



Social Media and Promotion of National Values amongst Youths for Sustainable National Development: Perspective from Bonny Island, Rivers State

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Abstract

This study examined the application of social media in the promotion of national values among Nigerian Youths for Sustainable National Development. The core objectives of the study is to determine the potential of social media in promoting national values among Nigerian youths. Three objectives were raised to guide the study; and the technological determinism theory was adopted as the theoretical framework. The study adopted the survey research design with a structured questionnaire as the primary instrument for data collection. The study's population was 346 registered youth members of Bonny youths Federation in Bonny Island. Using the census sampling technique, the entire population of 346 was taken as the sample size of the study, and mean criterion was used to analyse the data collected via the questionnaire. Findings revealed a widespread utilization of social media among youths, and that, social media significantly influences the behaviour of the youths. Inference from the data further revealed that, social media are highly viable in promoting national values that can engender attitudinal change among Nigerian Youths for utmost participation in national development. The study, among other recommendations, suggested strategies will enhance the use of social media in fostering national values among youths and also, emphasized the need for the government to strategically harness the vast potential of social media as a tool for promoting national values among Nigerian youths for sustainable national development.

Keywords: Social Media, Promotion, National Values, Promotion, National Development, Youths.

Introduction

There is no gainsaying that social media is revolutionizing communication and information sharing among youths globally. Of course, due to its technological sophistication, social media progressively replaced the traditional media as sources for information gathering and sharing, including the promotion of ideas, goods and services (advertising), not only among youths but

also across diverse global populations. According to Jha and Bhardwaj (2012), social media exploded as a category of online discourse which enables people to create contents, share them, bookmark them and network at a prodigious rate.

Asur and Huberman (2010) in Kohan and Dzandza (2018), opine that, social media has breached the gap that existed in communication where people had to rely solely on traditional methods such as letters and phone calls as a mode of getting in touch with friends and relatives. Today, communication is as easy as walking into a neighbor's residence to deliver a piece of information or vice versa through the use of social media. Social media is fast changing the public discourse in the society and is setting trends and agenda in topics that range from the environment and politics to technology and the entertainment industry.

It is thus evident from previous research that, social media possesses a significant capacity to facilitate the communication of ideas, intentions, and knowledge among individuals, groups, or specific target audiences as it enables the rapid dissemination of information with remarkable precision, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of interaction, collaboration, and engagement across diverse contexts.

With regard to the demonstrated potential of social media as established in previous research, this study seeks to further substantiate its viability as a tool for promoting national values among Nigerian youths, with a view to fostering sustainable national development. It has been observed that a significant proportion of Nigerian youths today appear to lack the essential national values such as, integrity, patriotism, discipline, honesty, hard-work, social responsibility, etc. that are indispensable for effective leadership and for sustaining the nation's developmental aspirations in the future. Previous research has proved a widespread use of social media among the youths as they have adopted them as a major source of information and entertainment over the traditional media (Kohan & Dzandza, 2018).

The gratification that social media provides them builds up their preference for social media over other media. To address the challenge of national values among this category therefore, it is imperative to choose a medium that will not just disseminate the message, but that will deliver it to the very target audience. According to Marshal McLuhan in West & Tumer (2018), "the medium is the message." Thus, to instill the national values that will reconfigure the mindset of the Nigerian youths for actions that will engender sustainable development, this study investigates the influence of social media among the youths of Bonny Youths Federation in Bonny. Of course, there is no country in the world that can attain any tangible development when the youths who are the future leaders lack essential national values.

Statement of Problem

The actions and inactions of many Nigerian youths show that a significant proportion of them seems to lack the essential national values that are indispensable in nation building, setting agenda and attainment of developmental goals. The get money quick syndrome and unpatriotic attitude of many young Nigerians override the essential national values that can engender tangible national development.

National values such as integrity, patriotism, discipline, hard work, accountability, social responsibility, and honesty, among others, appear to be gradually eroding in the attitude and behaviour of many Nigerian youths. This decline is evident in virtually all spheres of their social life-thereby posing serious challenges to moral development, social cohesion, and the overall pursuit of sustainable national progress.

Also, the lack of strong national values has led many Nigerian youths to exhibit indifference toward the nation's growth and development. Thus, prioritizing the pursuit of opportunities abroad over contributing to progress at home. Such a mindset undermines patriotic commitment and constitutes a serious impediment to sustainable national development. This study therefore, investigates social media and promotion of national values among youths for sustainable National Development.

Objectives of the Study

1. To ascertain the extent of social media usage among youths in Bonny.
2. To examine the extent to which social media influences the behaviour and attitudes of youths in Bonny”
3. To determine if the social media have the potential to promote national values among youths

Literature Review

Conceptual Review

Social Media

Social media has been defined by different scholars, especially, with regard to the technological features that they possess. Anonue, et al. (2016) affirm that, “Social media have been attributed with special powers and this includes their ability to bridge information gaps between the media rich and the media poor in the society” (p. 239). Solis (2007), describes social media as a shift in how people discover, read and share news information and content... a fusion of sociology and technology that transforms monologue into dialogue” (para. 1) Jantsch (2008) defines social media as the use of technology combined with social interaction to create or can create value (p.3)

Kaplan and Heinlein (2010), described the social media as a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological multifaceted and technological foundations of web 2.0 and allow the creation and exchange of user generated content”(para 3).

The social media simple are new kinds of communication tools enabled by the internet for all manner of communication that include, real time communication and information sharing at an unprecedented speed. The social media is revolutionising the communication domain, and they have made communication cheap and affordable to all and sundry.

National Development

Attempts have been made by scholars to define national development, perhaps, it will be ideal to define development first for a better understanding of national development. Asadu, (2012, p.5), opines that:

Development means different things to different people, but generally, it involves a change from one level to another, where the latter is usually considered better than the formerly. Initially, development was viewed from the materialistic and economic (GDP -gross dogmatic product)growth stand point later the meaning changed to reflect valued ends such as social advancement, equality and freedom.

Inayatuallah (1969) in Adoan, Lim and Mikahetiya (1991, p. 2), sees development as a “change toward patterns of society that allow a society better realization of human values, gain greater control over its environment, political destiny and enables its individuals gain increased control over selves”. Okigbo (1995, p. 2), sees development as “freeing men and women from nature's servitudes, economic backwardness and oppressive technological institutions, unjust class structures and political exploiter, cultural and psychic alienation- in short, from all of life's in human agencies.

Lastly, Uche (1999, p. 14), sees development as:

A continuous process of harnessing all the available human and material resources of a society in a way that is compatible with cultural expressions of its peoples with the final goal of achieving a quality of living standard that is based on satisfaction, justice, equality, liberty, happiness, freedom and progress.

As regards national development, Elube (1990), opines that, it is the growth of the nation in form of unity, education, economic wellbeing, and mass participation in government. Iyanda and Adama (2003), agree that, national development is the ability of a nation to provide a conducive atmosphere for realization of individual potentials, the existence of buoyant economy and availability of social infrastructural facilities for the populace.

In consonance with Iyanda and Adama (2003), this paper, sees national development simply as the overall transformation of a people from an archaic kind of life to a modern one where all and sundry are beneficial of the equal opportunities that the modern life brings in all ramifications. This type of development is definitely not possible if all hands are not on deck.

Promotion

Promotion in academics has been defined from different domains, yet all definitions have the same underlying notion. McQuail (2010) explains promotion in communication as a purposive attempt to influence knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors through the planned use of messages disseminated via various media channels. Kotler and Keller (2016) from the Marketing and communication point of view, define promotion as the means by which organizations communicate with their target audiences to inform, persuade, and remind them about their products and services in order to influence attitudes and behaviors. Note, both definitions capture the concept of promotion in this study.

National Values

According to Parsons (1995), national values the shared principles, norms, and ethical standards that define the collective identity of a nation, guide citizens' conduct, and provide a framework

for social cohesion, political stability, and national development. Nnoli (1995), describes national values as the fundamental beliefs and ideals consciously cultivated within a polity to promote unity, patriotism, and loyalty to the state, while also shaping citizens' attitudes toward governance, nation-building, and democratic participation.

Obasanjo (2005), sees national values as the normative foundations of development, encompassing virtues such as integrity, accountability, discipline, honesty, hard work, and patriotism, which serve as drivers of collective progress and social transformation. According to UNESCO (2015), national values can be seen as universally recognized humanistic and cultural ideal adapted to local contexts that foster social responsibility, respect for diversity, peace, and sustainable national development. Going by the identical definitions of national values as above, the following are crucial national values that scholars agree can engender sustainable national development. They include:

- i. **Integrity:** Integrity promotes transparency and trust, both of which are vital for governance, anti-corruption efforts, and public confidence (Transparency International, 2023). Integrity ensures that leaders and citizens act honestly and transparently. It combats corruption and builds trust in institutions, which is critical for stable governance and economic development.
- ii. **Discipline:** Discipline underpins effective policy implementation, law enforcement and national order (UNDP, 2019). Discipline promotes order, efficiency, and respect for laws. It is essential for the successful implementation of governmental policies and the proper functioning of public institutions.
- iii. **Patriotism:** Patriotism inspires citizens to put national interests above personal gain. It encourages unity, civic responsibility, and a commitment to national goals. According to Nye (2007), patriotism strengthens national unity and motivates citizens to work toward the collective good.
- iv. **Hard Work:** A culture of diligence boosts productivity and innovation, which are key drivers of national growth in industries, agriculture, education, and services (World Bank, 2020). Put differently, hard work fosters productivity and innovation which are essential for economic growth and national progress.
- v. **Tolerance and Unity:** In diverse societies or communities populated by mixed ethnicities, tolerance can be a tool to promote peaceful coexistence among the diverse ethnicities. National development thrives when people of different backgrounds work together towards common goals. According to UNESCO (2020), diversity can be a strength when underpinned by tolerance, which is essential for peace, stability and inclusive development.
- vi. **Education:** Placing value on education equips citizens with the skills needed to innovate and contribute meaningfully to the economy and society. Of course, education remains the bedrock of any civilization and development. According to UNESCO (2020), a value placed on education ensures the development of the human capital, critical for innovation and national competitiveness.
- vii. **Responsibility and Accountability:** It is essential that citizens and leaders must take ownership of their actions. Accountability fosters good governance and responsible citizens. These values uphold democratic and governance, ensuring that leaders and citizens fulfill their duties with integrity (OECD, 2015).

- viii. Respect for the Rule of Law:** Having respect and regard for the law ensures justice and equality. It is the backbone of democracy, peace, and investors' confidence. Rule of law ensures justice and equality, attracting investment and maintaining peace (World Justice Project, 2023).

Notes, aside these enumerated and highlighted national values, there are other values that are needed not just by the youths but by all and sundry for sustainable development. They are: trust, teamwork, gratitude, empathy and patience. All these values are all essential for sustainable national growth and development.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the technological Determinism theory postulated by Marshal McLuhan in 1962. According to the theory, mass media technology does not only shape attitude and behavior of people but also bring a revolution in the mode of operation of a social system, (Khan, Sadaf Naz & Khan, 2021). "The theory further proposes that, the functioning of a social fabric changes according to the emergency of every new technology, (p.31).

Khan, Sadaf Naz and Khan (2021), opine three key assumptions of technological determining theory, that is first, media instill every act in the society; second, media shape perceptions and organize human experiences, and third, media link the world - "the media turn the globe into an enormous political, economic, social and cultural system" (p. 32). According to Marshal McLuhan in West and Tumer (2018), the medium is the message. Simply, technological Determinism opines that, we learn, feel and think the way we do because of the messages we receive through the current technology that is available (Okon, 2017).

The technological determinism theory is apt for this study in that, the social media are new technologies revolutionising communication among youths, the focus of this discourse and, as one of the assumptions of the theory states that, the media instill every act in the society - thus, to instill the national values that will reconfigure the mindset of the Nigerian youths for actions that will engender sustainable development, the social media are the appropriate media.

Empirical Review

Akinyelu (2023) conducted a study on "Social Media and Promotion of Academic Success among Tertiary Institution Students in Imo State." The study was guided by five research questions and survey design was adopted with structured questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. The findings of the study show that social media are beneficial to students' academic success, and that, upgrading social media platforms to include search engine(s) can make them more academically lively - thus, making tertiary institutions students make use of them to their own advantage. The study recommended that, concerned authorities, especially tertiary institutions management should periodically organise seminars to enlighten students on the possible implications of social media on their academic performance. The study is related to the one in focus in that, it studied how social media can influence (promote) the behaviour of students positively to engender good academic performance.

Osharive (2015) conducted a study on “social media and academic performance of students in University of Lagos”. The study was guided by five objectives which were formulated into five research questions and five hypotheses. A simple random sampling technique was used for the selection of the sample size of seven five (75) students randomly selected from five (5) randomly selected faculties of the University of Lagos. A four likert-type scale questionnaire was used for data collection. The findings of the study revealed that, social media has significant influence on students' academic performance of students and that there is a significant influence on student's usage of social media network by age. The study is relevant to the present research as it provides insight into the influence of social media on the academic behaviour of a specific group of users who constitute the focus of this investigation.

Kolan and Dzandza (2018) investigated "the effect of social media on the academic performance of students in Ghana Universities." The study was guided by three objectives and a survey design method was used to conduct the study. A sample size of 200 students were randomly selected from the total population of thirty eight thousand (38, 000) in eight (8) randomly selected halls of residence from the sixteen (16) halls at the University of Ghana. A four likert-structured questionnaire was administered to collect data from the respondents. Findings of the study revealed widespread use of social media among tertiary institution students. The study recommended among others that tertiary institution students should avoid unnecessary addictiveness to social media as it could have serious consequences on their academic life. This study is relevant to the present research as it highlights the widespread use of social media platforms among youths, who constitute the primary focus of this investigation.

Methodology

This study employed the survey research design. This method is considered most appropriate for this study because survey is suited for studies that have individuals as units of analysis that enables the researcher to make some generalizations concerning the population of interest (Ohaja, 2003). The population of the study comprised the 346 registered youths of Bonny Youths Federation in Bonny Island, Rivers State. Considering the size of the population (346). Census sampling technique was adopted and the entire registered youth members were taken as the sample size of the study. The instrument for data collection was a well-structured questionnaire which was administered to the entire 346 registered members in one of their compulsory age grade meetings. The mean criterion would be used in analysing the results in a tabular form. To arrive at the mean criterion, responses options would be weighed as follows: Strongly Agree (SA)= 4 points, Agree(A)= 3points, Disagree(D)= 2points and Strongly Disagree(SD)=1 point. Thus, any mean score below the average of 2.5 would be rejected while any mean score above 2.5 would be accepted. Thereafter, further explanation would be given on each of the tables for clarification.

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent do youths in Bonny Island, Rivers State use social media platforms?

Table 1: The extent at which Bonny Island, Rivers State youths use social media platform

S/N	Items	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	EFX N	MEAN	REM ARK
1	I spend at least 30 minutes on social media everyday	232 (928)	106 (318)	6 (12)	2 (2)	1260 346	3.64	Agree
2	I use at least, two of these social media platforms: WhatsApp, Facebook, Youtube and Instagram	204 (816)	84 (252)	40 (80)	18 (18)	1166 346	3.36	Agree
3	I have never been exposed to any social media platform	1 (4)	2 (6)	139 (278)	197 (197)	486 346	1.40	Disagree
4	Social media is my preferred source of information and gratification	187 (748)	86 (258)	46 (92)	27 (27)	1123 346	3.10	Agree
	Grand Mean = $\frac{11.5}{4}$						2.90	Accepted

Decision Rule: <2.5 =Acceptance while >2.5 = Rejected

The data in table 1, with a mean score of 2.90 reveals that, majority of the respondents agree that there is a widespread use of social media among youths of Bonny Island, Rivers State.

Research Question 2: To what extent do social media influence the behaviour and attitude of Bonny youths?

Table 2: The extent at which Social media influence the behaviour and attitude of youths in Bonny Island, Rivers State

S/N	Items	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	EFX N	MEAN	REM ARK
	I take most social media contents seriously and practice some	186 (744)	106 (318)	31 (62)	23 (23)	1147 346	3.31	Agree
	I do not trust most social media contents so I discard them	2 (4)	8 (24)	189 (378)	147 (147)	553 346	1.59	Disagree
	I learn new things from social media	184 (736)	102 (306)	41 (82)	19 (19)	1143 346	3.3	Agree
	I share social media contents that I like with friends	162 (648)	156 (468)	18 (36)	10 (10)	1162 346	3.3	Agree
	Grand Mean = $\frac{11.5}{4}$						2.88	Accepted

Decision Rule: <2.5 =Acceptance while >2.5 =Rejected

The mean score of 2.88 in table 2 indicates that majority of the respondents agree that social media influence the behaviour and attitude of youths

Research Question 3: Do social media have the potentials to promote national values among Bonny youths for sustainable national development?

Table 3: The potentials of social media in promoting national values among Bonny youths for sustainable national development

S/N	Items	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	EFX N	MEAN	REM ARK
1	Social media messages are instantaneous and often reach their intended audience with precision	185 (740)	143 (429)	7 (14)	11 (11)	1194 346	3.4	Agree
2	I prefer social media contents because they provide insight into new ideas and innovations	174 (696)	133 (399)	22 (44)	17 (17)	1156 346	3.34	Agree
3	Social media is very effective in promoting ideas and values among the youths	106 (424)	197 (591)	31 (62)	12 (12)	1058 346	3.05	
4	I agree that social media can be effectively harnessed to promote national values among youths	197 (788)	128 (384)	10 (20)	11 (11)	1203 346	3.4	Agree
	Grand Mean = $\frac{13.19}{4}$						3.29	Accepted

Decision Rule: <2.5 =Acceptance while >2.5 =Rejected

The mean score of 3.29 shows that vast majority of the respondents agree that social media has the potential to promote national values among youths for sustainable national development.

Discussion of Findings

R/Q1: To what extent do youths in Bonny Island use social media platforms?

346 respondents responded to this question and their response revealed that Nigerian youths are well exposed to social media. 338 respondents out of the total 346 respondents agree that they use one social media platform for over 30 minutes daily; and the grand mean of 2.90 reveal that majority of the respondents agree that they are exposed to social media. This corroborates the findings of Wiley and Sisson (2006), that previous studies have found that more than 90% percent of young persons (tertiary school students) use social networks.

R/Q 2: To what extent do social media influence the behaviour and attitude of Bonny youths?

The data in the table show clearly that majority of the respondents agreed that social media have influence on the attitude and behaviour of the youths of Bonny. The grand mean score of 2.88 reveal that a larger proportion of the respondents strongly agree to the item that indicate that social media influences the attitude and behavior of its users. Item 6 that indicate that social media does not influence attitude and behaviour of its users has a mean score of 1.5 which show clear rejection on the part of the respondents. It thus means that majority of the respondents agree that social media influences behaviour and attitude of its users. This corroborates the assumption of technological determinism theory, that, new technologies shape human behaviour (McLuhan, 1962).

R/Q 3: Do social media have the potentials to promote national values among Bonny youths for sustainable national development?

The grand mean of 3.4 makes it evident that vast majority of the respondent agree that social media have the potential to promote national values among youths for sustainable national development. Item 12 which specifically asked the question on the level of social media's effectiveness with relation to promoting national values has 197 respondents that agree that social media can effectively promote national values; 128 strongly agree while just 10 and 11 respondents disagree and strongly disagree respectively. Thus, the data provided proves without doubt that social media can effectively promote national values among Nigerian youths for sustainable national development. This aligns with the findings of Kolan and Dzandza that social media promotes ideas and facilitates collaborative efforts among young people.

Conclusion

This study concluded that social media is both a driver of youth engagement and a platform for the transmission of values in contemporary Nigeria. Social media has the potential for promoting national values among youths of Nigeria for sustainable national development. However, it should be noted that without deliberate efforts to regulate content, encourage responsible use, and strategically deploy social media for value reorientation, the same platforms may entrench negative behaviours that undermine national progress.

Therefore, governments, educators, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders must collaborate to maximize the positive potentials of social media by ensuring that it becomes a tool not merely for social interaction but also for nation-building. By doing so, Nigerian youths can be guided towards internalizing and practicing values that contribute to sustainable national development.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The Nigerian government should harness the vast potential of social media as a tool for promoting national values among youths of Nigeria.

2. To harness the interactive, far-reaching, and persuasive potential of social, media platforms, the government should periodically provide incentives that encourage the creation and dissemination of social media content for the promotion of national values.
3. The Youths should discard social media content that undermines nation-building but instead engage in creating contents that affirms their role as the future leaders of the nation.
4. Government should look into the regulation of the social media to avoid the use of same to undermine national unity and development.

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