Research:-   One of the most outstanding achievements of the social media is its contribution to the body of knowledge. The task of the researcher is to find, use and

disseminate information. The social media offers a range of tools with which the researcher can achieve these seamlessly. The search engine has become a critical research and learning tool, offering a limitless pool of data on limitless subjects and issues via Google etc.

Globalization: The phase *global village* came into existence following the advent of digital communication. Every day, new innovations in the social media continue to shrink the world even further. One of the most recent impacts of the social media on globalization is the former's ability to break the hitherto insurmountable language barrier. Today, web applications exist make it possible for people whose languages are not mutually intelligible to communicate seamlessly and near effortlessly.

Employment generation: - One of the most common uses of the social media is as a recruitment tool, especially for advertising job vacancies and receiving applications. Beyond this however, some employers and recruitment agencies have gone a step further to use social media applications to conduct initials interviews of candidates. In fact, more and more companies are conducting online job interviews for their convenience and for cost effectiveness.

Threats of Social Media
The lack of control over the content of social media may be positive in the sense that it allows for greater freedom of information, but there are also the dark sides of these phenomena. The social media has been misused in many ways including using social media platforms to spread false information or fake news etc.

Theoretical Framework
In the quest to adequately reflect the issues involved in this study, three theories that explain the concepts in the work were reviewed. One of such theories is the Social Network Theory. The social network theory explains the mechanisms by which social interactions can promote or inhibit individual and collective behaviour. The theory according to Imoh (2007) as cited in Oloruntoba (2015), emphasizes the importance of social network which refers to the set of linkages and social relationship between and among members of the society. Applied to this study, the theory in turn influence societal actions.

The Uses and Gratifications Theory is another theory. This theory is associated with the works of Elihu Katz, Jay Blumbler and Michael Gurevitch (1974). It belongs to the limited or indirect effect theories of Mass Communication. The theory according to Anaeto, Onabanjo and Osifeso (2008:71) is concerned with what people do with media instead of what media do to people. The assumption is that people influence the effects media have on them. That is to say that Uses and Gratifications Theory a more humanistic approach to media use and effect. It assumes that members of the audience are not passive but play active role in interpreting and integrating media into their own lives. Applying the use and gratification theory to this study, users of social media are intentional seekers of such messages. They are able to select and use the technology in ways that suit their purpose. Thus, they as the audience members are active and not passive. Similarly, members of the society are also able to select and use media of choice and message contents of their choice as the case may be.

The Gate Keeping Theory was coined by Kurt Lewin in 1974 (Anaeto, Onabanjo and Osifeso, 2008, p. 91). The theory is concerned with the screening of information that is disseminated to the public. The concept of gate keeping emanates from the understanding that apart from legal restrictions on what is to be published including photographs, the communicator has the moral duty to be socially responsible to his audience in the content of his messages. The relevance of this theory to the discourse is hinged on the fact that powerful tools like social, media should have some sort of monitoring and regulation to forestall the possible abuse especially by minors and the young at heart.

Research Methodology
This paper adopted a survey research design and data were collected through primary and secondary sources.This method was adopted because it afforded the researcher to use questionnaire in generating data from the respondents. The paper adopted purposive random sampling techniques and selected (200) respondents. These selected populations were administered with questionnaire but (186) copies were returned.

The data for this paper were analyzed using percentage table to express respondents' responses from the questionnaires administration. This data were both analysed quantitatively and qualitatively using the percentage means scores.

Data Analysis
This presents the data gotten through the instrumentation of questionnaires distributed to the target sample size of the population. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents across the area of study by only 186 while 14 of the questionnaire were not returned. The analysis is base on the 186 questionnaires that were returned and completed.

Table 1
Social media promote interaction

Responses	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Agree	165	88%
Disagree	14	8%
I don't know	7	4%
Total	186	100%

Table 2
Social media offers a whole new way for corporations to conduct their business

Responses	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Agree	141	76%
Disagree	39	21%
I don't know	6	3%
Total	186	100%

Table 3

Social media has helped to overcome major barriers to communication

Responses	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Agree	103	55.4%
Disagree	80	43%
I don't know	3	1.6%
Total	186	100%

Table 4
Social media promote sharing of information on real time

Responses	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Agree	179	96%
Disagree	6	3%
I don't know	1	1%
Total	186	100%

Table 5
Social media is addictive

Responses	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Agree	131	71%
Disagree	55	29%
I don't know	-	0%
Total	186	100%

Table 6
Social media constitutes distraction to the academic performance of youth

Responses	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Agree	133	72%
Disagree	46	24%
I don't know	7	4%
Total	186	100%

Table 7
Social media contributes significantly to immorality

Responses	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Agree	168	90%
Disagree	15	8%
I don't know	3	2%
Total	186	100%

Table 8
Social media platform spread fake news

Responses	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Agree	129	69%
Disagree	52	28%
I don't know	5	3%
Total	186	100%

From the table 1 above it show that 88% of the respondents agreed that social media promote interaction and 8% disagreed while 4% of the respondent said they do not know.

The table 2 above indicates that 76% of the respondents agreed that social media offers a whole new way for corporation to conduct their business while 21% disagreed to the assertion and 3% said they don't know.

In the table 3 above 55.4% of the respondent agreed that Social media has help to overcome major barrier to communication and 43% of the respondents have contrary view while 1.6% remained neutral.

The table 4 above indicates that 96% of the respondents agreed that Social media promote sharing of information on real time while 3% disagreed to the assertion and 1% said they don't know.

The table 5 above indicates that 71% of the respondents agreed that Social media is addictive while 29% disagreed to the assertion and 0% said they don't know.

In the table 6 above 72% of the respondent agreed that Social media constitutes distraction to the academic performance of youth and 24% of the respondents have contrary view while 4% remained neutral.

The table 7 above indicates that 90% of the respondents agreed that Social media contributes significantly to immorality while 8% disagreed to the assertion and 2% said they don't know.

The table 8 above shows that 69% of the respondents agreed that Social media platform spread fake news while 28% disagreed to the assertion and 3% said they doesn't know.

Analysis of the Responses obtained from Questionnaires Distributions

S/N	Details/tables Number	Agreed (%) Responses	Disagreed (%) Responses	I don't know (%) Responses	Total
1	Table 1	165 (88%)	14 (8%)	7 (4%)	100
2	Table 2	141 (76%)	39 (21%)	6 (3%)	100
3	Table 3	103 (55.4%)	80 (43%)	3 (1.6%)	100
4	Table 4	179 (96%)	6 (3%)	1 (1%)	100
5	Table 5	131 (71%)	55 (29%)	0 (0%)	100
6	Table 6	133 (72%)	46 (24%)	7 (4%)	100
7	Table 7	169 (90 %)	15 (8 %)	3 (2 %)	100
8	Table 8	129 (69 %)	52 (28 %)	5 (3 %)	100
	Total	**617.4%**	**164 %**	**18.6%**	**800**

Percentage for Agreed
$\frac{617.4}{800}$ x 100 = 77 %

Percentage for disagreed
$\frac{164}{800}$ x 100 = 21%

Percentage for I don't know
$\frac{18.6}{800}$ x 100 = 3%

Agreed = 77%
Disagreed = 21%
I don't know = 3%
Total = 100%

Major Findings

From the data analysed above we have the following findings: The paper proved that social media have played significant role in spite of the threats associated with social media considering its strength and how it has impacted on Nigerians due to its numerous opportunities.

Conclusion

The research has shown that social media and its impact on Nigerian have no doubt been able to influence all aspect of human life and all sectors of the global economy. Though, more efforts are needed in addressing the negative influences of social media. It is expected that global leaders will censor the contents that are allowed on the internet.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- Nigerian should focus on the opportunities available in social media and do away with the negative aspect.
- Global leaders should censor the negative contents that are allowed on the internet
- Charges on data for network should be reduced
- Youths should pay more attention to their academics work in terms of research when on net and less time on chatting or entertainment.
- Youths should as well be guided by parents and teachers of the implication of social media as regards their future because of the declining standard of education among youths etc.

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