

Rethinking the Negative Implications of Social Media on Youth and Peace Building in Nigeria

Bennet Essien Ekpe

Abstract

Social media usage among young people has had a significant impact on society recently, both favorably and badly. In the twenty-first century, a great number of individuals have experienced anxiety due to the urgency of ICT, such as social media use. Notwithstanding the apparent benefits of social media, research has also revealed that there are numerous drawbacks, especially for young people. The youth are essential users of social media, and it's made available as a platform for youth to build a network system or social relations among the general public. The concept of social media refers to the computer-based technology that facilitates the delivery of ideas, thoughts, and information through virtual networks and communities. This study specifically seeks to explore the effects of youth involvement in the use of social media and also to strengthen the capacity of youths to bridge the gap from a conflict environment to a peaceful one. Currently, societal opinions on social media are largely dominated by its negative implications because of how it has been used, but this research will deepen our knowledge of the positive effects of social media. The source of data for this paper was derived from the internet and existing literature based on the current happenings and incidences in our society, and an index desk research method, also known as desktop review, was used. The research work revealed that most users use their social networks to outspread false news and rumors quickly which leads to the modification of peace and then creates violence in society. In order to reduce extreme conflicts some forms of mechanisms are meant to be put in place so as to checkmate the usage of the internet in order to reduce the broad rate of conflict going on in our environment due to dishonest messages and content. The study recommends that social media could play a positive role in diverse ways, which have been of an advantage at a wider range in peace-building instead of violence, through creating awareness, connecting peace-builders, promoting dialogue and understanding, etc.

Key Words: Youth, Social Media, Positive Implication, Negative Implication, Peace Building

Introduction

Social media development necessitates a change in the way debate and arbitration processes are conducted because of its very recent use as a weapon for peace. There are serious risks linked to it, so taking preventative action is crucial. To preserve the peace process, peace specialists must take advantage of social media's advantages while implementing risk-reduction measures. Since its inception, there has been a lot of discussion about the risks associated with social media use. But it's important to keep things in perspective. Over the past two eras, social media have expanded so much in growth and fame worldwide to the extent that many researchers are now interested in learning more about these social platforms and their effects on the community. Notwithstanding the fact that almost everyone in the community is connected to at least one social media platform, the youth and teenagers are the leading and most fanatics of these social platforms, to the point that they even socialize while in class or even church. It is in this light that scholars have found that these social media locations impact the lives of our youth in a society a great deal in terms of morals, behavior, and even education-wise. The advanced impacts of social media on youth today include keeping them up-date on the events happening around the globe and also enabling them network and stay connected with their fellow youths and friends without bodily meetings. It bridge the gap between friends since a person who stays in Africa can network and interact with his or her friend in other countries. This in turn helps in firming relationships, say

among peers in high school or college who, after concluding school, moved to different locations around the world. Furthermore, youths can create pages and groups on social media platforms based on their profession and faith among other dimensions of their lives, and this leads to more connections being built and more opportunities being opened for their respective disciplines. This can even lead to more employment opportunities being created for unemployed youth. From the many interviews carried out daily, youths say that social media platforms make their lives enjoyable, efficient, and easier and have also become their lifestyle. Social media handles also encourage the spread of wrong information and news, primarily aimed at polluting other people's names or those of other groups of interest, such as political or religious groups. This in turn leads to fights and enmity between the anxious parties, and this can lead to divisions among tribes or people from different ethnicities and tribes, but in all of this it could also play a positive role if properly handled and controlled with security measures. The effect of the media on failing conflicts is more commonly accepted than the influence of the media on building peace. However, it is not unusual to hear experts say the media's effect on peace-building needs to be given due attention given its affinity to incite conflict. Nevertheless, this simple relationship must not be taken for granted and should be examined unfavorably with a view to arriving at an understanding of how to use the media most effectively for conflict prevention and peace-building. The research work will contribute to the body of knowledge by providing rich data-sets, enabling new research methodologies, deepening understanding of human behavior and society, influencing cultural and communication practices, supporting health initiatives, fostering collaboration, and informing policy decisions. Embracing these opportunities while addressing associated challenges (e.g., data privacy, misinformation) can lead to a more informed and responsive approach to leveraging social media for research and societal benefit.

Operational Definition

Rethinking

The concept of rethinking is to consider or assess (something, especially a course of action) again, especially in order to change it. "The governments were forced to rethink their plans."

What is Social Media?

The definition of social media refers to all applications, websites or blogs that enable people around the globe to interconnect via the internet, chat, share content, video call, among much other functionality the offers to their users. For a person to be a member of any social media platform, he or she has to first sign-up and then sign in to access content and be able to share and chat with other users of that platform. Some of the common and widely used social media platforms include Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Snapchat many others. Despite the fact that almost everyone in the community is connected to at least one social media platform, the youth and teenagers are the leading and most fanatics of these social platforms to the point that they even social network while in class or even church. It is in this light that researchers have found that these social sites impact the lives of our youth in a society a great deal in terms of morals, behavior, and even education-wise. Social media can be defined as a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundation of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated contents (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Social media has emerged as a term frequently used to describe different types of communication platforms and electronic ways of interacting. According to Anjuge (2013), social media is a group of internet-based applications that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content, while Ezeah et al, (2013) defines it as a modern interactive communication channel through which people connect to one another, share ideals experiences, pictures, messages and information of common interest.

Anjugu(2013) classified social media into: Social networking that interacts by adding friends, comments on photos, profiles, sharing groups for discussion (Facebook, WhatsApp, etc.) Social bookmarking; which interacts by tagging websites and searching through website bookmarked by others. WIKIS; This interacts by adding articles and commenting on them. Social photo and video sharing; Interact by sharing photos, videos and commenting on users' submission (Flicker and YouTube).

The Concept of Peace and Peace Building

Definition: The term peace-building has several definitions, most peace initiatives adopt a broad definition based on the work of Galtung and Lederach two of the most relevant scholars who have contributed significantly to expanding the concept of peace-building as initiatives to promote positive peace by addressing the roots of conflict, preventing and mitigating all forms of violence, and fostering just and inclusive societies. This vision of inclusion is predicated on the inclusion of all members of society, particularly youth, and strives to promote a culture of peace. Peace-building is a term of more recent origin that, as used in the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (2000), defines "activities undertaken on the far side of conflict to reassemble the foundations of peace and provide the tools for building on those foundations something that is more than just the absence of war.

Peace according to Ibeanu (2006) is a procedure involving events that are directly or indirectly linked to cumulative development and dropping conflict, both within specific societies and in the wider global community. In the same vein, Igbuzor (2011) defined peace as the absence of war, fear, anxieties, conflict, violence and suffering. Peace is a state of peaceful coexistence among individuals in the community. Galtung (2011) opined in his model that two types of peace exist, which are positive and negative peace. Negative peace refers to the absence of straight conflict violence, and war at international, national, community and individual level while positive peace refers to the absence of indirect and structural injustice, disparity and violence, inner peace at separate levels, polices and unjust organizations. The word peace is comparative in nature.

Who is a Youth?

Conferring to the UN, a youth is an individual between the age of 15 and 25 years old; otherwise, the African Youth Charter (2006) sees youth as those between age 15 and 35 years old. The term youth is not a similar group and numerous other social features and identities, including beliefs, ethnic origin, incapacity, gender, position as an ex-combatant, status as a refugee or migrant, role as a caregiver of younger siblings, etc. Another significant strategy framework that has shaped and defined the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda is SCR 2250. Accepted by the UN Security Council in December 2015, SCR 2250 is a breakthrough globally and aid the legal framework that highlights the key role(s) that youth play in addressing world conflicts. The Definition of youth perhaps changes with circumstances, especially with the changes in demographic, financial, economic and sociocultural settings; however, the definition that uses 15- 24 age cohort as youth fairly serves its statistical purposes for assessing the needs of the young people and providing strategies for youth expansion.

The Purpose of this Reserch

1. Is on Government intervention in curbing out some social media handle if not properly used or control of the negative implication of social media handle.
2. To investigate positive implication of social media
3. The relationship between social media and peace building
4. Educating our youth on the negative and positive implications of social media
5. Youth as agent for peace and security.

Theoretical Framework

The Social Responsibility Theory has its origin in a directive of a review set up by Henry Luce in 1942 known as the Hutchins Commission as it was chaired by Robert Hutchins due to criticisms of the American press then to examine commercialism, sensationalism as contrasting to being a public platform for all among other reasons. Findings of the Directive which were submitted in 1947 noted that the reporters had failed in providing access to

the minority, while providing access to the powerful. The Commission, therefore, recommended that a press which is socially responsible must be a „common carrier of the public expression. In this case the media must also be socially responsible and report honestly within the proper context of event and happenings. The fundamental of the theory is that media possession is a public trust and must be carried out responsibly. As a result, media autonomy carries with it a responsibility to the society, in which the Government can be of great intervention by interfering and ensuring that this obligation is been carried out and handled effectively.

Methodology

The primary goal of conducting the study with a diverse group of participants was to assess how young people use the media platforms currently in use, as well as their awareness of the idea of peace building and the types of energies that individuals in their age range can contribute to peace building initiatives. Since it is index desk review research method, its goal is to source for the current state of youth's symbolic participation in peace-building efforts. The approach was carefully chosen in response to review of the current social media practices and their detrimental effects on young people. The internet and currently published literature served as the research project's primary information sources in which the study employed a quantitative research methodology. The researcher employed the desk research evaluation approach, commonly referred to as the desktop study, to examine publications derived from secondary data. This study employed a desktop research, collecting current relevant literature and data from the internet and analyzing, deliberating, and planning the data in a systematic manner. Put another way, this eliminates the need to travel to the field compared to alternative approaches. The advantage of doing a desk research review is that it is less expensive and time-consuming than other methods that call for conducting a field survey. On the other hand, if the researcher is not skilled enough in organizing and synthesizing the data, it may be a fruitless endeavor. This is the case since only thorough understanding of the methodology allows for the formulation of a relevant judgment and conclusion. Desk research review is crucial for conducting assessments like the one in this paper, which examines how to use media properly and how young people in particular are the main users of social media for peace-building. It also discusses social media control, which is why it was submitted as an appropriate methodology for this research project.

Positive Implications of Social Media and Examples

1. The EndSAR Protest draws our attention to the inability of social media platforms to completely overhaul ineffective governance structures to reflect and respond to the needs of the people. There are various reasons for this, but majorly, the inherent weak nature of African states. Many African states, including Nigeria, are bedeviled with soft governance structures and other challenges that make it impossible to tap into the potential of social media platforms.

2. Deborah Emmanuel, a student of Shehu Shagari College of Education, Sokoto, who was murdered over alleged blasphemy. Videos of the late student being stoned and beaten with sticks were shared on social media. Her killing had sparked outrage across the country, with Nigerians asking the government to fish out the perpetrators of the crime. There was also a flurry of condemnation from civil society organizations (CSOs), Muslim leaders and groups, most notably Muhammadu Abubakar, the Sultan of Sokoto. The police command in Sokoto had also announced the arrest of two suspects in connection with the killing. This is a good example of social media and how the government and the world to see the injustice going on in Nigeria.

3. Active role of social media during the period of Covid 19. As increased numbers of people search online for health information, social media platforms are leading the lightning-speed spread of preventive measures, control of the deadly disease and providing adequate information in connection with the correct life-saving measures to individuals, families, and communities can take to reduce their risk. Public health programs must have a proactive presence in these information-sharing spaces to provide access to trusted and accurate information which social media did during that period in which some were fake actually. The ubiquity of

pessimistic information about COVID-19 and its associated mortality across news-feeds on social media has exacerbated the risks for mental ill-health. Turning to social media in times of anxiety is commonplace. And while using platforms such as Facebook, for example, users can temporarily find relief from their negative emotions, any positives associated with social media use are known to have links to addictive behaviors. In terms of excessive use, the advantages gained from social media use to dispel mental stress can go into reverse: overuse can pose an increased risk to mental health. Study findings have shown a potential risk between social media use and emotional trauma (Abbas, et al. 2021).

4. Social media also help in providing Employment for youths in terms of Movie Acting, Movie Production, Music and lot more. Through this avenue talents are been discovered (Entertainment) and showcasing craft and as well as a medium for exchange of goods and services through digital marketing by so doing creating more jobs opportunity and employment for the youths.

5. The Recent Flood Incident in Nigeria: It was with the aid and help of social media handles that we could find out how many states and villages were affected in which States and Federal Government had to put heads together in other to find possible solution to it immediately. No fewer than 600 people have died since June 2022 across Nigeria in the deadliest floods experienced in a decade, an AFP report has said. No fewer than 195 people have been reportedly dead and while more than 322,000 were also affected by the flooding caused by torrential rain in Niger Republic. The United Nations had raised the alarm that flooding in Nigeria affected more than 2.8 million men, women, and children. As of October 21, 59 people had drowned and 136 had died in collapsing homes, while 211 people were reported injured, according to figures from the Civil Protection Service. The “rainfall is intense”, while runoff water can no longer make its way into the soil because it has been “degraded by human activity”, he explained as a result of the viral videos and information going on in the country as this moment, I think the government has a firsthand information on how to channel its best to prevent this disaster and possible solution.

6. The process of using social media in Conflict Prevention and Early Warning. A case study in the threat in Abuja currently on insecurity about bomb-blast and the rest from the UN Government.

7. A statement by Minister of Information in person of Lai Mohammed in which he said (We won't rest until we regulate social media). The minister, who decried the unregulated use of digital platforms across the globe, added that people need to be adequately equipped with enough knowledge to manage the information at their disposal. As I ponder on the state of our world and the enormous challenge it faces, especially with the unregulated use of social media and other digital platforms, I see the urgent need for every person to be equipped with the ability to critically evaluate and wisely use the information at their disposal.

Negative Implications of Social Media

The negative implication of social media from the negative stand point is growing intensely on a daily basis. Society at the creation of social network is shifting from what it used to be, to what nobody can interpret for other than the negative effect of the social network; these negative implications of social media has raided the society of its common values and standards. According Sule, A. (2012) before the outline of the digital social media in Nigeria, numerous persons had adverse thoughts about others: government or individuals and held several undesirable values and needs. But they had no stand to portion or pour out such into the social setting of society. Therefore, they had their negative effect covered to them; moreover, repressed or retained in the unconscious. However, the arrival of the social networking media has modified the order of social value. Sule, A. (2012) trusts that the social network has inspired the issue of one's deepest thought, values, or want, an idea he terms: “Digital Technology Masturbation Syndrome (DTMS)”.

Moreover, it is flawless that most of our youths, particularly undergraduate students have misplaced their

regulator or control over social media practice and start having difficulties with their functionality in group, career and private circles as the internet has taken over total switch of their existence. They have agreed that social networking media has the indescribable power over their intellect of verdict and attention. Therefore, it has subjected a lot to a great extent on what and who they attach to or with, what they put their mind in and the actions of their decision-making procedure. Idakwo (2011) postulate that college work and social communication have been affected at the introduction of these social media handles because of its uses.

Ways to Control the Negative Implications of Social Media

Sanction: This method is one major factor which should be introduced on social media handlers only when it's been wrongly used, Nigeria as a country can introduced this to help regulate social media handles as done in other African countries. This year alone at-least four African countries Uganda, Senegal, Rep of Congo have restricted social media access. Globally about one third of countries have restricted social media since 2015. The tracker notes that restriction of social media access is particularly prevalent in countries where state authorities own or control the internet infrastructure (Carlos Mureithi 2021).

Ban: Ban of some social media handle if not properly used, in cases like this Responsible journalism does not just re-publish press releases but is truly concerned with a candid, sensible and fair account of dealings. To accomplish this, journalists have to avoid judgmental representations and describe reality without embellishment. (Koven, Ronald, 2004). The media is a double-edged sword which can be a frightful weapon of violence when it propagates messages of intolerance or misinformation that manipulates public sentiment, it can also be an instrument of conflict resolution, when the information it presents is reliable, respects human rights, and represents diverse views. Regardless, the potential of the media in conflict and post-conflict situations remains a net positive and has been sadly underutilized to this point in time. (Nora Kuusik, 2010). In addition to media structure, dispute must be viewed in the light of their political, social and cultural angles, if we are to consider the best practices in the media. Citing an example of this is the case of A.I.T (African Independent Television) which was Ban by President Mohhamed Buhari Administration from covering its official engagement when he got into power with personal reasons.

Peace Education and Sensitization: This particularly goes to the youth that are been use as tool for conflicts and destruction. Peace education activities or programmes promotes the knowledge, skills and attitudes that helps people either to prevent the occurrence of conflicts, resolve conflicts calmly or create social conditions favorable to peace. The fundamental value of social justice and pacifism is manifested through values such as respect for human rights, freedom, responsibility and harmony. In order to achieve these ideals, peace education programmes must be done across the country to address a wide range of themes. These include nonaggression, conflict resolution techniques, equality, disarmament, gender impartiality, human rights, environmental responsibility, communication skills, history etc with this significance educative message or teaching our youth will have more insight on how to be agent of peace than agent of conflicts. The UN's actions for peace-building include education as one of its principal components. For peace-building initiatives to remain sustainable, it is vital that attitudes towards war and violence are transformed and translated into long-term behavioral change which seeks alternative solutions to armed battle and conflict.

Social Media as a Tool for Peace-Building

The Media and Peace-building Universal, the power of the media in the last six eras cannot be overemphasized, especially its ability to either escalate or de-escalate possible conflicts. The media has a key role in raising consciousness of trending and emerging development issues and is expected to support civil society in this process. It is earnest of note that radio remains the top medium for reaching and disseminating of information to people (irrespective of their status or location) across the world, regardless of increasing global internet saturation. "The media" refers to several mediums or channels used in an organized fashion to communicate information to groups of people, as a service to the public (Howard, 2002). Media platforms are universally

acknowledged as a means of distribution information and evidence.

Bulk Communication is a key tool for equality. Dissemination of important messages and news by using community radios can help reach people in different areas, even with different languages which make it easier and convenience. This way people can be addressed in a straight line in which their personal experiences and lives can be incorporated much better, than with foreign media. The threat of handling and inflammation of ethnic or religious tensions however cannot be disregarded. Another benefit of local media, especially radio is that, in border areas, it is possible to convey peace messages to passing fighters and refugees alike. (Nora Kuusik, 2010). For the media, it can be problematic to find a balance between averting harm caused by speech and protecting human's right to expression. Been able to find this balance, however, is important particularly in conflict circumstances. To achieve nonviolence acts, journalists have to avoid judgmental representations and describe reality without embellishment. (Koven, Ronald, 2004). The media plays either negative or positive role if not properly control by handlers and it can be a frightful weapon of violence when it spreads messages of prejudice or half-truth that manipulate public feeling. It can also be and device of battle resolution, when the messages it gifts is dependable, compliments human rights and represents diverse opinions.

Dialogues on 'Advance Today' reached out to more than a million people frequently within the southwest region of Nigeria. The creativity cumulatively touched an estimated of millions of persons by extension. The discussions were real in encouraging people to participate actively in the electioneering process, while major players and participants also enjoyed hearing a variety of views and sentiments without prejudice. To a large extent, 'Expansion Today' was positive in helping to outline the role of peoples in conflict tenacity, attracting the government to being part of public life.

Example was the 2019 General Election Remark which was one major landmark for Nigeria was the successful completion of the electioneering process that led to the prefiguring and replacement of democratically elected leaders across the board in the country. SIHD partnered with YAIGA to witness the whole electioneering progression including Pre-election, Election-day and post-election events in Oyo State, with special focus on Lagelu local government, where the founder was the Local Government Focal Person.

Peace-Promoting Citizen Media: Citizen Media mainly falls into two sub-categories which are community media and user-generated content developing from new technologies in which they play a positive role. Community media functions on a local level through old-style platforms such as television, radio and print. In overall, it serves as a conduit for community information and evidence. The supremacy of citizen media lies in its ordinary, bottom-up legitimacy and naturalness. Leveraging its prospective therefore, will come less from trying to "establish it" than from showing the individuals, through training, how to use new tech media or how to stand hate media when it arises in community channels. The Promotion or social marketing for conflict prevention and peace-building: The media influences many distribution channels and formats, ranging from soap operas to community service statements to street theatre and performances. Its theatrical, often imaginary formats, offer the benefit of being able to challenge quarrelsome acts and disruptive matters.

Conclusion

In conclusion, social media handles have been established to have both negative and positive effects on our youths and the general public. Individuals should make a conclusion whether to go on using the sites or stop or even reasonable on their practice. Parents should guide and counsel their children on current matters like the usage of social media and warn them of its negative effects to them when distorted or overused. The schooling syllabus also should be reviewed so that it can include social media studies in its punishments so as to be attentive to students that they need to be careful in their social media habit. In addition, I will to submit my work by saying since we can't totally eliminate social media handles and its negative implications, we could find preventive measures to control its negative effects to encouraging once so as to impact the society positively.

However, a responsible and nonviolent social media communication must be encouraged and pushed for before this can happen. In this wise, peace education using digital media tools is critical and Digital media technologies could play a role in cultivating the efficiency of peace education. Not to mention, in order for us to take use of these cutting-edge and developing technologies, it is recommended that all citizens embrace social media's beneficial elements and steer clear of its negative ones.

Recommendations

- Social media, despite its challenges, can indeed play a positive role in peace-building.
- Promote Dialogue and Understanding: Encourage platforms that facilitate respectful dialogue between different communities or conflicting groups. Highlighting shared values and common goals can help foster mutual understanding.
- Disseminate Positive Narratives: Use social media to amplify stories of reconciliation, forgiveness, and cooperation. Highlight instances where communities have come together despite differences to resolve conflicts peacefully.
- Raise Awareness: Utilize social media to educate the public about the root causes of conflicts and promote awareness about peace-building initiatives. This can help build support and empathy for affected communities.
- Connect Peace-builders: Create networks and communities of practice for peace-builders and activists to share experiences, strategies, and resources. Social media can facilitate collaborations across geographical boundaries.
- Engage Youth: Given the demographics of social media users, engage young people in peace-building efforts. Empower them to be ambassadors for peace within their communities and online.

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