Effects of Social Media on Family Bond and Cohesion: A Study of Port Harcourt Residents, Rivers State.

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT

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The study investigated the effect of social media on family bond and cohesion: A study of Port Harcourt resident, Rivers State. The study was anchored on technological determinism and rational choice theories and employs survey research design to gather information from social media users in Port Harcourt with the population of 3, 171, 000.It adopts Taro Yamane sample size determination to arrive at 400 as the sample size and employed purposive and multi-stage sampling techniques with the questionnaire as the instrument of data collection. Some of the objectives of the study include to, identify the extent of exposure to social media platforms among Port Harcourt residents; examine the predominantly social media platform used for family bond and cohesion in Port Harcourt and to find out the factors that hinder social media platforms to bond families in Port Harcourt. Some of the objectives of the study include identifying the extent of exposure to social media platforms among Port Harcourt residents, to examine the predominantly social media platforms used for family bond and cohesion in Port Harcourt. The study found that Port Harcourt residents are adequately exposed and interact on social media; this helps families to interact on regular basis for bond and cohesion. Although, lack of electricity experienced in Port Harcourt has hindered Port Harcourt residents from having an effective use of social media. Also, it was found that WhatsApp and Facebook are the major social media platforms used by Port Harcourt residents. The study recommends that families in Port Harcourt who are exposed to social media for family bond and cohesion should be mindful of what they expose themselves to and share on social media since many of such information give exposure to the wrong people and create security risk or danger ; Port Harcourt social media users should be exposed to other social media platforms like Twitter, Instagram, etc. for family bond and cohesion; the government should intensify efforts on constant power supply to Port Harcourt residents to enable them connect with families members, relatives and friends.

INTRODUCTION

Many people including families are bond by consistent interaction. This bond and cohesion is the growing together in love and understanding as a result of effective interactions either on interpersonal basis or mediated. This does not happen in isolation but through communication channels. Interaction is part of communication that has over the years brought about the unity of friends and families. Beebe & Redmond (2005) opine that consistent interactions among friends and family members especially on social media have dramatically contributed to the bonding of families. For instance, families who are not together could feel very bonded by a video call, WhatsApp or Facebook calls and chats rooms. Joo& Tang (2007) argue that respondents use social media circle to make contacts with distant family members and friends on their social circle and to utilize face-to-face on social media to improve families understanding and love. Facebook for instance is a mechanism for both friends and acquaintances to communicate.

The key highlights in family communication and interactions on social media according Joo & Tang (2007) is to share love and understanding. That is the reason Haralambuos, Holborn & Heald (2002) regarded families as the cornerstone of every society. This is because; it is the families that make the society. The love, bond and cohesion existing in every society is a function of the bond and cohesion from different families. Family interaction on social media enhances unity and brings about togetherness in the families, irrespective of their locations and environment.

Although, scholars like; Muise & Demarais (2012) noted that interaction on social media lead to feeling of regret if negative consequences such as lost opportunity or punishment are experienced. Families tend to disengage for several reasons following the activities of life, as a result much engagement on social media. Engagement on social media without control has resulted to disintegration among family members, even though we understand the importance of social media for family bond and cohesion. It is not clear in Port Harcourt the effect of social media on family bond and cohesion. The reason is that some family members in Port Harcourt are poor, predominantly illiterates and lack basic knowledge of technology. This has made them to find it difficult to buy smart phones, read or even operate smart phones. This has become a concern to both the researchers and the residents of Port Harcourt. How the families of Port Harcourt the residents interact on social media to be bonded is not clear. It is on this basis the study investigates the effects of social media bond and cohesion: A study of Port Harcourt residents, Rivers State.

Statement of problem

Man has even in the days of creation communicated and had social interaction. This interaction existed even in the families and it includes face-to- face contact, radio, television among others. This interaction was also sometimes affected as a result of distance, mechanical and psychology among other various means. The advent of technology appears to have changed the narrative as people can be reached without gathering at a particular place. Families are no longer within a vicinity but can interact, share, understand through social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp among other. This interactions help to bond them and share as though they are close.

Although, some of the residents in Port Harcourt are poor and the acquisition of technological gadgets to connect online are not within their reach because they are predominantly illiterate. This makes it difficult for them to connect online to interact with close relatives and family members. In spite of these changes, some Port Harcourt residents still connect online. We therefore seek to investigate the effect of social media on family bond and cohesion: A study of Port Harcourt residents, Rivers State.

Objectives of the study

The study is guided with the following objectives which are to:

1. Identify the extent of exposure to social media platforms among Port Harcourt residents.
2. Examine the predominantly social media platforms used for family bond and cohesion in Port Harcourt.
3. Find out the factors that hinder social media platforms to bond families in Port Harcourt.

Research questions

1. What is the extent of exposure to social media platforms among Port Harcourt residents?
2. What are the predominantly social media platforms used for family bond and cohesion in Port Harcourt?
3. What are the factors that hinder social media platforms to bond families in Port Harcourt?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Media

Social media is one means of interaction among people in which they create, share and exchange information and ideas on virtual communities and networks. Social media integrate technologies, social interaction, and

content creation to collaboratively connect on-line information Bri-Ann (2014). Social networking sites allow users to share ideas, activities, events and interests within their individual networks. Individuals can upload pictures, chat, connect with friends, do business, upload videos, get latest updates on music, movies and fashion. One of the first social media sites was created in 1994 and was called "Geocities" (Joe & Tang, 2007).

However, in the past years, social media websites have become common, giving young people particularly a new way to interact with each other and communicate with the world. Boyd (2007) noted that what started out as a hobby, today has become a social norm and a way of life for people all over the world. Social networking sites commonly used by students include: Twitter, Yahoo Messenger, Facebook, Blackberry Messenger (BBM), WhatsApp, 2go, Skype, Google talk, Google Messenger, Linkedin, Myspace, YouTube, Instagram, etc.

According to Edegon (2012), of these networking sites, students spend more time on Facebook, twitter or other networking sites through smart phones which have gradually become a part of everyday life of youth in the society.

In fact, many students cannot go for two-three hours without checking and updating their profiles on these networks even at the detriment of other activities such as educational and career pursuit (Morahan-Martin & Schumacher, 2000). Hampton, Sessions-Goulet, Rainie & Parcel (2011) noted that students are using Facebook and other channels to develop their identities, beliefs and stances on various issues such as politics, religion, economy and work as well as pioneer and develop intimate relationship. Also, according to Jeong (2005), students use social networking sites not only for leisure and personal socialization but also as a platform for more meaningful and serious deliberations, and students are using social networking for making friends, sharing links, online learning, finding jobs to accomplish their economic, educational, political and social goals.

According to Kaplan (2010), social networking helps in the schools and universities to leverage and complement formal education activities and enhance learning outcomes. Social media offers plenty of opportunities for learning. This buttresses Oskonei (2010), submission that internet is advantageous to both students and teachers if used as a tool of knowledge creation and dissemination. Even some schools successfully use blogs as learning tools which has the benefit of reinforcing skills in learners (Boyd 2010).

Observational evidence indicates that students use social networking websites and spend more time on them. On one hand the social media affords many opportunities for learning entertainment which serves as basis of distraction, enrichment and personal growth. Thus, many educated parents have a positive view of social media use and encourage children and young people to make judicious lines, microwave, fiber optic cables which is built specifically for this purpose. For instance, the phone system, when a call is being made from Canada to London, the call is routed through several different phone networks in different parts of the country. Nobody cares what route it takes or which company handles it as long as the call gets there.

Internet is increasingly being used and has become a must for some people. Other than information seeking and dissemination, the medium is also used as effective means for family bond and cohesion or social interactions. Tang et al (2017). It has crossed distance with the help of computerization and digital technology especially the advent of social media. This has interactions online to bond family members. Service such as Facebook allows millions of individuals to create online profile and share personal information with vast network of friends and families (Gross & Acquisit, 2005).

It is important that family members meet face-to-face to catch up individuals screen time on different interests. This is why Diaz, Evans & Gallahger (2011) maintain that social media enhances people ability to connect with others and form positive relationships with peers and families

Social media helps long-distance relationships and encourage people to keep in touch.

Empirical Review

Talatu Ibrahim Umar & Murja Idris (2017) did a study titled the "Influence of Social Media on Psychosocial Behaviour and Academic Performance of Secondary School Students". It was conducted in Batagarawa Local Government, Katsina State, Nigeria. Two research hypotheses were formulated for the study, and descriptive survey research design was employed. The target population consists of four secondary schools purposively selected out of the seven public schools and 306 SSII students were randomly selected for the study. Researchers made validated questionnaire and academic performance test in English Language was used for data collection. Collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation. Null hypotheses were subjected to t-test of independent samples. The study found among others that, social media usage has negative influence on psychosocial behaviour and academic performance. It therefore recommended that parents, teachers, educational psychologists should pay more attention to their students' attitude on these platforms and also educate them on time management as not to waste too much of their time chatting, but they should concentrate on their studies.

The study is related with the present study since both studies deal on influence of social media on the students of Nigeria. However, the previous study looked all the psychological behaviour and academic performance of secondary school students, but didn't establish the bond and cohesion of family members, the present study examines the effect of social media on

the bond and cohesion of family members among Port Harcourt residents.

In another study, Owusu-Acheaw and Larson (2014) did a study titled "Use of Social Media and its Impact on Academic Performance of Tertiary Institution Students", the objectives were to assess students use of social media and its effect on academic performance of tertiary institutions students in Ghana with a focus on Koforidua Polytechnic students. Questionnaire was used for collecting data. Out of one thousand five hundred and seventy-eight (1,578) copies of the questionnaire distributed, one thousand five hundred and eight (1,508)were retrieved which represented a response rate of 95.5 %. The study revealed that majority of the respondents had mobile phones which also had Internet facility on them and had knowledge of the existence of many media sites.

The study further confirmed that most of the respondents visit their social media sites using their phones and spend between thirty minutes to three hours per day. In addition, the study revealed that the use of social media sites had affected academic performance of the respondents negatively and that there was direct relationship between the use of social media sites and academic performance.

The study recommends among others that, students with mobile phones having internet facility should be encouraged to use it to supplement their research in the library rather than the usual charting with friends all the time. Students should be encouraged to limit the time they spend on their social media sites per day and advise them to rather substitute those hours to read novels to improve their knowledge. Since the use of social media sites has affected the academic work of students negatively there is the urgent need for the introduction of students to the availability of novels and other information resources or materials that can help them academically.

The study is related with the present study because; they deal with social media for relationships in Nigeria. The previous study focused on the use of social media and its impact on academic performance of tertiary institution students but the present study focused on the effect of social media for family bond and cohesion.

Theoretical framework

Technological Determinism Theory

According to Adler (2006), Technological determinism theory propounded by Marshall McLuhan in 1964, states the idea that technology has important effects on our lives. This features prominently in the popular imagination and political rhetoric, for example, in the idea that the internet is revolutionizing economy and society. The technological deterministic view presents the internet as an innovative force that has profound influence on children and youth. Technology generates new patterns of expression, communication and motivation. This theory asserts that innovation in technology causes cultural change.

Mcluhan in Asak and Ohiagu (2013) asserts that the electronic media have altered the way people think, feel and act such that these technologies have the abilities mankind is in the midst of a revolution which most people are yet to come to term with. He also sees electronic media as mechanistic and capable of eliciting uncontrollable influence on the people and society, that is, societies have always been shaped more by the nature of the media with which, people communicate than by the communication.

It is true that technological innovations have a great impact in the way people communicate and maintain relationships as these technologies have the abilities to eliminate space in the communication process because people now communicate with families and friends using internet based technologies such as text messaging, e-mails, video messages, etc who are in the same part of the world as them.

Technological Determinism theory argues that the characteristics inherent in a new technology govern the direction of its development and set the conditions for social change. Marshal McLuhan is one of the scholars associated with technological determinism theory with his notion that a global village is based on the characteristics inherent in electronic media, including the elimination of time and space barriers in the common process (Barnes2003, p.327).

Technological Determinism theory recognizes the positive effect of technology and its wide usage by people with diverse cultures. The theory simply explains how technology does not adulterate cultures but help to reshape, polish and fine-tune them. This perspective reflects a long tradition of theories based on the assumption that technology shapes society more than society shapes technology (Norris, 2001). This theory is relevant to this study because technological determinism theory argues that the characteristics inherent in a new technology govern the direction of its development and set the conditions for social change, this is because social media is the newest means or platform through which interactions in almost all sectors are done.

Rational Choice Theory

While rational choice theory was propounded by Adam Smith in the 1776's. The theory is relevant to this work in that it focuses on understanding human actions and how to model it, what moves us to do what we do. The theory assumes that an individual is rational, we take decision based on cost and benefits. The actors may choose not to pursue the most highly value goals if their resources are negligible. Our teenagers are engaged on social media network based on their needs, resources and information.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The nature of this study required the use of the survey research design. The justification for the use of survey was born out of the need to identify social media users and elicit responses on the subject matter. It therefore provides the researchers the opportunity to use quantitative (survey) research with a view to weighing the responses of the residents on social media for family bond and cohesion. The essence of this was to ensure that data generated were verified, conclusion reached and generalization made.

Population of the study

The population of this study comprised residents of Port Harcourt, Rivers state. Port Harcourt has two local government areas; Port Harcourt City and Obio/Akpor local government areas. However, Port Harcourt has a total of 3, 171 000 at annual growth rate of 5.00% in 2021 according to National Population Census (NPC) in 2021 http://www.macrotrends,net. Therefore, the population of the study is 3, 171, 000. The choice of Port Harcourt was necessitated because of their high level of social media use for family bond and cohesion.

Sample size

In determining the sample size for this study, Taro Yamene (1967) sample size was adopted. Therefore, a sample of 400 respondents was drawn from the population of Port Harcourt.

The researchers determined the sample size using the actual National Population Census of 2006 projected for 2021 at annual growth rate 5.00% and 4.10% respectively. The population of Port Harcourt is 3, 171, 000 http://www.macrotrends,net.

The sample size is statistically determined using Taro Yamane's sampling technique.

Formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

where; n = Population, N = total population , e = Expected error image $(0.05)^2$
$\quad$ 1 $\quad$ = constant.
$\quad$ N $\quad$ = 4, 079,000
$\quad$ E $\quad$ = $(0.05)^2$
$\quad$ n $\quad$ = 399.8752079
$\qquad$ =400 respondents (approximately).

Sampling techniques

The multi-stage sampling technique was use to get respondents for the survey. The purposive sampling was used to select participant family who use social media for family bond and cohesion. Therefore, the stages of sampling for this study were thus:

Stage one: The study focuses on; Port Harcourt City and Obio/Akpor.

Stage two: From each of the two local governments, communities were purposively selected from each of them. In Port Harcourt City, we have Diobu, Oroworokwo, Port Harcourt town, Rebisi and Ama/Abuloma. In Obio/Akpor local government area, we have, Akpor, Aboh, Rumueme, Okoronugu, Rumuokorosi. The selected communities have a total of 193, 135 residents. The reason for selecting them was born out of the fact that these communities have more residents with most of them having access to the social media for family bond and cohesion.

Stage three: At this final stage, respondents were selected using the simple random sampling technique. Respondents were to be selected at an every interval of three of the streets in the communities selected.

Also, the proportionate sampling technique was used to administer the questionnaire to the various streets in each of the community selected. Below is a representation of the proportionate distribution of copies of the questionnaire to respondents based on population distributions in the study.

Instrument for data collection

The questionnaire served as the instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was used in generating data. The questionnaire comprised two sections: the demographic (sex, age, educational qualification and occupation) and psychographic section consisting of three questions.

The instrument contains twenty one (21) items. Twelve (12) items were open-ended options, while two (2) were close-ended. Similarly, twelve (12) of these items were structured on a four point Likert.

However, items 1-6 in the instrument were used to elicit responses for research question 1. This sought to find out the extent of exposure to social media platforms among Port Harcourt residents. Item 7-11sort to find the predominantly social media platform used for family bond and cohesion in Port Harcourt and items 12-15 identified the factors that hinder social media platforms to bond families in Port Harcourt.

The questionnaire was used to sample the opinions of 400 respondents drawn from across the ten (10) communities in the selected kingdom of Obio/Akpor and Port Harcourt local government areas of Rivers state used in the study.

The copies of the questionnaire were administered directly to respondents with the help of four (4) research assistants; and 381 copies of the questionnaire were retrieved.

Data presentation

Table 1: Investigates the extent to which Port Harcourt residents are exposed to social media for family bond

Statement	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	TOTAL 1	WMS	RMK
The extent of exposure to social media for family bond is very high	131	98	87	65	1057/381	2.8	Accepted
The extent of exposure to social media for family bond is high	107	161	69	44	1093/ 381	2.9	Accepted
The extent of exposure to social media for family bond is low	39	77	101	167	756/ 381	2.0	Rejected
The extent of exposure to social media for family bond is very low	43	59	123	156	751/ 381	2.0	Rejected

Table 1 shows that the extent to which Port Harcourt residents are exposed to social media for family bond and cohesion is high.

Table 2: Responses on predominant social media used for family bond in Port Harcourt

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook	149	39
Instagram	23	6
Whatsapp	153	40
Twitter	41	11
Telegram	15	4
Other	-	-
Total	**381**	**100**

Table 2 indicates that WhatsApp and Facebook are the predominant social media platforms used by Port Harcourt social media users.

Table 3: Responses on the challenges of social media for family bond and cohesion among Port Harcourt residents

Statement	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	TOTAL 1	WMS	RMK
Lack of access to internet is the major problem of social media for family bond and cohesion	41	81	91	168	757/381	2.0	Rejected
Lack of information is the major problem of social media for family bond and cohesion	37	76	121	147	765/ 381	2.0	Rejected
Illiterate is the major problem of social media for family bond and cohesion	21	139	124	97	846/ 381	2.2	Rejected
Lack of electricity is the major problem of social media for family bond and cohesion	101	123	71	77	1019/ 381	2.7	Accepted

The data in table 3 indicate that electricity is the major factor that affects social media use for family in bonding and cohesion among Port Harcourt residents.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study investigated the effect of social media on family bond and cohesion among Port Harcourt residents. The study found that Port Harcourt residents are adequately exposed and interact on social media. The finding is similar to the finding of Diaz, Evans and Gallahger (2011). They found that exposure to social media enhances people ability to connect with others and form positive relationships with peers and families. The finding is also related to the technological determinism theory used in the study. According to Adler (2006) technological determinism is the idea that technology has important effects on the lives of the people.

The finding answered research question one of the study: What are the predominant social media used for family bond and cohesion in Port Harcourt. The finding is similar to the finding of Bali, & Desai, (2019), Bali, & Desai, (2019). The study revealed that, Indian people predominantly used social media like Facebook and Twitter to spread fake news about the election results. Also, Shaiba and Yinusa (2020) found that Offa residents were exposed to fake news on social media at one time or the other. Social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Linkedln, Youtube and Google now allow members to interact with one another and to build relationships even across countries (Dii, 2018).

Igwebuike and Chimuanya (2021) also found that whatsApp allows for easy and fast sharing of fake news as it pulled the largest occurrence of legitimation strategies followed by Facebook. People's access to media and interaction with technology and other media have given rise to a host of malicious effects, propaganda of doubtful and fabricated content (Ibrahim and Pate, 2019). Kurfi and Msughter (2021) also found that Kano residents were significantly exposed to digital images that often accompany fake news in the social media. They read news online every day, prefer news accompanied by images, share and like online. It further revealed that Kano residents are influenced by fake news with digital images on Covid-19 to a very great extent, especially on face book.

This agrees with technological determinism theory used in this study. According to McLuhan in Baran& Davis, (2012) communication technology plays such a critical role in the emergence of new social orders and new forms of culture. Words and new forms of media transform (massage) people's experience of themselves and that this influence is ultimately more important than the content that is transmitted in its specific massages, meaning that technology determines experience (Dominick, 2002). The exposure to internet has increasingly encouraged family interaction and has become a must for some people. Other than information seeking and dissemination, the medium is also used as effective means of family bond and cohesion or social interactions. Tang et al (2017).

The study also found that electricity is the major factor that affects social media use for family bond and cohesion among Port Harcourt residents.

CONCLUSION

The study investigated effect of social media on family bond and cohesion among Port Harcourt residents and found that Port Harcourt residents are adequately exposed and interact on social media which helps the family to interact on regular basis and foster the bonding of family members. The implication of this, is that it has close the gap between time, space and distance experienced by family who are not all in the same location. Although, lack of electricity experienced in Port Harcourt has stood as a challenge for Port Harcourt residents in the use of social media for the bond and cohesion of family members.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that:

1. Port Harcourt residents who are exposed to social media should be mindful of what they expose themselves to and share on social media since many of such information (personal information) are exposure of them and their families to security risk or danger.
2. Port Harcourt social media users should be exposed to other social media platforms like Twitter, Instagram, etc. for family bond and cohesion.
3. The government should intensify efforts for constant power supply, so that Port Harcourt residents can connect with families, relatives and friends effortlessly.

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