

Reinventing Social Media for Increased Educational Roles and a Smarter Country

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Abstract. This study is on reinventing social media for increased educational roles and a smarter country. The study adopted a literature review methodology to meet the objectives of this work. Specifically, areas treated are the various kinds of social media in use by students, what social media ought to be used for by students, and the darker side of the use of social networking sites. There was also a peep into expectations of the 22nd century in terms of using social media for scholarship by students, and finally, the contributory factors to a smarter nation like Nigeria was also surveyed. It was therefore found that social media platforms have come to stay but should be used by students more sensibly and appropriately, with the efficient use of social media in academics, scholarship is therefore guaranteed, users of social media should spend at most an hour on its use daily. It is important to note also that the authors forecasted that in less than a decade from now, 70% of people living on earth will become smart people.

Keywords: social media, education, educational roles, reinvention, smart country

Introduction

Technology has today brought countless benefits and succour to all sectors especially the academic sector. Whether we like it or otherwise, technology has come to stay in African developing countries like Nigeria (Idhalama, Udem & Dime, 2020). With the invention of Information and Communication Technology, schools now use various types of technologies to aid the services they render. Everyday new technological advances affect the way information is handled in various learning institutions. The impact of new technologies is felt by schools as a whole in every aspect. Computing technology, communication technology and mass storage technology are some of the areas of continuous development that reshape the way that school operations and services are been carried out. Over the years, the concept of learning and teaching is no more confined within the school walls. There are so many forms of technologies emerging which make it difficult to only learn and teach in the known conventional ways. This is as a result of what some scholars called smart' schools of the 21st century. Social media is one of the technologies that have evolved to assist teachers and students at all levels to advance in access to information and learning. This has simply improved the way people communicate and by extension turning the world into a global village. The social media according to Okeoghene (2018) are all web-based services that give room for both active and passive users to create their profiles, connect with other friends that they may wish to converse with. On the other hand, Ramesh (2010) submits that social media is used to mean virtual community that has geometrically grown in popularity where users participate in all kinds of discussions. To the researcher, social media is referred to networking sites where people connect with each other for the advancement of knowledge to perform more effectively in their jobs. There are numerous benefits of social media, some authors argue that there are negative impacts while others believe that there are positive vibes. To Edobor and Mabawonku (2018), social media has become a 21st century tool without which teaching and learning may be hindered. They further mentioned some of the

tools to be facebook, academic.edu, whatsapp, Google+, library thing, LinkedIn, Instagram, Telegram, Blogs, Imo, Twitter etc.

Though a handful of scholars have argued that social media interrupts effective teaching and learning, it must therefore be mentioned that it has so many benefits. That the gun can be used to kill an innocent citizen doesn't mean that it should be banned from sale. Omekwu (2019) supported this stance by stating that social media platforms provide a very vast and flexible medium for connection, friendliness, cooperation and communication. Omekwu hinted that the social media tools are useful for examination, information and information sharing among others. The emergence of facebook in 2004 according to Omekwu marked the golden era of social media, and also a golden age for academic activities using social media platforms. Education at any level is expected to be well rounded. This is to engender national integrations and development in the final analysis. This position is in sync with that of Waleed and Mohd (2014) when they averred that at the higher stage of academic pursuit, more academic tasks are expected and new generation students should be ready to understand that social media and other social technologies are instrumental and influential to learning. The social media concept should be seen, understood and effectively applied by both the digital natives and the digital immigrants; this will no doubt help to build confidence and required interaction between those that are being taught and the teachers. This is simply hinged on the fact that the social media platforms allow both teachers and students to meet many online tasks that are relevant to the day to day activities offline. For instance making new friends, share photos, share ideas, receive lectures, do group assignments etc.

Statement of Problem

The rapid advancement of media technology has had a greater impact on the way people communicate on a daily basis. The growing dimension of the use of social media among students and teachers today cannot be overemphasized. It is a way to make connection, not only on campus but with friends outside the school. These platforms help people feel they belong to a community.

On a more neutral note, the use of social media according to scholars can either make or mar the academic journey of students. It can make a student when it is properly used for academic activities and it can mar a student's journey to stardom when it is abused by using social media for frivolities. This paper will therefore unravel ways to effectively use social media in order to achieve results and be smart citizens.

Objectives of the Study

The major objective of this particular study is reinventing social media for increased educational roles and a smarter country, in specific terms, the study focuses on the following:

1. Various social media platforms used by students.
2. Students' supposed ways of using the social media.
3. Examination of the extent of use and darker side of social media use by students.
4. Peeping into the 22nd century with the use of social media in mind.
5. Further contributors to a smarter nation.

Methodology

This article has been put together by using literature review approach. This was done in consonance with reinventing social media for increased educational roles and a smarter country. This approach has been found suitable as it is said to provide a summary of literature on a particular problem identified (Idhalama & Ikenwe, 2018). In this particular paper, the above listed objectives were all considered in the cause of reviewing literature.

Literature Review

As have been stated above, social media are computer based technologies that help in the creation, manipulation and sharing of information, ideas, career interest and communication through a virtual space. Information is said to be power, to this end, Simplilearn (2020) noted that when information is not distributed or shared among people, then the intrinsic power may not be harnessed. A positive of the social media today is to aid the sharing of information. There is no doubting the fact that platforms such as Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook and others have made it simple to access all kinds of information by simply clicking a button. The social media has become a very interesting platform for students to educate and socialize. The following are some of the popular ones in use.

Facebook

This is a popular networking website founded in 2004. Currently known as the biggest/largest networking site based on global reach and its active users. Developed and launched by Harvard student Mark Zuckerberg and some friends, the service was at the initial period available to only the Harvard students. It is used by registered users to create profiles, share photos, send messages and also help to get in touch with friends and family (Lamoureux, 2019).

Google+

The network was founded in 2011 in a bid to compete with other social media platforms. It is designed for people/students to participate in a closed online environment that ensure easy communication. This service is owned by Google Inc.

LinkedIn

This is a social media network popularly used by professionals, workers and employers. It enables users to create profiles and get connected to each other. It was actually founded in 2002 and in 2019, the users had grown to 10 million registered members in 200 countries (LinkedIn, 2019).

Wikipedia

Wikipedia is known to be an electronic encyclopaedia collectively put together by the people who have access to it. Millions of people help to build encyclopaedia by making thousands of changes and updates per hours. Citing Wikipedia as a source of information by researchers may be questioned since anybody can alter its information.

Reddit

This is a social platform where stories are shared.

Whatsapp

This is simply a common application on smartphones that allows users to send and receive messages. Connection with friends is strictly based on phone numbers.

Flickr

Flicker has been known to be a service that hosts images and videos which was created by Ludicorp in 2004. Its ownership has changed severally and currently owned by Smugmug (frickr.com traffic, 2019).

Instagram

This is another photo and video sharing platform created in 2010 by Kelvin Systrom & Mike Krieger.

Twitter

Twitter was founded in 2006 known to be American online news update and social networking room where people get connected and interact. Others are youtube, blogs, skype, telegram.

The social media platforms are synonymous with web 2.0 where users send and receive missives towards effective communication.

Students' Supposed Ways of Using the Social Media

In the study of Javaeed (2020), the geometric increase of social media platforms presently influence our lives rapidly therefore leading to the reassessment of educational delivery method across the board. New technologies are steadily dominating the old methods of delivering education. In this 21st century, learners are reliant on new techniques to help them learn faster. To this end, social media can actually be fully introduced in order to complement traditional techniques

Irrespective of addiction and misuse of social media on the part of students, it has remained a major source of information and learning. It has been globally accepted to be a platform where students and organizations interact for effective coexistence.

Some of the areas students are expected to be using social media are according to Dlamini (2019) making connections with those that are experts in their various fields of study, this will no doubt boost their knowledge.

On same social media platforms, students are expected to be always up-to-date as institutions of learning are now creating facebook accounts where information is disseminated to their pupils or students as the case may be e.g. facebook and youtube.

Social media is also supposed to be used by students for research purposes. In doing this, students post their research topics for critiquing and fine tuning, in the end, a polished topic is realized, also students are supported with related materials to prosecute their thesis works.

Students ought to use social media to communicate with their colleagues that may be absent in a particular class, by so doing, there may not be so much information or knowledge missed.

Supervision of students' theses is another area that social media can be of help.

Also very important is the fact that our digital natives ought to become very smart as they are exposed to different kinds of cultures and styles as they identify with friends with various backgrounds.

Instant online discussion is another reason why the students are supposed to make use of social media which can be otherwise referred to as online meetings.

Examination of the Extent of Use and Darker Side of Social Media Use by Students

While in school, excellent performance is a key factor for academic scholarship. It is the reason why students must be encouraged to shun all sorts of distractions that will lower their educational performance. To this end, the time being spent on social media by students is a major issue. Students devote so much time to online activities like Whatsapp, facebook, twitter, youtube etc (Jagero & Murithi, 2013). In a related development, Beres (2020) noted that social media has a few negative side irrespective of its efficiency in teaching and learning. Some of the issues raised by the author are: making one to spend more money, altering one's appetite, inability to think independently, hurting one's self esteem and others.

As a student, effective time management is instrumental to positive outcomes. This is in line with the position of Ahmed and Qazi (2011) when they forecasted that with the way students are handling social media platforms, there may be a time where students will be too busy to attend classes for their studies. This submission was augmented with their finding that majority of students studied consumed so much reasonable time using social media in Pakistan.

On his part, Oluwatoyin (2011) made his point clear that students who use the social media spend lesser time studying than those who do not use the social media. Oluwatoyin by extension, posits that university students in Nigeria who use the social media networks barely find time to study thereby leading to lower grades in their academic performance.

For those students that see social media as their second home, here are some of the issues raised for consideration. Zhukova (2018) submits that as interesting as the various social media platforms may appear, there exists some challenges faced by users. The author opines that depression and anxiety are some of the outcomes of using the social networking sites for a long time. The author states that it has a way of affecting the mood of students which may lead to suicide. In the final analysis, Zhukova recommended moderation in the use of social media platforms for instance 30 minutes per day.

Cyber bullying was before now carried out face-to-face, but with the advent of social networking sites, it is now done commonly online. As social media is seen as platforms for association and making friends, it is also known to be a platform for predators to find their gullible preys. It must be noted therefore that cyber bullying isn't affecting only students but also adults and parents. Zhukova (2018) further noted other negative impact of social media use by students to be: fear of missing out (FOMO), unrealistic living standard, unhealthy sleep patterns and questionable students' addiction to social media currently worse than addiction to cigarettes.

Peeping into the 22nd Century with the Use of Social Media in Mind

As we gradually move closer to the 22nd century, it is hoped that students and other users of social media will begin to have a different attitude in the area of these social networking platforms. This made Mittal (2020) to note that students need to be cautious on the use of social media in order to encourage moderation, the author further stated that students have a lot to benefit from careful utilization of social media which are knowledge propagation, academic current news, connection with classmates and teachers, global exposure and further more. Some other areas to consider in using social media as we peep into the 22nd century will be:

- Ventilating and cross fertilizing ideas among students: With the social media in place, students from different backgrounds and different countries can now form a forum or a group where they share ideas, information and knowledge. In most cases, this may lead to heated debate; but the beauty remains that at the end, the superior views take the day.
- Online visibility and accessibility: This point was raised by Omekwu (2019) when he opined that visibility is very important in this digital era as no one is an island unto him/herself. With the help of media such as facebook, twitter, instagram etc, then online visibility is sure.
- Stay up-to-date with news and current events. Desreumaux (2018) states that a worthy life is that which makes room for people to be properly informed even at the appropriate time. Up-to-datedness is very important in this life of uncertainty; with social media people are informed of current happenings and how to avert troubles.
- Get in touch with what peers are doing: Nobody wants to be left behind therefore, it is important to always be abreast of what other colleagues and friends are doing in a given period in order to adjust. Adjustment here is only necessary if and only if what is currently in vogue is generally acceptable.
- Sharing one's opinion: Social media according to Desreumaux (2018) are avenues for sharing or selling view points. In the next few years to come social networking site may mostly be used for showcasing and advertising various points of view. By then, the era of using social media platforms for trivialities may have been gone.
- For marketing your products: In the century to come, social media will be fully adopted by products and services providers as a major communication tool to reach customers. This strategy has been partially adopted by the library though not fully. Marketing in this regard may be through advertising or selling of products. To this end, users of social media should begin to look at this noble direction.

- Area of research: This aspect will be fully considered in using social media. This is because as the world is gradually experiencing a paperless globe, also researchers are keying in, there comes a time where social media will be used for research supervision and also distribution of copies of questionnaire (Poushter, Bishop & Chwe, 2018).

Further Contributors to a Smarter Nation

At the time we started witnessing smart devices, automatically we started experiencing smarter cities and by extension smarter economies. There are a number of factors that determine if a country is a smart one. For instance Vyas (2019) noted that for cities to be smart, connectivity is a key factor, he used connectivity to mean a situation where citizens collaborate through connection with their devices. There are still people in this 21st century dispensation that will not be able to access their emails for a period of one week. This is not only appalling but also not a welcome idea in a smart economy. Availability of smart schools is another major factor that constitutes a smart nation. To Omekwu (2019), citing Omidinia, Masron and Salanat (2013), smart schools are those learning institutions that encourage active thinking abilities. These institutions make sure that their students are motivated to use personal computers (PCs), the Internet and intranets for carrying out research and also for communications. This according to the authorities a major sign of a smart environment of ecosystem as graduates from those institutions will have the abilities to impact their communities in a smart and digital manner. Leadership is a very key factor in a smart environment or country. Leaders at all levels should demonstrate the determination to develop the ICT sector. A very good example is the recent step of the Edo state government (Nigeria) under the leadership of Godwin Obaseki to train all primary and secondary school teachers on the basis of computer skills. Also the current management of Ambrose Alli University (AAU) led by Prof. I.A. Onimawo has shown the zeal and zest to make AAU the best state university in the area of ICT.

Effective/rightful use of social media is a good example of a smart economy or city as the case may be. Students and other stakeholders should be ready to shun trivialities and use social networking sites for more important and life transforming issues. This will no doubt catapult the country to an enviable height in the committee of countries.

Smart people are very important in talking about a smart nation, according to Monfaredzadeh and Berardi (2015), human and social capital, flexibility, creativity, tolerance, cosmopolitanism and participation in public life are criteria that determine the kind of people needed in a smart nation.

In all, it is the candid opinion of the researchers that in less than a decade from now, 70% of people living on earth will become smart people.

Conclusion

This study has shown that social media are very key to our day to day living. This is contrary to submissions by a handful of scholars advocating the negative impact of the social media. It is obvious that with appropriate use of social media, there will be fast tracked journey to scholarship and by extension smarter cities. To this end, students, teachers and lecturers are hereby encouraged to know what they stand to benefit in using social media more appropriately without abuse.

Findings/Recommendations

1. There are numerous types of social media platforms, hence users are to choose according to their purpose of use
2. Social media has come to stay but to be used by students sensibly/appropriately
3. With efficient use of social media in academics, scholarship is guaranteed

4. The benefits of social media are more than its disadvantages
5. There is a great correlation between social media and smart cities
6. In less than a decade from now, 70% of people living on earth will become smart people
7. It is recommended that users of social media should spend at most an hour on the site

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