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## **SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE AMONG YOUTHS AND GRASSROOTS MOBILISATION IN RIVER STATE, NIGERIA**

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# CHAPTER TEN

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## SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE AMONG YOUTHS AND GRASSROOTS MOBILISATION IN RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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*Carol Dixon Odoyi, Chritie U Omege & Rotimi Williams Olatunji*

### **Introduction**

**D**igital natives, otherwise called Millennia Generation, are born into and live in the world of social media. Media offer choices for education, information, socialisation, entertainment and escape. Ironically, digital natives exploit mainly the entertainment and escape functions of the media than other critical functions. Accordingly, this chapter presents the outcome of a research on patterns of social media use among youths and its implications for grassroots mobilisation. Ahoada East Local Government Area (LGA) of Rivers State served as the case study. The study is anchored on the theory of technological determinism and uses and gratification theory. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design; a sample of 382 youths aged between 18 and 30 years were drawn, using simple random sampling procedure. Data analysis was carried out through frequency distribution; weighted mean score, standard deviation and student t-test to determine the outcome of the null-hypothesis. The study finds that 72% of the sample use existing social media platforms daily, with only 25% patronizing social media haphazardly. On a 4-point scale, the dominant reasons for usage of the social media among youths include interaction with friends (3.16); entertainment (2.85) and escapism (2.87). However, the test of hypothesis shows that there is no significant influence of social media patronage among youths on maintenance of grassroots mobilisation. The implications of these findings for governance and youth engagement in Nigeria are discussed in this paper.

### **Background issues**

Communication is an ever continuing process and an integral part of the world of all living things. The need for communication is basic to man, just as the need for air, food, drink, clothing, shelter and security. In addition to the instrumental function, communication provides man with opportunities for education, information sharing and acquisition, and more specifically,

communication serves as a vehicle for socialization. Communication is therefore vital to life and living. Media of communication have often varied, diversified depending on the technological sophistication of each historical epoch. At the elementary stage, the sign language and or oral media were dominant, followed by writing, print, broadcast (radio and television), and with the advent of telecommunications and the Internet, the social and digital media have become prominent. Samovar, Porter and McDaniel (2009) state that communication is a dynamic process in which people attempt to share their internal states with other people through the use of symbols. According to Omego and Nwachukwu (2012) there has not been one generally accepted origin of communication. But a careful examination of history and scholarly works reveals that communication has evolved from the pre-literacy stage, literacy stage, Gutenberg galaxy stage, to the electronic stage.

Castells (1999) sees the electronic stage as the age of the electronic media, digital media as well as the era of the new media which enabled the social media. Social media refer to any App, website, electronic or digital tool that allows for social interaction such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Snapchat, Twitter, and Tumble (Nesi, 2019). In the same vein, Eke, Omekwu and Odoh (2014) stress that social media are elements of the new media that have become the highest activity on the Internet and the most important innovations pertaining to the social media are the creation of social networking sites (SNS). In the words of Boyd and Ellison (2007) social networking sites are:

Web based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection and view or traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system (p.78).

However, it is very pertinent to note that social networking sites have become hugely popular as they have the capabilities of educating, informing, entertaining, mesmerizing and inflaming the youths. Youth presence in social networking sites has increased significantly in recent years, with more than 80% belonging to sites such as Facebook and Instagram (Rideout & Robb, 2018). This has critical implications for governance and thus, poses some legitimate concern to researchers as some youths end up spending more time online (the virtual world) than offline (the real world). Asak and Ohiagu (2013) also support this notion as they declare that:

Internet addicts, for instance, spend many hours online and are believed to exhibit the same signs of addiction like escapism and isolation just like drug or alcohol addicts. Addicts whether of the Internet, drugs or alcohol all try to escape from the real world and isolate themselves from others. They usually absorb themselves in drugs, alcohol or Internet sometimes to forget their problems in the real world, so much so that they dissociate themselves from the real world around them (p.58).

Holistically, social media are sure ways to eradicate boredom and loneliness but when used in extremity, it becomes a thorn on offline relationships. Georgiou (2016) posits that offline relationships are relationships that occur in real life or in the physical world. That is, relationships based on face-to-face communication and actual interactions, relationships that are not computer mediated or otherwise, not primarily through the medium of the Internet or virtual, fictional and idealized worlds. Therefore, this chapter presents the outcome of a research on patterns of social media use in relationships building among youths in Ahoada East Local Government Area (LGA) of Rivers State and their implications for community mobilisation.

## Statement of the problem

Since the inception of social media in the 1990s and the prevalence of its use among youths, offline relationships have assumed varied dimensions that go beyond the intended consequences and often disrupting the accustomed ways of life. For example, one of the hardest tasks in this 21st century is for youths to spend 30 minutes without touching their phones. Most youths are now phone addicts. They are always online chatting with thousands of friends in thousands of kilometers away and establishing virtual relationships while at the same time shunning any form of acquaintances with closest neighbours. This tends to destroy the basic fabric of human society, family and offline relationship. The study is motivated by the desire to probe deeper into the challenge with a view to proposing appropriate solutions to common abuses of social media among youths in Nigeria. Moreover, there is surprisingly little conclusive research on social media, identity and networking patterns among youths in Nigeria. In this connection, this study seeks to investigate patterns of social media use in relationships building among youths in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria, while drawing attention to implications for policy and Governance.

Questions that guided the research include: Which social networking platforms are predominantly used by youths in Ahoada East Local Government Area of Rivers State? What is the frequency of use the social media among youths in Ahoada Local Government Area of Rivers State?

What are the gratification in the use of social media among youths in Ahoada East Local Government Area of Rivers State? What are the implications of social media usage among youths in Ahoada East Local Government Area of Rivers State for grassroots mobilisation ?

## Literature review

There is no standard definition of social media but renowned scholars see social media as tools that facilitate web-based social interaction and collaboration. Two main features distinguish social media from traditional media and other types of technologies: (1) content creation, which refers to the ability of end users (rather than professional sources) to create content themselves; (2) the existence of multidimensional interaction channels between users (Ola, 2018). According to Akpan, Akwaowo and Senam (2013), social media are principally Internet, computer-mediated technologies and mobile-based tools for creating, viewing and sharing of information, meaning, ideas, career, interests and other forms of expression among human beings. It is a medium that do not only give people information but interacts with the people while giving the information. Social media are elements of the new media that have become the highest activity on the Internet. Social media have grown to become an indispensable part of youths' life and have, to a great extent, changed the way youths build relationships. Social media functions as an umbrella term that includes internet based sites and services that function for or promote social interactions (Johann, 2017). According to Nesi (2019), social media refers to any app, website, electronic or digital tool that allows for social interaction. Holistically, Asak and Ohiagu (2013) catalog the following as some of the most popular types of online platforms classified under the vast umbrella of social media:

1. Microblogs: Are social networking combined with bite-sized blogging, where small amounts of content "updates" are distributed online and through the mobile phone network (e.g. Twitter).
2. Content communities: Are communities which organize and share particular kinds of content (e.g. YouTube).

3. **Social networking sites (SNS):** Are websites where people come together to create and view online communities and develop relationships online (e.g. Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram).

We now examine an equally important concept of 'governance'. According to Mark (2012), governance comprises all of the processes of governing whether undertaken by the government of a state, by a market or by a network over a social system and whether through the laws, norms, power or language of an organised society. Governance is the way rules, norms and actions are structured, sustained, regulated and held accountable. Governance refers to structures and processes that are designed to ensure accountability, transparency, responsiveness, rule of law, stability, equity and inclusiveness, empowerment, and broad based participation. In the same vein, World Bank (1999) defines governance as the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development. However, there are levels, fields and models of governance but for the purpose of this study, only one field of governance will be examined (i.e., internet governance). Internet governance deals with how much influence each sector of society should have on the development of the Internet. That is, to what extent should the state be able to censor the Internet, and how issues on the Internet, such as imposter content, hate speech; cyber-bullying should be tackled.

According to Ubhenin and Omoregie (2014), the challenges of governance in Nigeria range from security and peace, human development to rule of law and constitutionalism. Nigeria faces some of the toughest security challenges in terms of internal conflicts, tenuous post-conflict situations, weak security and fractional social relations which threatens the peace of the nation. The normative framework for the actualization of human development is the ability of youths to lead a valued life and the opportunity to actualize their potentials as human beings. But the challenges that threaten this majorly is unemployment, lack of access to clean water and sanitation among others. Nigeria has not been able to uphold the pedestal of democratic governance where the rule of law prevails over the rule of man. That is, a case scenario where transparency, integrity, accountability and human rights are held in high esteem - zero tolerance to corruption and total adherence to due process. In Nigeria, politics is nothing but feud. For example, the just concluded 2019 general elections were replete with an overdose of electoral malpractice, irregularities and violent acts by political gangsters.

The term offline relationships is also worthy of our discussion. According to Schawbel (2010) offline relationships are relationships established and maintained between two or more people, groups and countries in the physical world or real-world. In the same vein, Sinanan (2015) sees offline relationship as a relationship that resists the digital media and does not incorporate any form of computer-mediated communication into the relationship. In this regard, offline relationships extend to efforts geared towards social or community mobilisation.

According to Cox, Rosenbluth, and Thies (1998), grassroots mobilisation is the process by which a passive collection of youths in a society is translated into an active group in the pursuit of a common goal or coerced into political participation by an authoritarian government. With effective grassroots mobilisation, youths become vibrant contributors to governance and shareholders in government due to their mediated involvement in the decisions of the state. Social media platforms have been heralded as viable instruments in getting youths strategically engaged in meaningful ventures, as well as facilitating grassroots mobilisation or amplification of civic engagement. Social media have become viable tools for mobilising, organising, and coordinating civic actions because they offer affordable and quick alternatives to traditional means of

grassroots mobilisation. Social media also provide enabling environments for low cadre youths to network with middle class and wealthy citizens to discuss familiar communal obstacles, shared opportunities, mutual social events and shared ideological politics. (Dumitrica, & Barkardjieva, 2017).

Often, youths turn to social media to organise civic action or protests believing that they are the most efficient ways to gather support, for their cause. Social media platforms help youths to fulfil the function of keeping in touch with friends. According to Geist (as cited in Dumitrica, & Barkardjieva, 2017), social media are more than just cool to catch up with old friends; rather, they are incredibly effective and efficient platforms that educates and galvanises grassroots advocacy, placing unprecedented power into the hands of individuals. Social media also serve as amplifier of youths voice. For example, youths can now put their political careers on YouTube, tell their story on Facebook, and express discontent on Twitter, (Yusuf & Benjamin, 2013). According to Castells (2012), social media platforms can create a populist identity and sense of solidarity, which allows youths to develop common sense of indignation, anger, frustration, as well as perception of shared victimhood. Nevertheless, the state can also leverage social media to fight against social movements and shut them down. Holistically, social media have, to a great extent, transformed the isolating experiences of individuals into a social phenomenon that is difficult to ignore. That is, they have risen to become the significant extra muscle of activism because of social media contagious quality, (McMurdy, 2007). Social media use have made the separation of communication from organisation in both virtual and physical space impossible (Gerbaudo, 2012).

In Nigeria, 'youth' includes citizens of the Federal Republic of Nigeria aged 18 to 30 years (Nigeria National Youth Policy, 2006). According to Steven (2011), individuals (male and female) born and bred between 1980 and 2004 are Millennial. The millennial generally is marked by an increased use and familiarity with advanced communications and digital technologies. Ackerman (2018) maintains that millennial are individuals who grew up with much more advanced technology than any previous generation - they did not all have Android phones or cell phones in their teens, but they likely came of age with a connection to the internet that facilitated instant messaging which to a very great extent earned them the name: 'instant gratification generation', digital natives, generation Y, and plurals.

### **Review of empirical studies**

Akpan, Akwaowo and Senam (2013) embarked on an extensive study on the keywords: Uses and Gratifications of Social Networking Websites among Youths in Uyo, the capital of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The findings of the study revealed that youths in Uyo are Internet-savvy and are part of the global networking made possible by the social media. In the same vein, Eke, Omekwu, and Odoh (2014) embarked on an extensive study on the keywords: The Use of Social Networking Sites among the Undergraduate Students of University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The findings of the study revealed that youths are the heaviest consumers of Facebook and WhatsApp. Similarly, Farrugia (2013) embarked on an extensive research on the keywords: Facebook and Relationships: A Study of How Social Media Use is Affecting Long-Term Relationships. The findings of the study proved that Facebook has partially modernized the way people communicate and form relationships offline and that there is a correlation between Facebook usage and relationship satisfaction.



## **Theoretical framework**

The theoretical foundation of this study lies on two theories of technological determinism and uses and gratification. Technological Determinism theory commonly called Medium theory or Reductionist theory was propounded by Marshall McLuhan in 1962. According to Mwanyika and Mberia (2017), technological determinism theory avows that electronic media technology shapes how individuals in a society thinks, feel, act, and how the society operates as it moves from one technological age to another (Tribal-Literate-Print- Electronic-Social media). The theory asserts that when new systems of technology are developed, the culture or society is immediately changed to reflect the senses needed to use the new technology (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003). According to McLuhan (as cited in Baran, 2004), technological determinism theory focuses on technology - the medium of the message to human brains (i.e., the medium is the message). It expounds on the advancements of internet based technologies and how they influence the integration of social entities. This theory is therefore relevant in investigating social media, identity and networking patterns among youths because it explains how social media use has influenced youths offline relationships. It is pertinent to ask: How and to what extent do social media determine patterns of relationships among youths in the area of study?

Uses and Gratifications theory also called Needs and Gratifications theory or Functional theory was established in the 1970s by Blumler Jay, Katz Elihu and Gurevitch Michael. Uses (exposure to the media) and gratifications (benefits) theory elucidates why and how people actively seek out specific media to satisfy their most prioritized needs and the media that is most accessible. UGT claims that the media do not do things to people; rather people do things with the media (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1972). According to McQuail (2010), uses and gratifications theory assumes that people use 'social networking platforms' in a goal-directed way. That is, youths predominantly go for the medium that supports their ideology and allow for the gratification of most prioritized needs. Leung and Wei (2000) report that a medium will be used more (by a youth in Ahoada East) when the existing motives to use the medium leads to more gratifications. This theory is therefore relevant in investigating the social media predominantly used by youths in Ahoada East and the reasons why they use them. Uses and gratification theory will be helpful in addressing such questions as: For what reasons do youths in Ahoada East use the social media? How does social media use influence offline relationship among youths in Ahoada East?

## **Method and materials**

The descriptive survey research design was adopted as the appropriate design for the study. According to Nwankwo (2013), descriptive survey research design is that in which the researcher collects data from a large sample drawn from a given population and describes certain features of the sample as they are at the time of the study and which are of interest to the researcher. The population of this study comprised 86,477 youths (male and female) aged between 18 and 30 years resident in the 53 communities of the four clans in Ahoada East local government area. A sample of 382 youths aged between 18 and 30 years were selected for the study. The sample was composed using the Krejcie and Morgan formula for sample size. Similarly, the simple random sampling technique via balloting without replacement was used to draw 32 communities out of the 53 communities. The next stage was the picking of streets from the selected communities from which alternate compounds were selected to reach the respondents. The instrument used for data collection was a self-constructed standardized questionnaire posed in relation to the research questions. The data gathered were analysed using frequency distribution, simple percentage, mean and standard deviation while t-test of one sample mean was used to test the null hypothesis formulated for the study.

## Results and discussion

Data presented are presented in tables and analysed, in relation to the research questions posed and the hypothesis formulated for the study.

**Research question 1:** Which social networking platforms are predominantly used by youths in Ahoada East Local Government Area of Rivers State?

**Table 1:** Predominant social networking platforms among youths in Ahoada East Local Government Area

S/N	ITEMS	RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE(%)
1.	Which social networking platform do you use?	I use Facebook	196	51
		I use Facebook Messenger	50	13
		I use WhatsApp	105	28
		I use Instagram	22	6
		I use Imo Messenger	9	2
Grand Total			382	100

Table 1 implies that youths in Ahoada East mostly use Facebook and Facebook Messenger (64%), followed by WhatsApp (28%) and Instagram (6%).

### Research question 2

What is the frequency of use the social media among youths in Ahoada Local Government Area of Rivers State?

**Table 2**

Frequency of usage of social media among youths in Ahoada East Local Government Area

S/N	ITEMS	RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE(%)
1.	How often do you use the social media?	I use the social media on daily basis	153	40
		I use the social media on weekly basis.	10	3
		I use the social media on monthly basis.	1	0
		I use the social media every night.	122	32
		I use the social media when chanced.	96	25
Grand Total			382	100

Table 2 implies that youths in the area of study use social media on daily basis (40%); every night (32%) and on weekly basis (3%)

### Research question 3

What are the gratification in the use of social media among youths in Ahoada East Local Government Area of Rivers State?



**Table 3:** Gratifications for social media use among youths

S/N	ITEMS	N	SA4	A3	D2	SD1	X	SD	Criterion X	Decision
1.	I use the social media for communicating and interacting with old and new friends.	382	199	94	39	50	3.16	1.06	2.50	Agree
2.	I use the social media for escapism, isolation and easing of boredom and loneliness.		116	150	66	50	2.87	0.99		Agree
3.	I use the social media for watching movies and video calls.		100	134	85	63	2.71	1.03		Agree
4.	I use the social media for uploading photos.		124	102	72	84	2.70	1.14		Agree
5.	I use the social media for entertainment.		121	138	68	55	2.85	1.03		Agree
<b>Grand mean</b>							<b>2.86</b>			<b>Agree</b>

Table 3 indicates that youths in Ahoada East use the social media for a variety of reasons, including communicating and interacting with old and new friends; to prevent boredom and loneliness; for posting photos; and for entertainment.

**Research question 4**

What are the implications of social media usage among youths in Ahoada East Local Government Area of Rivers State for grassroots mobilisation ?

**Table 4**

Mean, standard deviation and t-test analysis of the influence of social media use on offline relationship.

S/N	ITEMS	N	SA <sub>4</sub>	A3	D2	SD <sub>1</sub>	X	SD	C.X	t-cal.	t-crit.	Result
1.	I rely on the social media for advice, comfort and support when problems arise and in times of need for finance, love and affection.	382	99	107	94	82	2.58	1.09	2.50	1.43	1.96	Not significant
2.	I use the social media for professional activities like searching for job than in offline relationships.		108	99	84	91	2.59	1.13		1.56	1.96	Not significant
3.	I use the social media to keep abreast with latest news and updates about the society.		101	138	78	65	2.72	1.04		4.14	1.96	Significant
4.	I rather chat with family and friends on social media than visit them.		102	106	92	82	2.60	1.10		1.78	1.96	Not Significant
5.	I am always anxious about checking for updates and responses from my social media accounts than offline relationships.		102	125	83	72	2.67	1.06		3.14	1.96	Significant
6.	I use the social media for connecting and interacting with business partners than offline relationships.		72	105	96	109	2.37	1.09		2.33	1.96	Significant
7.	I use the social media for communicating, mobilizing and organizing grassroots issues like politics, economy, religious and traditional matters.		113	124	64	81	2.70	1.11		3.52	1.96	Significant
<b>Grand mean</b>						<b>2.60</b>						<b>Significant</b>

**\*Significant level: 0.05**

Table 4 implies that social media use among youths influences offline relationship including relying on the social media for advice and support when social or other problems arise; for professional engagements, job searches and or interaction with business partners; and keeping abreast with news; and chatting with friends. Most importantly, a significant majority of respondents in the area of study “social media for communicating, mobilizing and organizing grassroots issues like politics, economy, religious and traditional matters”

## **Discussion of findings**

The findings discussed are the results arising from the research questions posed and the hypothesis formulated for the study as well as similar or dissimilar findings from the empirical review. The frequency distribution and simple percentage of responses to the item of questionnaire reveals that youths in Ahoada East mostly use Facebook, followed by WhatsApp. This revelation is however in agreement with the study conducted by Akpan, Akwaowo and Senam (2013) which reveals that the most prominent social networking sites used by youths are Facebook and WhatsApp which indicates that youths are Internet-savvy in the first place and are part of the global networking made possible by the social media. Holistically, this study reveals that youths in Ahoada East use the social media and Facebook happens to be the highest and most popular social media platform used by youths in Ahoada East which implies according to the uses and gratifications theory implies that youths in Ahoada East most actively use Facebook in a goal-directed way as it provides youths the means of gratifying a wide variety of needs.

The frequency distribution and simple percentage of responses to the item of the questionnaire reveals that youths in Ahoada East most frequently use the social media on daily basis and every night. This revelation is partly synchronized with the study carried out by Akpan, Akwaowo and Senam (2013) which prove that youths are frequent users of social networking websites. Holistically, youths frequent use of the social media every night indicates that they either get up earlier than usual to use the social media or sleep a couple of hours late after using the social media and this can have a significant effect on their health and mood. According to Walton (2012) when the body's internal clock, or circadian rhythm, gets out of synchronization with your sleep-wake cycle, you can be left feeling out of sorts and the length of time a person has to stay awake is also known to influence mood.

The mean and standard deviation rating representing respondents' rate of agreement or disagreement to the items of the questionnaire reveals that youths in Ahoada East generally use the social media for communicating, interacting with old and new friends and often times for escapism, isolation and easing of boredom and loneliness. This revelation is however similar to the findings of Akpan, Akwawo and Senam (2013) which submit that youths use social networking websites for connecting with friends and easing boredom. However, this brings to fore the theory of uses (exposure to social media) and gratifications (benefits) because youths in Ahoada East deliberately choose to use the social media because it embodies the capacity to satisfy youths' most prioritized needs and supports youths' ideology (Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch, 1972).

## **Social media and mobilisation of youths for development**

What really are the implications of social media usage among youths in Ahoada East Local Government Area of Rivers State for grassroots mobilisation? The ubiquity of social media within their short period of arrival is unparalleled in the annals of media industry. Also, the ability of social media to educate, inform, entertain, inflame and mesmerize millions of users to the point that they forget their real lives motivated the researcher to investigate patterns of social media use in relationships building among youths in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria. The findings of the study revealed that a significant majority of respondents in Ahoada Local Government Area of Rivers State use "social media for communicating, mobilizing and organizing grassroots issues like politics, economy, religious and traditional matters". Thus the potentials of social media for grassroots mobilisation is immense. The Millennia generation are hooked on various social media platforms everywhere in the global arena, and in Nigeria,

particularly. Social media platforms through news, video, photo sharing, and blogging on critical societal issues have in recent times provoked wide range condemnation and protests often championed by youths. Youths and youths organisations in political mobilisation during general elections in Nigeria have also been reported (ACSPN, 2018).

The result of the study presented in this chapter reveals that youths are transfixed with social media use and this has to a great extent challenged their relationships in real life. It then behooves public agencies to use social media to reach, interact, and collaborate with youths or mobilise them for grassroots development. Thus, it behooves the government to harness its potentials for youths to enhance social capital, where public agencies and officials become part of youths' social networks and engage with them in an interactive manner. In this way, government would have relinquished its primary position as a mere broadcaster to becoming member of youths' network where the youths can talk to the government and the government talks back to the youths. This will also go a long way to socially engage youths and make them co-producers of public services to foster social, economic, environmental, and institutional, sustainable development. Social media can act as a strategic communication tool during crisis, it helps in gauging and management of corporate reputation.

Governments' presence on social media should not be ad hoc; they should be available 'online' almost 24/7. Social media platforms can become tools for witch-hunting or serving as platforms for challenging and undermining authority and spreading misleading and imposter contents. Thus, the government should critically analyse what youths actually do with social media, then foster an environment in which social media can empower youths. For effective use, government needs to put in place strategies that will ensure that conversations are not hijacked or dominated by misinformation, disinformation or mal-information without compromising on openness, transparency and free speech.

The study has thus shown that the social media can as well be put to positive uses to bring about youth inclusiveness in governance in Nigeria. Youths can engage positively with the political class, particularly political party leaders, by setting political agenda through social media campaigns so as to influence policies towards addressing youth unemployment, education, infrastructural deficiencies, gender equality and the like. Good governance is enhanced in an atmosphere of openness, transparency, integrity, effective collaboration and performance orientation. Hence, non-political actors, particularly activists groups can leverage on the social media literacy skills of youths to create sustainable social media campaigns that promote transparency, integrity, inclusiveness and openness in governance.

There are also the economic potentials of positive uses of the social media. Governments and policy makers can empower youths to deploy their digital and social media skills towards creative uses of social media, including involvement as social entrepreneurs, video game design, and the design of animation schemes and or online sales of video and audio contents and so on. Above all, health awareness campaigns can be disseminated through social networking sites that are popular among youths in Nigeria. The overall goal will be in the direction of de-emphasizing the negative uses of social media among youths while simultaneously directing their attention to the deployment of social and digital media towards the creation and sustenance of good governance in Nigeria.

## **Recommendations**

The federal government should enact laws on social media content to guide, regulate and control the use of the social media as well as the information, ideas and meaning they share via these media. In addition, youths should moderate the time they spend on social media use for a healthier offline relationship and to help curb the hazards of addiction. Also, youths should pay more attention on the ethical and more positive uses of the social media so that it serves our society in a right way by developing positive self-esteem, nurture and maintain offline relationships and stay safe in the new digital environment. Equally, the government should integrate Media and Information Literacy (MIL) into the school curricula as a means to regulate and mitigate the influence of social media use on offline relationship among youths and to help interpret the influence of addiction to youths' cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains. Finally, non-governmental organisations should partner with youths to sustain social awareness campaigns on good governance, transparency, accountability and openness in governance.

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