

# X-Raying the Positive-Negative Effects of Social Media Networks on Young Persons: The Mediating Role of Media House in Nigeria

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## Abstract

*The study x-rayed the positive-negative effects of social media networks: the mediating role of media house in Nigeria. It was organized into six sections; introduction, positive effects, negative effects, the Nigerian experience, the mediating role of the media and conclusion. The main objective was to dissect the intricacies (benefits and abuses or harms) surrounding the use of the social media and to find measures of curtailing the excesses or negative effects of the social media on young persons. The study found that young persons are glued to the social media and it will be very difficult to gag or censor its use. However, the media house has enormous task by constantly deploying sensitization, and advocacy mechanisms to abreast young people of the ills associated or interfacing with social media networks. It is therefore suggested that there should collaborations among all stakeholders; governments, media house, families, churches, mosques and educational institutions towards educating and enlightening juveniles on proper use of the social media networks.*

## Keywords

x-raying; positive-negative effects; social media networks; media house; mediate; Nigeria



## I. Introduction

The effects of globalisation are reverberating on daily basis because innovations, creativities and developments are evolving across all human endeavours. Globalisation has caused multiple changes to existing norms, values and standards in the world. The resultant effects on socio-cultural socio-economic and socio-political connections have placed the concept of globalisation at the front burner of propounding theories of development in the 21st century (Edih et al., 2021). The sweeping influence of globalisation is transported around the world through the aid of information and communication technologies, ICTs.

Information and communication technology (ICT) have dramatically transformed the global space over the past two decades due to emerging social media networks. The development of social media(SM) has further dramatised the world as a global village. Mobile devices have taken over the terms of total minutes spent in online communication. It has been observed that through globalisation and social media, hitherto exclusion tendencies manifested in some notorious cultures have been abandoned ([www.simplilearn.com](http://www.simplilearn.com)).

Social media networks (SMNs) are becoming new and appreciable channels for the accumulation of human and intellectual capital. SMNs membership in the US has increased from 33% to 58% while in Brazil and China, it has moved from 64% to 75% and 47% to 48% respectively (Dell'Anno et al., 2016 ; Hutton & Fosdick, 2011). With the advent and use of the diversified social media networks, hitherto barriers to transmission of information have been completely removed. This has enabled a multi-channel codification and diffusion of knowledge considering the diversity of media involved (blogs, wikis, videos, pictures, etc (Dell'Anno et al., 2016 ; Rayna & Striukova, 2010). However, the use of SM platforms had negative impact on economic growth. In the study of Dell'Anno et al., (2016), SM showed a negative and significant effect on economic growth by increasing search costs for information, increase in substitution effect from labour to leisure.

Studies have revealed that valuable and entertainment messages are shared across the internet through social media networks. The media have assisted in defining self-image, grow and nourish relationships, also promote brands and causes that are reward able. It is noticeable that the influence of social media cuts across the entire human endeavours; politics, business, world cultures (arguments on homogenisation, Americanization or heterogeneous societies), education and training, careers, innovations and creativity in the ever evolving world ([www.simplilearn.com](http://www.simplilearn.com)).

In the study, a young person is synonymous with a juvenile. Accordingly, Black's Law Dictionary defines a juvenile as a person who has not reached the age at which he should be treated as an adult as adopted or enacted provision in the Criminal Justice System of a country while the Oxford Dictionary defines juvenile as a person connected with young people who are not yet adults. A young person is a person who has not attain 18 years as age of majority (1999 Constitution of Nigeria). Connotatively, a young person represents a minor within the age bracket of 13-17 years. However, studies have used the word 'teens' to mean young people and teens are persons within the ages of 13-19 years. This translation or representation extends more than the 18 years stipulation as age of majority in the Nigerian Constitution. Therefore, it could be well said that, the age bracket for young persons are based on the prevailing law. In this case, the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is the grundnorm and the supreme law of the country. It is apposite to align with the provisions of the supreme law. Juvenile delinquencies are anti-social behaviours exhibited by minors and currently made manifest through the use of social media networks.

The use of social media has become an integral part of many teen's lives. According to Pew Research Centre survey on 750 teens (13 -17 years) in 2018 found that 45% use the online on constant basis and 97% use social media platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram or Snapchat. In 2019, a study covering 6500 persons within the ages of 12-15 in the US revealed that persons who spend more than three hours a day using social media might be expose to mental health problems. In similar vein, a study was carried out with a sample size of 12000, age bracket of 13-16 years in England found that the use of social media for more than three times a day presupposes poor mental health and wellbeing of teens. Accordingly, surveys undertaken in 2016 and 2015 linked social media use with depression and symptoms of anxiety ([www.mayoclinic.org](http://www.mayoclinic.org)).

It is evident that social media platforms can be used to better and transform lives as well as harm society. Modern students and young persons are tightly attached to social media especially when they are physically separated from their families, friends, and peers.

Social media are likened to double edged sword because they provide several benefits as well as cause some avoidable harms to the human person. Through the use of social media platforms, one can express himself, exercise creativity, learn and explore opportunities and connect to the wider world while its abuse will result to addiction, poor sleep, eye fatigue, negative body image and depression, cyber bullying, anxiety and lure some into unfamiliar terrain of drug abuse, etc(www.netweeper.com).

Interactions and relationships consummated among young persons through social media platforms or otherwise have resulted to harmful and misguided social behaviours that are rampant in modern global society (Edih, Umuze & University, 2022). In Kwame (as cited in Edih et al., 2022), modernity and globalisation or maybe, civilization have changed the old orientation to a smart world orientation in reasoning, dressing and general lifestyles. The hue and cry are that, morals, values, and acceptable standards are waning very fast nowadays. Edih et al.,(2022) identified some forms of moral decadence or degradation pervading the new world; infidelity on the increase, broken marriages and homes, disrespect to parents, breakdown of institutions, the get-rich-quick syndrome, freedom to licentious living, increase in juvenile delinquencies, approval for lesbians and hydras lifestyles, idolizing nudeness and seductive conducts as modern fashion and many more instances.

It is on this background that Edih et al.,(2022) argued that African are gradually losing grip of their rich cultural heritage to the overwhelming and domineering influence of the assumed global culture. Ogechukwu et al., (2016) contend that globalisation has impoverished the continent of Africa and degraded her morals and values. However, Edih et al., (2022) concludes that globalisation and its effects are here with us. Africans and governments should galvanize the use of ICTs to propagate the rich cultural endowments to the world. Also, Lemke (2018) argued that discussions and analyses on effects, drivers of globalisation had existed for centuries and current researches or reconsiderations are limited by scale.

It is on this foundation that the study x-rayed the positive-negative effects of the social media networks on young persons : the mediating role of media houses in Nigeria. The study is organised as follows, introduction, positive effect of the social media platforms, negative effects of the social media networks, the Nigerian version of the social media, mediating role of media houses in Nigeria and conclusion.

## **II. Review of Literature**

### **2.1 Positive Effects of Social Media Platforms**

The basic function or purpose of the social media is to pass information from one person to the other. Social media platforms is not meant only for the young persons but have been dominated by them. It is obvious that the study cannot enumerate the entire usefulness of the social media to mankind because life is constantly changing and evolving. However, some positive effects of the social media on human endeavours are outlined below;

- a). Social media platforms allow young persons to create online identities, communicate with others and build interactive networks. Social media present platforms for social interactions, create awareness on current events and variety of subjects leading to healthy behaviours among persons, teens or adults.
- b).The media serve as means of entertainment and self expression. They are veritable measures of associating with persons experiencing exclusion, disabilities or chronic health conditions.

- c). The social media networks are veritable avenues for electoral campaigns. A new study from Pew Research claims that about one in five in the U.S.A, adults get their political news primarily through social media ([www.mayoclinic.org](http://www.mayoclinic.org)). In Nigeria, the Obidient's Political Movement for the Presidential Candidate of the Labour Party in the forthcoming General Elections in 2023 is publicize through social media platforms.
- d). It has been observed that the social media platforms create access for online educational training and development. A survey carried out by OnePoll on Pearson and Connections Academy asked 2000 parents in U.S.A and their High School aged children about the 'new normal' of High School. Report showed that 68% of students and 65% of parents agreed that social media networks are useful tools for transferring educational messages and accepted new normal in High School. It concludes that platforms like Blogs, Wikis, LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and Podcast are common access for studying in Educational institutions and also facilitate distance learning ([www.simplilearn.com](http://www.simplilearn.com); [www.netsweeper.com](http://www.netsweeper.com)).
- e). Report showed that almost a quarter of the world's population is on Facebook. In the US, nearly 80% of all internet users are in Facebook and social media activism is creating awareness on societal matters or problems on daily basis. The political activism and awareness generated by social media networks ahead of the 2023 General Elections in Nigeria is overwhelming. In similar vein, the atrocities perpetrated by Boko Haram insurgents in Nigeria are spread through the social media ([www.simplilearn.com](http://www.simplilearn.com)).
- f). Summarily, social media connect friends and spread information, facilitate constructive learning process, help in updating information and showcase the real world news, create awareness, innovations, build new internet communities by fostering unity in diversities, promote noble cause (donations to the vulnerable in the society), and relieve stress through healthy communication among peers.

### **III. Result and Discussion**

#### **3.1 Negative Effects of Social Media Networks**

The social media networks are floodgates that are difficult to be gagged or censored by any regulation. The use of the social media networks is at the disposal of persons who have access to mobile devices and internet services all over the world. Its use is therefore open to every Dick and Harry; the young persons and the adults, criminal elements etc. But, in recent years, the abuse of the social media especially by young folks is becoming worrisome.

Studies have identified some harms the social media have caused society. Among the varied negative effects of the social media networks are;

- a). The use of social media sites increases the fear of missing out(FOMO) and feelings of inadequacy, dissatisfaction and isolation. These negative feelings affect the mood and worsen symptoms of depression, anxiety and stress.
- b). Social media use expose teens to distraction, cyber bullying, and disrupt sleep. They aid the spread of rumours, unrealistic views of peer groups and others
- c). Social media networks create shadow friendship and reduce real face to face conversation, and in person chats, quick-wittedness, sense of humour and sporty tete-a-tete are becoming rare.
- d). It has been observed that social emotional disconnects are on the rise due to breakage in real hugs.
- e). Laziness, addiction, cheating and relationships issues are problems associated with the

use of social media networks.

- f). Summarily, the use of social media platforms may likely result to the following issues ; increase cravings for attention, distraction from life goals, high risk of depression, stunt creativity, reduce self-esteem due to social comparison, lack of privacy etc.

### **3.2 The Nigerian Version of the Use of Social Media**

The Nigerian experience in the use of social media networks by juveniles and youths may not be entirely different from other nations of the world because communication between and among youths span across the globe and such interactions or relationships have common denominator. One cannot trace the extent of the relationships establish by these young persons with the rest of the world. The 'rat race' mentality exhibited by teens in Nigeria is a cause for concern. Students in the secondary schools are grossly distracted from studies due to the use of mobile phones. It is more degrading with public school's students than the private schools based on stringent monitoring of rules prohibiting the use of mobile devices in boarding environment.

Young persons in Nigeria are saying education is a 'scam' because of the high rate of unemployment that has pushed many youths into doing illicit business such as internet crimes popularly called Yahoo. Boys and girls are into this yahoo business since it is the only means of survival. Nigerian youths may not be entirely blamed because the Federal and State governments have failed to provide conducive environment for economic investments to absorb the teeming youth population making some parents to support the illegal yahoo phenomenon. Statistically, on the average about 60% of young persons are perpetrating this illicit Yahoo trade enabled by social media networks and banks in Nigeria are flourishing from the inflow of dollars on regular basis. The number of young persons and youths transacting business of dollar exchange is overwhelming.

Networking and teen's romance through social media has resulted to unwanted pregnancies and promiscuous lifestyles. Facebook friendships and marriages are rampant in Nigeria. Based on the high spate of moral or value decadence in the society, the hitherto abnormal tendencies have been accepted as the 'new normal'. In this new normal world, young people are strongly addicted to surfing the internet to sooth their quest to uncover new realities or possibilities. It's a global trend of knowledge discovery that has pushed majority of them to absorbing delusions and vanities. It is possible that most of the teens are living with their parents and therefore, it is incumbent on them to mould their character. This enormous task may be carried out by setting standards in the family as follows;

- a). Set reasonable limits, present a clear picture of the positive acts and must avoid habits.
- b). Monitor them always
- c). Encourage face to face friendship
- d). Engage them on the proper and acceptable use of the social media.

### **3.3 The Mediating Role of Media Houses in Nigeria**

The media house is legally responsible for dissemination of information to the public. There are both government and private owned media houses in Nigeria. Media houses in Nigeria are also known as Broadcasting Corporations or Stations. The Federal Radio Corporation, FRC is own and manage by the Federal government of Nigeria while every state has a Broadcasting and Television Station that is State Owned Parastatal. These radio and television stations are duty bound to broadcast government and private news to the general public. The Nigeria Television Authority, NTA, is anchored by the Federal Radio Corporation as an agency of the Federal government. Its main is situate at the

Federal Capital Territory, FCT, Abuja and sub-stations in the Capital Territory of the 36 States in Nigeria. There are several private broadcasting houses across the country such as Silver Bird, Channels Television, TVC, and others. The activities of broadcasting and television stations are guided by laws unlike the social media networks that are loosely used without censorship.

The basic functions of media houses all over the world includes information dissemination, educating the public, entertainment of the masses, giving up to date news, etc. It is all about public sensitisation, advocacy and public enlightenment. They are vital channels for transmitting information and communication. The media house is therefore the appropriate medium to correct the anomalies in the use of social media networks. Considering the enormous weight of the abuse of the social media by young people, there is need for collaboration by all stakeholders.

In modern democracy, the media is the fourth pillar of the realm. As the watchdog, the media have a mandate of policing the society. It is a channel for public socialisation and influencing the thoughts or philosophies of the people. The media is empowered to perform social orientation, social engineering and development tasks. Persons who are professionals in media activities are called journalists and journalism entails the art and science of seeking, collating, processing and disseminating information through print media (Newspapers and Magazines) and/or internet networks (Blogs, Twitter, Instagrams, WhatsApp, YouTube, Facebook) or radio and television ([www.vendatu.com](http://www.vendatu.com)).

#### **IV. Conclusion**

The study concludes that young persons are grossly attached to use social media networks and the combat against abuse of media networks is an onerous task. It is discovered that increasing rate of moral depreciation in the society could be attributed to failure in social structure, family structure and the continued manifest perverseness in governance in Nigeria. No singular institution is capable of correcting the havoc created by the excess and unrestrained use of the social media platforms by young people such as WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram, Facebook Twitter, among others. It is therefore recommended that;

1. The media house, the government, family, religious bodies, NGOs should collaborate to strengthen the campaign against negative application of social media platforms. This should be done by educating young persons through diverse local languages because not all teens understand the English language in Nigeria.
2. Morals, values and norms should be incorporated into Civic Education Curriculum and be taught in all educational institutions in Nigeria.
3. Religious institutions should preach and emphasize godly values and rewards as well as expose the evils in the society and attendant punishment.

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