

Dormancy of Social Media Sites among Nigerian Youths

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate why youths abandon social media sites. Adopting the Google document as instrument of data collection, the study investigates on why Nigerian youths abandon or render some of their social media sites inactive from 398 youths (18-35 years). The study found that most youths (92.9%), many of whom are on four social media sites, are active on social media platforms which they use regularly. Findings further reveal that that a reason they abandon their SMPs is due to friendliness of new platforms; and they discard a platform by simply anonymising their profile by changing their photographs or by simply leaving their account without necessarily deleting them. The study concludes that use of social media among the youths has come to stay. It recommends among other things that existing social media sites should always upgrade their functionality to enable them to withstand emerging ones with more endearing features.

Keywords: *anonymise, cyber safety, dormancy, google doc, social media sites, youths*

INTRODUCTION

Despite concerns about repercussions of social media usage, there is no doubt social media play key role in human life. Social media enhance social interaction, provide comfort, and serve as platform for education, business transactions, entertainment and relaxation. They have given users potential for communication and interaction that they did not

previously possess (Kapoor, Tamilmani, Rana & Nerur, 2018; Miller, Costa, Haynes, McDonald, Nicolescu, Sinanan, Spyer & Venkatraman, 2016). Due to the acclaimed advantages of social media, users have continued to explore and open accounts with the ever-emerging platforms. The magnitude and meteoric rise in social media use is attested to by Facebook (2019) that social media are used by billions of people around the world and

have fast become one of the defining technologies of the moment; Facebook, for example, is reputed of having 2.39 billion monthly active users and 1.56 billion daily active users as of March 31, 2019. But the fact that social media are highly inundating the technology landscape does not foreclose that all social media platforms are accorded a proportionate use. As social media platforms rise generally, some are not only being displaced but are becoming dormant probably because even among social media users, not all ways of using social media have been found to lead to the same benefits (Burke, Kraut, & Marlow, 2011).

This development has spurred interest to social media use and abandonment of social media platforms as a topic of scholarly research among researchers. One of these researches has focused specifically on the non-use of social media. Sheldon's (2012) study which serves as example found that non-users are frequently significantly older and score higher on shyness and loneliness. The study further stresses that non-users are less socially active, and are less prone to sensation seeking activities. In a survey, 61% of Facebook users described having "voluntarily taken a break from using Facebook for a period of several weeks or more (Rainie, Smith, & Duggan, 2013). Similarly, Brubaker, Ananny and Crawford's (2014) study focused on what people report leaving, how they leave and what they say leaving means to them. Another study has simply examined motivations for leaving social media (see Baumer, Adams, Khovanskaya, Liao, Smith, SchwandaSosik, & Williams, 2013). Other researchers (Baumer, Guha, Quan, Mimno, & Gay, 2015) based their study on social media reversion; a situation when a user intentionally ceases using a social media site but then later resumes use of the site.

While literature is replete on quitting or dormancy of social media platforms by users in the western world, the same cannot be said to be the case in developing countries particularly Nigeria, This understudied country creates a problematic limitation of geographic social media research. Premised on this assumption, this article contributes to addressing this research gap by investigating rationale for quitting some social media platforms among Nigerian youths, who at the same time retain or open new accounts with other social media platforms. This is more germane considering the fact that from statistics drawn in Africa, Nigeria has the largest internet users; more than 80 million people have access to the internet, with penetration of 50% (Internet World Stats; Forbes, 2018). This position is further stressed by Nche (2012) that while the internet is the chief host of social media sites, the youths are the most predominant clients.

The term, social media, according to Lewis (2010) is label for digital technologies that allow people to connect, interact, produce and share content. This is what Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) referred to as a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of web which allow the creation and exchange of user generated content. Among the most popular social network services are Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, LinkedIn, Flickr, YouTube and FourSquare. Stretching the social media platforms youths use, Ngonso (2019) avers that today's youths spend hours surfing the net engaging in different networking sites like Pinterest, WhatsApp, Care2, Cellufun, Vine, Classmates, We Heart It, Flickr, Tumbir, and Instagram which have become a

prominent part of their daily lives. These platforms essentially enhance sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests. They as a matter of necessity build communities or networks and encourage participation and engagement.

Dormancy of social media platform may be described as state of inactive, passive engagement by users, who may have previously initiated or contributed to posts on the social media (Brodie, Ilic, Juric, & Hollebeek, 2013). Viewed this way social media users exhibiting a state of dormancy make passive contributions to the social media platform. They do not engage with social media through the consumption, contribution to or creation of any content (Dolan, Conduit, Fahy & Goodman, 2015).

In order to address the research problem that researches on quitting or dormancy of social media are skewed to other developed countries rather than Nigeria within the context of WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and 2go, the study sets the following four objectives taking recourse to Nigerian youths which are to:

- i. Determine the extent Nigerian youths are active on social media.
- ii. Identify the most used social media platform by Nigerian youths.
- iii. Find out the reasons Nigerian youths abandon their social media platforms.
- iv. Investigate ways Nigerian youths abandon social media platforms.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Media Conceptualised

Several researchers have defined social media depending on their respective

conceptions of the term. For many people, the concept of social media is synonymous with such platforms like Facebook, 2go, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter (Kane, 2013). However, these sites change over time in functionalities, focus, content and use and therefore the definition is not precise. For example, Fab-Ukozor and Ojiakor (2020) gives insight into the functional definition of social media networks as platforms that facilitate the building of social relationships among people. In the wake of the numerous and varying perspectives, this study settles on the definition offered by Boyd and Ellison (2013), who define the concept of social media as: communication platform in which participants 1) have uniquely identifiable profiles that consist of user-supplied content, content provided by other users, and/or system-level data, 2) can publicly articulate connections that can be viewed and traversed by others; and 3) can consume, produce, and/or interact with streams of user-generated content provided by their connections on the site. This definition has semblance with Nair's (2011), which describes social media as online tool where content, opinions, perspectives, insights, and media can be shared. A salient feature of these two similar definitions is the virtuality of social media which allows users to interact in virtual worlds as they would interact in real life. Viewed from this prism, social media are basically those sites or platforms people especially youths associate with. These include WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and 2go.

According to Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy and Silvestre (2011) social media possess seven functional building blocks which are present to any social media application and which can be substituted and enhanced through

integration of several applications explained below.

Identity: refers to the representation of the user in the virtual world. It could be as descriptive and personal as a profile on Facebook, listing birthday, hobbies, family relationships etc., or could be as vague as an imaginary pseudonym. *Conversations:* allows users to interact with each other in a broadcast or dialogue manner synchronously in real time or asynchronously with time lapse between statements. *Sharing:* refers to activities through which existing content is spread through the social graph. Hereby the social connections might not be necessary be made explicit, for example publicly sharing on Facebook or posting on Twitter does not rely on existing connections: on the contrary in the example of Twitter “sharing” often precedes connections. *Presence:* allows users to know where other community members are (on/off-line and actual/virtual location). *Relationships:* allows community members to visualize their networks in many ways ranging from “likes” and “followers-followed” to virtual representation of real-life relationships. These social-graph abstractions can be unidirectional and bi-directional and allow strong and weak ties. For example, “following” on Twitter is not necessarily reciprocal, whereas a connection on LinkedIn requires both parties to accept the connection and both to indicate the nature of their relationship (e.g. colleagues). *Groups:* refers both to membership groups where users can articulate their affiliations with, or interest in, a specific subject and groups utilized by users to manage their relationships. *Reputation:* allows users to qualify the content provided by another user and establish trust-levels between community members. These trust-levels can be made

explicit, for example through a scoring or ranking system (LinkedIn “influencer” status, StackOverflow points system), or remain implicit (Twitter number of followers).

Social Media and Youths

There exists an inextricable relationship between social media and youths. Studies reveal that youths the world over aggressively use social media, which have become an inherent feature of their lives for different reasons or purposes. Their usage could be for pleasure, interact with their co-users, who could be friends, family members or acquaintances. On account that they are inherent part of everyday life Sorensen, Porras, Hajikhani and Hayar (2014) share that:

Privately, we keep updated on friends and family members’ whereabouts; at work, we use the social networking sites to keep us informed about news in a research field, to find the experts to ask or the right jobs to apply for, and public institutions send alerts via the social media to warn about disasters (p.1).

Apart from this implied information role, social media influences youngsters’ lifestyles and it is helping them to create a network throughout the world. Social media makes it effortless to make relationship with anyone by expressing their likes and dislikes, which can be easily done (Ranni & Padmalosani, 2019). They are able to comment with everyone through texting, sharing pictures and videos to their friends and the information

can be passed on immediately at cheaper cost.

Youths almost indiscriminately use social media anywhere anytime – in toilets, streets and while eating. This underscores Rousseau and Puttaraju’s (2014) observation that social media sites have grown beyond time pass activity and become a significant and useful, but addictive activity in our daily lives. Today, social media users are more pro-active participants by using it almost 24/7 for some of their favourite activities like chatting, commenting, liking, posting new content, tagging photos, following celebrities (Rousseau & Puttaraju, 2014). Beyond use of social media to socialise, Fiegeman (2019) adds that social media platforms are used as political tools to share thoughts and opinions and especially for dissemination of political sentiments and engage voters. Giving the massive potential youths spend hours daily using social media across various platforms, it is not surprising that stakeholders like marketers have embraced social media as a marketing channel. Academically, social media have also been embraced, as an extensive body of research on social media marketing and related topics, such as online word of mouth and online networks, have been developed (Appel, Grewal, Hadi & Stephen, 2019).

With a plethora of social networking sites available, youths can choose their favourite sites based on the best features available and where their maximum numbers of friends are members to build their own personal socialising network. In the wake of multiplicity of these social media sites, young people, particularly, are quick to use the new technology in ways that increasingly blur the boundaries between online and offline activities. Social

networking services are also developing rapidly as technology changes with new mobile dimensions and features. (Childnet International Research Report, 2008).

The dark side of social media merits mention. Social media encourages unethical conduct among Nigerian youths. On account of this, Ranni and Padmalosani (2019) point out that unethical videos, chatting, and images weaken affiliation among youths especially as youths are immature and fall victim of the cyberbullying.

Concerns are also raised about echo chambers produced by social media platforms. While social media platforms signify that echo chambers could pose a problem, the situation may not be clear. However, Fiegeman (2019) advances a reason that echo chambers present such a problem, which is their proneness to fake news that are fabricated stories that try to disguise themselves as authentic content, in order to affect other social media users.

Social Media Dormancy among Youths

In spite of the addictiveness of youths to social media, there is a lack of proportionate attention youths give to all sites they operate thereby rendering some of the sites dormant. A lot of factors are responsible for dormancy of social media sites. These include but not limited to preference for other technologies, privacy concern, and time constraints and many studies have been conducted in this regard. As regards shift in technology, a study was conducted by Birnholtz (2010) specifically on instant messenger adoption, use and abandonment which demonstrates how shifts in users’ contexts relate to their long-term use and adaptation of a communication technology. Based on interviews with

respondents, Birnholtz reported that instant messaging made participants too available to contacts from previous contexts, prompting some to leave it altogether.

Another early study on the non-use of social media was by Baker and White (2012) where the authors investigated the non-use of social media sites, specifically MySpace and Facebook among Australian teenagers. The top reason offered by teenagers is a lack of motivation, while the other main reasons include poor use of time, preference for other forms of communication, preference for engaging in other activities, cyber safety concerns, and a dislike of self-presentation online. Their findings suggest the failure of social network sites to provide engaging features and user experience to attract young adolescents.

In their study that investigated Twitter and Facebook abandonment, Guo and Goh (2014) note that Facebook is preferred over Twitter and the reasons for the abandonment of both platforms are similar, with privacy concerns being one of the main reasons. Additional findings indicate that time and effort, privacy, and culture are reasons that not only influence the abandonment of microblogs but also the abandonment of social networking sites in general. Fundamentally, too, abandonment of one social media platform was affected by preference for other more popular social media platforms.

Privacy being a huge concern that makes youths to abandon social media platforms spurred a related study by Siu (2019) titled: *The Changing Position of Social Media in 2020: What Does it Mean for Marketers?* The study establishes that Facebook has embarked on aggressive

campaign to retain users by encouraging them to trust the platform within data which is not secret. With reference to Mark Zuckerberg's testimony that even though the platform (Facebook) stores data; some of the content with people's permission and information is never directly sold to advertisers, many users are not happy about their private data and activity being used without their consent.

Another reason for social media abandonment is attributed to the context in which a technology is used. Birnholtz (2010), whose study focused on the Instant Messaging (IM) service, found that while participants were attracted to IM by features that facilitated their social interactions during leisure time, the very same features proved to be distracting and annoying outside of leisure time. In addition, users may also be unwilling to use a new or different technology due to the switching costs involved (Kim & Kankanhall, 2009 cited in Guo & Goh, 2014). Therefore, they are content to continue to use the technology that they have been using, and resist alternatives.

Media Niche Theory

This study was anchored on the theory of the niche which origin is traced from the ecological study of competing animal populations and has been applied to the rivalry in mass media first by Dimmick (2008) and now social media for the common resource of consumers. The theory underscores the idea that media must differentiate themselves along certain dimensions that allow for their survival to compete and coexist within a resource space. As an incumbent medium matures, it will need to adapt, converge or become obsolete when faced with a new medium (Dimmick, Feaster, Hoplamazian, 2010).

The niche of a medium is derived from its pattern of resource use, represents its strategy for survival and growth, and ultimately determines its position in a multidimensional resource space (Ramirez, Dimmick, Feaster & Lin, 2008). The point being made is that when groups of similar media comprising common attributes vie for the same resources to support survival, what stands out some media is the quantum of their resources. Dimmick (2003) cited in Dimmick, Feaster and Hoplamazian (2010) notes that if a medium cannot differentiate itself through some form of competitive superiority, it will not be able to survive or compete or coexist with other media for serving an audience

The niche theory gives pre-eminence to resource space especially the macro dimension of the resource space. The macro dimensions of the resource space may include gratification utilities and gratification opportunities. Gratification opportunities are properties of a medium that allow users to overcome time and space constraints and, in effect, amplify or attenuate the ability to derive satisfaction from a medium. The position adopted here is that there is no universal set of gratifications applicable to all media, but there are domains of gratification utility particular to each set of competing media (Dutta-Bergman, 2004 cited in Ramirez, Dimmick, Feaster & Lin, 2008). These include:

i. Niche breadth, or the degree to which a medium satisfies a relatively broad or relatively narrow spectrum of media-related needs. Niche breadth can be interpreted as relative specialism or relative generalism. Specialists gratify a relatively narrow set of needs, and generalists satisfy a broader spectrum.

ii. Niche overlap, or the extent to which media are perceived as similar, indicated by the “distance” between their gratification niches. Put differently, niche overlap is an index of the substitutability or complementarity of two media. High overlap indicates that media are substitutes or serve the same needs, whereas lower overlap indicates that different needs are being served. Thus, low overlap points toward the complementarity of the media, whereas high overlap indicates strong similarity or competition.

iii. Competitive superiority or the extent to which one or the other of a pair of media provide greater gratification. Indices of superiority for gratification measures are defined as arithmetic means, and differences between two means on a dimension can be tested for significance using a *t* test for correlated groups. If the test yields a significant result, this is interpreted to mean that the medium that obtained the higher superiority score is better at providing gratification utility to consumers than the other medium. Conversely, media that do not differ significantly also do not differ in their ability to provide gratifications.

In examining the competition between various new media platforms, the niche theory proves more appropriate if not the most. This is borne from the concern that as the social media platforms emerge and evolve there is almost always high tendency for users particularly the youths, who are avid users to supplement or even substitute pre-existing ones in use for the latest.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study adopted electronic and internet surveys using e-questionnaire as instrument of data collection which Sue and Ritter (2012) believe that are faster, cheaper and easier than traditional methods. Similarly, Schonlau, Fricker, and Elliot (2005) justified that nowadays many surveys are carried out by the internet-based questionnaires (google docs) and have their own advantages. Google Documents (docs.google.com) is an online internet-based questionnaire that makes it possible to create a survey, document, or a presentation which is kept on the server and is easily accessed from anywhere as far as there is an Internet connection. The security level of the document or survey created was adjusted high or low according to need of the researchers and was shared with participants as desired. The document was freely viewable by anyone on the Internet, particularly by those who had the link to the document as needed. The questionnaire created in Google, this online tool was not affiliated with any website, and did not require login information not related to the study (Schonlau, Fricker & Elliot, 2005). Thus, those invited or with a link to the questionnaire were able to access it and participate without divulging any identifying information. Once participants completed the questionnaire and clicked on the submit button, data was stored in the Google Docs spreadsheet. This spreadsheet was safe and once again only reachable or viewable by the researchers. Once data collection was completed, the questionnaire was closed to further participation. The data file was converted into a spreadsheet which was then uploaded into the data analysis tool such as SPSS (Sue & Ritter, 2012). Population of the study, according to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), was

84 million voters registered in the 2019 Nigeria Presidential election out of which 51 percent of the population was youths within the age group of 18-35. Hence, 51 percent of 84 million is 42,840,000. Based on this population, a sample size of 398 was drawn premised on the foundation of the social sciences tradition that allows for a 95% confidence level benchmark (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). Youths were purposively selected. Hence, entries from ages below 18 and above 35 were regarded as invalid, as they are not captured within the scope of the study. Another reason for the use of this sampling method is because of the instrument of data collection which is Google document, an online-based internet questionnaire and sampling in internet research studies is also not randomised (Kayam & Hirsch, 2012). In the case of social media, five social media platforms namely; WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and 2go were purposively selected as study sample.

DATA PRESENTATION

The data presented is based on all the 498 respondents harvested through the e-questionnaire as instrument of data collection.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

The major demographic characteristics in this study are respondents' gender, age and religion. The demographic profile of this study is presented in frequency and percentage format table 1. The age range of respondents in this study is placed between 18 years and 35years (M=1.68, SD=.772). With ages recoded into categories, respondents between 18 years to 23 years, constitute the majority of the

youths in the study as they accounted for 51.0% of the total respondents. The

number of females accounted for 212 (53.0%).

Table 1: Respondents' Demographic Profile

Demographic profile	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
18 – 23 years old	200	51.0
24 – 29 years old	124	32.0
30 – 35 years old	74	17.0
Total (M=1.69, S.D=.772, min=18, max= 35)	398	100
Gender		
Male	187	47.0
Female	211	53.0
Total	398	100

Analyses of Research Questions

RQ1: To what extent are youths active on social media?

Respondents' activeness on social media is captured in various categories across different levels. The results of the test of youths' activeness presented in Table.2 shows that 163 respondents which captures 40.9% of the entire population

spend 4-6 hours daily on their various social media platforms (M= 2.55, SD= .818). On testing youths' activeness, the result also shows that 370 respondents which is 92.9% of the population are very active on social media platforms (M=1.80, SD=.282). Also, 166 respondents which occupy 41.7% also show activeness on social media platforms by commenting on issues of interest to them (M= 2.55, SD=.815).

Table 2: Extent of social media activeness among respondents

Social media activeness Percentage	Frequency	
Hours spent on SMP daily		
Less than one hour	38	9.5
1-3 hours	151	37.9
4-6hours	163	40.9
7 hours and above	46	11.5
Total (M= 2.55, S.D= .818)	398	100.0
Activeness on SMP		

Very active	370	92.9
Moderate	26	6.5
Less active	2	0.5
Total (M= 1.08, S.D= .282)	398	100.0
I comment on issues of interest		
Regularly	166	41.7
Occasionally	151	37.9
Rarely	45	11.3
Never	36	9.0
Total (M= 2.55, S.D= .815)	398	100.0

RQ2: What is the most used social media platform by youths?

Usage of social media in this study is explored also in various categories across different levels. The results of the test on usage are presented in Table 3. The table shows that 127 respondents which is 31.9% of the population have four (4) social media platforms, next to which is

29.6% (118) of the population having five (5) social media platforms. The table also shows that 351 respondents, which captures 88.1% of the respondents use social media regularly on their device (M=1.12, SD=.328). While 331 respondents represented by 83.1% of the population show that the most used social media platform by respondents is WhatsApp.

Table 3: Most used social media platforms amongst respondents

Most used social media platform Percentage	Frequency	
How many social media platforms are you on?		
1	2	0.5
2	25	6.2
3	86	21.6
4	127	31.9
5	118	29.6
6	36	9.0
7	4	1.0
Total (M= 4.14, S.D= 1.122)	398	100.0
How frequently do you use social media on your device?		

Regularly	351	88.1
Occasionally	47	11.8
Rarely	0	0
Total (M= 1.12, S.D= .328)	398	100.0

Which social media platforms do you use the most?

Facebook	21	5.2
WhatsApp	331	83.1
Instagram	19	4.7
Twitter	27	6.7
2go	0	0
Total (M= 2.14, S.D= .602)	398	100.0

RQ3: What are the reasons youths abandon their social media platforms?

Reason refers to the emotions and motives that make one to do something. To arrive at social media abandonment among respondents across the 5 selected social media platforms, a 15 item 4-point

Likert scale was used. Respondents disagree that they abandon their SMPs because of absence of their favourite celebrity (M=2.23, SD=.772) rather they abandon their SMPs due to presence of new friendly SMPs (M= 3.02, SD= .694).

Table 4: Reason for abandonment of social media platforms

Reason for abandonment of social media platforms	Level of Agreement* (%)						Overall (%)
	1	2	3	4	M	SD	
Absence of user friendliness on the platform	9.2	37.9	41.1	11.5	2.55	.815	63.75
Presence of family members in the platform	12.7	36.2	35.9	15.0	2.53	.898	63.25
Absence of favourite celebrity on the platform	15.7	51.1	27.7	5.2	2.23	.772	55.75
Loss of interest in platform	7.5	18.5	53.9	20.0	2.87	.818	71.75
Presence of new trending social media platform	1.5	22.9	52.4	22.9	2.97	.721	74.25
Presence of new friendly social media platform	1.5	18.7	56.4	23.2	3.02	.694	75.5
Absence of friends on the platform	3.5	21.9	57.4	17.0	2.88	.719	72
Excessive time spent on the medium	9.5	35.9	44.4	10.0	2.55	.799	63.75
Addiction to the platform	4.7	39.7	37.9	17.5	2.68	.814	67

Fear of academic failure	12.0	36.2	36.9	14.7	2.55	.886	63.75
High possibility of fake news on the medium	8.0	24.2	55.9	11.7	2.72	.775	68
Fake self-representation on the medium	9.2	25.9	49.4	15.2	2.71	.836	67.75
Fear of expression of opinion on the platform	.5	36.2	42.4	14.7	2.66	11.7	66.5
Too old	38.2	38.9	11.0	2.49	.841	8.2	
Cyber-bullying.	33.2	42.4	15.2	2.65	.838		62.25
Total		.802			2.67		66.8

***Scale 1= strongly disagree 2= disagree 3= agree 4= strongly agree**

RQ4: How do youths abandon some social media platforms?

Several reasons abound as to the way youths abandon some social media platforms. As shown on Table 4 respondents strongly agreed that a way

they abandon social media platform is by no longer responding to or posting messages on the social media platform (3.37 M=2.23, SD= .628). Similarly they abandon it by deleting the application (M=3.27, SD= .692).

Table 5: How youths abandon social media platforms

Preference of social media platforms	Level of Agreement* (%)						Overall (%)
	1	2	3	4	M	SD	
I delete my account.	7.5	6.0	45.0	41.5	3.21	.857	80.25
I delete the app from my phone	2.0	8.0	51.0	39.0	3.27	.692	81.75
I anonymise my profiles by changing my photograph.	3.5	3.5	50.0	43.0	3.33	.708	83.25
I simply leave the platform without necessarily deleting it.	5.5	9.0	34.5	51.0	3.31	.852	82.75
I change my interaction styles	2.5	21.0	49.0	27.5	3.02	.766	75.5
I convert my contacts to other communications services.	8.0	12.5	46.5	33.0	3.05	.880	76.25
I no longer respond or post messages on the platform	2.0	2.0	53.0	43.0	3.37	.628	84.25
Total					3.22	.769	80.64

Scale* 1 Strongly disagree (1-25%), 2 Disagree (26-50%), 3 Agree (51-75%), 4 Strongly Agree (76-100%).

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Arising from concerns that emerging youths are addicted to social media use

and their inclination to explore emerging platforms thereby rendering other existing ones in use dormant informs the study. Findings about the four research questions

that guide the study are revealing. For example, in order to establish the youths' regularity of social media use, most of them answered in the affirmative. This is not surprising considering submissions of certain studies and literature that the advent of social media is aggressively used by everybody irrespective of age and other demographical considerations. If everybody is noted of regularly using the platform, it is needless to stress on the youths' involvement, who out of curiosity tend to be early adopters of new media. This confirms Rousseau and Puttaraju's (2014) submission that young people, particularly, are quick to use the new technology in ways that increasingly blur the boundaries between online and offline activities. Reasons they use social media are legion. Youths use the media for entertainment, communication, collaboration, dating, and content sharing across networks of contacts and connect with friends and family members.

Regularity of youths' use of social media is strengthened by findings that they are very active and devote several hours on social media use. The time youths spend on social media is expected considering the relative leisure they enjoy particularly when off academic rigours and other activities that would restrain them from using the social media. Regular access and use of the social media sites by youths is further established as findings of this study reveal that most of the youths are on four to five active platforms. This is in affirmation of a study by Rousseau and Puttaraju (2014) youths indulge in social media through activities like chatting, commenting, liking, posting new content, tagging photos, following celebrities. Fiegeman (2019) adds that social media platforms are used as political tools to share thoughts and opinions and especially for dissemination of political sentiments

and engage voters. This submission is, however, based on the five social media platforms of Facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram, Twitter, and 2go studied. As a matter of fact these social media sites have a number of common features. These include the ability of users to create a list of friends, update their statuses, to comment on other users' statuses and content, to indicate that they like another user's content, and to send private messages (Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, 2011).

Despite youths' presence on these platforms, majority are of the opinion that they mainly use WhatsApp. This is an indication that they prefer using WhatsApp to other platforms in affirmation of niche theoretical underpinning which underscores the idea that media must differentiate themselves along certain dimensions that allow for their survival to compete and coexist within a resource space. And probably, WhatsApp, to the youths, is comparatively unique. It should be noted that social media users generally and youths in particular enjoy the privilege of using a plethora of other existing social platforms like Skype, Printerest, YouTube, MySpace, WeChat, QZone, Tumbir, Viber, Line, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Telegram, Tagged, Badoo, The Dots, and Reddit among others. Thus, in the context of this study, respondents identified with as many as seven social media platforms most using as many as four or five social media platforms. Respondents' choice of WhatsApp as the most used social media platform impliedly relegates the other four social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and 2go) to the background. This means even if they are not abandoned, they are comparatively underutilised suggestive of the fact that users by human nature are by default programmed to be disproportionately

socially active to certain extent and therefore opt for means to connect and network with others depending on platforms that maximise their relationship with others (Spencer, 2020). More so, it could be that some of these social media platforms may be unknown or are known but have not used them. More fundamentally, challenges to use a platform with ease could likely inhibit continual use consistent with Spade’s submission cited in Spencer (2020) that Facebook is blocking everything sent even down to replying to their own questions probably due to a problem they may be trying to fix.

Naturally, people do not stick to a particular thing or issue eternally but make a change of what they are known for. The decision to change is dependent on perceived advantages of the new technology like ease of use. This is why when respondents were required to indicate why they abandon some platforms; their action was attributed to several reasons. Basically, these reasons include the presence of new friendly social media platforms inconsistent with findings of some existing studies. For example, Birnholtz (2010), who studies Instant Messaging (IM) service, found that while participants were attracted to IM by features that facilitated their social interactions during leisure time, the very same features proved to be distracting and annoying outside of leisure time. In addition, users may also be unwilling to use a new or different technology due to the switching costs involved (Kim & Kankanhall, 2009). Therefore, they are content to continue using the technology that they have been using, and resist alternatives that may culminate to abandonment. To further stress rationale users discard social media platform Ranni and Padmalosani (2019) link the behaviour

to unethical posting of videos, chatting, and images that have potentials of weakening affiliation among youths especially as youths are immature and fall victim of the cyber bullying. A dimension to social media abandonment is pushed forward by Fiegeman (2019), who reasoned that echo chambers present such a problem, which is their proneness to fake news that are fabricated stories that try to disguise themselves as authentic content, in order to affect other social media users. A peep into social media content across different platforms especially with political colouration dominates the social media space. This shows the level of media literacy among Nigerian youths.

Giving that youths are avid users of social media platforms, and most of them are on multiple sites but have the propensity for platform abandonment, the researchers sought to find out how youths discard some sites. In this case several options are at the disposal of youths to quit any platform. Therefore, some of them indicate that the way they discard a platform is to simply anonymise their profile by changing their photographs. Similarly, they note that their leaving a platform is by deleting their account or by changing interaction or by converting contacts to other communication devices. To the extent that youths abandon some sites by adopting different ways affirms existing literature that articles and posts regarding quitting social media were generally separable into either those discussing (a) completely deleting one’s account and quitting social media or a specific service or (b) taking a prolonged hiatus due to social media fatigue. The latter often described being tired of tedious activities associated with social media (i.e., account upkeep), or what Tufekci (2008) referred to as online “social

grooming” activities or simply having grown tired of social media altogether.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusion that can be drawn from this study is that people and youths in particular always explore ways to network with each other. In this age of digitisation, Nigerian youths sparingly network physically but leverage on the Internet to be socially active on social media. Social media, therefore, make available the platform for Nigerian youths to build social networks or relationship among themselves. The permissiveness of the social media platforms can be seen in the ease of access and use. In as much as Nigerian youths are avid users of the various existing social media platforms, there is a remarkable disparity in the number of social media platforms they use, retain and abandon. This forms the basis for the study.

This study on dormancy of social media site further asserts that Nigerian youths have the propensity to continually quit some social media platforms as far as emerging ones with better qualities register their presence in the social media ecosystem. This is vital considering the motivations that drive their decisions to quit some social media platforms. Given the ubiquity of social media as a normalised social tool, it is unsurprising that youths are on several platforms they use regularly to create and maintain friends, connect with family members and so on. However, findings of the study cannot be generalised considering the narrow scope the study is situated which is Nigerian youths. A second limitation is found in the study’s use of quantitative method only rather than combining it with qualitative method for

triangulation. This constrained the authors from probing into the reasons Nigeria youths abandon social media sites which can only be achieved through in-depth interview.

Based on the findings presented, it is hereby recommended that:

Existing social media sites should continually upgrade their functionality so as to be able to withstand threat or challenge posed by the emerging ones with superior resource. As incumbent media being matured, they should improve with a view to adapting or converging new ones or they will become obsolete.

Arising from the fact that youths abandon social media sites due to existence of fake news and cyber bullying on the platform, service providers should introduce some check mechanisms against these to make the platform friendlier for users thereby discarding the idea of quitting the sites for these reasons.

It is also recommended that youths who abandon social media sites should ensure they completely delete their profile on the site. This is premised on the fact that by simply leaving the platform without necessarily deleting it, their presence on the site can still be felt and other users may take advantage of using such sites to their disadvantage.

Future studies should combine several methods as well as broaden the scope for generalisation. The methods could be a combination of survey and in-depth interviews or focus group while the scope can be expanded to cover a broad spectrum of people across the world.

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