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THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON EDUCATION DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

UKPOMA ESTHER A.

**Department of General Education,
Edo State College of Education,
School of Education,
Igueben, Edo State**

And

MOCHI SOLOMON OMOSEMHOMHE

**Department of General Education,
Edo State College of Education,
Centre for Educational Technology,
Edo State**

Abstract

COVID-19 has affected governments at all levels operating in a context of radical uncertainty, and faced with difficult trade-offs given the health, economic and social challenges it raises. The academic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are highly heterogeneous, with a strong territorial dimension and significant implications for academic and social management and policy responses. This paper takes an in-depth look at the effect of social media on academic during COVID-19 pandemic. Important and familiar social networking sites and applications were discussed. And also, some of the challenges and banes were explained. Finally, some recommendations were made such as regular orientation and re-orientation of the use of ICT among the educators by authorities of educational institutions, ICT materials should be made available in all the levels of educational system and Parents should be advised to monitor their children; wards concerning the activities carry out during the utilization of ICT materials.

Key words: Social Media, COVID 19, Education.

Introduction

Man is a social being and has a unique tendency of interacting with one and another either through traditional means or modern means. In the modern means of interaction and communication, through networking, his quest for knowledge and inventions gave birth to a more advanced and digital way of social interaction with the use of social media. Social media refers to websites and applications that are designed to allow people share content quickly, efficiently and in real time or participate in social networking. This is made possible through numerous networking platforms and apps. Social networking is the act of engagement, while Social media is the tool used to communicate with mass audience (Hartshorn 2010). Social media link people, organization, and knowledge with others over physical boundaries

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(Barry,2006). The author further stressed that they are social institutions removing isolated livelihood as it is being integrated into every lives. Social media are computer based online community of individuals who exchange messages, share information and in some cases, cooperate on joint activities (Britannica, 2010). Social media also provides opportunity for instant messaging, video calls, text chatting, voice chats, photo sharing, blogging, professional development and linkages, making friends, business marketing, travel and lifestyle, information sharing, online meetings, maintaining diaries, music sharing, video sharing, dating, gaming etc

Mike,Moran,Jeff and Tinti-Kane ,for a long period of time believed that the term Social media does not have a clear definition, however, when one platform emerged that gave people an opportunity to be content creator, controllers and transparent users, to a great extent .Once this content is shared, it becomes a conversation , because all users who have account, on social media platforms can interact with all posts (Moran, Seaman and Tinti-kane,2011) .Social media is the platforms that gave individuals the opportunity to interact, using two ways communication; meaning ,that anyone who has online accounts can share their opinions with other social media users.

There are two types of social media users; digital natives and digital immigrants. Digital natives are the ones who were born after 1980,they came to this world when the digital media existed .While digital immigrants are the ones who were born before 1980 and adapted their lives to digital media (Antonson et al,2014)

However, social media has shown to have both positive and negative tendencies due to the purpose of development and content shared via the social media space. Social networking has affected positively all aspect of our lives ranging from health, industry, and education etc especially in this advent of corona virus. Negatively, many young people today, are unduly obsessed with social networking at the expense of their studies and future. They care less about what they do, consumed or exposed to on the social media. With the advent of digital technology, our society has witnessed increase in moral decadence, crime rate and immorality with the young people mostly affected. Whichever view of it, the benefits accrued to social media and its applications cannot be over emphasized.

Social media apps and benefits

There are numerous social media and networking apps that help to promote social interactions and easy communications. We have over sixty six (66) known social networking sites or apps used by over 2.6 billion people according to Statistics. The advent of smart or mobile phones have contributed immensely to the increase number of social media users.

Types of social media networking apps/ platform

- Friendship based social networking apps examples Face book, WhatsApp, 2go, Tencent QQ, Classmate, wechat and so on.
- Music based social networking apps examples my space, Reverb Nation, and so on
- Web based photo or video sharing social networking apps examples snapfish, instagram, pinterest and so on
- Travel and lifestyle based social networking sites example wayn
- Study based social networking apps example my school app.

- Information based social networking apps examples Next door, café mom, my heritage and so on
- Professional based social networking sites example LinkedIn
- Dating based social networking apps or sites examples Michat, Twoo, badoo and so on
- Gaming based social networking sites examples Cellufun, gaia online and so on
- Communication based social networking apps example Skype

Important and familiar social networking sites and apps

- 1) **Face book:** This is the largest social network sites in the world. It provides platform to network with friends and family. You can also market or promote your business, brand and products by using paid face book ads. Over 1.59 billion people used this platform.
- 2) **WhatsApp:** This is an instant messaging platform with end user encryption where you can connect with individuals or groups. It can also be used to make voice or video calls.
- 3) **Instagram:** Instagram is a social networking platform that is based on sharing photo and video, it allows you to apply multiple filters on your photo in an artistic way.
- 4) **Twitter:** this social networking site enables you to post short text messages called tweets which will be seeing by all your followers.
- 5) **Skype:** Skype is one of the most popular communication based social networking platforms. It allows you to connect with people through voice calls, video calls (using a webcam) and text messaging.
- 6) **Pinterest:** This is a photo sharing and visual bookmarking social media site that enables you to find new ideas for your projects and saved them.
- 7) **LinkedIn:** Is one of the most popular professional social networking sites used across the globe by all type of professionals and serves as an ideal platform to connect with different business, locate and hired ideal candidate.
- 8) **Wayn:** Is a travel and lifestyle based social networking platform and it offers its user the ability to discover where to go, what to do and how to meet like-minded people to share their experience.
- 9) **YouTube:** Is the world largest video sharing networking site that enables users to upload and share videos, view them, like them and comments on them. It also allows users to create a YouTube channel where they can upload their personally recorded videos to show case to their friends and follower.
- 10) **Telegram:** Is a written or printed telegraph message that is directly delivered to the recipient by a messenger. Is also a cloud – based instant messaging and voice over IP.
- 11) **Zoom:** Is a cloud-based video conferencing service you can use virtually meet with others-either by video or audio only or both, all while conducting live chats and it lets you record those sessions to view later.

Education

On the other hand, there is no single definition of education. It is open to several definitions and explanations depending on the contexts. It could be defined as an instrument for modernization and change, a medium for the development of human resources and as an institution that assists man in the business of all-round human development. UNESCO (2008) defined education as:

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'A process of facilitating learning or the acquisition of knowledge, skill, values, beliefs, and habits'.

The word education has a triple yet intermingled connotation, and refers either to, in its broadest sense, any process by means of which man is shaped and led towards fulfillment, or the task with regard to youth, or in strictest sense, the special task of schools and universities. Fafunwa (2004) opined that education is the aggregate of all the processes by which a child or young adult develops the ability, attitudes and other forms of behavior which are of positive value to the society in which he lives. Education is seen as the totality of all the process by which a learner (no matter the age) develops abilities, attitudes and all positive behavior that help him/her to adopt to his environment and the society. As a discipline, education implies the body of the art and science of teaching and learning. Also as a discipline, it is perceived as a branched of study with different areas for example philosophy of education, sociology of education among others.

As a process, education involves:

- i. Transmitting/inculcating accumulated knowledge, skills and dispositions of generations of people to/into a new generation of people.
- ii. Helping individuals to unfold the good in them and to develop the latent potentials/capabilities and to use them positively.
- iii. Exposing individuals to various environments so that they may realize existing knowledge, skills and dispositions or construct new ones.

As a product, education implies the use of relatively permanent knowledge, skills and dispositions by an individual to respond to the environments that are often in a flux and solve problems in his environment.

As an institution, education connotes the education of people of a country/group of countries at a particular time. In this sense, we can talk of Nigerian education, American education and British education. Education may be formal, informal and non-formal. In whatever forms it appears, education is important. This is well enshrined in the Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of human rights which declared basic education for all. Also, UNESCO stressed the importance of education by stating that 26% of the annual budget in developing countries should be allocated to education. The National Policy on Education (FRN 1977, Revised 1981, 1998, 2004 & 2013) recognized the importance of education by stating that, education is an instrument par excellence for effecting national development and that no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers.

Martin Luther King Jr in Ikejiani (1964:8) pointed out that:

"The prosperity of a country does not depend on the abundance of its revenues, not to the strength of its fortifications, not to the beauty of its public buildings. It consists in the number of its cultivated citizens, its men of education and enlightened characters".

In the book of Nwana (2009) Educational Technology in Digital Age, we can deduce from the definitions that:

- Education is an instrument for all-round human development;
- Education is an instrument for nation development;
- Education is an instrument for social reconstruction;
- Education is an instrument for cultural transmission; and
- Education is an instrument for the development of scientific ideas and technologies.

Thus as the world became more digital, there is an increasing need for the application and deployment of ICT tools in every area of human endeavor : ICT and other emerging technologies are increasing being used to create new services and improve solutions in all sectors. Education as an important sector of the society requires accelerated adoption and implementation of ICT to further quest achieve high quality and valued driven education services.

However, social media is the most powerful tools in today's digital world. Without social media, it is not possible for business to promote their brands and reach out globally. Social networking sites are useful in all field of human endeavors such as education, economic, religion and political fields. This networking site could be useful for storage of information, online interaction, collaborative learning and research. It is also a medium of acquiring skills. Social media platforms are amongst the most widely used sources of information in the World, the easy and inexpensive access to the internet and a large number of registered users in these platforms make them one of the easiest and most effective ways to disseminate information. During major events, the overall response is usually a greater search for information be it a sports event, a disease, or a natural disaster.

Social media platforms can play an important role for teaching students already hard-wired into the tools and for advancing teacher professional development benefits of this include making students feel more engaged in learning, creating deeper interactions between teachers and students and expanding learning communities beyond school walls, it's not surprising since students use social media in almost every other aspect of their lives .Educators and teachers have had very little guidance on research-informed practices this has been a problem since a quarter of teachers surveyed turned to social media to interact with students when the pandemic began and were rapidly required to teach online. This will help educational professionals understand how their social media use can help students and support their own rapid learning during the pandemic and beyond.

According to research, it showed that through social media, teachers can enhance interactions between students and teachers, and with people and resources outside the classroom. All are important for a student's sense of belonging in an educational community. And by using social media themselves, teachers can receive professional benefits through just-in-time teaching-related resources and social or emotional support outside their own school or district. It also provides an understanding of the impact social media has on teaching and learning, which will help teachers prepare for a combination of in-classroom and online learning likely expected.

Faced with uncertainty about what form their teaching will take, these insights on the advantages of using social media will help teachers address common teaching challenges, The constant challenges of promoting students' active learning and sense of connection are issues that educators often struggle with, but especially so when they have to turn on a dime to

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recreate in-person classes online. It was a great profit to students to develop an attitude to positive use of social media for educational purposes during the era of COVID-19 Pandemic.

COVID-19 Pandemic and education

A pandemic is a disease outbreak that spreads across countries or continents. It affects more people and takes more lives than an epidemic. The recent pandemic currently invoke is coronal virus popularly called COVID-19. The Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) on 30th January 2020 a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC).

On 27th February 2020 the Federal Ministry of Health announced the confirmation of the first case of Corona virus disease in Lagos State, Nigeria. In the same communication the Honourable Minister of Health announced that the Multi-sectoral Coronavirus Preparedness Group led by the Nigeria Center for Disease control (NCDC) has immediately activated its National Emergency operations Center⁴. Since then, in less than 2 months, Nigeria has reached more than 50 cases across the country. NCDC keeps and updates figures daily.

The near-total closures of schools, universities, and colleges worldwide have reshaped nearly every aspect of normal life. Based on UNESCO data, more than a billion students were thrown into very uncertain waters as the pandemic put a halt to in-person classes and courses. From primary schools to PhD programs, students across the globe are experiencing the altering effects of corona virus as classrooms move online and course curriculums stretch into the summer. Even researchers were not exempted. Both students and teachers have been burdened with the task of adapting to an online learning environment seemingly overnight. As well, many parents have been forced to take on the role of IT technician, teacher, and babysitter as kids remain struck at home.

Although the stark consequences of COVID-19 have thrown both families and the education industry for a loop, the sudden switch to digital learning has brought with it a few valuable lessons. In fact, the future of education has been transformed to not only accommodate online classrooms, but embrace a digital education. Social media has also been instrumental in helping improve Education situation. On a study in responses to COVID-19 in higher education: Social media usage for sustaining formal academic communication in developing countries”, published in Sustainability on 12 August, show that social media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp have been used effectively to sustain formal teaching and learning.

The study reveals that most faculty members used Facebook or WhatsApp as the sole tool for academic communication with their students because online meeting platforms such as Google Classroom and Zoom were unfamiliar to students and no training was available. However, public universities in many underdeveloped nations, e.g., Egypt, are suffering from a lack of technological platforms and formal online learning management systems (LMS) for communication with students or with their faculty members. Hence, they do not have the full capabilities to support the online learning process.

A cross-sectional survey was designed to find changes in optometry training and adaptations of Indian optometry educators amid COVID 19 lockdown. In the last week of April 2020, on the observation that the majority of optometry institutions have switched their teaching-learning activities on e-learning mode, an online survey was conducted using a

validated questionnaire containing a mix of open and close-ended questions. The results showed that Seventy-three out of 78 optometry educators (93.58%) have switched to e-learning mode in a very short time span with good confidence. Most teaching-learning and assessment activities are carried out using multi-device supporting video conferencing tools, dedicated educational portals and social media apps. Conclusion: The COVID-19 pandemic is proving to be a constructive disruptor, giving an opportunity for restructuring the present conventional, classroom based educational system. The quick transitions to online mode assisted in keeping continuity of optometry education programs, effectively fitting in the purpose of completion of the current academic year. The rapid transition to online education has not only benefited optometry students but also has created a momentum of continued education for practicing optometrist in the country.

For students, Facebook was the most adopted tool for formal academic communication, followed by WhatsApp – 69 percent, YouTube – 63.1 percent, Wikis – 50.2 percent and other social media – 19.4 percent, for example, blogs and Twitter. A low proportion of students used LinkedIn for academic communication which was 6.5 percent. Social media has advantages and disadvantages, the responsible use of these tools can help during a pandemic to quickly spread new important information, sharing diagnostic, treatment and follow-up protocols, comparing different approaches from other parts of the World to adapt them to our setting and available resources, with the downside of possible dissemination of fake data, myths, and pessimist information that combined with quarantine states may lead to anxiety, depression and in some extreme cases, the suicide. Therefore, it is advisable not to contribute to the infodemic and follow a responsible use of social media when disseminating information.

Social media abuse and bane

The drawback to the use of social media today is the abuse mostly by young folks who regularly visits the social media on daily basis. This consequently affects them physically, academically, psychologically and spiritually.

Some identified effects of social media on the youth are:

- a. **Distractions:** With several hours spent on the social media, student find it difficult to concentrates on their studies, reading and doing their home works.
- b. **Addiction:** Many people cannot do without visiting social media in a day. This may lead to social media addiction.
- c. **Lack of discipline:** Some student because of addiction and lack of discipline would not mind to be pressing their phones while lectures are going on or even in the church. They no longer have control over their personal life.
- d. **Watching pornography:** Visiting dating sites and watching indecent programmes like Big Brother Niger have unduly exposed young people to pornography, immorality and sexual corruptions.
- e. **Cybercrimes:** A lot of yahoo boys and internet fraudsters hack into the account of unsuspecting victims through the social media to get information about them. Various forms of Ponzi scheme is also on the increase today.

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- f. **Gambling and examination malpractices:** Naira bet is a gambling social website that many youths are found of visiting. Students have also invented and perfect ways of using the social media to cheat in exams.
- g. **Online prostitutions:** From dating websites it is now easy for campus prostitutes to connect with suitors where every arrangement of meeting place will be done without having to see each other face to face.
- h. **Cyber bullying and propaganda:** Cyber bullying is an electronic means of harassing other on the social media platform. People spread a lot of fake news and misleading information through the social media.

Aims and Objectives:

- 1. To find out what are the effects of Social media on academic activities during COVID-19 pandemic
- 2. To identify the commonly used Social media platform during COVID-19 pandemic
- 3. To support e-learning/teaching platform with official platform for sustainable academic-related purpose

Conclusion

The surest way to advert the shutdown academic activities during COVID-19 pandemic is through utilization of social media and its applications by migrating from conventional method of teaching/learning to digital method. Social media has played dominant roles in all the sectors of economic and most especially in education. Education is the process of transmitting knowledge, skills, values and attitude to individual to enable the individual to be useful in the society. Social media is imperative in this transmission.

Despite the roles social media played in education, some abuses and banes were observed such as watching pornography, online prostitutions and among others. This paper also suggests that parents should monitor their children; wards concerning the activities carry out during the utilization of social media and its applications.

Recommendations

- 1) There should be regular orientation and re-orientation of the use of ICT among the educators by authorities of educational institutions.
- 2) ICT materials should be made available in all the level of educational system.
- 3) Companies that produces and/or input the necessary internet-enable electronic devices should be encouraged to establish in Nigeria so that the cost of acquiring the devices will be reduced both to the individuals, educational institutions and organizations.
- 4) Parents should be advised to monitor their children; wards concerning the activities carry out during the utilization of ICT materials.
- 5) The COVID-19 pandemic and its disruptions have created an opportunity for the restructuring of the educational system.

The quick transitions to online mode assisted in keeping continuity of educational programs, effectively fitting in the purpose of completion of the current academic year. The journey from the tea steeping model of education to a competency-based learning program has commenced. Online teaching, use of internet technology in education is set to become a new normal. The transition can be quick and smooth if educators and technical staff show an

adaptive and collaborative attitude. It is, however, very early to conclude the successful narrative of transition as the judgment of students' performance are yet to be actualized

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The worldwide pandemic of COVID-19 has presented unparalleled challenges to traditional or face-to-face education. With the need to contain the virus outbreak, countries have implemented measures to reduce gatherings of large crowds and ensure physical social

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distancing. Thus, most governments applied the quarantine times that led to stopping traditional education. In consequence, governments have shifted all classes from face-to-face to online. However, public universities in many underdeveloped nations, e.g., Egypt, are suffering from a lack of technological platforms and formal online learning management systems (LMS) for communication with students or with their faculty members. Hence, they do not have the full capabilities to support the online learning process [1,2].

The pandemic of COVID-19 has pushed policy makers, university leaders and institution deans in higher education to search for alternatives to the traditionally-based learning system of the physical classroom. Various universities in Egypt, for instance, have encouraged their faculty members to use free communication platforms, e.g., Google Classroom and Zoom. Social media, e.g., Facebook, Sustainability 2020, 12, 6520; doi: 10.3390/su12166520 www.mdpi.com/journal/sustainability Sustainability 2020, 12, 6520 2 of 18 WhatsApp and YouTube are formally used by institutions and their faculty members to communicate with their students. Institutions have encouraged their faculty members to communicate with their students via official pages and formal groups on these social networking sites (SNSs), such as Facebook and WhatsApp.

As a consequence of COVID-19, and for the first time, both faculty members and students in many developing countries are forced to officially communicate online for academic-related purposes. With the absence of online LMS, social media can create a great opportunity for these institutions to officially communicate with their students to foster online learning [3,4]. The research builds on the presence of students and academic staff on these social sites to foster online social interaction and create effective online learning experience [3,5]. Previous studies on social media usage in higher education [3–6] have shown that they can be used for supporting communication with students, e.g., to supplement traditional learning and enhance their learning experience. This research, however, makes an attempt to investigate social media usage for sustaining formal academic communication, especially after the COVID-19 worldwide pandemic, in public universities that do not have a robust use of LMS and were reliant on in-class communication prior to COVID-19. In this research, formal academic communication means using social media as a sole and official platform for academic-related purposes, which include teaching and learning, student support, building an online community and program marketing and promotion, after their approval from institution leadership. More specifically, the research examines the extent to which social media are adopted by faculty members and students for sustaining formal academic communication. The guiding research questions for this research were: 1. what is the extent to which faculty members and students in public high

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2. Review of Literature

2.1. Social Media Usage in Higher Education

Social media have emerged as powerful platforms for possibly enhancing students' learning, facilitating interactions between students and their instructors as well as with their peers, and engaging them in the new distanced learning environment [3,4,7]. Research has also shown that faculty members are using social media for professional and teaching purposes [5]. The top-ranked social media for academic communication are Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube and Wikipedia [8]. A recent study found that Facebook and WhatsApp are the most used tools in higher education for different academic-related purposes [4]. Several studies [4,9–11] have focused on the broad advantages of social media usage in higher education. Such studies have confirmed the value of social media tools for informal scholarly communication, connectivity, community building, maintaining trust and satisfaction as well as developing students' social-life. Studies also showed the value of social media usage for student engagement and influencing positive student learning experiences [5,12].

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2.2. Student Perceptions of Social Media Usage for Academic Communication

Several studies [5,13–16] have been conducted to measure the effectiveness of social media tools for improving student integration in higher education. Studies showed that social media, such as Facebook, is considered an effective tool for improving students' performance [13,16,17], increasing students' engagement [5] and improving student awareness of their learning experience [15,18]. Furthermore, there is a direct relationship between the students' educational performance and the usage rate of Facebook for learning [17].