A Discourse on Nigerian Youths as a Gullible Consumer of
Social Media and Popular Culture

JOSEPHINE OSATOHANMWEN ADEYEYE [1]

jenobakhare@biu.edu.ng

AND

KINGSLEY AGHOGHO EDAFIENENE PH.D[2]

kedafienene@biu.edu.ng

Abstract

The mass appeal of social networks on the internet could be a cause for concern, particularly when attending to the gradually increasing amount of time youths spend online. Social networking sites offer youths the possibilities of networking and sharing media content, therefore embracing the main web 2.0 attributes against the framework of their respective structural characteristics (Jenkins, 2006). The internet has an indescribable power to influence, connect and mobilize youths. Some youths are overwhelmed by the easy access and freedom to multifarious media content on the internet and have lost control over its usage and begun having problems with their functionality in social, vocational and personal circles as the internet has taken over total control of their lives. Thus, this paper attempt to examine social media and popular cultures and specifically focuses on the gullibility of Nigerian youths that are addicted in consuming foreign media contents via social media sites and how social media has affected their communication and socialization habits. Although, it is impossible to dissuade youths from using the social media, however, youths should be encouraged to engage online websites more creatively to their advantage and to the benefit of the society. This paper recommends that there is need for parents, guardians, to understand the use of these forms of media and, if possible, attempt to use them, and try to be involved thereby monitoring their wards on how they use these sites and what they use the sites for. They should also encourage youths to engage media content on social media platforms pro-actively and profitably.

Keywords: Social Media, Popular Culture, Media Consumption, Gullibility.

Introduction

Social media are forms of electronic communication, which facilitate interaction based on certain interests and characteristics. Social media are Internet sites where people interact freely, share and discuss information about their lives, using a multimedia mix of personal words, pictures, videos and audio. Social media enable individuals and groups create and exchange content and engage in person-to-person conversations. They are in many forms including blogs and microblogs, forums and message boards, social networks, wikis, virtual worlds, social bookmarking, tagging and news, writing communities, digital storytelling, scrapbooking, and data, content, image and video sharing, podcast portals, and collective intelligence. Some of the well-known sites include Facebook, LinkedIn, Myspace, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, Wordpress, Bloggers, Typedpad, Live Journal, Wikipedia, Wetpaint, Wikidot, Second Life, Del.icio.us, Digg, Reddit, Lulu, etc (Haruna and Danladi, 2013).

The advent of social media heralded a change in our cultural norms because it connects people instantly from across the globe and serves as a platform to establish new relationships amongst youths. Since the emergence of social media, youths have increasingly immersed themselves with cyber or online activities which have deeply integrated into their daily lives. Thus, this has attracted a growing debate between scholars and commentators on the emergent impact of new media technology on the activities, social relationships and worldviews of youths in contemporary societies in late modernity (Mesch, 2008).

---

[1]Josephine Osatohanmwen Adeyeye is a lecturer in the Department of Mass Communication, Benson Idahosa University, Benin City, Nigeria.

[2] Dr. Kingsley Aghogho Edafienene is a lecturer in the Department of Mass Communication, Benson Idahosa University, Benin City, Nigeria.

The transformation of social media becoming an integral part of the way we live, connect to the globe and streamline our relationship to new concepts, innovation and design has created a paradigm shift from the mundane traditional way of communicating to mainstream online activity where information and communication is limitless and not goal oriented. Accordingly, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) quipped that social media is "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological multi- faceted and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content." Social media is often used interchangeably with web 2.0, denoting second generation of internet-based services. O'Reilly (2005) in Ekeli and Enobakhare (2013, p. 119) provided a comparison of Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 to demonstrate how Web 2.0 represents a new mindset: Web 1.0 was the era when people could think that Netscape (a software company) was the contender for the computer industry crown. Web 2.0 is the era when people are recognizing that leadership in the computer industry has passed from traditional software companies to a new kind of internet service company.

The transmogrification of web 1.0 to web 2.0 is not a backlash on older network but an improvement to digital network that is more accessible and less controllable enabling a new sense of disquisition of hopes between and among individuals. The intricacies of social media according to Ociepka (2012, p. 25) is an easy route that enables individuals to disseminate information, intensify social contact and engage in multifarious discussion on diverse platforms, while at an instant can control content through networks they participate. There are diverse forms and usage of social media varying on different platform with keenness embedded with its characteristics of participation, openness, conversation, community and connectedness (Mayfield, 2008). In its entirety, social media can never sail free from technological advancement, social interaction and cohesion, content creation via online connectivity.

Theoretical Framework

The commodification of culture theory best depicts this study as it is concerned with what transpires when a foreign culture is mass produced and distributed in direct competition with locally or community-based culture. Baran and Davis (2003, p. 331) observed that the mass media have become industries specializing in the production and distribution of cultural commodities. This has direct implication on our culture as foreign entrepreneurs with greater economic power and advantage are able to displace the local producers of cultural fare, to the detriment of the people's everyday lives. Folarin (2005) asserts that elite entrepreneurs engage ill-paids killed workers who weave together bits and pieces of folk culture which they then market for profit and as a substitute for the authentic folk culture. Thus, the people are made to subsidize subversion of their own everyday culture. This sub version is perpetrated through westernized and other hybridized folk music, movies and television programmes. Culture emanating from the Hollywood industries of the United States; tend to be accepted in Nigeria as the genuine folk culture because of the huge supporting industries, lack of government competition, and the sophistication with which the products are packaged. Ironically, these packaged products when exported often become subject of controversies in Europe, Asia and other Third World countries and are hardly tolerated in the media of some Asian countries and most Arab countries, particularly at the initial stages of trial and error which culminate in what authorities and critics regard as destroyers of local culture and of daily life.

Critical and cultural theorists have examined the implications of taking a part of a people's culture without critical insight into the issues involved and then package same for marketing in another cultural context. Baran and Davis (2002, p.232), Jamieson and Carebell (1997) and earlier studies by Hay 1989, Meyrowitz (1985) and Postman (1985) postulates that the effect of deployment of some unethical marketing device have greater consequences for the mental health of the audience and particularly youths. Second, representations of segments of community through restructuring of experiences seem over dramatized as a selected aspect of culture is made attractive to audience. This can give a wrong picture of the pertinent cultures to foreigners and to the youthful members of the audience. Third, advertising is especially implicated in the commodification of culture syndrome through its encouragement of people to costume products whose values are suspect, to engage in spurious fun or to seek fake identity. Fourth, the entrepreneurs who operate the cultural industries are generally ignorant of

the consequences of their bastardization of culture because of their social and psychological distance from their consumers. Where the entrepreneurs are aware of unwholesome effects, they resort to what Baran and Davis call "strategic avoidance" or denial of evidence" about these effects. They either pretend ignorance of them, strive to distort the evidence or claim they are giving the audience what they want. However, this can lead to intrusion and disruption or corruption of indigenous cultures. Thus, commodification of culture theory explains how our behaviours when faced with communication tools (social media sites) have not only modified time and space, but also the culture of Nigerian societies. Each stage in the use of these tools has modified the filters of our perception and the imagination of individuals.

Popular Culture

Okumagba, Arisi and Nwaezeapu (1997) in Oduh (2007, p. 177) stated that: "Culture is the totality of the way of life evolved by a people in their attempt to meet the challenges of living in their environment". Thus, culture provides order and meaning to socio-political, economical aesthetic, religious and values espoused by people which, in turn, define the uniqueness from other people. According to Diver (2007, p. 13) culture is best understood not as a static entity that is taken; however, on the contrary, Michel de Certeau noted that culture "consists not in receiving, but in positing the act by which each individual marks what others furnish for the needs of living and thinking". Such thinking shifts away from reifying culture as contained object to be consumed or meaning to be known.

Popular culture also referred to as pop culture is a contemporary lifestyle that is well known and generally accepted with diverse cultural patterns that are widespread within a population. According to WordIQ.Com (2010) popular culture is the vernacular (people's) culture that prevails in a modern society. The content of popular culture is determined in large part by industries that disseminate cultural material, for example the film, television, and publishing industries, as well as the news media. Nonetheless, popular culture cannot be described as just the aggregate product of those industries; instead, it is the result of a continuing interaction between those industries and the people of the society who consume their products. Steinem (1965) noted that the definition of pop culture is ambiguous and slippery but the term encompasses anything currently in vogue which is familiar to the public. Furthermore, pop culture vocabulary is always familiar, although they make little or no sense to the average man. Popular Culture is the entirety of ideas, perspectives, attitudes, memes, images, and other phenomena that are within the mainstream of a given culture, especially Western culture of the early to mid 20th century and the emerging global mainstream of the late 20th and early 21st century. Heavily influenced by mass media, this collection of ideas permeates the everyday lives of the society.

Storey (2006, p. 4-6) stated that there are six definition of popular culture: the quantitative definition of culture has the problem that much "high culture" is also "popular". "Pop culture" is also defined as the culture that is "left over" when we have decided what high culture is. A third definition equates pop culture with "mass culture" and ideas. This is seen as a commercial culture, mass-produced for mass consumption by mass media. From a Western European perspective, this may be compared to American culture. Alternatively, "pop culture" can be defined as an "authentic" culture of the people, but this can be problematic because there are many ways of defining the "people". Storey argued that there is a political dimension to popular culture; neo-Gramscian hegemony theory "... sees popular culture as a site of struggle between the 'resistance' of subordinate groups in society and the forces of 'incorporation' operating in the interests of dominant groups in society." A postmodernist approach to popular culture would "no longer recognize the distinction between high and popular culture". Storey claims that popular culture emerges from the urbanization of the Revolution. In many ways, popular culture is the Polaroid snapshot or Facebook photo page that documents our lives in the social world; it is a backdrop of day-to-day life and its power is both diffuse and indisputable. From Disney to Barbie to MySpace, youth today navigate a range of popular culture and media. The reality that children and youth interact with a vast amount of media—books, toys, video games, advertisements, etc.—requires parents to become aware of and fluent with the diverse popular cultural materials young people read, view, and consume.

Marshall and Sensoy (nd) in their book title -"Rethinking popular culture and media" states that popular culture is a challenging term given that culture is constantly changing and renders what was once popular soon to be outdated and perhaps quaint. With this, they offer an approach to popular culture

by examining variety of expressions of popular culture: (i) Popular culture can describe texts like Michael Jackson's Thriller album that are or were widely accepted by many people; (ii) Popular culture is often used to refer to things that are less sophisticated or considered "low" culture. Adults often dismiss children's culture as innocent, crass, or dumped down. For instance, popular series books produced for youth, such as the Nancy Drew mysteries, were not available in public library collections for decades because librarians dismissed them as popular texts that had little or no literary value; (iii) Popular culture is often synonymous with a consumer culture that is produced for mass consumption (Disney's animated films; McDonald's Happy Meal toys); (iv) Popular culture might also be defined as a place for creating new forms of expression as well as a vehicle for critique. In particular, mainstream popular culture and media offer a space where new meanings are made through tactics such as culture jamming. Culture jamming refers to the rewriting or reimagining of media such as corporate logos or advertisements in a way that subverts or overturns taken-for-granted ideas. In addition, Diver (2007, p. 14) noted that popular culture is a process through which queer girls creatively imagine possibilities, forge connections, make meaning and articulate relations.

Media Consumption

Media consumption or media diet is the sum of information and entertainment media taken in by an individual or group. It includes activities such as interacting with new media; reading books and magazines; watching television and film; listening to radio; and so on. The principles to be an active media consumer include capacity for skepticism, judgment, free thinking, questioning, and understanding (Ekhareafo and Uchenunu, 2014). With social media networks rapidly growing such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and other social network sites, our world of media consumption is reaching youths and younger age group, making our consumption much larger as a country. With easy access to mobile devices such as iPhone, news, entertainment, shopping and buying is all now at the tip of our fingers, anytime, anywhere (Sambuno, 2016). In a research carried out by Broadcasting Board of Governors (2014) on contemporary media use in Nigeria, it was revealed that new media platforms empowered by internet connectivity surpassed ownership rate of both radio and television. This trend in ownership of mobile smart phones is likely to revolutionize communication in the near future as personal ownership rate increased by 10 percent points in 2012. Their research findings also revealed that the percentage of mobile phone ownership is more prevalent among those aged 24-34, well ahead of those aged 35 and above and also leading those of age 15-24 due to their lack of purchasing power suppressing the rate among younger Nigerians. It is particularly revealing from their research findings that younger Nigerians engage in accessing the internet and social networking sites weekly. Media consumption in any given contemporary society is on the increase due to easy accessibility of mobile and technological gadget. In a holistic research conducted by Statista (2018) on number of internet users in Nigeria from 2013 to 2019 revealed that internet usage in 2018 is 84.3% and by 2019 it will increase to 93%. This new trend in media consumption have not only opened youths to the ample opportunity of consuming versatile information on diverse social web platforms but have created a door way for youths to be at the centre of news creation. Due to the freedom created by new media technology, young-news consumers are creating their own news and developing their own content of self-expression rather than media approval of their creative production. The paradigm shift in modern media consumption by younger news consumer is that their mind set has moved from competition (Me perspective) to cooperation (We perspective) 'underscored by big-data possibilities developed out of the emergent sharing economy – moving from an old individualist perspective to a collective mindset' (Okusaga, 2018, papa. 2). Media content and consumption have moved from only controlled content (professional) to uncontrolled content (armature) which has altered a lot of culture and also brought to light certain types of cultural practices that was thought to be nonexistent. The influence of social websites empowered by new media technology and internet connectivity has not only increased news consumption of youths and younger generation but it has also greatly promoted pop culture across boundaries and nations. The influx of youths on social media platforms have created a domicile modification in character which have shifted their needs and accommodate their preference for diverse culture (Akande, 2018).

The Intersection of Social Media and Pop Culture

The content and flow of information on social media is hardly controlled as access is not monopolized making connectivity between and within audience possible all over the globe. In addition, communication does not flow in a centralized way from the top or centre of the society because its prevalence outpaces regulation making it easy for pop culture to easily reach out to its audience. The intersection between social media and pop culture will go beyond national boundaries and create

ideological alliance. Social media platforms has given birth to internet based pop culture which has facilitated knowledge in diversification of popular culture and has deeply affected our sense of cultural creativity (McQuail, 2000). Thus, entertainers and musical groups get involved with social media because social media offers them an incredible opportunity to engage and make an immediate connection with their fans (Arends, 2011). Celebrities in the entertainment industry are taking the advantage to reach and engage fans in their target market. In this fast-paced, digital world, industries, brands, and products are all competing for audience attention. It is a known fact that due to the activity of pop culture on diverse social media platforms a lot of people are glued to their phones because that is where the action is constantly taking place. A popular music producer on social media using snapshot as a marketing instrument discovered that out of the one million daily active users, 71% are under the age of twenty-five – his ideal market. This is a clear indication of how entertainers of pop culture connect their targets especially youths through social media platforms (Easy Media, 2017).

A popular social media site can allow audio streaming of song clips, the displaying of current music videos, an online blog and photo galleries. Such tools can offer an immediate connection between musicians and their fans. Popular social media sites offer instant connectivity, so entertainers (or their agents) can update a social media page from anywhere they can get an Internet connection, including Wi-Fi hotspots. Links from a social media site to the entertainer's main site can result in additional revenue by spurring product purchases. Not only can bands promote their current albums, but they can advertise items such as hats, sweatbands, T-shirts, posters and any other branded items they offer. Such online publicity allows musicians to let fans know all of their latest news and significant achievements as well is offering information on the prerelease sale of new projects and the fans respond. They post feedbacks, ask questions, and post messages on the bands fan pages. The world of social media has in many ways allowed entertainers to be viewed by fans as approachable and friendly. In a sense, social media levels the playing field between the famous and not so famous. The social media environment becomes an odd mix of entertainment report, reality TV and fan base. Social media allows pop stars to keep their past, present and future offerings constantly in front of fans (Arends, 2011).

Uses of Social Media by Nigerian Youth

Social media and its consequent effect on a range of attitudes and beliefs on Nigerian youths are evident in contemporary public discourse. It is a major concern of how media content and flow of information that out space regulations can either influence the Nigerian youth positively or negatively. Nonetheless, efforts to control the content of new media influences have raised timely and penetrating questions about the types of features or interactions that warrant attention. Social media has become a sine qua non in the life of Nigerian youths as it is now a part of their everyday life. This is evident as it is constantly noticed in diverse places that youths tightly hold their phones which is more or less their companion (Ibidapo, 2014). The new media which is propelled and driven by the Internet has provided platforms for social interactions between and among Nigerian youths in such a manner that no older platforms/media can boast of. The new media display such potentials that the only limitation to the dynamism is ignorance or illiteracy in terms of the ability to use the hardware and/or software for maximum effects in the realm of communication, education, politics, economics, social or technology (Adaja and Ayodele, 2013).

Social media, which include blogs (political Blog), networks (Facebook, Twitter, etc), video sharing (YouTube) audio sharing (Podcast), mobile sites (2go etc), image or picture sharing (flicker), etc have the capacity of boosting Nigerian youths participation because of its openness, conversation nature, connectedness, and textual and audio-visual characteristic appeal (Abubakar, 2011 p.447). It is imperative to concede to the fact that social media are "fast becoming the default internet mode of interaction, communication and collaboration" (Verster, 2010). According to Abubakar (2011), "social

media are both internet and mobile based apparatuses that allow people to easily share and discuss information". Thus, the role of the different social media platforms in enhancing socio-cultural, economic, political and technological development of any nation as well as its citizenry can never be overemphasized.

The internet has an indescribable power to influence, connect and mobilize youths. Some youths have lost their control over social media usage and begun having problems with their functionality in social, vocational and personal circles as the internet has taken over total control of their lives (Ajewole and Fasola, P. 62). Idakwo (2011) in Ajewole and Fasola (2013 p. 62) posit that school work and social interaction have been affected at the advent of these social media. Undergraduates spend more time on Facebook, Twitter and other social networks through smartphones that are now in abundance among these youths. Many youths cannot go for two-three hours without checking and updating their profiles on these social networks even at the detriment of other activities such as educational and career pursuit. Ajewole and Fasola (2012 p. 63) further says that, today's youths have grown up understanding the power of the internet and as a result they feel a constant pressure to be connected with their peers through maintaining a continuous connection with technology. Their connectedness is creating new kinds of peer-to-peer relationships that are considerably different from what used to be the norm.

The spiraling effects of social media platforms have signaled a wide range of youth's connectivity that has built a strong networking relationship between them. Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and Twitter which are the popular social media platforms in Nigeria have become invaluable tools for keeping in touch with friends and family. Indeed, social media are opening up the Nigeria social space in new ways. It is now the new equalizer that is breaking the information monopoly that was enjoyed by the state and a few media houses. In the process, it is unleashing hidden journalistic talents as we witness a mushrooming of bloggers, citizen journalist, social commentators and critics. The latter are a part of a new generation of social activists who have now appropriated this new technology and now use it to network, share news stories, ideas, criticize and vent their frustrations. Elatedly, citizen power is now growing. Those who were formerly voiceless now have a voice. These voices are now possible once you can sign up to an account on a social media, say Twitter or Facebook. Social media have become a veritable tool with vast potential to use for awareness creation, sensitization and social mobilization (NigerianMonitor, 2013).

According to Sawyer (2011, p.3-4) people use social media for many reasons. First, the need for connection and interaction with other people is evident. As supported by Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, people desire to fulfill a sense of belonging through support from relationships with others. After obtaining physiological and safety needs, people strive to achieve Maslow's third need of belonging. New social media provide this opportunity where people can communicate with others and belong to different networks via virtual communities on the Internet. In relation to interacting with others online, people use social media to gain knowledge and learn about different opinions and perspectives of issues, topics, and events. Most importantly, new social media is used for socializing; it is a form of media that allows people to participate in conversations and online dialogue without being face-to-face with others.

Influence of Social Media on Culture

It is somewhat predicted that the internet is also an instrument of glorification by its 'technophile' advocate. The social media empowered by the internet is transforming lives and changing societies towards a more enlightened and creative existence. The audience or users of the new media technology are constantly told that internet will revolutionize human existence. The transformation of societies through the new media technology has constantly changed the way we talk, work, play and interact with each other globally. Thus, the impact of digital new media is already evident on diverse culture of the world (Furedi, 2015).

While cultures around the world value their individual traditions, beliefs, and norms that make them unique, social media links people around the world regardless of differences and geographical boundaries. According to Chen and Zhang (2010), "The compression of time and space, due to the convergence of new media and globalization, has shrunk the world into a much smaller interactive field". People across the globe can interact with each other within seconds of sending and receiving messages. Social media has brought people from different cultures together in the "global village."

People use social media to learn about their host countries, establish and maintain relationships, and stay informed with events in their home countries (Sawyer, 2011). In the process of learning, contesting, confronting and promoting culture through the internet empowered by social media, our lives and behaviours have been greatly influenced. In recent times, the social media has been instrumental in outbreaks of social protest and resistance like "the mushrooming of occupy protests, the Arab Spring, the mobilization of resistance against the Government of the Ukraine or in Hong Kong was heavily dependent on the resources provided by the social media". Social media is indeed a power tool for transforming and promoting public participation, engagement and the process of democratizing public life and culture (Furedi, 2015, para 2).

In relation to new social media, differences in individualistic and collectivistic cultures are apparent in users' communication and behavioral styles. Rosen, Stefanone and Lackaff (2010) describe how people from individualistic cultures focus on meeting new people and being seen by many people, rather than maintaining their already existing relationships. On the other hand, people from collectivistic cultures utilize social network sites to "maintain close relationships with a small number of ties instead of creating new connections with people" (Rosen et. al, 2010). Peters (2013) in her work: 'social media and its influence on culture' cites an example on how social media such as Facebook are used by youths to share their culture and cultural practices with friends and in turn learn likewise about the culture of others in the western world. Another example cited is the sharing of new born baby pictures on Facebook which is received with mixed feelings as it contradicts the offline (African or Developing Countries) cultures (P.2). Social media has also caused revolution in cultures across the globe ranging from girl right to education in Pakistan, radicalization of jihadist youth in the west, female circumcision etc. A lot of cultures in the globe have gone through a process of political correctness via imperial social media of dominant government campaign like was seen in the Arab spring spiraling through Arab nations such as removal of Presidents in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Syria. Inarguably, social media has 'enabled greater political awareness and organization, rewriting political landscapes and causing significant change in the way we live today' (Lowisz, 2014, para 2). Taking into cognizance the consequent effect of social media in cultural change and transformation can either be misleading or deceptive if not properly monitored and controlled. For example, in many cases, Muslim youths in the west have been radicalized into jihadist youth. There are considerable evidence of young Muslims from good cultural background who go online to visit jihadist social media pages have gone through a process of self-radicalization (Furedi, 2015).

Also in the work of Peters (2013), participants discussed the economic advantages of owning a Facebook account. Many participants advertise their goods, services or themselves on Facebook and one participant mentioned that Facebook contributes to a "cleaner city" because it gets rid of paper ads. Words like "mass customization" were also used and of course, this advertising space is "free". Selling on Facebook also extended beyond the geographic borders of participants and new methods of dealing with foreign traders/sellers and currency transfer takes place. Different mechanisms are implemented to trade online beyond their own geographic boundaries. Participants also discussed how they used Facebook as e-learning platform by forming class and course groups, sharing assignments, asking and answering questions and since most of them access Facebook via cellphones and often cannot access other internet sites, they would collaborate with friends who have access to computers to look up information. "Our internet culture, like the internet itself, is always changing. Whether through casual references to the latest meme or through finding sources to corroborate claims in an essay, our internet culture has and will continue to influence the way we communicate and interact with one another, both in person and online" (Tim, 2007, para 2).

The Nigerian Youth as a Gullible Consumer

Growing up in an era when mass media representatives increasingly pervade their cultural environments and imagination, youth are challenged to use popular images and stories to make sense of their lives and communicate their differences. Popular cultures are intensely passionate sites through which learning and enjoyment overlap in the daily experiences of youths. While they constitute public pedagogical tool of knowledge, popular cultures are also realms in which youths derive pleasure, elaborate fantasies, and feel belonging. When it comes to popular cultures, youth interests,

interpretations and identifications are hard to pin down; they are incredibly complex realm in which changing selves and social languages converge unpredictably. In this way, popular cultures simultaneously regulate relations and spur questioning, they are controlling and permissive, and they reproduce conformity one minute and disrupt normative codes the next minute. The enticements and incitements of pop culture provide a productive meeting point between texts, subjectivities, and collectivities through which to consider Nigerian youths (Diver, 2007). Social media as medium of communicating popular cultures contains 60% entertainment and have a high dosage of foreign (Western) material. These contents are produced without our (African) culture in mind as a result wrong or conflicting culture is circulated. According to the Nigerian Youth Policy (2001, p. 2) youth comprises all young persons between the ages of 18 and 35 years who are citizens of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. These youths consist one third of Nigerian's population and they are the ones that make use of these social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr etc to derive pleasure, communicates and feel sense of belonging.

The Nigerian youth becomes gullible on the precise that they consume almost any content on the internet that is foreign to Nigerians and in most cases conflicting with our culture. This is because of the addictive power mobile smart phones empowered by the internet have on youths that makes them susceptible to learning popular cultures that are contrary to African culture (Osahenye, 2012). The unstoppable power of the social media has a contagious and outreaching influence which the conventional media lack. The mass appeal of social media has become a concern for Nigerian youths particularly considering the amount of time spend online (Lami, 2011). A study conducted in 2013 revealed that youths spend most of their time on social media for the purpose of entertainment, pornography, follow news about their celebrities, share images and discuss with friends and family members (Greg, Euphemia, Asogwa and Obiorah, 2013). Due to the exposure of controlled and uncontrolled content on social media, Nigerian youths are consuming too much of foreign content that have made them mentally, psychologically and intellectually enslaved to foreign cultures which have affected their ways of dressing, dancing, eating habits and how they relate to people in their environment.

An excerpt from Nigerian Monitor (2013) states that: as usual, youthful exuberance or perhaps unguarded youthful exuberance has taken over the airspace; unclad, offensive, sexually appealing and sexually abusive pictures are the new strategies inhibiting the youths from productive use of the social media. Youths that are craving to attain cheap fame, tend to step over the line by introducing this technique to attract and expand their network base. Pictures revealing entire unclad body, parts of private parts, entire private parts, chest, laps etc are posted with little or no regard to other users. Such youths use these aforementioned pictures as their contact pictures while others post it periodically online. On the other hand, various youths have debated extensively on this worrying trend, arguing that it is sheer abuse of social media, infringement on the rights of other intending users by intentionally posting such pictures on general sites and a violation of the tenets of religious doctrine.

Conclusion

The emergence of social media and diverse platforms empowered by the internet has a far reaching effect and influence on Nigerian youths than any other form of media. Social media has indeed revolutionized communication and has broken the monopoly of traditional media once enjoyed by the state and few media institutions. In recent times, youths have been the most gullible users of social media as they are at the centre of this new trend of communication. This has however, open youths to a whole new world of unregulated media content where information surpasses boundaries of the world. The implication of this new and dynamic information age where information and diverse media content is free and at our finger tips has begun to change the way youths speak, dress, walk and address people in the society. This learned behaviour is as a result of a wide range of youth's connectivity that has built a strong networking relationship and brought about a paradigm shift in their awareness and sub conscious mind which have influenced their cultural values. The implication of the rapid usage of newer social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and Twitter and others have inculcated a sense of global cultural acceptance and viewing the world in newer ways different from previous generations. The growing concern of Nigerian youth's involvement and activities on social media platforms has reached an all new height. This growing concern of social media reshaping and restructuring Nigerian youths has invoked unnecessary attention to attain cheap fame in order to attract

and expand their social network base (for more see, Ibidapo, 2014). These new ways of cyber or online lifestyle is well reflected in Nigeria owing to acquiring and distribution of media content that makes the Nigerian youths to copy and act foreign cultures; thus, revealing sensitive and private parts of their body are posted with little or no regard to other users. Such youths use these aforementioned pictures as their contact or display picture while others post it periodically online (Nigerian Monitor (2013).

The attitudinal change in the cultural value of Nigerian youths is evident that they are gullible users of social media. Due to the unregulated control of cyber space, issues are raised over what type of features and interactions warrant attention for regulation by the state as social media has become a sine qua non in the life of Nigerian youths. The prevailing effect of social media is constantly noticed in diverse places as youths now have sentimental attachment to their phones that has become more or less their companion. However, these smart phones has over time made youths susceptible to learning popular cultures that are contrary to African culture. This conflicting cultural mix has even made it

difficult to understand the way of life of Nigerian youths as they tend to live a life of secrecy and double standard online and offline.

It will therefore be naïve or unwise to think that immediate change of youths to social media addiction is the solution. As a matter of fact, it will be an almost impossible task to curb youths involvement on social media platforms due to the information age we now live in rather it is a long lonely road of sensitization and education that will bring about somewhat change in the life of Nigerian youths. This is because youths have effectively keyed into the capabilities and potentials of social media and they spend enormous amount of time on social networking which is signaling obsession. These networking sites have aided a radical change in the social, interpersonal and personal behaviour of youths in recent times and they have become an essential medium for communication and entertainment among youths. Thus, this attributes of social media have brought about isolation as youths tend to spend more time online than with individuals and family members which have started to affect their daily activities of normal human interaction and productivity. Consideration to limit the time youths spend on social media, though a daunting task, but if achieved will go a long way in curbing addiction and obsession thereby sustaining Nigeria cultural heritage.

Recommendations

It is imperative to engage and sensitize Nigerian youths to the benefits of using social media sites for education and innovation purposes rather than engaging themselves with illicit content that tend to erode their cultural values.

While it is impossible to control the type of contents displayed on social media, youths should be encouraged to use social media or internet websites more creatively to their advantage and to the benefit of the society.

There is a need for youths to understand the implication and consequent effect of partaking in online activities as it will help guide against becoming gullible to all sort of social media content.

Parents, guardians, tutors, religious leaders, etc. need to understand the use of these forms of media and, if possible, attempt to use them, and try to be involved thereby monitoring their wards on how youths use these sites.

Youths should not be discouraged in using social media but rather encourage due to the information age we now live in. They should be encouraged to engage social media pro-actively and profitably.

.

References

Abubakar, A. A. (2011). Political participation in Social media during the 2011 presidential Electioneering in Oladokun Omojola et al (eds*.) Media*, *Terrorism and Political Communication in a Multi-Cultural Environment*: ACCE Conference Proceedings. Ota (Nigeria): ACCE Loc. Pp. 445-453.

Adaja, T.A. and Ayodele, F.A. (2013). Nigerian youths and social media: Harnessing the potentials for academic excellence. *Kuwait Chapter of Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review Vol. 2, No.5; Jan. 2013.*

Ajewole, O.O. and Fasola, O.S (2012).A study of social network addiction among youths in Nigeria. *Journal of Social Science and Policy Review Vol.4, September 2012*.

Akande, S. (2018). 5 Pop Culture trends Nigerian millennials can expect in the new yearhttp://www.pulse.ng/gist/pop-culture/5-pop-culture-trends-nigerian-millennials-can-expect-in-2018-id7801169.html Retrieved, 22nd May, 2018

Arends, T. (2011). The Intersection of Social Media and Pop Culture**:** http://www.techsling.com/2011/03/the-intersection-of-social-media-and-pop-culture/. Retrieved 19th April, 2014.

Baran, S. J. (2002).*Introduction to mass communication*. (3rded.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Baran, S. J. and Davis, D. (2003).*Mass Communication Theory: Foundations, Ferment and Future*. Belmont: Wadsworth/Thompson Learning.

Broadcasting Board of Governors (2014). Contemporary Media Use In Nigeria. https://www.bbg.gov/wp-content/media/2014/05/Nigeria-research-brief.pdf Retrieved 22nd May, 2018

Chen, G. M., and Zhang, K. (2010).New media and cultural identity in the global society. In R. Taiwo (Ed.), *Handbook of Research on Discourse Behavior and Digital Communication: Language Structures and Social Interaction* (pp. 801-815). Hershey, PA: Idea Group Inc.

Diver, S. (2007). Queer girls and popular culture: Reading, resisting and creating media. USA: Die Deutsche Bibliolhek. Retrieved from: http://books.google.com.ng/books?id=oO-0q2f9nIgC&pg=PA13&lpg=PA13&dq=the+youth+as+a+gullible+consumers+of+popular+cultures&source=bl&ots=qV2SNuzUD3&sig=209uGfRDKWDzpcQi851trvJO2zc&hl=en&sa=X&ei=pvJDU5rTFMKj4gS-hYGgDQ&ved=0CD8Q6AEwBA#v=onepage&q=the%20youth%20as%20a%20gullible%20consumers%20of%20popular%20cultures&f=false

EasyMedia (2017) The Power of Social Media in Pop Culture. https://easymedia.us/blog/power-social-media-pop-culture/ Retrieved 24th May, 2018

Ekeli, E. O and Enobakhare, J.O. (2013). "Social media and the changing nature of journalism practice in Nigeria". *In the Nigerian Journal of Communication (ACCE).Vol.11, No.1. (pp.118-138).*

Ekhareafo, O. D and Uchenunu, O. A (2014) Trends in Modern Communication. In Mass Media Modules for Tertiary Institution in Nigeria (Eds) Sambe, J.A 200-218

Folarin, B. (2005). *Theories of mass communication.* (3rded.). Ibadan: Bakinfol Publications.

Furedi, F. (2015). How the Internet and social media are changing culture http://www.frankfuredi.com/article/how_the_internet_and_social_media_are_changing_culture1 Retrieved 24th May, 2018

Greg, H. E., Euphemia, C., Asogwa, E., and Obiorah, I (2013.Social Media Use among Students of Universities in South-East Nigeria. IOSR *Journal of Humanities and Social Science* (IOSR-JHSS) *Volume 16, Issue 3, pp 23-32*

Haruna, A. and Danladi, K. (2013). "Social media, youth and culture change among ABU Zaria undergraduates". In Des Wilson (Ed.).*Communication and the new media in Nigeria: (Social engagement, political development and public discourse).* Pp. 176-188. African Council for Communication Education, ACCE, Nigerian Chapter.

Ibidapo, F (2014) Examining the impact of social media on Nigeria youth http://www.peoplesdailyng.com/examining-the-impact-of-social-media-on-nigeria-youth/ Retrieved 24th May, 2018

Jenkins H. (2006) Where Old and New Media Collide. New York, NY; convergence culture.

Kaplan, A. M. and Haelein, M. (2010). "Users of the world, unite! The Challenges and Opportunities of Social Media". Business Horizons, 53(1): 59-68. Retrieved from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/social.media On April, 2014.

Lami, I. (2011) The Use of Social Media among Nigerian Youths. www.slideshare.net/goldlami/the-use-of-socialmedia-networks-among-nigerianyouths

Lowisz, S (2014) The Influence of Social Media on Today's Culture http://stevelowisz.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/The-Influence-of-Social-media-in-Todays-Culture-wp.pdf Retrieved 24th May, 2018

Marshall, E and Sensoy, Ö. (nd).Rethinking popular culture and media.Retrieved 19th April 2014.From :http://www.rethinkingschools.org/publication/rcpm/rcpm_intro/shtml.

Mayfield, A. (2008). What is social media? An ebook from icrossing. Retrieved from http://www.icrossing.co.uk/fileadmin/uploads/ebooks/what_is_Social_Media_icrossing_eboodp_df

McQuail, D. (2000). Mass Communication Theory, 4th Edition. London: Sage Publication.

Mesch, G. S. (2010). The Internet and youth culture. Accessed on the 4th of April, 2014. From: http://www.iascculture.org/THR/archives/YouthCulture/Mesch.pdf.

Ociepka, B. (2012). The impact of New Technologies on International Communication: The Case of Public Diplomacy. INFORMACIJOS MOKSLAI. University of Wroclaw, Poland. Retrieved from http://www.leidykla.eu/fileadmin/infomacijos_mokslai/2012-59/24-36.pdf. 23th April, 2014.

Oduh, W, A. (2007). "Nigerian people and culture". In Prof. S.A Idahosa (Ed).Faculty of Social and management Sciences (General Study Unit), Benson Idahosa University. (Pp. 176-195). Benin: Gift-Print Associates.

Okusaga, B. (2018). The Nigerian Media – Evolution, Trends and Projections for 2018 https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2018/01/05/the-nigeria-media-evolution-trends-and-projections-for-2018/ Retrieved 22nd May, 2018

Osahenye, K. (2011). The Social Media Challenge. The Guardian Newspaper, pp.52, February 25th

Peters, A. (2013). Social media and its influence on culture. Retrieved on 29th April, 2014. From: http://noreenkamal.files.wordpress.com/2013/03/chi2013-social-media-culture.pdf.

Rosen, D., Stefanone, M. A., and Lackaff, D. (2010). Online and offline social networks: Investigating culturally-specific behavior and satisfaction. In *Proceedings of the 43rdHawai`i International Conference on System Sciences*. New Brunswick: Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, Inc. (IEEE).

Sambuno (2016) The Four Kind of Media We Consume. www.sambuno.com/passive-media-kinds-media-consume/ 24 February 2018

Sawyer, R. (2011).The impact of new social media on intercultural adaptation. Retrieved on 29th April,2014.From: http://digitalcommons.uri.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1230&context=srhonorsprog

Social media and the Nigerian youth by the *Nigerian Monitor*. Published on Jun 17th, 2013.Retrieved from: http://www.nigerianmonitor.com/2013/06/17/social-media-and-the-nigerian-youth/.

Statista (2018). Number of Internet Users in Nigeria from 2013 to 2019 (in millions) https://www.statista.com/statistics/183849/internet-users-nigeria/ Retrieved, 22nd May, 2018

Steinem, G. (1965).*Outs of pop culture*, in *LIFE* magazine, 20 August 1965, p. 73.Retrieved 21st April, 2014. From: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Popular_culture.

Storey, J. (2006). *Cultural theory and popular culture*. Pearson Education. ISBN 978-0-13-197068-7.

The Nigerian youth policy (2001).The Nigerian youth. Retrieved on April, 2014. From: http://nigeria.unfpa.org/youngpeople.html.

Tim, K (2017) How social media influences culture and language http://www.jhunewsletter.com/article/2017/12/how-social-media-influences-culture-and-language Retrieved 24th May, 2018

Verster, M. (2010) A Social Media Toolkit for Journalism classroom. *Rhodes Journalism Review. No. 30*.July pg. 36.

What is Popular Culture? A Definition: http://www.wordiq.com/definition/Popular_culture. Retrieved 19th April, 2014.