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Reflections on the Implications of Social Media on Education in Nigeria

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Abstract

Education has been considered to be the powerful instrument of social change and development. This is because it helps to disseminate new knowledge and ideas in the mind of the society. Education is expected to give new life and direction for new thought, ideas and creativity to emerge. However, for this to be possible, it requires learning through some possible means such as social media. Therefore, this paper examined thoughtful implications for social media on education in Nigeria. Aspects discussed include education, social media and social media implications on education. Recommendations were made among which include Schools should encourage teachers to use social networking sites such as Google Classrooms and Face books to create pages for their classes so that they will serve as an open discussion boards where daily queries can be posted to encourage students to voice their opinions and join the conversation. So doing, it will improve learners' communication skills, participation, and knowledge acquisition and reduce the time they normally waste engaging in non educational activities. Educational institutions can also try to arouse students' intellectual curiosity, the appetite for more learning and development of critical spirit so that they can effectively use social media for the purpose which it is known for. The paper concludes that social media has the tendency to improve teaching and learning, this is because the significant implications of social media for education far outweigh its negative consequences on students if judiciously articulated and rightly applied for the achievement of educational objectives.

Keywords: *Reflections, Education, Implications, Social Media.*

Introduction

Just like milk is essential to a child's growth, so is education important to everyone. Although Governments all over the world are doing their best to support and encourage education, there is still much to be desired. The search for a better system of education that can put Nigeria on the track of progress has commenced long before now and it is a journey of no end in sight in view of the changing nature of the universe. This portrays how earnest education is in human lives.

Education is not only believed to be the base of any progress and enlightenment, but live itself. For any nation to succeed economically or otherwise, such a nation must not joke with the educational needs of its citizens. At a time that Nigeria is passing through a range of social problems ranging from insurgency to banditry, cybercrime to separatist's movement; decent education can be a key for resolving these social problems. How can this be achieved? It is important for one to understand that good education brings confidence and confidence creates hope and hope begets peace and peace breeds development and stability. Education also brings unity which in turn leads to development. The aforementioned is a pointer to the power of education.

Over the years, the social media has turned out to be a friend for all. Hardly would one spend a day without accessing one social media platform or the other. Social media is perceived to play an important influence in not only education, but in politics, entertainment and business. No wonder, the social media continue to dominate here and now. According to Statista, (2021), there are currently no fewer than 3.78 billion social network users in the world. The social media is believed to be the most popular online activity in the world. Statista, (2021) stated that there are approximately 43 million social network users in Nigeria and this figure is expected to rise to at least 103 million users by 2026.

Although the social media has its own limitations, but it is not inappropriate to say that the social media if positively used can go a long way to create awareness and educate for the better. This can be achieved especially when one is not blinded of wickedness or other predispositions. It is in view of the rising number of social media users that this work is set out to examine the interplay between social media and education.

Education

Education could mean different things to different people based on their perspectives. It can be seen as the deliberate and systematic influence exerted by an individual through instruction and discipline. Education means the harmonious development of all the powers of the human being; physical, social, economic, intellectual, aesthetic and spiritual. The essential elements in the educative process are a creative mind, a well integrated self, socially useful purposes and experience related to the interests of the individual, needs and abilities of the individual and of a social group (Dash, 2015). To Sofradzija, Sehic, Alibegovic, and Bakić (2021), education is considered to be the formation of potentials: intellectual, psychological, moral, physical, aesthetic, cognitive and active possibilities. This is to say that education is the foundation of basic life skills, it polishes the mind, thought and character; it illuminates one's mind and thinking. Education gives an individual the power to adjust to changes in the society; it forms the mind by developing one's perspectives of life. It is a tool that provides people with the

necessary knowledge, skills, techniques, information which enables them to know their rights and duties towards their family, community and nation at large. Education is the process of acquiring knowledge and information that leads to a successful future.

More so, education according to Al-Shuaibi (2014) is the practice of gaining knowledge and information that are capable of leading one to a positive future. Education is an important medium of acquiring essential knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, beliefs and practice. It implies the systematic development of the mind, body, heart, and spirit of an individual to make them an effective and well-rounded person. It is an active and a dynamic process which takes place continuously during one's life by way of various experiences either in a formal or in an informal manner. In either of the settings, the individual learns to utilize his/her experiences in learning new things and also to reconstruct new things using the knowledge acquired. Thus, the learning takes place throughout life which is an active and a dynamic process. So, it can be said that education is a product as well as a process. In the process of acquiring the needed skills and knowledge, the individual needs to explore the different means of sharing and sourcing information. These means could involve teaching, studying, and training.

Social Media

Manning (2014) defined social media as new forms of media that involve interactive participation. Often, the development of media is divided into two ages, the broadcast age and the interactive age. Oyediji, (2021) posited that social media are forms of electronic communication that facilitate interaction based on certain interests and characterized media. It includes web and mobile based which are used to turn communication into interaction among individuals, communities and organizations. Inyang and Edem (2020) viewed social media as powerful channels for mobilizing and demobilizing people. They argue that social media provide podia for interactions that can spring up new and waning ideas, symbols, rituals and identities.

Social media is the collective of online communication channels dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration. Inyang and Essien (2021) are of the view that social media have been proven to be very potent tools for the diffusion of information, philosophies and sentiments. It is pertinent to note that social media began with the advent of media technologies which made social media and other interactive applications enabling platforms to run. Social media is important in many facets of life both for education and non educational. They have become invaluable tools for social and educational development of any society.

Social media is one of the most important means of communication presently. The media networking exists so as to provide communication among people regardless of location and distance, making it open to people easily to share the necessary information, ideas, files, pictures and videos, create blogs and send messages, and conduct real-time conversations. These systems are referred to as social, simply because they allow communication with friends, families and colleagues so easily and effectively. In various institutions of higher learning, instructors, students and others collaborate on the task of knowledge for construction using social media. The favorites in the realm of internet sites are Facebook, Twitter, blogs,

YouTube, Instagram, Google doc Newspaper, radio, Bebo, Flickr, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, Badoo, 2go, Snapchat, Wechat, and Pinterest among others. These websites and social forums are playing a large and influential role decision-making in the occasions from the global world economically, politically, socially and educationally.

Implications of Social Media on Education

Social media plays a very significant part on education in Nigeria especially at the higher level of the educational system. With the proliferation of social media, the education sector will without any iota of doubt continue to benefit because most of these online technologies can be used to enhance the teaching and learning process if sufficiently and prudently used. Buttressing further on this argument, Raut, Patil and Patil (2016) admitted that social media plays vital role in numerous aspects of human endeavors be it social, economic, political or educational.

It could be recalled that during the corona virus pandemic the traditional classroom was almost not available across the globe because of the social distancing rules imposed by the various governments and Nigeria was no exception. Schools were closed for several months to the extent that parents and education experts as well as the Government became very worried as to what will become of the future of the learners especially the youths. While parents continue to wait in anticipation, online technologies such as zoom, WhatsApp among others were used in some schools for the purpose of instructions. And since then, online classroom has been encouraged. Commenting on this development, Bozkurt, Jung, Xiao and Vladimrschi, (2020) affirmed that the physical absence of learners in the school during the covid-19 pandemic has led to a radical modification in the education of the learners and as a result the use of eLearning, online education and home schooling became popular at the time. Besides, other social media technologies such as WhatsApp, Facebook, zoom and the likes were also used. It is important to state that through some of these social media students were receiving content and instruction about what was to be learnt. These social media outlets have reasonable implications for education as discussed however, students must be guided if they are to use the social media for the betterment of their education otherwise the wrong usage of the social media would be inevitable.

Prior to the pandemic, it was almost impossible for learning to take place outside the classroom. Students were largely exposed to the physical teaching and learning process which takes place in a confined classroom. However, during the pandemic some schools proved the merit of social technologies in the enhancement of the teaching and learning process. As Bareq and Mirgane (2018) would say, as the traditional teaching and learning styles continue to vanish, the need to substitute them with advanced styles is imperative especially in the 21st century that is perceived to be a technological era. The use of technologies such as the learning via the social media has the potential to provide both the teachers and the students with autonomy, as well as ability to improve their own technological skills and apply their learning on the proper use of online technology innovations.

Devi, Eragamreddy and Viyaja, (2019) have adduced that the social media can be used to enhance educational process because social networks such as Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube

and Instagram can be used to support both the teachers and the learners. Although the social technologies have proven to be useful in the teaching and learning processes, it is important to point out that it has its own limitations. One of such limitations is weak network connection. Without a good and a strong network, it will not be possible for one to make use of any social media technologies such as the Facebook, YouTube twitter and WhatsApp can be used to enhance educational processes and practices. The use of social media in education can also help improve the students learning motivation and performance and the attainment of educational goals.

Recommendations

1. Social media in the 21st century should be able to afford students and teachers opportunities to learn, not only in the classroom, through the interactive media that provides them with similar objectives from the comfort of their various homes.
2. Moderating the learners access to social media is one excellent way of curbing the negative use of social media as this will help in reducing the amount of time spent on harmful social network sites.
3. Focusing attention of the social media to students' academic progress would no doubt address the negative aspects of the social media influence on education.
4. Providing ample time for face-to-face social interaction, like having some family leisure time in which individuals discuss their studies in a relaxed atmosphere or inviting friends and family over for get-together can help reduce the negative impact of social media on education as whole.
5. Educational institutions should incorporate social media in their mode of teaching and learning in order to arouse students' intellectual curiosity, their appetite for more learning and the development of critical thinking.
6. Schools should encourage teachers to use Google Classrooms and Face books to create pages for their classes so that they will serve as an open discussion boards where daily queries can be posted to encourage students to voice their opinions and join the conversation. So doing, it will improve learners' communication skills, participation, and knowledge acquisition and reduce the time they normally waste engaging in non educational activities on social media.
7. Teachers should be made to explore others networking sites such as pinterest for research where they can plan and organize research for students in a virtually appealing way and tik-tok to post experiments and projects that are interesting and digestible. These will improve students' engagement and participation, improve sense of community
8. The use of social media in education is expected to help students, teachers and parents to get more useful information, to connect with learning groups and other educational systems that make education convenient. Social network tools afford students and institutions with multiple opportunities to improve learning methods.

Conclusion

Social media have the tendency to improve students' learning which however depends on its positive utilization by learners otherwise the anticipated result will not be achieved. Social media provide a complementary platform that can leverage teaching and learning amidst unanticipated pandemic which could result in social distancing and restriction on large gatherings including the school system as witnessed in the recent time. Social media are flexible to manipulate for learning interaction between teachers and learners. The significant implications of social media for education far outweigh its negative consequences on students if judiciously articulated and rightly applied for the achievement of educational objectives.

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