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How Social Media Redesigned the Nigerian Education System: A Philosophical Analysis

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Abstract

The paper “philosophical analysis of how social media redesigned education system in Nigeria” was focussed on the inclusion of social media in teaching and learning. In lieu of that, the researcher explained briefly what education and social media meant and the changes that occurred by the cooperation of social media in education. The researcher enumerated the various social media platforms for the intended social media user to choose the right platform to use. The use of social media has changed the look of almost all aspect of life especially the changes that occurred in society when Nigerians had enough of the atrocities of the uniform men by coming up with the Hashtag ENDSARS where the nation sparked off the protest which started on 8th October, 2020. Social media has become integral parts of education in this generation where both the teachers and the students do resort to it to updates themselves and be prepared for the next class. The necessity of social media in education in Nigeria was brought to limelight by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic where schools were closed longer than expected. Thereupon, the use of social media to teach the students at home was adopted using different platforms. Usually the platforms that were commonly used in education were Telegram, Zoom and WhatsApp but beside these there were other platforms available on internet for students and teachers. The availability of these platforms expose students to different challenges associated with internet usage which include lack of privacy, health issues, no real friendships etc.

Introduction

The use of Social media has been increasing during past few years by students and teachers in educational setup. This social media made learning easier in all the stages of learning – primary schools, secondary schools and tertiary institutions. The use of social media has witnessed a change in direction over the past few years. Earlier, this social media was used as a means of how people know and interact with each other. It aids people to share things like photos, messages, videos and audios. With this privilege social media has a lot of influence in our lives be it in political aspect, social aspect, economic aspect and educational aspect.

People have been using this social media to showcase the potentiality of their candidates for a particular position or office and, or achievements of their candidates in office. Every hour, people upload videos/YouTube contents on social media which earned them huge amount of money. Others also displayed their achievements within certain periods of time in life or their expectation before the end of a particular time through uploading photos of themselves, writing and posting on their walls. Every day, several college students and teachers visit social media sites to update themselves and search for new knowledge. They come back to class and share

whatever they have gotten if necessary. All these routines revolve around Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.

However, in the past few years education has faced a change in approach through the use of social media. Before then, social media has been used by both the teachers and students either individually or in group at a particular place and time. A student can learn an idea using his/her smartphone at home but can only share the idea until when she/he comes to the class. Likewise, a teacher will also surf the internet for new ideas but will only communicate with his/her students when in the class.

Furthermore, social media has redesigned how education is disseminated. With the improvements in the facilities of social media, at the comfort of one's home, one can receive education especially at tertiary level. The improvements in the facilities of social media, education can be accessed anywhere you are in as much as there is network connections. This mode (home) of accessing education is possible on Telegram, Zoom, WeChat, WhatsApp, etc. where the teachers and students (participants) will have live chat. Upon these, there are other types of social media platform that are employed in imparting knowledge in this millennium. Some of them are; social networking sites, social review sites, image sharing sites, discussion sites etc.

By and large, using social media to access education is faster and easier, but it goes with a lots of challenges. These challenges include; lack of privacy, health, no real friendship and others.

Education

Education is one thing that one must acquire whether consciously or unconsciously. This is because it takes place every day from the day one is born through till the day he/she died. The conscious aspect of education is when one voluntarily decided to search for knowledge bearing in mind the challenges that comes with it. The unconscious aspect of education is when one unintentionally experience some phenomena in life especially through natural occurrence. Therefore, education is equated with experience when it is said that "education is equivalent to "experience" the experience of a living organism interacting with its normal environment".¹

This definition has told us that man must experience every changes that is taking place in the society. What is expected here is that man should change the environment in fulfilment of the quest of the members of the society and not for environment to change man. However, the kind of education that is given to the younger ones must be intone with the changing times. That is why teachers and students are expected to update themselves accordingly so as to move with the changing times. This is possible through the use of social media if properly and judiciously used.

Fafunwa explained education as "what each generation gives to its younger ones which make them develop attitudes, abilities, skills and other behavioural attributes which are germane to

¹ Lodge, 1947 in Mdooyongo, M.O. 2013: *Understanding the Philosophy of Education*. Spectrum Books limited Ibadan.

the growth of the society in which they live.”² This definition is somehow acceptable because it depicts that, the needs of the society where one is residing is what is to give to him/her. The problem with the definition is that, must it be the younger ones always receive education. I know adult citizens do also receive education from young teachers. That will make it necessary for the adult learners also to resort to social media

By and large, Wikipedia explored education as “the process of facilitating [learning](#), or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, morals, beliefs, and habits. Educational methods include teaching, training, storytelling, discussion and directed research. Education frequently takes place under the guidance of educators; however, learners can also educate themselves. Education can take place in [formal](#) or [informal](#) settings, and any [experience](#) that has a formative effect on the way one thinks, feels, or acts may be considered educational”.³ This definition is one of the definition of education that constitutes most of what it takes in education. It ranges from the processes, the contents, the methods, the educators/teachers, the learners and the forms of education. Nevertheless, it is not without problem. The definition is too long but still one important element is not included i.e. society. Society is sacrosanct in education processes, because education is useful if it addresses the societal issues. The problems and the needs of the society must be considered at all time.

According to R. S Peters⁴, education involves processes that introduce people to what is valuable in an intelligible and voluntary manner and that create in the learner a desire to achieve it. Peters has tried to explain in this definition that learners will later develop interest in learning and ready to explore on their own. This could be possible according to him through initiations into the society. In my opinion, this definition is faulty because the voluntary manner involved is not applicable to the lower level of learning. The pupils in the kindergarten, primary and secondary level of education are not always voluntarily ready to learn despite a lots of initiations. It is only those in the higher level of education that voluntarily ready to learn. Therefore, there must be a kind of coercion in enforcing these learners to learn especially in the lower level of education. For the higher level learners, they force themselves to device means of searching for information and ideas. The fastest and cheapest means in this dispensation is the social networking sites.

Social Media

Social media is a popular concept in this generation, but people are mostly familiar with only one or few social media or social networking sites. What usually come into the mind of almost everybody when engaged in discussion about social media is FACEBOOK. Actually, Facebook is one of the various social media platforms and the most popular among them. I personally assumed that Facebook attracts over a billion people or users every day.

² Fafunwa A. B 1974. *History of Education in Nigeria*. Ibadan, NPS Educational Publishers Ltd

³ Dollarhide, Maya, 2021: *Social Media* <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/social-media.asp>

⁴ R. S. Peters, 1973 in Dagar, B. S. 2017: *Concept and Meaning of Education*.
<https://www.egyankosh.ac.in/bitstream/123456789/8266/1/Unit-1.pdf>

What then is social media? Social media is a computer-based technology that facilitates the sharing of ideas, thoughts, and information through the building of virtual networks and communities.⁵ Going by this assertion, social media is accessed only by the opportuned and privileged people because its accessibility is only possible with the building of the virtual networks and communities as stated above. It is true because it is internet-based which involves; availability of network, data and device. This device includes: computer, tablet, or smartphone with a functional software.

Be as it may, social media has faced a sort of evolution from the broadcast age to the interactive age. To support this, Manning opined that “social media refers to new form of media that involves interactive participation. Often the development of media is divided into two different ages, the broadcast age and the interactive age”.⁶ Manning further explained the broadcast age as the time when media were exclusively centralised entity. For instance, radio, television, Newspaper Company, or a movie production studio that sent messages to many people. Feedback to media outlets was often indirect, delayed and impersonal. Communications between individual only happened on a much smaller level usually through personal letter, telephone calls etc. The interactive age came about with the rise of the digital and mobile technologies where interactions on a large scale became easier for individuals than ever before. One individual could now speak with many and instant feedback was a possibility. The low cost and accessibility of new technology also allowed more options for media consumptions than ever before.

Types of Social Media

There are many types of social media platform for our consumptions. The purpose of joining the social media will determined which of the social media platform will be logged in. The following are the types of social media for this purpose.

Social Networking Sites: Social networking sites is the most popular site in the social media platforms. People are mostly familiar with Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. These platforms help us connect with friends, family, and brands. They encourage knowledge-sharing and are all about personal, human-to-human interaction. Users can share thoughts, curate contents, upload photos and videos, form groups based on interests, and participate in lively discussions. They’re built around the users and everything that’s important to them and their social circles.

Social review sites: Review sites like Yelp and TripAdvisor display reviews from community members for all sorts of locations and experiences. This eliminates a lot of the guesswork that goes into booking a restaurant or hotel. Not sure it’s the right thing for you? Check out the reviews and you’ll know.

Image sharing sites: Visual contents like images, infographics, and illustrations capture our hearts, eyes and imaginations. Social media platforms like Instagram, Imgur, and Snapchat are

⁵ Dollarhide, Maya, 2021: *Social Media* <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/social-media.asp>

⁶ Manning, J. 2014: *Social Media, Definition and Classes*. In Harvey K. (Ed.). *Encyclopaedia of Social Media and Politics*. (1158-1162). Thousand Oaks. C.A. Sage

designed to amplify the power of image sharing. Users create, curate, and share unique images that spark conversations and speak for themselves. A picture can be worth a thousand words to your business.

Video hosting sites: YouTube revolutionized the way we watch, create, and think about videos. It transformed the medium into something accessible. Recent improvements in technology and connectivity helped video go the rest of the way.

Video hosting platforms like YouTube and Vimeo help creators put together contents and share it to a platform optimized for streaming. This accessibility makes video a super important medium.

Discussion sites: While most of us have seen many a heated discussions happened on Facebook, discussion sites like Reddit and Quora are specifically designed to spark a conversation. Anyone is free to ask a question or make a statement, and this attracts people with shared interests and curiosities. However, unlike Facebook and Instagram, users tend to give out less identifiable information.

Sharing economy networks: Sites like AirBnB and Rover aren't just a cool place to find cheap holiday rentals or a pet sitter. Sharing economy networks bring people who have got something they want to share together with the people who need it.

Community blogs: Shared blogging platforms like Medium and Tumblr give people a space to express their thoughts and help connect them with readers.

These community blog sites provide an audience while allowing plenty of room for customization and self-expression.⁷

In lieu of this, social media has become a solution to people's problems but only if one knows the right platform. One can promote whatever he is in for through social media either as a teacher, student, business personnel, traveller, tourist etc. As said earlier, social media does cost less and easily accessible is true if and only if one has the money and his community has network coverage. With the network coverage and a smartphone or android phone in one's hand he/she can impact the life of many as shown below.

Impact of Social Media in Nigeria

Information and communication technology has witnessed a rapid change in the past few years with the aids of the emergence of social media. The changes started with development of mobile technology and its introduction in Nigeria in 2001. This has played an important role in shaping the impact of social media. Mobile device in the hands of users is considered the most used online device to connect people anywhere at any time. Social media has evolved from being a handy means for keeping in touch with friends and family to being used in ways that have a real impact on society. It is being used in ways that shape politics, businesses, world culture, education, careers, innovations, and more.

⁷ <https://biteable.com/blog/the-7-types-of-social-media/>

Politics suffers the most when talking about the impacts of social media. A new study from Pew Research claims that 62 percent of people get their news from social media, with 18 percent doing so very often.⁸ In comparison to other media, social media's influence in political campaigns has increased tremendously. Social networks played an increasingly important role in electoral processes especially in the developed countries. Conversely, in the developing countries like Nigeria, social media has minimal impacts because of the accessibility and manipulative ability of the social media by the citizens. For instance, in the last general elections in Nigeria, social media was actually one-sided but it didn't influence anything. This was attributed to lack of social media awareness in terms of elections.

Society also suffers the impacts of social media. Almost a quarter of the world's population is now on Facebook. In Nigeria nearly 70% of all internet users are on this platform. Because social networks feed off interactions among people, they become more powerful as they grow. People with the same views can identify themselves through social media and formed a group with a particular pattern of behaviours, then strengthen their worldviews, and then break into the mainstreams. With social media, social, ethical and political ills have been exposed. Increased exposure of issues has changed the balance of power from the hands of a few to the masses. For instance, the ENDSARS protest that started on 8th October, 2020 after weeks of anger with videos and pictures showing police brutality, harassments and extortion in Nigeria. The protests were led prominently by young Nigerians in different cities alongside many activists and celebrities.⁹ The protests carried out by young Nigerians has forced the government to meet some of the demands of the youths.

The recent one was the video clip on 23rd of Sept., 2021 of a female Nigerian soldier assaulting a female member of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) in Cross River State, Nigeria's South-south, has caused outrage among Nigerians. The corps member, Ifeyinwa Ezeiruaku, is seen in the 32-seconds clip, kneeling down, while the soldier identified as Chika Viola Anele, a lieutenant, kept scooping what looked like dirty water and then pouring it all over her. The video ended with the soldier slapping her victim. The corps member, Ms Ezeiruaku is doing her mandatory NYSC programme at the 13 Brigade headquarters of the army, in Calabar, where the incident happened. Reports said the soldier and the corps member had an argument before the incident.¹⁰ With the help of the social media, the atrocities of our uniform men were unveiled and they will be brought to book one after another. For the case of Lt Chika Viola Anele, at the time of this write-ups the erring officer according to Brigadier Nwachukwu "would be made to undergo regimental orders (trial) in line with the extant provisions of the

⁸ Gottfried, J and Shearer, E. 2016: *News Use across Social Media Platforms 2016*.

www.journalism.org/2016/05/26/news-use-across-social-media-platforms-2016/

⁹ <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/End-SARS>

¹⁰ Ukpong, C, 2021: *Nigerian Soldier Filmed Assaulting Female Corps Member*.

<https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/486543-nigerian-soldier-filmed-assaulting-female-corps-member.html>

Armed Forces”.¹¹ At this juncture, our own is prayers – let it be done without fear or favour. These and other like incidents were the impacts of social media on society. Without this social media this and the like could have died unnoticed.

The rise of social media has reshaped the commercial activities of companies and organizations by making it faster and easier to reach their customers and prospects through one social media platform or another. Companies see the importance of using social media to connect with customers and build revenue.¹²

Businesses have realized that they can use social media to generate insights, stimulate demands, and create targeted product offerings. For instance, social media especially Facebook, most people had made it to be their markets full of advertisements. People order based on what has been displayed on their suppliers’ walls. This has reduced the cost of transportations and other risks associated with travelling. Nevertheless, there are some contents that are usually advertised on social media that are harmful especially to the youths. For instance, porn contents advertisements which needs serious restrictions.

One of the impacts of social media is encouraging people to form and cherish artificial bonds over actual friendships. The term ‘friend’ as used on social media lacks the intimacy identified with conventional friendships, where people actually know each other, want to talk to each other, have an intimate bond and frequently interact face to face.¹³

The impacts of social media on friendship cannot be overemphasised, friendship suffers a lots because of the rise in social media platforms. Social media users reject true love/friendship to social situations which is not clear and certain. This at a time makes others to be victims of circumstance.

Social Media and Education

In this section, the researcher tried to elaborates how social media is used in education. Social media and technology are parts and parcels of our daily life, and they are mostly integrated into the classroom when needs aroused. In Nigeria, the use of social in education has become apparent and necessary during the COVID -19 pandemic where all places were totally locked down. On March 19, 2020, Nigerian government through the federal ministry of education ordered the closure of all schools at various levels. The lockdown has opened our eyes on the use of social media to teach students. During the lockdown, there was no movement nor to talk of going to school. With this, the issues of using social media has become paramount with the aim of teaching the students while they are at home.

In respect of this, seminars and workshops were held to train the teachers on online teaching tools in various places in Nigeria. One of this seminar was presented by Adewale James who

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Alzakhravi, O. 2020: *What is The Major Impact of Social Media?* <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/what-major-impact-social-media-olena-alzakhravi/>

¹³ Ibid

in his wisdom defined online learning tools as “any program, app, or technology that can be accessed via an internet connection and enhance a teacher’s ability to present information and student’s ability to access that information”.¹⁴ In the seminar paper, he outlined the applications that are used in online teaching; Google, Telegram, Zoom, WhatSapp, and Canvas. Therefore, social media platform offers many different ways to be used in the classroom, from sharing announcements to holding live lectures, and so much more.

According to Chloe¹⁵, there are many social media tools for education that can be of advantage for students of any age, from elementary all the way through college as follows.

Firstly, a Facebook Page is created to broadcast updates and alerts. Facebook can be the perfect social media platform to incorporate into the classroom. Students are to follow the class’s Facebook Page created by the instructor who uses it to post class updates, share homework, assignments and encourage discussions. Even if a student is not active on Facebook, these Pages are still accessible when signed out. However, keep in mind Facebook Page are public and anyone with a Facebook account can comment on the posts. The big problem with this is that every student must have Android phone to have Facebook account which is not easy for some students.

Secondly, a Facebook Group is created to stream live lectures and host discussions. With this Facebook Group instructors can have Facebook Live lectures, post discussion questions, assign homework and make class announcements. Keep students engaged during school breaks or by posting reminders and assignment to avoid having to review once class resumes from the break. To have access to the Facebook Group, the teacher(s) have to share the link through email to both parents and students to avoid unnecessary memberships.

Thirdly, create a class blog for discussions. A class blog is created to help students on writing blog posts which gives the students another outlet for digital contents that they can then easily link back to class social channels. There are many different platforms available, such as WordPress, SquareSpace, Wix, Blogger, Tumblr or Medium, where teachers can create a class blog. Students can create their own user accounts to make discussion posts or add comments on class prompts. The course syllabus and any assignments, updates and resources can be shared on a blog as a central location as well.

Fourthly, Create interest-based Facebook Groups. This is meant to connect the past and present students together. Many people want to be involved in their schools even after they leave - especially university alumni. Creating Facebook Groups for current students and alumni can increase engagement and school spirit.

Nevertheless, the platforms mentioned above were not the only platforms that are used for education purposes. There are as many as one can think of. But with the numerous number of

¹⁴ James, A, A. 2020: BLS Seminar on Online Teaching Tools. Paper Presented By American University of Nigeria Staff on 22nd July, 2020

¹⁵ West, C. 2021: *12 Ways to Use Social Media for Education*. <https://www.sproutsocial.com/insights/social-media-for-education/?amp>

the social media platforms that are used for education purposes had exposed the students to different types of challenges.

Challenges Students Faced by the Use of Social media

There are many challenges which students faced by the use of social networking sites and they are as follows.

Privacy: Many of the students were engrossed with social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter and many more, with the help of which they come in contacts with many other people whom they never had met before, seen before or even had talked before. They share their very personal and private information which many times may be used for wrong deeds also. Students and many others start believing very easily on strangers and share their private talks which may be misused. This is very challenging tasks which is being faced by social media users in general.

Therefore, privacy is one of the challenges faced by students and teachers in the use of social networking sites in education. In this respect, students and teachers forced to open the secured and unsecured sites for information related to their research work. This makes the users vulnerable to all sorts of threats.

Health Issues: Due to the use of social networking sites for long hours would create multiple health issues. Because of continuous accessing of networking sites may create an eyesight problem, back pain because of sitting in same position for long hours and many more. Students and teachers are advised to be cautions on the use of social media in order to safeguard their health. They should be using glasses and straighten themselves from time to time to avoid the ailment of sitting in one position for a long time.

Real Friendship: Through social networking sites, person has a lot of friends but the quality and integrity of these friendships is not always true. On the other hand, data on these social networking sites of a person is not always true and reliable, and they do not verify personal details (age, location, etc.) of their members. While sites provide an opportunity for individuals to present a positive and accurate self-image. So, having many friends through social networking sites is likely to be more harmful than good. This will affect the use of social networking sites in education.¹⁶ Students are to verify first who sent them friend's request and whom to send friend's request to minimize fake friends.

Conclusion

The paper was on the use of social media in and outside the classroom with the aim of enhancing learning among students. It was confirmed that social networking actually promote teaching and learning in varied ways. Apart from teaching and learning, social media impact was felt in commercial, social and other aspects of life.

¹⁶ Raut, V., Patil, D.Y. and Patil, P. 2016: Use of Social Media in Education: Positive and Negative impact on the students *International Journal on Recent and Innovation Trends in Computing and Communication* Volume: 4 Issue: 1 p. 283

Be as it is, social media has been misused by some miscreants by portraying themselves as good persons. With this, people will trust them but later on take advantage of them and defraud them in different ways. Not until been defraud before the side effects of social media manifest itself. Constant and too much use of social networking sites can damage our health especially our eyesight and back.

ENDNOTES

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<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/what-major-impact-social-media-olena-alzakhravi/>
- ¹ Dollarhide, Maya, 2021: *Social Media* <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/social-media.asp>
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