

AYIKÁ: JOURNAL OF ENVIRONMENT AND POLITICS IN AFRICA

AYÍKÁ

ISSN: 2664-3030 (Print)
2664-3022 (Online)

**JOURNAL OF ENVIRONMENT AND
POLITICS IN AFRICA**

**Vol 6, No 1
March, 2024**

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ISSN: 2664-3030 (PRINT)

2664-3022 (ONLINE)

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On behalf of the Editorial Board, thank you for the interest in Ayika.

**AYIKA: JOURNAL OF ENVIRONMENT AND
POLITICS IN AFRICA**

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EDITORIAL POLICY

AYIKA: JOURNAL OF ENVIRONMENT AND POLITICS IN AFRICA is

a journal that provides an avenue to scholars, researchers, policy analysts, think tank groups, as well as the civil society community to ventilate the various ramifications of the relations between environment and politics and development in Africa. The causal relationship between the environment and politics and vice versa has grown such that the scientific and political communities have fundamentally and unprecedentedly come to agreement as to the cause(s) of environmental problems. Hence, there is a growing recognition of government as the consumer of scientific findings on the environment such as that this journal portends. This point, in many respect, led to the inauguration of this journal. It is as a consequence of addressing environmental governance issues from the global level right to the local and municipal levels across the world and with special interest on Africa's landscape that AYIKA: JOURNAL OF ENVIRONMENT AND POLITICS IN AFRICA was established.

Coupled with an ever-growing number of environmental movements and the broadening scope of environmental protection and environmental security advocacy and activism, the journal garners relevance. That is, a meaningful venture therefore to critically periscope the environment-politics nexus that this journal represents is because it appreciates the environment's complex realities in our modern world. The necessity of this journal too stems from many cases of resource-rich nations in Africa that have largely failed to translate their

endowments into mass wealth and development, and thereby give rise to what scholars have tagged “resource curse” and/or affliction, to trench sustainable environment in the continent.

Hitherto in the African continent, there has been recognised absence of much intellectual, academic and advocacy platforms upon which to discuss issues of environment-politics linkages in the continent in tandem with the rest of the world. While many existing academic mediums treat issues on the relationship between environment and politics as part of larger themes on geography, agricultural science and the sciences generally, regrettably those in the humanities and social sciences have not fared better on this. It is for the reason of providing a platform for intellectuals in the humanities and social sciences alongside those in all other spheres of academic research that the Editorial Team purposefully pursued to ground *AYIKA: JOURNAL OF ENVIRONMENT AND POLITICS IN AFRICA*.

Vision/Mission Statement

The vision and mission statements of *AYIKA: JOURNAL OF ENVIRONMENT AND POLITICS IN AFRICA* revolves around “Ayika”- a Yoruba word that refers to the environment. The linkage that the environment has to Africa’s socio-political development is no more under contestation. In fact, such a linkage is now established such that every discourse – be it an academic discussion and every other form of dialogue – notes the relationship between the environment and development in general. Thus, existing and emerging environmental problems are ever more political and now require political solutions more than ever. Whereas, the nature of the African continent is such

that environmental problems are increasing and rising steadily and by the day, and in many cases, the negations are as a result of existing poor public infrastructure, disjointed socio-structural arrangements, lack of good policies and abysmal governmental investments in the continent's environment sector. Therefore, *AYIKA: JOURNAL OF ENVIRONMENT AND POLITICS IN AFRICA* sets ultimately as its vision/mission statement the pursuit to bridge the gap of Africa's underdevelopment emanating from her "Ayika". This is given that new environmental problems such as climate change continues to impact on the daily lives of the African man and woman, yet mitigation and adaptation policies and strategies are chiefly nascent, ineffectual and in most cases poor. This journal, therefore, will aid to illuminate the views of scholars that argue that new environmental realities deemed developmental problems - as is the actual case in Africa- flow from political culture and politics that places very weak emphasis on thorough and concrete conceptualisation of the environment-politics nexus for the continent's development.

Scope of the Journal

"Ayika" means environment in Yoruba language of Nigeria. Hence,

AYIKA: JOURNAL OF ENVIRONMENT AND POLITICS IN AFRICA is

established to treat issues of environment in ways that will provide sound policy and socio-economic and political perspectives from scholars within and outside the African continent. Papers to feature in this journal may speak to the global dimension of environmental issues, but must have profound

bearing on the African connection in terms of abating tremendously the environmental inducing underdevelopment variables in the continent. By implication, the journal will provide, and be, an avenue to proffer practical policy and political insights to Africa's most pressing and strategic environmental issues.

Aim of the Journal

AYIKA: JOURNAL OF ENVIRONMENT AND POLITICS IN AFRICA is an

environment politics journal in Africa that so much focuses on the African continent. It covers theoretical, policy, programmatic and other overarching dimensions and dynamics of environmental politics, governance and diplomacy in Africa. As a result of this, original review articles and every other kind of intellectual manuscript from academic fields cum disciplines such as philosophy, geography, international relations, economics, political science, sociology, psychology and related scholarly areas will be published in the journal.

House Style

The journal is based on universal standards of presentation of papers for academic journal publication. That is, papers should be segmented and should begin with an Abstract. The Abstract should not exceed 300 words and should be in italics. The author(s) are at liberty to segment the body of their papers according to a preference. Paper length will differ with every other publication based on the Editorial Team's designation. The Harvard and APA referencing styles are preferable amongst other referencing techniques. Author(s) will be provided with

an email address where their paper(s) should be sent to every quarterly and the sending frame for papers should be in Word Format.

Issues

This journal is published two times annually. Meaning that, each issue will be published once within six months of the year. The journal will be committed to global best practices in academic journal publication. There will be double blind review for every article submitted to this journal.

Editorial Note

The widespread use of digitization in all spheres of human life, including government, healthcare, and education, has come and will continue to be. The global movement of digitization has had a significant impact on the dynamics of politics and governance. Developed countries have been particularly affected positively with the emergence of digitization in governance and politics, this has affected politics in Africa particularly in Nigeria. The last decade has witnessed significant use of digital tools in promoting democracy and its process in Africa. Several political debates and advertisements have strongly relied on social media as a broadcasting medium. Digitization will undoubtedly remain a potent tool for enhancing governance, not just in Africa but all throughout the world. Digitization has changed people's lives and the ways that information is shared and communicated. The emergence of novel communication technologies has fundamentally transformed the ways in which societies and their governments engage both during and following election campaigns.

Africa has witnessed the power of social media in the last decade and, social media has shown its power of information dissemination throughout Africa, changing the way citizens are canvassing for votes and how they mobilize to cast ballots during elections. Social media has made a number of political behaviours more visible and well-known, Africans now have the chance to observe how politics are conducted in other countries with increased coverage of internet use.

Social media is not without its problems, as there are a number of abuses that negatively impact societal political environments. Social media abuse is essentially the improper use of information and communication technology by individuals or groups to send messages that harass or embarrass their political rivals or enemies, in an effort to express their hate, bigotry, and contempt for them. Sending

offensive, false, and fraudulent messages to blogs, websites, Facebook, and interactive web journals are all forms of social media abuse.

This publication offers a variety of perspectives on digitization, politics and governance in Africa, making it a great resource for readers. In order to comprehend the intricate tapestry of digitalization in the modern world, readers will have the chance to peruse scientific arrays of the viewpoints of several contributors.

We would especially want to express our sincere gratitude to the editorial staff, reviewers, and contributors whose hard work and commitment to scholarship made this extensive compilation possible. We sincerely hope that this issue will serve as a catalyst for thought-provoking discussion, encouraging critical thinking, and directing academic endeavors towards a more comprehensive comprehension of the mutually beneficial link between digitization, governance, and politics.

As editors, we extend an invitation to readers to interact with these papers, consider their implications, and participate in the ongoing conversation about this interaction between digitalization and political where the digital sphere is inextricably linked to everyday living and governance.

Guest Editor

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DIGITILIZATION AND PROSPECT OF DEMOCRACY IN AFRICA.

<https://doi.org/10.69778/2664-3022/6.1/a1>

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ABSTRACT

The end of critical period of Cold War in the late 1990s paved the way for democratic agenda in Africa. The study seeks to examines the impact of adoption of technology in democratic transformation in Africa. The study posits that technology is unavoidably essential in ensuring a sustainable democratic structure, as digital technologies have had huge impact on governance around the globe which has made the world a global village. It argues that, the internet networking possibilities are creating many opportunities for the people to be actively participants in democracy. The study, establishes that, there is increase access to communication technologies which has made it easier for citizens to be politically sensitized and deeply involved in public discourse. To interrogate the discourse, the study adopts Democratic Theory and uses secondary sources to gather the relevant information. It concludes that, the technology provides a platform for citizens to exercise their franchise, which often strengthen the evolving democratic values in African countries. In view of the positive impact of technology in engendering well entrenched democratic values and effective structure, the study recommends that, the African leaders urgently need to address some challenges which often threaten the visibility of technology in the conduct of elections, particularly insecurity, falsification of data and manipulation of electoral machines.

Keywords: *Africa, Democracy, Digitalization, Election, Technology.*

INTRODUCTION:

DIGITALIZING DEMOCRACY

In the age of information and communication technology, there is a lively debate on the political consequences of the prominent place taken by technology in our daily life because some consider

the use of digital technology as a liberation that serves as an alternative to traditional media by providing a more open and freer source of information most especially in countries with limited freedom of speech (Diamond, 2010), others believe

that it is a “mis-information technology” for the dissemination of fake news dissemination, surveillance and propaganda (Allcott and Gentzkow, 2017).

Digitalization transforms our everyday life, our way of communication and information, as well as our relationship to other people especially in African countries, digital technology is still under development and poses on the one hand risks, challenges, and difficulties, on the other hand opportunities, chances, and perspectives for users, providers, and politics. High hopes for development lie on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and their potential benefits for countries in Sub – Sharan Africa. In this context, it is important to structure and systematize the complex discourse on digital technology and democracy in Africa.

The advent of innovative communication technologies has deeply changed how societies and their governments interact, affecting both democratic processes and the ways citizens participate in political process of their country, for example, digital technology gives the people the opportunity to have easy access and inexpensive ways to follow global events in real time because,

citizens can seek out alternative sources of information, collectively organise for both online and offline programmes, express their opinion, concerns and demands as well as government authorities, and hold political leaders accountable for their actions and inactions. Digital technologies are also becoming indispensable in key democratic processes such as electoral process in Africa.

Though, the effects of digital technology on democracy have been immense because, there have been negative as well as positive. On the positive side, technologies have helped to improve political pluralism, facilitate government transparency and accountability and expanded political participation through the democratisation of communication platforms (Cheeseman and Garbe, 2021). For example, the relatively low entry barriers to participate in digital activism and organise have allowed previously unheard social groups, such marginalized minorities and women to exercise their fundamental human rights and take leadership positions in social mobilizations. Indeed, these group of people have faced social and cultural backlash when they assume prominent leadership positions in the public sphere. On

the negative side, governments are increasingly using digital technologies to consolidate and extend existing repressive practices, such as hate speech, mass surveillance, targeted monitoring of users' digital footprints, curtailment of digital spaces through legislation and internet shutdowns, and promotion of pro-government digital platforms (Roberts et al. 2021).

The digital technology as a platform for citizen participation and public discourse has important potential to improve democracy in sub-Saharan African countries. The continent of Africa has for years now been synonymous with political instability. Since the majority of African countries gained independence in the 20th century, they have been characterized by a series of problems including political corruption, ethnicity, sit – tight syndrome, tribalism and human rights violations. Political regimes have failed to give adequate attention to elite abuse, ethnic fears of oppression by the majority, and legitimate group demands for political and social rights. In many cases, ethnic minorities have as a result been largely excluded from political processes due to a lack of adequate communication channels (Rothchild, 1995).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study is to examine the relationship between digital technology and democracy in Africa. The specific objectives are to:

- (a) Identify the prospects and challenges brought about by digitalization.
- (b) Examine how digitalization could enable the realization of democracy and support the practice of accountable governance.
- (c) examines “new” dynamics that are emerging due to digital technologies and their application in various aspects of political governance

METHODOLOGY, MAIN ARGUMENT AND STRUCTURE OF THE PAPER

The paper adopts the qualitative approach anchored on historical design. Data were collected mainly through secondary sources. The textual analysis of data, major issues and themes of the paper was supplemented with Innovation Diffusion Theory and Democratic Theory as analytical framework. These illuminated the discussions, findings and recommendations of the study.

The main argument of the paper is to examines the impact of adoption of technology in democratic transformation in Africa. The

study posits that technology is unavoidably essential in ensuring a sustainable democratic structure, as digital technologies have had huge impact on governance around the globe which has made the world a global village. It argues that the internet networking possibilities are creating many opportunities for the people to be actively participants in democracy. The study, establishes that, there is increase access to communication technologies which has made it easier for citizens to be politically sensitized and deeply involved in public discourse on how the digital technology can be used to promote public discourse and citizen participation as functions of democracy in African countries. It concludes that, the technology provides a platform for citizens to exercise their franchise, which often strengthen the evolving democratic values in African countries. In view of the positive impact of technology in engendering well entrenched democratic values and effective structure. The paper identifies some challenges of digital technology on democratic process in Africa such as misinformation, hate speech and the digital divide. The suggestions proffered are capable of attenuating these challenges.

Structurally, the paper is divided into eight sections. Section one which is the introduction took a general overview of the paper. Section two examined the methodology used in carrying out the research. Section three reviewed the extant literature on digitalization as a tool for good governance and benefits of E governance in Africa. Section four explained the concept of democracy and citizen's participation in democratic governance. Section five explored the work within a theoretical framework of analysis. Section six examined the concept of E- voting, Bimodal Voter Accreditation and Electoral Transparency and Smart Card Reader in Nigeria. Section seven explained a detailed dimension of the challenges of digitalization and prospect of democracy in Africa while section eight drew conclusion and recommendations.

Digitalization as a Tool of Good Governance

Digital technologies can in a broad sense and for the purpose of this study be described as the platforms through which people access the Internet. It has in many ways redefined what we understand to be effective citizenry and citizen participation, which are fundamental to a functioning democracy. Many Internet users

worldwide with unlimited information at the push of a button now have alternative access points to the political realm through their computers and mobile phones. Likewise, African citizens are slowly but surely, through the use of the digital technology, retrieving some of the power over their own lives and possessions that many believe elected leaders have been wasting (Ott & Rosser, 1999). Many continue to believe that the solution to Africa's problems lies in the utilization of the digital technology to stimulate and improve democracy in the continent of Africa. Digital tools can promote transparent and accountable institutions, advance civic education and provide means of skills training for citizens, while fostering richer political and social dialogue

Advancements in digital technologies are changing electoral processes. For example, several African countries have partially or fully digitized their electoral processes (Mosero, 2022). This has the potential to introduce greater transparency and overcome challenges regarding electoral manipulation even if the exclusion of some segments of the population and manipulation of results cannot be fully ruled out, due to the complexity of e-voting processes.

This study is, therefore, important in an African context, where until recently many countries have lacked a practical medium through which ordinary citizens could participate in and contribute meaningfully to a culture of liberal democracy in a non-offensive way that does not endorse the conflict that has in many ways become an everyday occurrence for Africans. In many instances, what are in effect single party systems have condemned opposition to the party in power as treason, and political opponents are often presented as "anti- people" or enemies of the states and are severely punished and repressed (Hameso, 2002). The digital technology now provides a platform for communication and networking where traditional media have until now been limited. Indeed, the application of digital technologies in African elections has grown in leaps and bounds in the last two decades. Since South Africa used a centralized electronic election results center in 1994, and subsequently the 'zip- zip' voter registration device, election technologies have come to form an essential part of election management. They are now used in all activities of the electoral management cycle, including the registration of voters, preparation of election plans, procurement,

logistics and, in some cases, voting. In addition, digital technologies have become an essential tool of political participation for voters. Election-related information is shared by EMBs, candidates and the media, using digital technology. Indeed, social media has become one of the most powerful tools of citizen mobilization and engagement in Africa during elections, especially with an estimated 30 million cellphones on the continent. In a new form of collective bargaining digitalization makes visible a layer of social process that is more fundamental than organisations and just as fundamental as institutions, namely, the process by which people that have something in common think together. Collective cognition is greatly facilitated by the community- building mechanisms of digitalization (Jenkins & Thorburn, 2004) because it creates the opportunity for people to form ideologies, spread news, compare agendas, exchange ideas and share experiences (Rothchild, 1995).

By providing a new means of gaining information from citizens, digitalization has helped some governments design better social protection schemes and enhanced resilience to external shocks even if the mechanisms used for such purposes have also expanded

surveillance by states (Alcorn 2021: Roberts et al. 2021)

E-payment platforms, similarly, have made it easy the process of collecting taxes and service fees for utilities. This has both reduced administrative burdens on government and given citizens greater access to public information and services. Digitalisation allows governments to easily share information across line ministries and departments, in many cases, reducing bureaucracy and increasing efficiency. Digitalisation facilitates information dissemination and government service provisions easier. Governments thus increasingly rely on the internet and digital technologies to communicate with citizens and carry out their responsibilities through what is commonly referred to as e-governance. For example, laws, policies and government regulations are announced online and public documents and tenders can also be disclosed to the general public. Many countries also use digital data registry systems to document births and deaths and to issue certificates, passports and other legal documents (AUDA-NEPAD, 2022).

Benefits of E-Government

The goal of e- government is to be

able to offer an increased portfolio of public services to citizens in an efficient, effective, and cost-effective manner because e-government allows for government transparency. Government transparency is important because it allows the public to be informed about what the government is working on as well as the policies they are trying to implement. Simple tasks may be easier to perform through electronic government access. Many changes, such as marital status or address changes can be a long process and take a lot of paper work for citizens. E-government allows these tasks to be performed efficiently with more convenience to individuals. It is an easy way for the public to be more involved in political campaigns (Ayo & Ekong,2008). It could increase voters' awareness which could lead to an increase in citizen participation in elections.

Also, it is convenient and cost-effective for businesses and the public benefits by getting easy access to the most current information available without having to spend time, money and energy to get it (Ayo & Ekong,2008).

In addition, e-government helps simplify processes and makes access to government information

more easily accessible for public sector agencies and citizens. For example, India became the first country to allow government records to be digitally signed, legally certified and delivered electronically by using Electronic Postmark Technology (UNCTAD,2004)

Furthermore, the introduction of e-government will facilitate e-procurement and better communication between government and business because the society is moving towards the mobile connection

Lastly, the ability of government service to accessible to citizens irrespective of location throughout the country brings the next and potentially biggest benefit of e-government services (Asogwa,2012).

The Concept of Democracy and Citizens' Participation in Democratic Governance

Democracy like most other concepts in social sciences lacks precise and universally acceptable definition although, there are quite areas of convergence among the scholars on the concept.

According to Eke (2005) in Ogbulafor, etal (2018) defines democracy to means population in the decision-making process with

its core component as political pluralism through party politics in a free, fair and periodic election to enhance freedom of choice of leaders. Shively in Eze, (2015) views democracy as a state in which all full adult citizens vote at regular intervals to choose, from among alternative candidates, the people who will be in charge of setting the state policies. However, Willige (2017) defined democracy as a political system that allows the citizens to participate in political decision-making or to elect representatives to government bodies. This supports the assertion of Gilbert and Ubani (2015) who posits that democracy is a form of government which lays emphasis on active participation by the citizenry and on popular sovereignty. Ogbulafor (2018) see democracy from the prism of representation through a periodically organized free and fair election. Willige (2017) defined democracy as a political system that allows the citizens to participate in political decision-making or to elect representatives to government bodies. This supports the assertion of Gilbert and Ubani (2015) who posits that democracy is a form of government which lays emphasis on active participation by the citizenry and on popular sovereignty. Okeke (2017) sees

democracy as a people-centered system of government. Democracy is “a system of elected representative government operated under the rule of law, where the most significant groups in the population participate in the political process and have access to effective representation in the practice of making governmental decisions, that is, of allocation of scarce resources” (Erunke, 2012).

Public participation in democratic governance comes in different shapes and shades, such as involvement in campaigns, holding public offices, being a candidate in an election, analyzing political events, dissemination of party programmes, membership of a political party, financial contribution towards the activities of political party etc.

African countries have made varying degrees of progress in building democratic institutions, and the scope and quality of citizen participation in democratic processes differs. Digital technologies provide additional avenues for governments to expand and facilitate citizens' participation and involve them in public institutions. Government institutions and officials increasingly use digital tools, such as social media platforms and government websites, to interact

with citizens. For example, in the 2022 general elections in Kenya, one area of progress, according to the country's electoral commission, was in the public online dissemination of election results from polling stations, in Ethiopia, the National Election Board created a Twitter profile and used the platform to conduct online question and-answer sessions to inform electorates about the electoral process before the 2020 general elections and this has enabled the citizen groups and the media to do their own independent tabulations and tallying of results, in 2019, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa used his Twitter live chat to engage with citizens of the country which was part of an online campaign programme before the elections.

The civic technology sector is still growing, bringing a stream of new web platforms and mobile applications geared at improving the political participation of Civil Society Organisations (CSO) in the continent of Africa. For instance, Nigerians used social media platform to express their concern towards their political leaders for abandoning them during the COVID-19 pandemic in spite of the country's already fragile and under-resourced public health care system, while the same

political leaders sought medical care for themselves in oversea countries. Also in Mali, the mobile phone application allows citizens to directly contact their elected politicians to raise concerns and provide ideas for improving governance and through this, increase government accountability and citizen participation in government activities. In Kenya, the non-partisan parliamentary monitoring organisation uses technology to make the Kenya's parliament more accessible, connecting the political representatives with their constituents through the rollout of legislative trackers in selected countries. All these allow citizens to claim more influence over public institutions and political processes (Onminyi, 2020).

In addition, social media platform have advanced citizen mobilization and collective action, especially in contexts where offline spaces are limited and politically controlled. Some of this online mobilization has influenced decision-making and led to offline action and reform. In Ethiopia for example, Facebook Twitter were used to disseminate information on protests that led to the overthrow of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) coalition in 2018 (Meseret, 2020).

In a Similar vein in Nigeria, social media has allowed the transition of activists from online agitation to fully fledged offline protest, as in the 2020 protests the Nigerian Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS). Since 2017, Nigerian citizens have used social media to report excessive violence by SARS. In 2020, this led to a social media campaign with global reach under the hashtag #EndSARS. The peaceful, offline youth-led protests that followed were met by police violence. Though, the movement was successful to force the government to disband SARS but the demands for the compensation of families who lost their relatives due to police brutality and calls for independent investigation and prosecution of perpetrators of police brutality and misconduct were not satisfactorily met (Vanguard, 2020; Uwazuruike, 2021). However, the examples from Nigeria and Ethiopia, as well as those of other African countries provide precedents for the transformative potential of online social movements. Specifically, they offer two lessons on how digital tools can lead to positive change. Firstly, digital activism may be most effective when paired with offline action and not instead of it. This demonstrates the continuing relevance of offline civic

engagement and the value of open offline civic and political spaces for the consolidation of democracy and accountable governance in African countries because digital tools allow citizens to circumvent some legal and physical barriers, offline civic spaces remain necessary for transformative change. Secondly, digital tools can lead to change derives from the experiences of women, minorities and other socially marginalized actors.

In digitalized environments, these actors may be able to overcome some cultural and structural barriers and take a more central role in initiating and leading civic and political movements (Salzinger et al. 2022). Digital activism blurs the line between the public and private spaces; it allows anonymity and provides for broader platforms from which actors can generate support. Digital activism, therefore, has potential to increase women's political and civic participation even if various examples demonstrate that women continue to be excluded from formal processes once online and offline movements formalize (Salzinger et al. 2022).

Thirdly, citizen disengagement from politics and public life is one of the fundamental reasons for the

systemic failure of our democracy (see, for example, the result of the last Italian general elections, which saw only slightly more than 50 percent of Italians go to the polls). The public has difficulty relating to politics and often believes that it is only a context of victories and defeats that cannot be influenced by individual action (much less individual voting). New technologies can be used to make politics more interesting, fairer, more engaging, and even more fun. Improving participation can be the first step and the way to solve the dangerous problem of political disempowerment.

Fourthly, new technologies improve representation in decision-making which enable the minority voices to be represented in democratic realities.

Fifthly, it improves trust in politics by enhancing fairness, transparency, and accountability. Citizens are increasingly concerned about transparency and accountability in the functioning of any democratic institution, but at the same time they have become increasingly aware of the issue of data privacy. New decentralized technologies and distributed ledger systems can provide transparency without endangering individual privacy.

Sixthly, it improves sharing of resources and expertise across geographical barriers. The Open Science, Open Data, and Open Education movements have demonstrated that technology can improve access to science, information, and education for communities around the world that lack the infrastructure, money, or human resources to obtain them. These technologies are inherently suited to democratize access to knowledge across geographic, economic, and social barriers.

In addition, successful examples of digital democracy projects have shown that technology can be used to disrupt power, protest, and mobilize the masses. These examples show the opportunities that technology can offer to bring democracy to places where it is not taken for granted.

Lastly, social media have shown that ICT tools can radically broaden participation in many social processes such as commerce, education, work and socialization.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To this study, the author based his analysis on democratic theory. Democratic theory is an established subfield of political theory that is primarily concerned

with examining the definition and meaning of the concept of democracy, as well as the moral foundations, obligations, challenges, and overall desirability of democratic governance. Democracy is a government in which powers and civic responsibility are exercised by all the adult citizens directly or through their freely elected representatives. The basic principles of democracy are free, fair, credible and transparent elections, accountability, transparency, citizens' participation, equality and political tolerance among others. Democratic theory will not have meaning except democracy promote the interest of the people and no democracy will promote the interest of the people except there is free, fair, credible and transparent elections. Digitalization can promote, strengthens and reinforces the assumptions of democratic theory particularly because free, fair, credible and transparent makes democratic government to be accountable to the people and to be transparent in its activities, democratic theory is valid but digitalization will strengthen it by ensuring that the political leaders are accountable, responsive and responsible to the people that

elected them to different political offices. The theory looks closely at one significant facet of how rapidly evolving digital lives and how technology is radically changing our lives as citizens and participants in democratic government. The question of how digital technologies shape, reshape and affect fundamental questions about democracy and democratic theory. Cunningham (2002) presents a more comprehensive survey of the different currents of democratic theory and their historical developments.

The Concept of E-Voting and Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) in Nigeria.

The aim of any system of voting is to ensure credible, free, fair and transparent election where the votes of the electorates count. Electronic voting system is one of different forms of automated voting methods which employ computer technology devices to improve different aspects of the electoral process. The system incorporates to a large extent paperless voting techniques such as Electronic Voting Machine (EVM), Internet voting, Digital TV voting, electronic kiosk voting among others. According to Babalola (2021) in Ogieva and Ajisebiyawo (2023), electronic voting is a comprehensive system

of casting, counting and transmission of votes via electronic methods. It may involve both the process of casting and counting of votes or may relate only to the process of counting. According to Akena (2007), electronic voting system is a device where voters' collective intent are electronically determined and it is believed that when the e-voting method is employed, it allows for security of the votes cast and which will invariably allow the preferred candidates of the electorates to be elected.

The Nigerian Election Management Body (EMBs), the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) started with the experimentation of BVAS in the year 2021 in the Isoko South constituency 1 bye-election in Delta State and it was first used in a statewide election in Anambra State in 2021. The experimentation was followed in the 2022 gubernatorial elections in both Ekiti and Osun States which made the electorates in both states, civil society organisations and other stakeholders believe that elections in both states was to a large extent free, fair, credible and transparent (Iremeka, 2023) in Ogieva and Ajisebiyayo (2023). According to Odinakalu (2021) BVAS technology combines voter accreditation, voter enrollment

and result interface capabilities in one device and it is used to transmit a snapshot of the result sheet at polling units to INEC portal for assessment of the public as they logged in to the portal. Okonji (2023) in Ogieva and Ajisebiyayo (2023) posits that in order for INEC to show its preparedness to conduct a free, fair, transparent and credible elections in the 2023 general elections, the electoral body insisted to use the BVAS as a solution to election malpractices such as poor record keeping, falsification of number of accredited voters at the polling booths, making declaration and return while collation is still on going, falsification of votes at the polling unit, forging of results sheets, collation of false results, swapping of results sheets, mutilation of result and computational errors among others. The deployment of technologies in the 2023 general elections in Nigeria has brought about a number of improvements to the electoral process because it is on record that for the first time since 1999 when Nigeria returned to democratic rule, the incumbent President Bola Hammed Tinubu lost an election to a party considered to be small and a number of sitting governors such as Ben Ayade of Cross River State,

Samuel Ortom of Benue State to mention but a few lost the election in their attempts to become Senators in the 10th National Assembly and these heavyweight politicians would have done everything possible to win the elections if 2023 electoral act did not give the electoral body the needed legal backing on the deployment of BVAS technology as the only legal means of accrediting the electorates for the election. Also, technology innovation and its deployment into electoral process has been a major factor that encouraged citizens to participate in political process.

However, the deployment of BVAS is not without its shortcomings as experienced in the 2023 general elections because the technology has failed in some areas and it is susceptible to manipulation. The increasing reliance on e-voting is not without risk of cyber-attacks by those entrusted with the technology. There have also reported cases of BVAS not capturing older Permanent Voter Card (PVC) and its inability to read some elderly peoples' thumb print which has disenfranchised many eligible voters

Electoral Transparency and the Smart Card Reader in Nigeria: The Nexus

The smart card reader is a technological device setup to authenticate and verify on election day a Permanent Voter Card (PVC) issued by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) The device uses a cryptographic technology that has ultra – low power consumption. It is a portable electronic voting authentication device configured to read only the Permanent Voters Card (Ibrahim and Makama,2015). This card reader is designed to scan and translate information stored in the implanted chip of the PVC issued by INEC so as to confirm the genuineness of the PVC. It also performs the function of confirmation of the prospective voter by comparing the biometrics of the potential voter taken on the spot with the embedded on the PVC. The smart card reader was the most highly contentious and the real issue in the 2015 general elections in Nigeria. It was a critical component in the 2015 general elections and it was used for the first time in Nigeria's electoral and it remains one of the greatest innovative technologies in the 2015 general elections. Past elections in Nigeria had witnessed the desperate bid for political

power by some stakeholders with vested interests in Nigerian electoral process. Some of these stakeholders engaged in all forms of electoral malpractices including multiple voting, impersonation, manipulation and falsification of results which has led to legal actions, violence and electoral conflicts. Electoral malpractices make the citizens to lose confidence by the citizens in the democratic process and lack of confidence by the citizens in the electoral process is a big challenge in deepening democratic process because if the citizens does not believe in the fairness, openness, integrity and accuracy of the electoral process, the very basis of any democratic society might be threatened (Alvarez and Hall,2008). However, in view of the negative impacts of electoral malpractices, global attention is now focused on how to reduce this undemocratic behaviour and improve the electoral process if not totally eradicated. One such mechanisms to mitigate the electoral malpractices is the introduction of information and communication technology into the electoral process. Though, the use of technology in election is not an end in itself but assists in different aspects of electoral administration (Beetseh & Akpoo,2015). It is against this

background that an electronic technologically based device, the smart card reader was introduced into the Nigerian electoral process in 2015 general elections in Nigeria to help improve and deepen electoral process. The ability of the card reader to perform the above-described functions as well as keeping a tally of the total numbers of voters accredited at the polling unit and forwarding the information to a central database server over a Global System for Mobile (GSM) network makes the card reader most welcome at that point in time in Nigeria's electoral history.

However, despite the challenges that confronted the operation of some of the smart card readers during the 2015 general elections in Nigeria, the following significant impact of the device usage was observed:

- a. The use of card reader led to the increase and reinforcement of public confidence and trust in the electoral process and this public confidence is dependent on the integrity of an election which the 2015 general election appears to possess.
- b. Nigeria's democratic capacity

has increased and its democratic institutions now understood the knowledge needed to have a free, fair, credible and transparent election in order to deepen the democratic process.

- c. Electoral fraud was reduced and inflation of the number of voters and multiple voting at polling booths were reduced to the barest minimum. The device checked the undemocratic attitude of politicians in electoral malpractices.
- d. Electoral crises and violence became minimal as the election was seen to be free, fair, transparent and credible because of the use of the smart card reader. Tensions were reduced drastically reduced among the political elites compare to the past elections.
- e. Election litigation were minimized and there was a departure from the past where every election outcome is being contested at the election petition tribunal and most of the candidates that lost the 2015 general elections did not challenge the outcome. Some of the major players that lost the election congratulated and

embraced the winners. For example, the then PDP presidential candidate, Goodluck Ebele Jonathan immediately called and congratulated the then APC presidential candidate, General Muhammadu Buhari who was the winner of the presidential election in 2015 general election. This attitude also occurred in many states of the federation in governorship, house of assembly and national assembly elections

Electoral transparency in this context refers to a condition where the entire processes of conducting elections are carried out in accordance with the constitutional specified rules and regulations. In other words, it connotes free and fair elections. According to (Eya,2003), transparent elections are those administered in line with non – discriminatory electoral process. He further posited that a transparent electoral process is the one that is conducted without elements of malpractice, bloodshed, dishonest conduct and unruly activities that have the tendency of changing the real expected result of the entire process. In a similar vein, (Oyenka,2002) defines electoral transparency as the process that leads to the actualization of

democracy and legitimization of governmental powers.

The Digitalisation of Governance Challenges in Africa

Digitalisation can improve state-society relations and bring about good governance as discussed above but it is not immune to exploitation by state and non-state actors because there are shortcomings while implementing on e-governance in Africa. Evidence has shown that digitalization in Africa is low because some government organizations have even by-passed the interact stage as capture thereby giving no room for citizen request or feedback. There are some challenges that influence the implementation of digitalization in Africa as follows:

Digitalisation has greatly added to states surveillance capabilities as phones and electronic devices as well as one's digital activities can be tracked and monitored towards both commercial and political reasons. As an extension of political repression, the internet and other certain social media tools can be partially or fully blocked and/or censored to curtail or contain political dissent. (Ennatu and Lidet,2022)

Misinformation and voter

manipulation, which pre-date the internet, are increasingly being adopted and weaponized by state and non-state actors, including to undermine electoral processes in African and other developing nations of the world because digitalization has empowered certain non-state actors, including businesses such as Facebook and Twitter to mention but a few to get involved alongside foreign governments and political opponents with minimal or dubious accountability.(Benchmarking e-government,2012)

Inadequate resources such as electricity supply, internet diffusion, adult literacy rate, political challenges, and others. There are other significant problems like maturity of governmental process and lack of other physical communications (Adeyemo,2011).

Government must maintain partnership with other organizations, either private sectors or non-profit making organizations as well as relationships within departments. On the other hand, a poor coordination between federal, regional, and local agencies may leads to ineffectiveness of e-government, especially for implementing e- administration

(Greenhill,2010).

Lastly, the large demand of e-administration systems requires external vendors to provide high quality products and services.

The digital technologies can also be used by government for repression because, States, too, are resorting to digital tools, not only to serve their citizens, but also to control and regulate their actions which is otherwise known as ‘digital authoritarianism’.

CONCLUSION

Based on the facts on ground and from the recorded events, the paper concluded that the use of digital technology will result to incremental development in Africa electoral process, it will give room for inclusive citizenship, public survey, public forum, citizens engagement, participatory budget process, public forum, community conversation, consensus conference and information dissemination where electronic system of operation will help government to judiciously engage public participation, encourage government transparency and give proper accountability on how governance is run in Africa.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper was informed by the need to examine impact of digital

technology as a platform for citizen participation and public discourse as potential to improve democracy in sub-Saharan African states and to know why digitalization is not yet developed in Africa and it was observed that lots of factors are militating against its achievements as discussed above. To curtail the observed challenges, the following policy options are hereby recommended:

- a. African leaders should urgently address some challenges which often threaten the visibility of technology in the conduct of elections, particularly insecurity, falsification of data and manipulation of electoral machines.
- b. The most significant solution to achieve the implementation of digital technology in Africa is for the political institutions to strengthen their level of will and commitment both attitudinally and financially.
- c. The primary agenda of the government of African countries is to ensure that adequate and constant power supply is guaranteed because without constant power supply e-government is bound to fail.
- d. A successful digitalization programme is dependent on

- the sophistication and availability of ICT infrastructures and government of African countries needs to employ a scheme that will make computers and internet affordable to the citizens for them to actively involve and participate in the e-government programme.
- e. African governments need to really invest in education and make ICT a compulsory subject in schools from primary education up to tertiary education and adult education so as to improve the knowledge and skills required by citizens to operate and communicate with the government electronically.
- f. African governments should establish a Commission on ICT to regulate the sector and to see to the full implementation of digital technology.

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**SOCIAL MEDIA ABUSE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR
DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA**

<https://doi.org/10.69778/2664-3022/6.1/a2>

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ABSTRACT

Nigeria's democracy has been under the siege of incessant crises and these crises are a culmination of the country's successive years of corruption, human rights violation and in recent times the misuse of social media (through the use of propaganda, cyber bullying and cyber harassment) that heats up the polity and generates bitter politics, hate and bigotry. The implication of this is that it creates a rife environment for continuous electoral violence and ethnic strife that consequently undermines democracy. In the light of this, the objective of this paper seeks to identify how the wrong use of social media can be a threat to the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria. Qualitative method based on document investigation was adopted and the findings from this paper revealed that some of the causes of social media abuse is the culture of gross impunity of the Nigerian society and the lack of effective regulation of social media by governmental institutions. It therefore concludes and recommends that effective policies must be enforced to end the culture of impunity and abuse of social media in order to put an end to ethnic cynicism, ethnic conflicts and hateful politics that breeds sycophants, political violence and the consequent destruction of public administration in Nigeria.

Keywords: *Administrative Collapse; Democracy; Ethnic Strife; Impunity; Political Violence; Propaganda; Social Media Abuse*

INTRODUCTION

Social media abuse has emerged because of globalization and a societal shift from face-to-face contact towards technology-based interactions. Thus, social media abuse has risen as a new form of strategy for intimidating and provoking victims especially for politically motivated intents. Hence, social media abuse is a new form of political participation involving online violence, harassment and stereotyping in order to establish some form of political relevance and dominance and so the globe has become more interconnected than ever before as a result of digital technology (Ologundudu, 2022). Thus, technology continues to advance continuously and swiftly and is therefore changing our modus operandi, lifestyle, political communication, economic activities, political atmosphere, public administrative systems, policy making processes and ways of operating in modern society (Olojede, 2021). However, despite the sophistication, advancement and interconnectedness social media has brought in facilitating democratic tenets, it does not come without its dark sides. Some of

which include cyber bullying, sarcasm, innuendos, ridiculing, manipulation and falsification of electoral results, propaganda, political trolling, satire, malicious and inciteful messages, misinformation, slander as well as the circulation of phony news (Mohammed, 2021). Thus, in this context, social media abuse is the use of computers, iPhone, iPad, cell phones and other electronic devices for making demeaning or politically provocative utterances against individuals, groups or a state that heat up the polity. Essentially, social media abuse focuses on the use of information communication technology as a means through which individuals or groups express their hate, contempt and bigotry towards their known or perceived political enemies or rivals via sending messages that embarrass or harass their opponents. Other forms of social media abuse include sending gross, misrepresenting and spurious messages to blogs, interactive web journals, websites, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, twitter and WhatsApp platforms via mobile devices to arouse hate, prejudice and bias against a political group that spirals into

political violence and genocide. Hence, social media abuse is not only a perilous social media behaviour, but also detrimental and antithetical to the survival of nascent democracy in Nigeria. Unfortunately, social media abuse involving taunting, mocking, negative labelling, intimidation, gaslighting, name calling, issuance of threats, rumor spreading, ethnic, religious or gender-based stereotyping, misogynistic or sexually debasing comments and libel triggers and leads to the spread of sectional and political strife and conflicts all of which pose a threat to democracy in Nigeria (Olojede,2021).

Aside that (Tsegyu and Kelvin,2021) has observed in recent times social media has been identified as platforms that aid terrorism and encourage insecurity and it is also used as channels for recruiting malicious individuals for propaganda especially among politically deviant users. For example, in Nigeria, Bokoharam is actively involved in the use of social media platforms in distribution of propaganda contents and the reach is unimaginably wide and so beyond

the division and dissension social media abuse creates, it has also been observed that this repugnant and unpleasant pandemic has gained normalcy among many internet users across the globe as many in a bid to engage in political activities become involved in using social media for threats, viciousness, terror and bigotry against the perceived supporters of their opponents. However, threats, viciousness, terror and harassment should be unlikely occurrences in the Nigerian cyber space because of the communal culture Nigerians are known for, yet the issue of social media abuse has persisted which has now snowballed into making the political atmosphere tensed, heated, volatile and unsafe and thus turned electoral activities into an opportunity for electoral violence, ethnic strife and unnecessary blood bath (Olojede,2021).In the light of this, the study seeks to examine the negative impact of social media abuse and its implications for the survival of democracy in Nigeria.

Conceptual clarification Social Media Abuse

Social media is an invaluable means of disseminating

information to the citizenry. Hence, it has become a powerful tool for propaganda, maliciousness, terrorism, electoral violence and insurgencies. In lieu of the Nigerian situation, it acts as a two-edged sword wherein it allows citizens unlimited access to information without limitations at the same time, it has been used as a tool to circulate unverifiable and deceptive information to citizens (Ani, Anikwenze and Isiani,2020). Thus, with all the socio-political, economic, technological and educational benefits social media has brought to man, it has not come without a costly price. Oluwagbohunmi (2017) noted that many internet users particularly in Nigeria have misused social media by disseminating provocative and misleading information that has generated ethnic conflicts and has also caused political, economic and national security threats in which has created a rife environment for constant political violence, electoral rigging, bigotry, corruption, sycophancy, injustice, mudslinging, prejudice, rage and political polarization. Unfortunately, these social media vices paralyze politics and creates

political apathy that leads to the destruction of Nigeria's nascent democracy. Therefore, Social media abuse can be seen as any activity involving harassment, altercations or mistreatment carried out by an offender against a victim through the use of internet before, during and after electoral campaigns. This suggests that social media abuse is any reprehensible social media activity in which computers or internet networks are used as a tool for intimidation, cruelty, inflammatory statements, and blackmail particularly for political motives (Olojede,2021). Similarly, some desperate politicians employ some deviant internet users to engage in smear campaigns in order to defame their opposing political candidates and damage their public image as well as their reputations during various elections. Thus, they do this by employing different manipulative tactics such as the production and dissemination of hate speeches to engineer violence in some particular regions and create disharmony, hate and dissension against their perceived political opponents or ethnic groups in order to slothfully and craftily get

the electorates on their side so they can win elections (Ekwueme and Ugwuta,2017).Therefore, social media abuse is the unconventional and contemporary form of perverted political participation in which perpetrators intentionally offend their targeted victims using e-mails, Facebook, Instagram, websites, twitter and WhatsApp platforms to endanger their perceived political opponents in order to encourage hostile political attitudes. Sadly, all of these volatile socio- political behaviour often riles the electorates up into political rage, intra and inter party conflicts, ethic and communal clashes and violent hatred which undermines elections and consequently sabotages Nigeria's crippling democracy (Olojede,2022).

Concept of Democracy

Democracy as a way of government is firmly rooted in the belief that people in any society should be free to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural systems. In the same vein, democracy as a political system is designed to widen the participation of ordinary citizens in government, the powers of which

are clearly defined and limited. Similarly, democracy is essentially a method of organizing a society politically. Therefore, there are five basic elements of a democratic society namely equality (One man, one vote),popular sovereignty (ultimate political power rests with the people),respect for human life (articulation and aggregation of the people's needs),rule of law and liberty of the people (freedom of speech, the press, conscience and assembly).In the light of this, democracy is a meaningful and extensive competition among individuals and organized groups (especially political parties) either directly or indirectly for the major positions of governmental power (Ogundiwin and Ogu,2022).

Thus, democracy is a form of government in which citizens in a state have political investments of political participation and trust. It essentially has to do with the ability of the people to control decision making. This explains why the central thing about democracy is to ensure that power actually belongs to the people. Therefore, democracy emphasizes freedom of the individuals in

various aspects of political life, equality among citizens, justice in the relations between the people and the government and the participation of the people in choosing those in government. In the light of this, the foregoing indicates that democracy entails institutional arrangements for arriving at political decisions which realizes the common good by making the people decide issues through the election of individuals who are to assemble in order to carry out its will. In this sense, democracy is an institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote. What these general conceptions suggest is that democracy as a system of government stresses the sovereignty of the people (Omotola,2006).Thus in real democracy, everybody must be allowed to participate in decision making (direct democracy).It must be a pluralistic system that is as decentralized as possible Hence, democracy is built on the equality of citizens ;the freedom of the citizens to associate with one

another for the realization of their ideals and the defense and promotion of their interests and the freedom of their citizens to choose between the different political platforms of various political parties and candidates and see to the actualization of the platforms they have voted for if their choices win (Babaleye, Ibitoye and Odurome,2020).

Types of Social Media Abuse that Sabotages Democracy in Nigeria

According to (Ologundudu,2022; Olojede,2021) there are various forms of social media abuse which shall be addressed below:

1. **Flaming:** This is a type of abusive social media behaviour that involves sending politically upsetting, rude and obscene messages in order to trigger the victim's attention.
2. **Cyber Harassment:** This is another type of unpleasant social media behaviour that involves the act of consistently sending a person or group of persons offensive or provocative messages with the intent of tempting or riling them up

them to engage in political violence

3. **Cyber Stalking:** This is another aggressive form of social media abuse that involves the act of intimidation which includes threats of kidnap or assassination to an individual, ethnic group or community if they do not support or vote for a particular political candidate during elections
4. **Denigration:** This is a dangerous social media behaviour that involves sending or posting false, malicious or cruel statements about a person or group in order to tarnish their reputation and create political and ethnic animosity that leads to electoral violence or genocide
5. **Masquerading:** This is another volatile social media behaviour that involves pretending to represent a particular political party, or political candidate and sending or posting materials that portrays the victim in a controversial light in order for the electorates to cast aspersions on the integrity of

the victim or to put the victim in potential danger.

Reasons for Social Media Abuse

According to (Nwufu and Nwoke,2018; Olojede,2022) they highlighted reasons for the prevalence of social media abuse amongst internet users which will be highlighted below:

1. **Poverty and Unemployment:** Poverty connotes inequality and social injustice and this traumatizes and angers the youths especially when they see the political class brazenly and disrespectfully flaunting their assets and celebrations on social media and using national resources that is meant to generate development and alleviate poverty engage in ostentatious living and reckless waste while majority of the youths languish in abject poverty. Thus, they see social media as a convenient and accessible avenue to engage in trolling, cyber bullying and harassment in order to either attract the attention of the political class

to their travails or vent out their frustration, anger and displeasure against poor governance, infrastructural decay, political impunity, poverty and unemployment.

- 2. Codes of Conduct and Policies that address what constitutes social media social media abuse are not clearly articulated:** Policies and laws that address social media abuse especially as it relates to political participation are usually not stated expressly, explicitly and communicated to all internet users and members of the public. Similarly, effective penalties are often not clearly outlined, implemented or enforced on the consequences of hate speech and social media abuse particularly when it concerns politically relevant issues detrimental to democracy. Thus, the lack of holding social media abusers accountable for their antidemocratic activities constitutes one of the reasons why social media abuse is prevalent and has become a

threat to the survival of democracy.

- 3. Power of Anonymity:** In cyber space, social media abusers often take advantage of the relative power of anonymity social media provides to engage in anti-democratic activities that are malicious and inciteful for the purpose of causing annoyance, inconvenience, danger, obstruction, insult, injury, criminal intimidation, enmity, hatred, ill-will or needless anxiety for politically motivated purposes.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This paper employed the systems theory to explain the study. Fundamentally, systems theory which was propounded by David Easton in the 1940s stated that the political systems are systems of interconnection and exchanges that impacts on society. Essentially, political systems are structural systems that exist within an environment and directly affects the society through daily and continuous transactions

(Enemuo,1999). Thus, when the constant interactions and nature of a political system which relates to each other is innately filled with impunity, derision, and corruption, it reflects in the relationship and communication on the cyber space. In other words, if the administrative culture, institutional structure, and socialization process of a particular political system is chaotic, violent, full of bigotry, prejudice, bias and civil unrest, it reveals itself on the cyber space. This basically means that the inclusivity, social justice, respect for the rule of law and democratic tenets a society has for one another in the political environment is reflected on the internet and the execrable contempt, ethnic aversion, political disregard, resentment, inter and intra party animosity, and communal irascibility a society has for one another is also reflected in the society. Hence, the recurring menace of social media abuse in the cyber space is only a manifestation of the inherent state of disharmony, heated political environment, electoral violence, ethnic resentment, political turpitude, politics of bitterness,

economic injustice, terrorism and political upheaval in Nigeria's political system and environment. Thus, the appearance of disdain, hate, threats, intimidation, viciousness and other forms of social media abuse continuously posing as a threat to democracy only gives an insight or revelation into the level of pervasive violence in Nigeria's political space and administrative environment that sabotages democracy.

METHODOLOGY

Documentary method was adopted for this study. Hence, data was sourced from local, national and international academic publications. These consisted of relevant text books and academic journals. The data gathered from the aforementioned method was analyzed using qualitative descriptive technique.

SOCIAL MEDIA ABUSE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA

The recourse to win elections at all costs is not unconnected to the nature and character of a lot of Nigerian politicians. Hence, social media abuse has become brazen, audacious, brash and pervasive

because of the winner takes all syndrome which has become deeply entrenched in the Nigerian political system and also because once elections are won or lost, losers know the torrid time that awaits them. Again, electoral victory confers on the winners unrestricted access to state resources at all levels which are often administered not only as their personal estate, but also as an instrument of patronage to reward kinsmen, family members, party loyalists and cronies while the electoral losers become disempowered. Thus, some of the desperate politicians sponsor and encourage all forms of social media vileness to harass, oppress, intimidate and frame-up their perceived opponents in a bid to desperately win election. Hence, they do this by using the internet to engage in ballot rigging, vote buying, disruptions of the result collation process, multiple registration, voting by proxy, outright disenfranchisement, encouraging the sponsorship of violence in opposition stronghold by state officials, party agents and political thugs and outright falsification of electoral results. Unfortunately, these acts of social

media abuse do not come without its consequences. Some of which are corruption and electoral violence which leads to weak democracy and by extension the collapse of public administration. Hence, these types of frail democracy can be likened to authoritarian democracy, neo patrimonial democracy, democracy without choice, illiberal democracy, and pseudo democracy. Sadly, these has been the reality of Nigeria since 1999 (elections without democracy) (Omotola,2021) some of which creates legitimacy crisis, ineffectiveness of public administration and births the propensity of military invasion into governance as can be seen in recent times especially in countries where military coup has occurred such as Burkina Faso wherein Burkina Faso's army ousted President Roch Kabore in January,2022 for failing to contain violence by Islamic militants. Mali- group of Malian colonels led by Assimi Goita ousted President Ibrahim Boubcar Keita in August,2020 over deteriorating security, contested legislative elections and allegations of corruption (Bate,2023).

Furthermore, social media abuse has also created a heated political environment that has sabotaged the survival of democracy in Nigeria. This can be seen in the political upheaval Nigeria constantly experiences. For example, state sponsored suppression, insurgencies, crisis of resource control, secessionist moves, ominous clamor for power shift to southern Nigeria, ethnic and communal clashes, genocide and terrorism have all contributed to the rape of democracy in Nigeria which has now being made worse by the invasion of COVID19 pandemic, inflation, food insecurity, banditry as well as the vested instability in the Niger-Delta and other oil-producing areas which all culminate to the destruction of democracy in Nigeria (Olojede,2022).

In addition to that social media abuse creates a political environment that makes democratization almost impossible thus the wrong use of social media has created misinformation and impunity which has spiraled into socio-political resentment and hatred that has destroyed democracy by

increasing political instability, political violence, economic uncertainty and insecurity and so this lawlessness caused by propaganda has encouraged the establishment of unnecessary and very violent militias like Odua People's Congress, Bakassi boys, Unknown gun men. Eastern Security Network, Egbesu Boys and Bokoharam. Lastly, the bastardization of social media especially on political issues has destroyed democracy by introducing anarchy and impunity into the political system wherein the spread of falsehood, sycophancy and cover ups of incompetencies has given political leaders the impetus not to feel responsible or accountable to the people and this has created room for poverty, cultural degradation, collapse of administrative institutions and failure of policy programmes (Itodo, Ayuba and Adeyi,2022).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the reasons for the pervasive impunity in the use of social media especially at the detriment of democracy in Nigeria is the empowerment of some

nefarious politicians who are desperate to have an enduring presence on the political power and influence of the nation. Thus, they recruit some malicious internet users to generate and circulate misleading and spurious information to cause dissension in such ways that can threaten the stability of the political system and administrative structures just in a bid to win elections. Therefore, it has become necessary for the government through its agencies like the Federal Ministry of Communications, Federal Ministry of Education and Youth Development and Federal Ministry of Information and Culture as well as media professionals, CT specialists, Public Administrators, the academia and local government leaders to work together collaboratively in ensuring enlightenment campaigns and workshops are done at the grassroots level on the implications of the wrong use of social media and its implication for not just our nascent democracy but on nation

building and our overall national life.

In addition, enforceable policies which carry weighty penalties should be enacted for those guilty of sponsoring the enablement and misuse of social media as well as the abusers of social media. Furthermore, it is of utmost importance that relevant agencies should be established to monitor the misuse of social media so that the abuse of social media will not lead to the annihilation of our political and consequently public administration in Nigeria.

Lastly, it is important that the academia and researchers need to complement the efforts of the government in clamping down on the wrong use of social media by designing and setting up courses that expose what social media basterdization is and how dangerous social media can be when abused especially for the survival of democracy national development and public administration in Nigeria.

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THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN VOTER'S MOBILIZATION IN NIGERIA'S 2023 GENERAL ELECTIONS'.

<https://doi.org/10.69778/2664-3022/6.1/a3>

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ABSTRACT

The 2023 Nigeria general elections have presented to scholars, analysts and observers with several issues, dynamics and developments to digest. Arguably, top among the issues is the power/influence of social media in the process of voter's mobilization. Social media has continued to break many age-old social barriers, and at the same time building bridges for the consolidation of intra and inter group relationship and consciousness. Nothing could have amplified this development better than the 2023 general elections in Nigeria. The 2023 general elections in Nigeria witnessed a huge engagement of the people in pre-election, during election and post-election periods, which heightened tensions and created serious uncertainty in the outcome of the elections. Prior to the 2023 general elections, a lot of Nigerians appeared to have lost interest in the electoral process, yet there appeared to be level of engagement in the electoral process by the citizens especially through the social media. Although, some other factors may have accounted for the level of voter's mobilization witnessed in the 2023 general elections, the role of social media deserved a systematic evaluation. Hence, this paper examines the role of social media in voter's mobilization in Nigeria's 2023 general elections. This paper will be anchored on the theory of cognitive mobilization as propounded by Russell Dalton in 1984 as it theoretical framework of analysis. Qualitative research design will be adopted, and through the use of secondary sources, relevant data relating to the objectives of the paper will be generated, and analyzed using content analysis method. The paper found that social media was very instrumental to mobilizing the youth population in Nigeria to participate in the electoral process. Thus, the paper recommends an improved use of social media by candidates for political offices and political officeholder in communicating with the people as it provides for effective and efficient connection between them and the people.

Keywords: *social media, voter's mobilization, election*

INTRODUCTION

Since the emergence of the Internet in 1983, communication has evolved through different methods. The older methods of communication were cave paintings, smoke signals, symbols, carrier pigeons, and telegraph (Time, 2021), while the latest and contemporary methods are radio and television, as well as internet powered social media platforms like Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter, Youtube, etc. Social media are the most recent and rapidly growing phenomenon in the context of Communication. Social media, which is multi-dimensionally connected with abundant hyperlinks, has presented users new ways to receive, process and circulate news and information. The structure of a social media is very much different, for it allow people to communicate news and information in very different way. Social media tools such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and other social networks are now considered as politically transformative communication technologies as classical media such as newspaper, radio and television. There is prediction that social media will transform democracy allowing citizens and politician to communicate, connect and interact in ways never before (Narasimhamurthy, 2014). Increasingly, politician and elected officials are realizing the power of

social media for communicating political information and interacting with citizens.

Social Media has rapidly grown in importance as a forum for political activism in its different forms. Social media platforms, such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube provide new ways to stimulate citizen engagement in political life, where elections and electoral campaigns have a central role. Personal communication via social media brings politicians and parties closer to their potential voters. It allows politicians to communicate faster and reach citizens in a more targeted manner and vice versa, without the intermediate role of mass media. Reactions, feedback, conversations and debates are generated online as well as support and participation for offline events. Messages posted to personal networks are multiplied when shared, which allow new audiences to be reached. This is the unique characteristics that underlines the potency of social media in the election process.

Election has become a critical index with which the degree of democratic culture domiciled in a country can be measured or gauged. Literally speaking, election denotes the process by which a group of people consciously and collectively identify through voting an

individual or group of individual to wield the collective power of the people. In other words, election is a process that revolves around the people; not an individual but a group of individuals. This is the character that makes election an important element of every democracy. As Mefin (2008) asserts, the founding pillars of any democratic political system, whether considered fragile or established, remain undoubtedly elections. Election possesses huge implication for people, given what Wojtasik (2013) refers to as functions of election which include: delegation of political representation; selection of the political elite; legitimization of those in power; control over authorities; ensuring political accountability; creation of political programmes; and recreation of the image of public opinion. All these functions of election have serious implications on the people positively or negatively, which points to the fact that election intrinsically revolves around the people ideally demands that people get involved in the processes leading to the emergence of an individual or group of individuals as representatives of the people. This is where and when voter's mobilization becomes critical in the conduct of election in a democratic society.

Mobilization is seen as the process of engaging and motivating a wide range of partners and allies towards achieving specific objectives. This process traditionally occurs through face-to-face approach until recently with the emergence of mass media and specifically the social media. Social media has changed traditional mobilization structures, including how members of movements are recruited, how communication takes place, how members interact, and what type of protest activities members engage in (McKeon & Gitomer, 2019). Social media has increased the speed and interactivity of communication and has transformed the landscape of political protest. Today, virtual protest influences institutional politics by creating symbolic change, highlighting economic disparities, identifying targets of blame, and keeping the issues in the news and in the broader political conversation. McKeon and Gitomer (2019) point out that social media serves as a tactical tool (a means to disseminate information, coordinate action, and publicize the cause) as well as an emotional conduit (a place to develop identity, share emotions, and symbolically construct a sense of togetherness among activists). The use of social media makes it impossible to separate communication from organization because people

mobilize in both virtual and physical space (Gerbaudo, 2012; Schradie, 2014).

In the buildup to 2023 general elections, Nigeria witnessed surge in the social media discourse of the dynamics and possible outcome of the election. Social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp, etc created a populist identity and a sense of solidarity, which allows people to develop a common sense of indignation, anger, and frustration as well as a perception of shared victimhood and conquerors on the other hand. There was an awakening of the consciousness of social media users especially the youths towards the election. For instance, in the build-up to the election, a particular candidate for the presidential election was frequently described as social media candidate. Critics of this particular candidate boosted that the large chunk of the people on social media who support this candidate would not turn up on election-day to actually vote for him. The 2023 general elections have come and gone, and winner have been declared by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), aggrieved parties have approached the court with different prayers. While many have continued to express their displeasure with the outcome of the election, some others

are still basking in euphoria of being on the winning side.

Regardless of the outcome of the election presently, one thing that seem clear to everyone who followed the election is that social media appeared to have played significant role in the mobilization of voters before, during and after the election. In this regard, this paper is concerned with the role of social media in mobilizing the electorates in the southeast Nigeria. The national statistics shows that Nigeria currently has 122.5 million internet users in Nigeria at the start of 2023, which stood at 55.4 percent. The report further showed that Nigeria was home to 31.60 million social media users in January equating to 14.3 percent of the total population. And a total of 193.9 million cellular mobile connections were active in Nigeria in early 2023, with this figure equivalent to 87.7 percent of the total population (Kemp, 2023). Given the statistics of internet and social media users in Nigeria, it would be logical to expect the impact of social media on the people towards the election to be significant. Hence, in this paper, we shall be examining the role of social media on voter's mobilization in the 2023 general elections in Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarification

In this section, the paper examines

the two major concepts contained in this discourse. The concepts are social media and voter's mobilization. Understanding these concepts would help us set a proper pedestal upon which the paper's discussion would proceed.

Social Media

Generally, media denotes a communication outlets or tools used to store and deliver information or data. Thus, social media would necessarily imply a kind of media. Broadly speaking, Davis (2019) defined social media as the set of interactive Internet Applications that facilitate (collaborative or individual) creation, curation, and sharing of user-generated content. Examples of social media platforms are numerous and varied, including Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Friendster, Wikipedia, dating sites, Craigslist, recipe sharing sites (e.g. allrecipes.com), YouTube, and Instagram. All social media platforms share the above-mentioned characteristics but are unique from one another in many respects. They often vary in their architectures, structures, norms, and user bases.

Other scholars have also lent their voices in conceptualization of social media in a variety of ways. For Boyd and Ellison (2008), social media is a platform to create profiles, make

explicit and traverse relationships. They are websites which allow profile creation and visibility of relationships between users Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy and Silvestre (2011) identified social media as set of functionalities or building blocks. According to them, it entails web- based applications which provide functionality for sharing, relationships, group, conversation and profiles. Kapoor et al., (2017) also stated that it is a set of information technologies which facilitate interactions and networking.



Figure 1: Different Types of social media Icon

A taxonomy of social media results into 6 distinctive categories: Blogs, Social Networking Sites, Collaboration Projects, Content Communities, Virtual Social Worlds, and Virtual Game Worlds (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Similarly, Wolf, Sims and Yang, (2018) asserts that one of the approaches to identify social media is to describe the functionalities of a given platform and application in terms of essential social properties. Thus, Kietzmann et al., (2011) specify seven functional building blocks of social media which are present greater or lesser extent any social media application and which can be substituted and enhanced through integration of several applications (Figure 1).

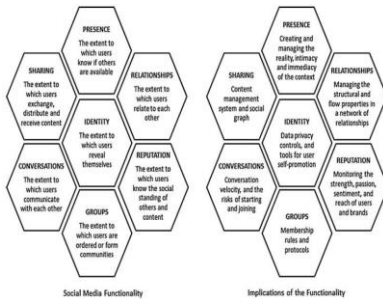


Figure 2 - Building Blocks of Social Media Source: Kietzmann (2011)

Identity refers to the representation of the user in the virtual world. It could be descriptive and personal as a profile on Facebook, listing birthday, hobbies, family relationships etc., or could be as vague as an imaginary pseudonym.

Conversations allows users to interact with each other in a broadcast or dialogue manner synchronously in real time or

asynchronously with time lapse between statements.

Sharing refers to activities through which existing content is spread (and possibly enhanced) through the social graph. Hereby the social connections might not be necessary be made explicit, for example publicly sharing on Facebook or posting on Twitter does not rely on existing connections: on the contrary in the example of Twitter “sharing” often precedes connections (expressed through “following”).

Presence allows users to know where other community members are (on/off-line and actual/virtual location).

Relationships allows community members to visualize their networks in many ways ranging from “likes” and “followers-followed” to virtual representation of real-life relationships. These social-graph abstractions can be uni- and bi-directional and allow strong and weak ties. For example, “following” on Twitter is not necessarily reciprocal, whereas a connection on LinkedIn requires both parties to accept the connection and both to indicate the nature of their relationship (e.g. colleagues).

Groups refers both to membership groups where users can articulate

their affiliations with, or interest in, a specific subject and groups utilized by users to manage their relationships.

Reputation allows users to qualify the content provided by another user and establish trust-levels between community members.

Characteristics of social media

Social media can be identified through various features as already pointed out. However, Kasturi and Vardhan (2014) have outlined some key characteristics of social media as follows:

Free web space: The social media websites provide the users or the so-called audience with free web space to upload their personalized content.

Unique web address: The audiences are provided with a personalized unique web address to have a unique identity, which makes them to share their content in real time. It remains intact till the time they maintain their online account.

Possibility of building profiles: With the possibility of building personalized profiles, the social media enables an individual to have access to the likeminded people to interact with each other. It is also possible to conceal the profile from

pirates and making it accessible to only a desired group of people.

Virtual connections with friends and relatives: Social media websites have become the platform for virtual meetings. People, who are miles away from each other, can get in touch virtually with each other through such website enabled chat engines. The websites even make it possible to share valuable files, photos and multimedia content with each other.

Real time content upload facility: Through social media, it is possible for the audience to have a chance to upload their personalized content or other files as the services are open round the clock 24x7 for all 365 days in a year.

Feedback: With the online social networks, feedback, the key element in the communication process becomes vital. Feedback is immediate like in face-to-face communication through new media or social media communication, provided the responder is also online, at the time when the sender initiates the dialogue.

Time stamp: Each post in the social media has a time stamp indicating if the post is either fresh or stale. Depending on the freshness of the post, the responder may either

choose to respond or not to respond.

Key Roles Played by social media

Social media has wide-ranging functions which are very imperative in a person's day to day life, such that life without social media has turned unimaginable. Some of the key functions provided by the social media platforms today are as follows:

Communication: Nevertheless, social media is of most recent origin, it turned to be one of the most effective communication tools in the history of communication. The entire organizations can turn to be a single social community which is more aptly known as town square. With the more interactive technology involved in this form of communication, the feel through this way of communication is rather very lively and gives a feel of face-to-face communication. It has an added advantage of the ability of very easily monitoring change initiatives. Social media is not only the media of extroverts, but also of introverts. They have the freedom of communicating at an ease without directly facing the responder, unlike in face-to-face communication or the so-called interpersonal communication.

Collaboration: Collaboration is off the charts. Today, it's very common

that almost all Netizens get themselves involved in social media chats, blogging and hangouts of google talk etc. One person initiates communication by his posts with or without the support of multimedia content and it is circulated among a closed or open group of Netizens. People keep on adding the comments to the post which further processes the communication. The comments can be considered as the feedback to make the conversation adynamic one. The entire process turns to be innovative and collaborative.

Education: social media has become an effective tool for educating the masses. The entire organization of community is made a global classroom on the social media platform. Virtual classes around the world are made possible through social media. People in nooks and corners of the world can attend an online lecture delivered by a resourceful person from a remote location. Even the audience can pose their doubts and get them clarified. Such a facility is more similar to that of a live class room environment. This type of education has an added advantage. Simultaneously, the entire thing can be recorded, to revise at a later stage. The world's best resources can be made available to all the desired people with the involvement of technology

in social media.

Monitoring: Monitoring is another crucial function of the social media. It gives a clear picture of the situation in the real time. For example, google analytics gives the clear picture of the number of visitors at any given time. Such type of monitoring facilities not only makes the team leaders to have virtual access to the situation, but also enables them to change the strategy in accordance to the situation. Setbacks are easier to spot, and losses can be cut, adjustments can be made, or reinforcements can be sent in. Social media functions in a similar vein just like the central nervous system of human body and paves the leaders a way to respond, accordingly.

Entertainment: social media is the new media that offers the audience a great entertainment. It enables the user to get all sorts of multimedia content, thereby dispelling all the limitations which otherwise are possessed by each of the traditional media. It has all good qualities of each and every conventional media embedded in it and more advanced features added to it.

Voter's Mobilization

Voter's mobilization entails the process of empowering the eligible voters to participate in the voting or

electoral process. This is usually done through various means such as education, outreach, and peer-to-peer contact (Kupferberg, 2023). Voter mobilization in the broadest sense would be best described as electoral mobilization. And speaking of electoral mobilization, it refers to the processes or activities that are connected with encouraging people to actively support and participate in election process. In this sense, electoral mobilization is a people-oriented process, aimed at resuscitating and energizing their interests and willingness to get involved in the electoral process. This explains why Huntington (2015) stated that political mobilization is a change in the attitudes, values, and expectation of people. It is understood to be a consequence of literacy, education, increased communication, mass media exposure and urbanization. Thus, Bappayo, Abubakar and Kirrfi (2021) submit that political mobilization encapsulates the sensitization of the citizenry, increase and improvements in their political consciousness to effect change in a political process. Relatedly, Mustapha (2016) conceptualization of political mobilization to mean simultaneous engagement of large masses of people in activities that have a predominantly social or collective objective. This entails that electoral

mobilization is effectively necessary in situations where the people share social or collective objective, which in this case is political power. Presidential elections in Nigeria are often rife with stiff contestations among different groups in Nigeria who jostle to emerge top over others in having access to the most decorated political office in Nigeria.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theory of cognitive mobilization as propounded by Russell Dalton in 1984

The Cognitive Mobilization theory is propounded by Russell Dalton in 1984. The theory attributes the process that causes education and political participation to determine political awareness to psychological forces inherent in human nature. Converse (1964) maintains that political elite have higher level of political sophistication than the political masses because of the mobilizing effect of political involvement. Campbell (1960) is of the view that rising education level in society would gradually increase the ideological consciousness of the citizens, especially at the lower level where lack of education may be more incapacitating. In their low information rationality thesis, Popkin and Dimock (1999), are of the view that citizens with low level of information tend to be less keen in participating in politics whereas

those with high information rationality are more keen in political issues such as public debate on policy, voting in elections, standing for political position and canvassing for votes.

Cognitive mobilization involves two separate developments. First, the public's ability to process political information has increased through the higher levels of education and political sophistication among the electorate. Second, the cost of acquiring political information has decreased such as through the expansion of mass media. Thus, cognitive mobilization means that citizens now possess the political skill and resources that better prepare them to deal with the complexities of politics and reach their own political decisions without reliance on affective, habitual party cues or other surrogates (Inglehart, 1988)

The basic assumptions of cognitive mobilization theory employed in this study are as follow:

- Education is a key indicator and determinant in measuring political knowledge and participation because of its cognitive mobilizing impact on mental capabilities of the citizens in dealing with politics (Adamson, 2006; Jacobs 2006).
- Access to political education

increases engagement in politics by developing the citizens' cognitive skill which in turn enables them to process complex information about political system, and to enhance feeling of civic duty (Denny & Doyle, 2008).

- Citizens with low information rationality tend to exhibit political apathy where as those with high information rationality have the propensity to actively engage in politics.
- Rising education level in society would gradually increase the ideological consciousness of the citizens especially at the lower level where lack of education may be more incapacitating.
- Cognitively mobilized publics are more issue oriented in their participation in such activities as voting and less inclined to be led by the elite.

Application of Theory

This paper which evaluates the role of social media in voter's mobilization in 2023 general elections aligns itself with the assumptions of cognitive mobilization theory of political literacy and participation, which is one of the major strands of thought within the spectrum of mobilization theory. Cognitive mobilization theory is a process through which

people receive cognitive cues to make decisions on voting and participation in various political activities owing to skills and knowledge derived from political education (Dalton, 1984). The social media has demonstrated the capacity to transmit an unlimited knowledge content to its users especially as it concerns politics and elections in particular. The 2023 general election witnessed a high flow information on every issue of the election in pre-election, during election and post-election periods. It shows the capacity to equip and help the citizens become politically sophisticated, having the skills and resources necessary to become politically engaged with little dependence on political elites. This paper therefore considers the social media an effective tool for cognitive mobilization. Through this lens, the paper shall examine the role of social media in mobilizing voters in the 2023 general elections in Nigeria.

METHODS

The paper adopts the Case Study research design. This design is adopted because it provides with the

tool to carry out an in-depth examination of the people of southeast in relation to the 2023 general elections. Relying secondary sources of data collection, relevant data relating to the objective of the paper was generated, and analyzed using content analysis method.

The Role of social media in Voter’s Mobilization in 2023 General Elections

Influence of social media in sociopolitical affairs is not a new thing in global and national political discourse. In Nigeria, the role of social media in politics, especially voter’s mobilization is increasingly becoming very prominent and impactful. Much as a lot things about the conduct of elections in Nigeria like logistical problems and manipulations remained same, the electioneering particularly voter’s mobilization through the social became more pronounced and instrumental. The EU Election Observation shows that the 2023 general elections saw social media play an even more pivotal role in electioneering. Candidates and their supporters used social media to shape narratives and boost the appeal of their messaging to a wide audience.

Statistics of top presidential candidates

Monitoring period - 1 January, 2023 to 23 February, 2023



Figure 3: Statistics of Tweets from Top Presidential Candidates

Source: EU Election Observation Mission (2023)

The correlation between social media activities and 2023 general election outcomes can be highlighted with different parameters. Amidst some contestable grounds, the All Progressives Congress (APC) was declared the winner of the presidential election, even though its candidate made fewer social media posts compared to that of the other major parties; the People’s Democratic Party (PDP), Labour Party (LP), and New Nigeria People’s Party (NNPP). This development would prompt the argument that despite how compelling social media conversations may be, only a fraction of Nigerians take part in social media discourse. But when critically evaluated in line with the report of Statista and the EU which

show that only 31.6 million of 221 million Nigerians use social media platforms, and most of these users are young, we can largely attribute the increased level of youth mobilization in the 2023 general to social media influence. This also explains why youths make up Nigerians who applied for voter cards in 2022 ahead of the 2023 general elections.

How Presidential Candidates Used Social Media

Of all the 18 presidential candidates, nine used social media. An analysis of 1,089 posts by the presidential candidates showed that they mostly used Facebook and Twitter. Their posts included videos of campaign rallies, press statements, encouragement, manifestoes and smear campaigns. There were also accounts dedicated to promoting parties and candidates. The EU report identified 946 of them and found that the accounts of these supporters saw higher activity than those of the candidates. For example, Labour Party supporter Aisha Yesufu posted an average of 22 videos per week on YouTube and had about 5,619,278 views. This is much more than Labour Party did.

Figure 4: Statistics of Public Engagements of Social Media Post from Top Political Parties and Support Groups

Party		Number of subscribers	Activity (Video)	Total Views
APC	Official Page	1.3K	90	343.5K
Support Group	ABNIR ENTERTAINMENT	82.5K	57	4.2M
LP	Official Page	1.5K	31	28.6K
Support Group	Aisha Yesufu	39.5K	856	5.6M
	TakeBackNaijaTV	1.2K	32	65.7K
	Obident TV	2.4K	28	39.8K
NNPP	Official Page	5.7K	112	437.9K
Support Group	Tijanni Gandu TV	24.9K	92	2.6M
	NNPP TV Kano	935K	100	80.4K
	Hausa Arab Rapper TV	30.5K	60	9.6K
	Muradi Hausa TV	192	37	9.6K
PDP	Official Page	2.7K	122	332K

Source: EU Election Observation Mission (2023)

Increased Registration, Decreased Votes

The report of conventional media as well as the election organizers based on the number of votes successfully cast during the election, the turnout of voters for the 2023 presidential election is a new record in Nigeria’s long history of political apathy, with 93 million registered voters – the highest in any election – and 87 million collected PVCs. With a 29 per cent turnout rate, the 2023 election might also be the lowest turnout of voters in Africa (John, 2023). The 2023 presidential election was the keenest and also the worst in voter’s turnout in the history of balloting in Nigeria, if the result announced by the Independent National Electoral Commission,

INEC, is anything to go by. Tinubu won in 12 states to beat Alhaji Atiku Abubakar of the PDP, who came second with 6,984,520 votes and also won in 12 states. The Labour Party, LP, Candidate, Mr. Peter Obi, polled 6,101,533 votes to place a close third. He also won 11 states and the FCT. Former Governor of Kano State and New Nigeria Peoples Party, NNPP, Candidate, Senator Rabiun Kwankwaso, came fourth with 1,496,687 votes. With 25.3 million voters or 27 per cent of the 93.469 million registered voters taking part, the February 25 poll also recorded the worst voters' turnout ever. This outcome of the 2023 general elections is being disputed in election tribunals, with accusations of electoral fraud and mismanagement. Particularly, INEC struggled with the electronic transmission of votes, triggering distrust in the transparency and fairness of the polls. Albeit, given the voters' turnout in past polls, the 2023 turnout of 25,286,616 voters is the least turnout in presidential contests in Nigeria. Before the election, it was projected that fewer than 30 million voters would take part in the polls even though 93.469 million voters were registered. The projection was based on the inability of millions of voters to collect their Permanent Voters' Cards, PVCs, INEC's non-removal of names of dead voters between 2019 and 2023 from the

list; fears of insecurity; and hardship arising from scarcity of naira (Ndujihe, 2023). There were also anecdotal reports of voter suppression due to: the INEC's inefficiencies; officials not showing up; targeted disenfranchisement; cancelled votes because of violence or overvoting; and problems cleaning up the voters register to reflect deaths and emigration. This contributed to the record-low official turnout, with only 27% of registered voters accredited during the presidential polls.

The run-up to 2023 general elections saw increased youth participation in the discourse and campaigns largely on the social media. Socio-economic problems, including incessant university strikes and high youth unemployment, apparently ignited to their increased engagement. Young people made up around 76% of newly registered voters, with 40% of that number identifying as students. Analysts suggested a connection between Nigeria's youth-led #EndSARS movement and the social media generated mobilization in support of the Labour Party's presidential candidate Peter Obi, referred to as the #Obidient movement. To his backers, Obi presented an opportunity for a new kind of governance with more transparency and accountability arising from

messages and views about him which was spread through the social media. Both the #EndSARS and #Obidient movements were dominated by mostly young middle-class Nigerians from urban areas are dominant in the Nigeria social media space (Tayo, 2023).

According to results released by the INEC, the Labour Party won the popular vote in the presidential elections in Nigeria's biggest city Lagos, and in the capital Abuja. The Lagos result was particularly surprising because it's Tinubu's stronghold, and violence prevented many from voting.

The effect of the #Obidient wave extended beyond the presidential elections, as around 40 individuals were elected to the National Assembly under the Labour Party. This includes the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) senator-elect, Ireti Kingibe. She defeated the People's Democratic Party's Philip Aduda, who represented the FCT in the National Assembly for two decades. The Labour Party had no seats in the previous National Assembly.

Recognition of the youth voting bloc became apparent in the three weeks between the presidential and state elections. After shunning invitations to debates during campaigning, incumbent Lagos State Governor

Babajide Sanwo-Olu ramped up his public engagements online and in person. The threat of losing power only became real after Tinubu lost in Lagos – a result partly attributed to the state's strong showing of urban youth. Other candidates also made overtures to young people elsewhere in the country. Interestingly, these youths were described as social media noise makers during campaigns, and were said to have little or no real voting presence or value.

Nigerian youth led the charge in demanding electoral accountability. They helped document the entire voting process by posting social media updates. Young people also made sure to 'defend' their votes, with some remaining at polling units until the early hours of the following morning to monitor the collation process. Some youth groups launched parallel collation projects to verify the INEC's declared results.

During the elections, young Nigerians played diverse roles. They were victims and perpetrators of electoral violence and drove both divisive rhetoric and calls for unity. In addition to differences based on religion, geography, ethnicity and class, stark divisions along political lines emerged during the polls. The #Obidient movement had a counter #JagabanArmy movement

supporting Ahmed Bola Tinubu of the APC, and the #Atikulated movement in support of Atiku Abubakar of the PDP.

How Social Media Worked in Voter's Mobilization

Characteristically, it takes a small army of social media professionals to give candidates and parties a voice on online; social media advisors and consultants are at the top of the pile but they all work with content creators and influencers. Particularly, we saw that the candidates and their parties have separate social media advisors and consultants and had different fortunes in terms of followership. Some consultants come with their own teams and campaign plan. But they all work in silos, independent of others. Chukwu (2023) observed that while social media was abuzz with election campaigns and discussions, it got little attention in most campaign budgets. Chukwu also reported that only a drop of PDP's budget went to social media, while the APC's media campaign budget was about ₦1.5 billion, most of it went to traditional media - television, radio, and print media - while only about ₦200 million went to social media channels. But with the outcome of the 2023 general elections, this will significantly change in the future considering the success of the Labour Party's campaign (Chukwu,

2023). The party's presidential candidate, Peter Obi, was declared third, and it was the first time a third-force candidate showed such potential. He received the most votes in online polls including one by Bloomberg. Strategists link his performance to his party's social media campaign.

As the 2023 general elections approached, Ibrahim (2023) observed that there were renewed sophistication and organisation in the push for disinformation. Key players are focused on glorifying or delegitimizing political candidates and undermining the credibility of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). At the same time online organisation remains largely informal, in part by design, with political parties driving disinformation behind the scenes through *unofficial* party accounts or hired influencers. In addition to the use of platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and WhatsApp, TikTok, with its predominantly video content that can bridge educational divides, is playing an increasingly important role. So too are Twitter Spaces, which are recorded and then shared, as podcasts, across social media platforms in ways that increase listenership.

Cross-platform posting remains critical to understanding Nigeria's

digital ecosystem, as screen grabs or content from one platform can be shared across all others, broadening the reach beyond the number of direct users. Content also moves from online forums into offline spaces, with soldiers of mouth spreading online content through streets talks, in motor parks and at newspaper stands. This makes curbing disinformation very challenging in Nigeria. But at the same time, these networks for the flow of information can also promote democracy. Civic awareness of the continuous voters' registration process and the importance of participating has largely been driven by a sustained online campaign in the run-up to 2023, while the platforms can be used to fact check and hold elected and aspiring officials to account. Finding a balance that accentuates these positives and diminishes the negative aspects must be a priority as the elections approach.

In previous elections, text and pictures were dominant, but in 2023, the emphasis has been more on the real time livestreaming of audio and video content on social media platforms. One of the innovations this year is the organisation of political song challenges, such as the one coordinated by Dauda Rara, a prominent northern political musician, and it is called '*Jagaban*

Shine Gaba'. The challenge encouraged citizens to mime a song with creative videos and upload it on TikTok. Rara and his team of judges reviewed the entries and awarded 12 cars, 30 iPhones and selected a further 50 individuals to receive N100,000 (\$220) each (Ibrahim, 2023). Other political actors have also been promoting challenges that favour their candidates by offering gifts or rewards to those who generate the most viral contents. Coupled with the TikTok's fairly lax community guidelines and limited enforcement, these challenges can be used to push disinformation "without those responsible being penalized" in the view of one user. TikTok content also reaches individuals without an account through cross-posting, meaning that it can reach Nigerians with limited literacy, when it comes to written text. It is much cheaper to send out jingles on TikTok, which previously had to be placed on radio and TV channels, and with phone sharing and cross-platform posting, the audience reached can still be significant. WhatsApp remains utilized to coordinate the organisation of elections, to circulate audio and visuals, and it has the largest reach in terms of the direct number of users. Voice notes remains critical, especially in local languages, with content regularly played and replayed to an audience

that has no direct online access. Other closed network platforms like Telegram are also becoming increasingly influential. These closed spaces are also used to help organise campaign rallies and other large gatherings, both online and offline. The latter is a concern, given that separatist groups, such as the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), have Telegram channels through which they talk directly to supporters, spread disinformation, recruit adherents and plan offline activities.

For all social media platforms, the line between the online and offline remains blurred. For example, during this election campaign cycle, a letter on the official INEC letterhead, and purportedly signed by the INEC spokesperson, was released claiming to commence the investigation of the APC presidential candidate on drug related charges. However, this letter was a forgery that originated on WhatsApp, moved quickly across social media, and was read out on national broadcast platforms such as Arise TV. There was never any investigation, nor was the statement issued by INEC, but in a rush to break the news, and possibly influenced by media partisanship, it became a mainstream story. The example given is an outlier, but social media, more regularly, serves

as a source of content inspiration for mainstream media. It is common to find issues trending on Twitter being discussed on morning or evening debate shows, as this is what the audience is looking to hear. In that sense, media houses are bringing the online into the conventional media and into peoples' homes. And when they invite so-called 'political consultants' as experts into their studios, they invite disinformation specialists. These individuals are often paid to peddle half-truths, promote conspiracy theories or attempt to legitimize false information flowing online.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The social media has shown to be effective for information dissemination and mobilization, as it allows users to find common ground with others online, while bridging barrier the of distance. The social media has become a powerful instrument for propagating sociopolitical agenda. The hope and enthusiasm of the people, particularly the youths ahead 2023 general elections were largely raised through the social media outlets/tools like Twitter, WhatsApp, Tiktok and Facebook. Many who were in doubt at the beginning of the process now understood that social media has come to stay, and will definitely be a powerful instrument for voter

mobilization in subsequent elections. It is therefore important to provide facilities that will aid internet penetration in the hinterlands to facilitate the use of social media in those areas. The also

recommend that political officeholders should maximize the potential of social media building and maintaining effective and efficient communication system with the people.

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THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN COMMUNICATING ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE: A REVIEW OF TWO SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS IN SOUTH AFRICA AND KENYA.

<https://doi.org/10.69778/2664-3022/6.1/a4>

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ABSTRACT

Recent environmental disasters happening all around the world, particularly in Africa, have given rise to the need for ways to protect and preserve the environment. However, one of the ways to achieve this is via accurate dissemination of information regarding climate change to the citizens as information is crucial to action. This study examines the trends in the dissemination of information to the public regarding climate change and environmental preservation. Through a critical evaluation of the exchange and dissemination of information, via social media, between the government and the public on two official Twitter handles of environmental agencies in South Africa and Kenya, the paper examines the extent of awareness created by the agencies in respect of climate change and environmental issues. Approaching environmentalism from a communication point of view, the paper argues that much of the efforts/interventions towards addressing climate change will be more effective if the public are duly informed and involved. It intends to do this by establishing the current state of climate change knowledge/awareness in the selected countries, thereby contributing to knowledge on approaches to better environmental preservation/conservation. Thus, in order to ensure participation and achieve sustainable environmental governance in Africa, there is need for adequate and consistent education/awareness on the part of the citizenry.

Keywords: *Environmental Governance, awareness, public, Social Media, Africa.*

INTRODUCTION

Environmental governance can be described as the appropriate and judicious control or utilization of natural resources and the environment for development. The term is synonymous with interventions aimed at changes in environment-related incentives, knowledge, institutions, decision making, and behaviours. More specifically, “environmental governance” refers to the set of regulatory processes, mechanisms and organizational activities through which political actors and technocrats influence environmental actions and outcomes (Lemos and Agrawal, 2006). In current literature, however, the vested interest in environmental governance has gone beyond “political actors” to accommodate other actors (both state and non-state) thereby broadening the scope of environmental governance. It has also been argued that environmental governance is used to denote patterns of interaction that derive from the strategies of various actors (both state and non-state) to govern or “steer” society towards achieving environmentally-related objectives (Adger and Jordan, 2009). Be that as it may, environmental experts have

identified the absence of coordination among government agencies as a major challenge confronting environmental governance in Africa.

In the same vein, sovereignty, existing divergent values, different levels of development, corruption and insincerity of purpose have equally been identified among challenges militating against a healthy environment in Africa (Amollo, 2011). In much of these efforts that have examined challenges and ways to navigate out of them, little is often said about the critical role of the media. In seeking to fill that gap this paper turns to the use of social media platforms as major tools in the dissemination of information aimed at making that public significant role players in the campaign for a sustainable environment. In other words, as part of the strategies needed to solve the existing challenges highlighted above, the effort is to conceptualize the use of social media in achieving environmental governance.

Current research also shows that traditional mainstream mediums such as radio, television and newspapers have not enabled enough participation in programs

designed for environmental education especially in view of the opportunities made available by digital technologies. In other words, traditional media have not been sufficiently used to communicate environmental governance in Africa. Furthermore, they (traditional media) have also limited ordinary people's participation in the communication process, as prominence is given to the opinions of elites in the media (journalists, politicians, civil organizations) over those of the less privileged. The quest for a broad-based participation therefore makes the use of social media a thing to consider. In doing so, an examination of the potentials of social media in communicating environmental governance might be a good starting point.

Social Media as Game Changer

Social media is regarded as a useful vehicle for the sharing and exchange of information and to stimulate change at the global, regional, national, and local levels (Kavada 2014, 2012). Again, in view of the proliferation of new technologies, especially the Internet, opportunities exist for citizen participation in message production and consumption

(Castells, 2012). Thus, the advent of social media has enabled the democratization of citizen participation and the unrestricted flow/exchange of messages for action. As such, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) continues to play a crucial role pro-environmental and other social values to help shape consumer preference for greener or alternative lifestyles. In other words, social media on their own will not necessarily save the planet [however] "they might just encourage a more sustainable future" (Lie and Servaes 2015). In view of this, the objective is to explore the use of social media for environmental education in Kenya and South Africa. While these African states are diverse and can be differentiated using certain indices; these countries have been selected because they have made relative progress institutionalizing environmental governance in their countries respectively.

This study will highlight factors that has enabled the positive institutionalization of environmental governance in the selected countries. It intends to do this by examining the communicative approach that are being used to achieve such feat

particularly when it comes to communicating with their audiences' online. As such, the effort is to explore the kind of social media contents/messages that government agencies such as the Department of Environment in Kenya and South Africa uses to interact with their audiences' online. This is to evaluate the nature and manner in which environmental messages are being disseminated to the online audience in the selected countries. Another of such objective is to establish if the government environmental departments in both countries are living up to their mandate and are discharging their environmental duties as expected.

Going further, and apart from the efforts of the United Nations and other environmental stakeholders in utilizing social media as a tool/instrument in disseminating environmental information to the audience, there is the need to explore ways in which social media can be utilized as a tool for mainstream environmental education. Therefore, and in the context of the selected case studies; the question is: Is social media being used as a medium of communicating environmental governance in the selected

countries? What social media platforms are being used to communicate environmental governance? What are the contents of messages on the social media platforms and what kind of messages are being disseminated on the platforms? Ultimately, the aim is to assess the extent of participation and information being conveyed on these social media platforms and the reactions/feedback to such messages. Hence, a cursory look at the social media sites of the Department of Environment in Kenya and South Africa to explore and review the messages being disseminated and the reactions/feedbacks to the disseminated messages.

Social Media and Environmental Education in Kenya and South Africa

Current literatures reveal that social media has been an active instrument for the dissemination of environmental information in Africa particularly in the selected countries. This is evident in the report on the State of Internet Freedom in East Africa (2015). The report indicates that Internet access continues to rise, with penetration in Kenya standing at 69% of the population, and mobile phone access rates standing at

(84%) in Kenya. Furthermore, the Nendo Report (2020) ranks on popularity basis the most common digital media platforms used to disseminate environmental information in Kenya and these include: YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Twitter and LinkedIn among others. According to the report, the digital world in East Africa is growing relentlessly because of telecommuting and digitization of businesses and essential services is moving communication to the digital platforms; opening up of remote areas to Internet services. The same is true of South Africa as well as ICTs (social media) continues to permeate and has particularly been used as a tool for climate change communication. In a way, this indicates that social media is a pervasive educational tool in Africa.

However, despite all these positive developments, climate change information is still largely inaccessible owing to the mode and language of dissemination in Kenya (Muchunku & Ageyo, 2022). In South Africa, the challenge is that the South African media has not done much to improve the public's understanding of climate change

because citizens are unable to associate climate reporting with their day-to-day lives. As a result, citizens do not understand and are unable to relate to the essence of climate change as well as the mitigation and adaptation policies regarding climate change. The reason, according to Sithole (2023) is that South Africa's media houses rely too heavily on the use scientific languages and vocabularies that do not appeal to the interests of the greater number of citizens in their coverage of climate change messages.

As such, the goal is "to shift climate change from a problem that seems 'out there' and 'abstract' by telling "stories that show local impacts on people's lives" (Ledwell, 2017:1). One way to achieve this is to ensure that climate change messages are framed in ways that evoke emotion and interest and demonstrate usefulness especially by: simplifying and contextualizing climate information; using forms and media that are largely accessible to the audiences; and repackaging scientific information into local languages and non-scientific narratives that resonate with daily experiences of local communities

(Media & SEI, 2020). This, in a way, suggests that there is the need to inject more of local and indigenous languages in communicating environmental information in Africa. This thought re-echoes in the thoughts of (Muchunku & Ageyo, 2022) who recommends that climate change messages should be repackaged and disseminated globally in newer accessible and locally relevant languages and formats in Africa.

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study is grounded in new media theory. This theory focuses on the utilization of popular new media to increase dissemination and access to information - in this case, environmental/climate change messages. Broadly speaking, it conceptualizes the implications of digital technologies: from the novel socio-political configurations fostered by computer-mediated communication, to the aesthetic and cultural significance of digital culture (Giraud,2018). This new media includes the Internet, and other social digital platforms.

The new media theory earlier forecasted by Marshall McLuhan (1964) predicted that

communication would become fluid and dynamic as a greater force to change the trajectory of communication globally would emerge –which came in the form of the Internet and other associated digital communication technologies. Thus, this new media has been succinctly described as communication technologies that enable as well as facilitate user-to-user interactivity and interactivity between user and information (Rice, 1984). Focusing on the later kind of interactivity (user and information); has the new media enabled interactivity with climate change messages in the selected countries?

Furthermore, building on the new media theory in relation to climate change communication; O'Neill & Boykoff, (2021) highlighted three cardinal roles of the new media and its implications for climate change engagement which includes: Information, Interactivity, and Inclusivity. As such, the new media theory recommends that apart from its primary role which is to disseminate climate messages and information; the new media must be interactive as well as and be inclusive while at it. The next question then is: Are the social

media platforms (in the countries under study) informative, interactive, and inclusive in communicating climate change?

Again, what are the social media sites being used to communicate environmental governance in the selected countries (South Africa and Kenya)?

Focusing on two social media platforms (Facebook and Twitter), the effort is to know which of these social media sites is being used to disseminate environmental messages and how much of environmental messages is being disseminated via both platforms in the selected countries. These two social media platforms were selected because they are popular and rank high among the most commonly used social media sites for sharing and disseminating information (Irwin et al.,2012; Merchant, 2012; Kimmons, 2014). The attempt is to measure the level of citizens' participation and interaction to the environmental messages they receive on these social media platforms.

It is fast becoming common knowledge that social media now form part of the tools used by government and other corporate entities in sharing and

disseminating information. A cursory look at the selected social media platforms (Facebook and Twitter) will be done to indicate which social media platform is frequently being used. The study also intends to measure the extent of feedback/interaction, participation, and responses to the messages being received via these platforms. As stated, "the complexity, immediacy, and ubiquity of environmental problems and crises demand novel and unusual human responses. Understanding such responses better and using them well is necessary if tomorrow's population are to inherit sustainable planet". (Agrawal and Lemos, 2007:5). In other words, environmental education is sacrosanct towards sustainable environmental governance.

METHODS

The exploratory nature of both the study and the means to achieve the objective of the study already suggests the kind of method to be used- which is the qualitative kind of method. Thus, a qualitative review/content analysis of the content/messages on the official pages of the department of environment in both countries was done. It is assumed that the Ministries/Departments of

Environment (as the case maybe) in the countries of focus are expected to disseminate environmental messages to the citizenry (which forms part of their obligations). Thus, the Department of Fisheries, Forestry, and the Environment (DFFE) in South Africa, as well as the Ministry of Environment and Forestry in Kenya would serve as the cases in study.

The Department of Fisheries, Forestry, and the Environment signed up on the Twitter Platform in June 2015, their first tweet/engagement on the platform began on the 02nd of November, 2021. However, the content analysis will begin from the (1st of January, 2022 to 31st March, 2022). In Kenya however, the Ministry of Environment and Forestry in Kenya registered on the Twitter Platform in July, 2015, while their first public tweet/engagement on the platform began on the (25th October, 2021). Hence, the content review will begin from the (1st of January, 2022 to 31st March, 2022).

Thus, the content reviews and in both countries (South Africa and Kenya), will begin from (November, 2021- March, 2022). A quick glance through the

contents of the social media pages of the Department of Environment in Kenya and South Africa indicates the absence of environmental messages/information to the citizens on how to conserve the environment against the impacts of climate change and other environmental hazards. Rather, much of the contents of the social media pages were used to discuss and highlight the administrative activities of the department and ministries in both countries as it showed no messages relating to environmental education/climate change education.

Focusing on two social media platforms (Facebook and Twitter) in both countries, the researcher was unable to find any official Facebook handle belonging to the Department of Environment in Kenya and South Africa respectively. Thus, there was no sign/presence of communication on Facebook in both South Africa and Kenya. For Twitter however, there was presence of communication on the Twitter handles of the Ministries of Environment in both countries. This suggests that government and government agencies are comfortable and find the Twitter social platform a suitable place to

interact/engage with the citizens. Hence, focus will be on the Twitter handles of the Department of Environment in South Africa and Kenya.

Going further and in view of the advancements in technology and the provision of a digital feature called analytics used in social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter to (primarily meant to measure and do an aggregate on the contents and feedback and interaction of the tweets/information on social media platforms); the most convenient approach would have been to review the content of the analytics (if it was accessible), make inferences and draw conclusions. However, in view of the fact that this is a research work coupled with the fact that there are people who have been hired to handle and manage these platforms; it will be unethical and would constitute a breach of privacy to request for the platform’s analytics to conduct this research. Thus, in the absence of such, the author’s effort was to critically review the contents on the social media platforms (Twitter) as well as to check the engagement of the public to those messages.

The table below constitutes the

discussion and analysis of data gathered through the review of the contents on the official Twitter platform of the Department of Environment in Kenya and South Africa respectively. As earlier stated, the official Twitter platform of the Ministries of Environment in South Africa and Kenya showed sign/presence of engagement as the Facebook platforms of the Department of Environment in both countries is non-existent. Hence, only the Twitter handles of the Department of Environment in South and Kenya was used to carry out the content analysis.

The Twitter handle for the Ministry of Environment and Forestry in Kenya is represented as: @Environment_Ke; while the Twitter handle for the Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment in South Africa is represented as: @environmentza.

SN	Date and Month	Content on the Twitter Handle of the Department of Environment in South Africa: @environmentza	Total Number of People who reacted to the content in the form of likes, shares, and comments.@enviromentza	SN	Date and Month	Content on the Twitter Handle of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry in Kenya: @Environment_Ke	Number of People who reacted to the content in form of likes, shares, and comments: @Environment_Ke
1.	10/1/2022	The Fishing Rights Allocation Process Online Application has resumed	4 Likes 1 Retweet 0 Comment	1.	06/01/2022	Environment and Forestry Cabinet Secretary Gerardo Tobiko speaks to Kenya's National Broadcaster to give a progress report on the environmental conservation and climate change in the year 2021.	39 Likes 23 Retweets 5 Comments.
2	12/01/2022	Fire fighting Teams commended for efforts to bring blaze under control	9 Likes 4 Retweets 0 Comment	2	11/01/2022	Makindu County in Kenya to plant 90,000 tree seedlings in the next rainy season	39 Likes 14 Retweets 2 Comments.
3	13/01/2022	Minister condemns killing of security guards at Landfill site	19 Likes 2 Retweets 4 Comment	3	13/01/2022	Commencement of the 57 th year of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA). The meeting will be held at UNEP Headquarters in Giza in	49 Likes 23 Retweets 1 Comment

4	14/01/2022	Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment displays environmental management inspectors to support snake anti-pollution of KZN rivers from sherry dam breach.	9 Likes 5 Retweets 1 Comment	4	14/01/2022	celebrate the 50 th Anniversary of UNEP's meeting for UNEA-5.2 and UNEP 50th commemoration which was held from 29 th February to 4th March, 2022.	171 Likes 2 Retweets 1 Comment
5	17/01/2022	Official Visit of the Minister of Environment to the Krommedal river following the fire which destroyed over 3 hectares of vegetation and left one structure burnt.	4 Likes 4 Comments	5	16/01/2022	World Wetland Day is commemorated on the 2 nd of February each year to raise awareness about wetlands. This day also marks the anniversary of the Convention on Wetlands, which was adopted as an international treaty in 1971.	581 Likes 27 Retweets 4 Comments
6	18/01/2022	Minister of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment, Mr. Barbara Crewey will be visiting the Overberg District as part of the Back to School	31 Likes 0 Retweets 0 Comment	6	17/01/2022	The Ministry of Environment in Kenya highlighting the benefits of wetlands and its critical importance to the ecosystem, climate mitigation and adaptation.	401 Likes 40 Retweets 2 Comments

7	19/01/2022	Minister Barbara addressing learners High Matrix learners about the impact of climate change.	11 Likes 0 Retweet 0 Comment	7	18/01/2022	availability. The Ministry of Education in Kenya continues with stating the advantages of wetlands to the management and regulation of water quality and availability.	51 Likes 16 Retweets 4 Comments
8	21/01/2022	The Department is hiring looking for a Communications Engagemnt/Technician	23 Likes 11 Retweets 2 Comment	8	19/01/2022	The Ministry goes down memory lane by stating that the first President of Kenya inaugurated UNEP's Headquarters in Kenya.	391 Likes 19 Likes 2 Comments
9	22/01/2022	The Minister sends condolences to the family of the Pibiko Tax Family	1 Like 1 Comment 0 Retweet	9	20/01/2022	The Ministry discusses the need for laws to be put in place to protect Environmental Rights Defenders with Cabinet Secretary of the Ministry, Kerika Tobiko.	40 Likes 19 Retweets 4 Comments
10	27/01/2022	The Department celebrates the World Wetland Day	14 Likes 0 Retweets 0 Comment	10	22/01/2022	Celebrations continue in commemoration of the #WetlandWeek. The celebration is Wetlands Action for People and Nature. #WetlandDay2022	30 Likes 15 Retweets 2 Comments

11	28/01/2022	The Department reminds the general public of the online application for the Fishing Rights Allocation Process. #FRA2022	61 Likes 8 Comments 0 Retweet	11	28/01/2022	Environment Cabinet Secretary writes parliament proposing changes to law on forest management	20 Likes 15 Retweets 0 Comment
12	02/02/2022	In celebration of the World Wetland Day	51 Likes 4 Retweets 0 Comment	12	02/02/2022	Environment and Forestry Cabinet Secretary, Mohamed Elmi leads a procession in Kilifi town in Kilifi County to mark this year's World Wetland Day.	40 Likes 16 Retweets 0 Comment
13	04/02/2022	In celebration of #WetlandWeek, Deputy Minister Setya identifies 100 eco-tourism sites, school sites, bays, restaurants, outdoor bowls, colour-coded dishes and garden tools to the pupils of Stamenite's Primary Farm School, Free State to aid the learners and teachers at the school.	1 Comment 0 Retweets 0 Likes	13	03/02/2022	#StameniteWetlandManagement2022 is an Act of Parliament to establish an appropriate legal and institutional framework for the efficient & sustainable management of water in the framework of the green economy, the realization of the zero-waste goal. #WetlandWeek #AdeP#Nature	28 Likes 19 Retweets 0 Comment

14	05/02/2022	As part of World Wetland Day celebrations, the Department hosted an outreach activity at K.L. Newton Primary School	51 Likes 1 Retweet 1 Comment	14	04/02/2022	Plans underway to protect endangered (Nditi) wetland in Kiambu.	121 Likes 8 Retweets 0 Comment
15	07/02/2022	Deputy Minister visits Malindi Local Municipality to report back on the waste management intervention.	61 Likes 2 Retweets 1 Comment	15	05/02/2022	The fifth United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA.5.2) meeting which was held from 21 st to 29 th March, 2022 at UNEP Headquarters in Egypt will be followed by a special session to be held 3-4 March, 2022 to commemorate the 50 th anniversary. #UNEP50 #AdeP#Nature	87 Likes 19 Retweets 2 Comments
16	09/02/2022	DFFE Report back on the Riteso Park in South Africa in 2021.	14 Likes 18 Retweets 4 Comments	16	07/02/2022	441st management meeting marks a green recovery from COVID-19 are some of the issues the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA.5.2) will address when it convenes for the second part of its fifth session	441 Likes 18 Retweets 1 Comment

17	10/02/2022	The Department announced a new date for suppliers to join and register for the workshop	71 Likes 0 Retweets 1 Comment	17	09/02/2022	The Cabinet Secretary held a virtual meeting with Her Excellency Katrina Zifika Lelipolova, the Slovak Republic Ambassador to Kenya to discuss how both countries can further enhance the bilateral cooperation.	71 Likes 0 Retweets 1 Comment
18	16/02/2022	The Minister, Mr. Barbara Crewey held a virtual stakeholders engagement ahead of the United Nations Environment Assembly	21 Likes 1 Retweet 1 Comment	18	10/02/2022	Kerika Preshara Uthuru Kenya has been named the new chairperson of the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change (CAHSSCC).	50 Likes 20 Retweets 0 Comments

19	17/02/2022	Deputy Minister Setya joined the African Women Independent Forum to deliver an address at a Round table Discussion at Cape Provincial University, Bellville Campus.	71 Likes 2 Retweets 0 Comment	19	11/02/2022	80% of Kenya's landmass is held & Semi-arid lands making climate change mitigation & adaptation a survival issue. Agriculture, the mainstay of the Kenyan economy, is predominantly rain-fed, making it highly vulnerable to climate change. #ClimateAction #UNEP50 #AdeP#Nature	51 Likes 28 Retweets 4 Comments
20	21/02/2022	Minister Crewey has declared potpourri of land as an extension to the Harold Porter National Botanical Garden	11 Likes 0 Retweets 0 Comment	20	14/02/2022	Cabinet Secretary, Kerika Tobiko holds talks with Germany Deputy Ambassador, Thomas Wimmer on the establishment of the International Climate Club, engaging cooperation in the assist, possible support for the development of the third NCCAP.	141 Likes 10 Retweets 2 Comments
21	24/02/2022	Minister Crewey welcomed the Minister of Environment	2 Retweets 1 Comment 0 Likes	21	15/02/2022	Cabinet Secretary, Kerika Tobiko meets with HON. Deputy Director Dr. Julia	111 Likes 10 Retweets 2 Comment

22	26/02/2022	Finance Minister to incorporate the carbon tax as a way to ensure that South Africa lowers its greenhouse emission.	121 Likes 19 Retweets 10 Comments	22	16/02/2022	Knowledge to collaborate and address deforestation and exploit opportunities in the environment and forestry sectors.	461 Likes 13 Retweets 3 Comments
23	28/02/2022	Minister Crewey announces trophy hunting quotas of black rhino, leopard and elephants for 2022.	31 Likes 2 Retweets 0 Comment	23	17/02/2022	Nature-based solutions offer cost-effective ways to tackle the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. It would also improve rural livelihoods, build resilience and support COVID-19 recovery. #AdeP#Nature #UNEP50 #ClimateAction	30 Likes 14 Retweets 2 Comments

24	01/03/2022	Finance Minister to incorporate the carbon tax as a way to ensure that South Africa lowers its greenhouse emission.	121 Likes 19 Retweets 10 Comments	24	16/02/2022	Nature-based solutions offer cost-effective ways to tackle the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. It would also improve rural livelihoods, build resilience and support COVID-19 recovery. #AdeP#Nature #UNEP50 #ClimateAction	461 Likes 13 Retweets 3 Comments
25	28/02/2022	Minister Crewey representing South Africa in Nairobi at UNEA together with the High Commissioner Malunga.	31 Likes 2 Retweets 0 Comment	25	17/02/2022	AMEN Session held under the theme, "Securing the people's wellbeing and ensuring environmental sustainability in Africa. The Cabinet Secretary attended a virtual meeting of the 9th Special Session of the African Ministerial Conference on the	30 Likes 14 Retweets 2 Comments

26	04/03/2022	Deputy Minister, Mo Malhotra Soya will tomorrow host a #DietDevDevelopmental odel feedback stakeholders engagement session in Bhorofw, North West and of the Presidential Inbaio which will be hosted on Saturday in Mahlang.	11 Likes 1 Comment	26	24/02/2022	Environment and Forestry Cabinet Secretary Kerika Tobiko welcomes all delegates from Kenya and all over the world to the resumed fifth Session of United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA 5.2) at #UNEP69 which kicks off on the 29 th February to 4th March 2022.	66 Likes 30 Retweets 1 Comment
27	18/03/2022	President @CyrilRamaphosa embarks on a visit to the North-West Province this Saturday, 17 th March 2022. For the #PresidentialInbaio taking place in Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality in Mahlang following his State of the Nation Address last month.	39 Likes 22 Retweets 26 Comments	27	25/02/2022	Environmental Management Commission Act is under review to incorporate latest best practices and jurisprudence-@S Tobiko at a meeting with a team of CEO and ED @UN Global Impact, Santa Qibambo.	19 Likes 7 Retweets 0 Comment.
28	11/03/2022	The National Master Plan for Spatial Planning(MSP)	51 Likes 10 Retweets	28	24/02/2022	Urban green spaces such as parks, sports fields, woods.	41 Likes 29 Retweets

		Bherha Creecy at the #WorldMeteorologicalD ay2022 celebration.				Government decided to put forward a global award Anansi and Matzaga Awards, a global award to persons, institutions who champion environmental sustainability and peace.	24 Likes 10 Retweets 1 Comment
34	24/03/2022	OFFE & Trainers/BSA launched Technical Handbook on Issuance of Sustainable Municipal Bonds in South Africa.	61 Likes 4 Retweets 1 Comment	34	04/03/2022	United Nations Assembly, Cabinet Secretary, Kerika Tobiko termed it as the most successful UNEA owing to the adoption of resolutions including Global Agreement on Plastics.	19 Likes 8 Retweets 1 Comment.
35	25/03/2022	The Minister, together with the Premier of Kwazulu-Natal and Mr. Ravi Pillay will officiate the much-anticipated @Sunguliso Investment Summit.	81 Likes 3 Retweets 1 Comment	35	08/03/2022	In commemoration of the International Women's Day, Kerika Tobiko called for embracing of women in high level leadership for gender equality and promote equity through community initiatives and advocacy for a sustainable tomorrow.	19 Likes 10 Retweets 1 Comment.
36	27/03/2022	Minister Bherha Creecy	71 Likes	36	09/03/2022	The Permanent Secretary of	11 Likes

		Data and Information Report (NDR) has been finalised and is now available to the public.	2 Comments			lakesides and gardens give people the space for physical activity, relaxation, and peace. They are associated with better air quality, reduced traffic noise, cooler temperatures, and greater diversity. #Act for Nature @UNEP69	1 Comment
29	12/03/2022	Minister Bherha Creecy joined the President's delegation for the Presidential Inbaio in Mahlang where the President and all three spheres of government will interact and engage community members on service delivery issues affecting them.	31 Likes 1 Comment	29	27/02/2022	Environment and Forestry Cabinet Secretary, Kerika Tobiko has today launched #UNEP69 centre at City Park at a ceremony where 183 trees were planted representing 183 UNEA member states.	111 Likes 31 Retweets 0 Comment
30	14/03/2022	Deputy Minister Soya joined the delegation to the 46 th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW66) taking place	11 Likes 2 Retweets 1 Comment	30	28/02/2022	Environment Cabinet Secretary, Kerika Tobiko held bilateral talks with European Union team led by Commissioner for Environment and Oceans,	91 Likes 20 Retweets 1 Comment

		has urged any applicant who is dissatisfied with the 2021 Fishing Rights Allocation Process to lodge an appeal from 29March to 29April, 2022.	2 Retweets 1 Comment			The Ministry of Environment, Dr. Ropwood has called on sports persons to partner with the Ministry in environmental conservation, saying there is a strong relationship between sports, health and leadership.	48 Retweets 2 Comments
37	31/03/2022	Minister Bherha Creecy spoke to SABC News about the land reform programme, which has enabled those who were dispossessed of land for political reasons to reclaim their land in terms of the laws governing land restitution	21 Likes 2 Comment 1 Comment	37	13/03/2022	UNEA 5.2 made history by adopting a resolution to stop plastic pollution through an international legally binding instrument and establish science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals.	47 Likes 10 Retweets 0 Comment
				38	14/03/2022	Chief Justice and President of Supreme Court, Honorable Justice Martha Koome launches the Environment and Land Court Users Committee with a call for collaboration	17 Likes 1 Comment.

		from 14 to 23 March 2022 at the UN Headquarters in New York				Virginia Sirokovic at the sidelines of UNEA 5.2 Meeting in Giza #UNEA5 @UNEP69.	
31	15/03/2022	Deputy Minister Soya delivered a speech on African Women Resilience in the context of climate change during a side event at the Commission for the Status of Women in New York.	71 Likes 1 Retweet 1 Comment	31	01/03/2022	Environment Cabinet Ministry said Kenya is expecting the international community to come up with a common resolution that will address plastic littering menace at #UNEA5 #UNEP.	201 Likes 10 Retweets 20 Comments
32	18/03/2022	The Department is celebrating #GlobalWatersDay and #Waterweek in partnership with different stakeholders in every Paal, Mahlang.	16 Likes 7 Retweets 1 Comment	32	02/03/2022	UN Environment Assembly adopts landmark resolution on the path to #ZeroPlastic Pollution at #UNEA5. In a major win for people and planet, nations have committed to develop a legally-binding agreement on plastic pollution #ActforNature.	239 Likes 139 Retweets 19 Comments
33	21/03/2022	Address by the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, Mo	21 Likes 1 Comment 0 Retweet	33	03/03/2022	In recognition and to 511 Likes celebrate 50 years of 178 Retweets #UNEP69, the Kenyan 1 Comment.	

						between state and non-state actors	
				39	17/03/2022	SDG12 is about decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation, increasing resource efficiency, & promoting sustainable lifestyles. There can be no sustainable development without sustainable consumption and production first. #InternationalDayofForests	171 Likes 208 Retweets 0 Comment.
				40	18/03/2022	21 st March of every year is the International Day of Forests. The Day celebrates and raises awareness of the importance of all types of forests. The National Celebration will be held at Corner Batek, Ngong Hills under the theme "Forests and Sustainable Production and Consumption" #SDG14	57 Likes 208 Retweets 1 Comment.
				41	21/03/2022	lined up activities for the commemoration of the	9 Likes 2 Retweets

					International Day of Forests include: - Tree growing exercise - Demonstration of Gallery Erosion Management - Demonstration of Dune Technology - Signing of MoU's on adopt a forest - Demonstration of seed dispersal - Soil organic carbon measurements - Mirandi Forest Model.	0Comment
		41	23/03/2023		Today is #WorldWaterDay held on 22March every year since 1993. The core focus of #WorldWaterDay is to support the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 6: Water and Sanitation for all by 2030. The theme for this day's event is Groundwater, making the invisible visible.	44Likes 27Retweets 2Comments
		43	23/03/2023	Environment and Forestry		33Likes

					Cabinet Secretary Kericho Tshiko message during World Meteorological Day whose theme is "Early Warning and Early Action".	12Retweets 0Comment
		44	28/03/2023	Environment and Forestry	Cabinet Secretary Kericho Tshiko is currently in New York at the UN General Assembly for the preparatory meeting for Stockholm-50 ahead of the commemoration in June.	37Likes 19Retweets 0Comment

Source: Author's own analysis/interpretation.

DISCUSSION

The above are the analysis of the contents of the messages on the Twitter platforms of the Ministries of Environment in both countries (South Africa and Kenya). The table further reveals the rate at which people interacted with the messages disseminated on the Twitter platforms. A number of issues emerged from the reviews.

The language used on the official Twitter platforms of the Ministry of Environment in South Africa and Kenya is the English language. As is expected on such official accounts, the language was formal and succinct. However, the tone and expression of the language used on the

Twitter platform of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry in Kenya was more explicit and engaging compared to the language used on the Twitter handle of the Department of Fisheries, Forestry, and the Environment in South Africa. That, in a way might be responsible for the increased level of citizen engagement / interaction on the Twitter handle of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry in Kenya. This, in a way, highlights the importance of language in disseminating environmental messages. Drawing on the recommendations of the new media theory which places emphasis on inclusivity and interaction - were the languages used (in the social media platforms of both countries) inclusive and interactive? It is important to state that in order to stimulate climate change action, proper use of language in communicating climate change is important.

Furthermore, and from the analysis of the contents of the two Twitter handles, there was little or no evidence of messages informing or educating citizens on how to conserve their environment and mitigate against the effects of climate change.

Thus, the bulk of the messages seen on both Twitter platforms were only to highlight the administrative activities / engagements of the Ministry of Environment in both South Africa and Kenya. There were few occasions when the twitter handles of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry in Kenya tried to briefly educate the citizens especially in commemoration of some environmentally significant days. These days are insignificant compared to the constant reportage of the administrative activities of both Departments. While these observations are not intended to water-down the efforts of the Ministries in both countries in showcasing and bringing the citizens up to-date with the activities of the Ministries, there is need to do more in terms of using those social media handles to educate, teach, and create awareness to the people on how to conserve their environment against the impact of climate change.

Another significant finding is the evidence of citizen interaction to the messages on the official Twitter handles of the Ministries of Environment in Kenya and South Africa. This was in the

form of likes, shares, and comments. It is evident that there is an online audience. However, the number of citizen interaction to the messages differs in both countries, there was evidence of citizen interaction to the messages on the official Twitter handles of the Department of Environment in both countries. As indicated in the table above, the number of citizens who interacted to the messages from the Department of Environment in South Africa is low compared to that of Kenya. The question to then ask is: What is responsible for the higher level of citizen's interaction/engagement to the messages disseminated on the twitter handle of the Department of Environment in Kenya? This, in a way constitutes a topic for further research- to explore the approaches the Ministry of Environment in Kenya is using to keep/engage the interests of their citizens to the messages.

Going further, and from the analysis in the table above, the bulk of messages from the official Twitter handles of the Department of Environment in both countries were purely administrative and official messages. There was no evidence of messages to educate the

masses on environmental conservation, adaptation skills and strategies to mitigate against climate change and other environmental issues. This is clearly a gap that needs to be filled. This, therefore raises the need for increased environmental education/awareness, and training in both countries. While it is understandable that the primary task of any official social media platform of any government ministry is to highlight the efforts and activities of that same Ministry to the public it swore to serve; it also would not be out of place for the Ministries of Environment to educate the public on ways to safeguard and conserve their environment against the impacts of climate change- which in fact is their primary duty and mandate. From the reviews of the official Twitter pages in both countries, there was clearly no clearly no effort at educating the citizens through the social media platforms. This clearly defeats the purpose of utilizing such social media platforms.

However, considering the power that social media wields in mass education; there is really no better media platform capable of reaching the public faster than

social media especially in this digital age. Thus, it suffices to say that, the Ministries of Environment in both countries (South Africa & Kenya) have under-utilized the capabilities of their social media platforms in educating the masses on environmental governance/climate change.

Upon further investigation, it was discovered that the Department of Fisheries, Forestry, and Environment in South Africa (DFFE) has been able to achieve this by publishing a quarterly environmental newsletter that gives a more robust and comprehensive details of the Department's activities to the public. The newsletter also contains other relevant and useful information to the public on the environment. The name of the newsletter is 'Environmental Quarterly' and its recent release was for February to March, 2022.

CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that despite the various forms of interventions and investments from the United Nations and other stakeholders towards achieving sustainable environmental governance, environmental governance remains a challenge in Africa. This, according to the findings

from this study is as a result of the manner and ways in which climate change messages are created and disseminated on social media platforms. Channeling and tailoring climate change messages in appropriate and understandable languages (particularly on digital platforms) is key in educating the public. This is taking into account the heterogeneity of the public and their different learning patterns. It cannot be over-emphasized that

social media play an important role in mass education. As such, environmental education via appropriate social media platforms need to be done using the appropriate language. A bottom-top approach is useful in making available climate change and environmental governance messages to the public in order for them to participate and be involved in environmental governance crusades.

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THE NEED TO MARKET LIBRARY SERVICES AND ITS CHALLENGES TO ACADEMIC LIBRARIANS: THE CASE OF DELTA STATE POLYTECHNIC LIBRARY, OTEFE-OGHARA

<https://doi.org/10.69778/2664-3022/6.1/a5>

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigated the need for the Delta State Polytechnic Otefe, library to reshape the promotion techniques of her library's products and services for improved service delivery to fit in the present global information society. This has become necessary as the world experiences continuous technological development. The study therefore sought to determine the challenges to effective marketing and to identify strategies to effectively market library services at the Delta State Polytechnic, library, Otefe. The study is qualitative research and adopts a descriptive research design method. The study made use of a combination of case study and survey research methods. The study population includes all the seven (7) professional librarians of the Polytechnic library. Data collection was done through interview of all the target population. Data generated were analysed using content analysis. The findings of the study indicate that the librarians consider the existing promotion/marketing practices obsolete and none effective. The study therefore recommends the adoption of core marketing principles of library services and products to reach out to customers to gain their confidence and remain relevant in the present dispensation.

Keywords: *Delta State Polytechnic, library, Otefe; marketing; technological development*

INTRODUCTION

The proliferation of information and information resources as well as technological advancement have changed the global

information landscape which have impacted greatly the access, use/intake of information globally. The internet, WWW and soaring technological

innovations have given leverage to information access/retrieval and have considerably reduced hindrances to information access to a great level. With the present global trend, the awareness of the importance of information among people in all works of life have grown especially among students. Members of academic communities are aware of alternative sources of information which are mediated by modern technology and their advantages. As a consequent, information seekers have developed appetite for the changing ICTs and expect the academic library within the tertiary institutions to provide latest ICTs and media technologies, innovate and upgrade their information services. In the face of these factors that are capable of stripping the library of her users, it becomes imperative for academic libraries to reshape her strategy, be preemptive and device processes to make the library attractive ounce again to both present and potential users, if they must remain relevant in the present global information society. Following the current global occurrences, Sondh (2021) points out that those who wish to stay afloat and remain competitive must be innovative

and adjust their business models to match the demands of her costumers. According to Agada (2019) academic librarians and information science professionals should initiate competitive marketing approaches to strategically reorient themselves and libraries as information superhighways that the academic community cannot ignore. Moreover, the library is service oriented, it is meant to be used else its establishment is needless. Maximum and effective use of the academic library especially in the face of alternative sources of information can be promoted through marketing. Like in every other business organization marketing is crucial in promoting library services in order to perform a user driven service. Chuabey and Lal, (2016) found that library and information products/services have been recognized as saleable and have a ready market.

Moreover, it is evident that the service sector to which the academic library belongs (education) contributes significantly to GDP and serves as a source of employment in every society globally (Johann, 2015). Payne (1993) in his classification of service

marketing categorised communication and information services as uppermost on the list of saleable services. Payne's classification recognizes that the principles of marketing can be applied to library services. According to Chaubey and Lal (2015) in the present post-industrial age knowledge is considered the most valuable asset. Invariably, the awareness and use of information is on a steady increase and so information seekers will source for information through sources that appeal to them that will satisfy their needs in the most convenient way. As mentioned earlier with the availability of diverse sources of information academic libraries run the risk of losing patrons which will have adverse impact on their sustainability. However, with increase awareness on the importance of information, Library and information literature indicates that, the academic library may be able to retain her place of relevance and continue to convey its integral role in supporting teaching, learning and research in tertiary institutions if they apply appropriate marketing principles to promote their services (Edewor, Okite-Amugboro, Osuchukwu and

Egreajena, 2016; Chegwe and Anaehobi, 2015; Kennedy, 2011). This study therefore seeks to study the need to market library services and its challenges to academic librarians using Delta State Polytechnic Library, Otefe-Oghara as a case in point.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The marketing of library products and services have been identified as crucial in the present information age with its characteristic features of information explosion, technological advancement, the internet and www and multiple webs based commercial information services providers (Adekunmisi, 2013; Adegoke, 2015 and Aderibigbe and Farouk, 2017). This phenomenon has increasingly reduced the turn out rate of users to the library's physical space, low use of information sources and other library's products. If this continues, the academic library may lose its relevance, as it may no longer be able to capture the attention of the educational community as occupying a central position within the institution and its function as the link between the information seeker and his/her information needs may no longer be

appreciated. This trend may further reduce the standard of research output, students' academic performances and decline in the image of the institution. As the saying goes, "an institution is as good as its library".

Several studies in library and information literature have shown the extent marketing of library services is practiced in various libraries (Adekunmisi, 2017; Okon and Umoh, 2014; Aderibigbe and Farouk, 2017; Terver, Doo and kwaghga, 2015; Ubogu, 2021). However, much cannot be said of Delta State Polytechnic Library, Otefe, regarding the issue of marketing of library services. Moreover, the issue of low turnout is evident in the library use statistics of the Delta State Polytechnic Library, Otefe. As, Ogungbeni, Adeleke and Opeke, (2013) point out information vendors' direct marketing to end-users and the rise of the Internet threaten librarians' traditional role of serving as an intermediary between information and the end-user. If not addressed, the continued decline of the use of the library and her resources and services will have adverse effect on the Polytechnic and her

products. This situation has motivated this study. The purpose of this study therefore is to examine the need for and challenges of marketing library services in Delta State Polytechnic Library, Otefe-Oghara and determine the perception of the librarians regarding library services marketing.

The outcome of this study shall contribute to the ongoing discussion on library services marketing and also serve as a benchmark for library services marketing for Polytechnic and Monotechnic in Delta State.

THE STUDY OBJECTIVES

The study objectives include:

1. To determine the challenges to effective marketing of Delta State Polytechnic, Otefe, Library services
2. To identify strategies to effectively market library services at the Delta State Polytechnic, library, Otefe

LITERATURE REVIEW

Marketing generally is defined in business as a social and managerial process by which individuals and organizations obtain what they need and want by creating and exchanging value

with others (Armstrong and Kotler, 2011; Cravens and Piercy, 2003). According to Ibrahim (2010), marketing is seen as any activity that is undertaken in order to provide goods or services that can satisfy the needs of customers. Perreault, Cannon and McCarthy (2010) define marketing as the performance of activities that seek to accomplish an organization's objectives by anticipating customers' or clients' needs and directing a flow of need satisfying goods and services from producers to the customer or clients. To Vij (2012) marketing is the activities that an organization put together to connect the organization to those parts of its outside world that use, buy, sell or influence the output it produces, the benefits and services it offers. From the definitions it can be drawn that marketing is centered on customers (clients) satisfaction.

It is based on the idea that whatever goods one has to sell must be what will satisfy the need of whoever needs it. On the other hand, the producer of the goods or service being sold already has an objective which can be termed a need that also has to be met. In this scenario the producer is conditioned to present his/her

commodity in such a way to attract customers as there may be other alternatives. Hence Akinawo (2018), explains that marketing is the process by which individuals or groups obtain what they need by creating, offering and exchanging products and services with others. Perreault, Cannon and McCarthy (2010) point out that in marketing, the needs of the potential patrons should be considered first before the process of production. According to these authors marketing should try to anticipate needs and then marketing rather than production determines what goods and services are to be developed to satisfy anticipated and current needs that have been identified.

Although, academic library services may not be considered tangible goods that are often exchanged directly for money between organizations and their customers, in management the same marketing principles are applied in marketing services. It should be noted that library services are paid for indirectly by user. The library also offers some fee-based services which may include charging membership fees, fines from overdue books, photocopying services, printing,

scanning, space allocation, consultancy services etc. (Abiola, 2016).

To be more specific in management, services is regarded as economic activities offered by one party to another; Often time-based, performances that bring about desired result to the recipients... service customers expect value from facility, professional skills, labour as the case maybe in exchange for money, time or effort (Lovelock and Wirtz, 2011). Another definition by Palmer (2004) sees service as the production of an essentially intangible benefit, either in its own right or as a significant element of a tangible product, which through some form of exchange, satisfies an identified need. With regards to academic library services, the recipients (library users/information seekers) of the services expect to be satisfied (value/information needs met) from the facilities (information resources/reference services/conducive reading atmosphere/support services) provided by the library in exchange for their time/effort and money as the case maybe. The intangible benefits derived by library patrons include the

satisfaction derived from fast and easy access/retrieval of information, guidance and support in the use of information resources. Tangible benefits are those benefits derived from satisfaction derived from services such as reprography, bindery, printing and photocopy, bookshop etc. it is important to note that service marketing as a concept recognizes the uniqueness of all services; it is an aspect of marketing that is applied specifically to the service industries (Morrison, 2010), hence professional librarians therefore have deemed it worthwhile to incorporate services marketing techniques to promote library services as the library is service oriented.

According to Munyoro and Mutula, (2018) the LIS profession is being compelled to revise its service philosophies which, in turn, have revolutionized its service models, practice, standards, professional tasks and routines. This according to them is spawned by the advancement in ICTs developments which have moved the communication culture, business operations, modes of information production and dissemination radically into

cyberspace. Hence, in response to these ongoing changes that characterized information handling globally, Ahire, (2018) avers that the concept of marketing in libraries will be introducing a new dimension to the profession. Komolafe, Opadeji and Haliso (2012) also see marketing as an important weapon for handling the ongoing competition in the global information society.

Baro and Ebhomeya (2013) have suggested that tertiary institutions libraries can enhance and promote their services through the application of marketing strategies to their clients.

Adekunmisi, (2013) is of the opinion that library and information centres have realised that with the adoption of marketing principles and techniques, they can understand better their users' needs, justify funding, have a wide outreach with a variety of external audiences and achieve greater efficiency and optimal result in delivering products and services that meet the individual needs of patrons. According to these authors the academic libraries' function as information and knowledge super higher is being threatened, it is therefore crucial

for them to come up with innovative approaches to serve their customers. It is important to add that the academic library is not an autonomous institution; its success is dependent on the level of satisfaction her clients get. This influences the degree of attention (funding) the library gets from the educational system within which it operates. To achieve this, a dynamic and powerful marketing structure in the library that focuses on users interests and satisfaction is required (Aderibigbe, 2015). According to Armstrong and Kotler (2011) marketing concept claims that the achievement of organizational goals depends on knowing the needs and wants of target market and delivering the desired satisfaction better than competitors do. In their opinion, marketing concept advocates customers' focus and value are the paths to 'sales' and 'profit'. Kotler and Keller (2006) point out that the core concept of marketing encompasses the marketer's knowledge and understanding of the target market's needs, wants and demands. The understanding of these factors will assist an organisation in the choice of what to offer. One of the competences of a librarian is the ability to

provide for potential patrons as well as anticipating current user's needs. Commenting on the "survival of a library" Abiola, (2016) points out that the image of a library is dependent on the ability of the library to offer quality and effective services by anticipating the desires and requirements of actual and potential users and their fulfilment. This points to the fact that the success of the library is dependent on the testimonies of the library users which agree with the concept of marketing (which is focused on customer's needs).

The laws of librarianship by Ranganathan upon which library services are developed, clearly project the interest of the library user. The concept of services marketing according to Davis, (2013) is focused on customers' satisfaction. Marketing principles have been embedded in the five laws of librarianship (Patil, and Pradhan 2014, and Abiola, 2018) as the laws were made to accommodate the continuous changes that prevail on libraries to adapt to the challenges of a changing society where information plays a determinant role (Tirziman, 2020). According to Sen, (2008), Ranganathan presented these laws to emphasise

that preservation of the book should not be uppermost but its access and use, as the book is worthless without the reader. Hence the implication of the first law, (books are for use) is that efforts at ensuring efficient use of library resources should be prioritised by the library. Abiola (2018) is of the view that the low use of library resources and services recorded by most libraries can be attributed to the fact that most present-day librarians no longer guide themselves with Ranganathan's laws. This invariably means poor marketing of library services and products on the part of the libraries. Several studies on the extent of library use within and outside Nigeria have recorded low use due to lack of awareness of the existence of desired resources and services (Kumah (2015); Okite-Amughoro, Makgahlela and Solomon (2014); Idoniboye-Obu (2013); Liu and Luo (2011); Zha, Li and Yan (2012); Tomaszewski (2012). Liu and Luo (2011) in his study discovered the lack of awareness of services and resources as a leading factor of non-use of library services and products at three universities in China (Zhongshan University, South Normal University and

Guangdong University of Technology). According to Tomaszewski (2012) marketing of library resources and services are required to reach the underserved library patrons at the Georgia State University, USA. Eyaufe and Mutula, (2019) also reported low use of libraries electronic information resources from their study of availability and use of electronic information resources (EIRs) by doctoral students in Nigerian and South African universities. Lack of awareness of available resources was found to be a major cause of the low use recorded. Tomaszewski's study recommended reconsideration of libraries' policies to give room for better advertisement of the library's resources and services to create awareness of and promote her services and resources among clients. In the words of Ogini (2016) services marketing is as an innovative kind of marketing and is well-known in helping business organizations promote their services. In a study of the impact of marketing library information resources in higher institutions in Nigeria, Ukpe, Akpe and Beetseh, (2015) attested to the benefits of marketing library resources and services. The study concluded that marketing of

library information resources is essential in making proper planning, designing and use of the services and products for the better and optimal use of the library. Yi, (2018; avers that marketing is an integral part of all short-term and long-term plan in any information centre and it propels the growth and success of an information centre.

Regarding the perception of librarians towards marketing, literature suggests that the concept of marketing to most academic librarians is not new. The studies by Ifijeh, (2011); Adekunmisi (2013); Ukwoma (2014) reveal that marketing is in practice in most academic libraries in Nigeria. Some of the marketing strategies applied by these libraries include library publications (memos, bulletins, and newsletters), orientation exercises, and website, flyers (Edewor's et al, (2016) bulletin boards, seminars and workshops, newsletters, publicity through advertisements and announcements and through website (Ukwoma, 2014). In the view of Daksiri and Dauda, (2020), marketing has gained increased prominence in library and information science (LIS) discipline, and it serves as a

strategic manoeuvre geared towards the promotion of academic libraries and help in achieving the overall objective of the institution. Gupta, (2017) sees marketing of library and information services as the effective execution of all the activities involved in increasing users' satisfaction maximally. Muruli and Kumar, (2013) summed it up by stating that marketing is an integral part of any library and one of the best ways to enhance the use of library services and products. The perception of librarians towards marketing can be said to be positive as reflected in the reviewed literatures. However, Kendadameta (2011) is of the view that there is still much resistance on the part of librarians concerning the adoption of marketing techniques to library management. In support of this view, Odine, (2011), found in her study that only three of the services in the surveyed libraries (academic libraries in Niger State) were marketed to a medium extent. These services include lending services, seating and study facilities and reference services. Other similar studies such as (Jacob and Olajide, 2018; Odunlade, Akinade, and Ojo, 2014; Igwela and Owate, 2016)

revealed that marketing practices in the studied academic libraries are not adequate. From these literatures it can be inferred that librarians have a considerable idea of marketing concept but they do not practice it fully. One may therefore assume that library services are not properly marketed hence the danger of losing patrons to other information providers. Abdulsalami and Salami (2013) therefore advised that librarians must begin to change their orientation about traditional approach to library services in order to experience the dividends of marketing library and information services.

In the words of Perreanault, Cannon and McCarthy (2010), the aim of marketing is to identify customers' needs and meet those needs so well that, the product almost sells itself ... and if the whole marketing job is done well, customers do not need much persuading. In Osinulu, Adekunmisi, Okewale and Oyewusi (2018) investigation of marketing strategies used for marketing by librarians, several factors were identified that constitute hindrances to effective marketing in academic libraries. Unstable internet connectivity

and inadequate funding are chief among them. Adekunmisi, (2013) also found that librarians' lack of professional understanding of the marketing concept and its applicability to librarianship as hindrance to effective marketing. Odine's (2011) study revealed inadequate fund, lack of effective communication between librarians and users and lack of facilities to market library services as major challenges to effective marketing of library's services.

The Delta State Polytechnic library, Otefe, is not exempted from the occurrences in the global information society with the changes it has brought and its implication to academic libraries and librarians. As found from the literature reviewed present day library is experiencing steady decline of users due to users' preference for computer mediated procedures and services. This situation will be worse for a library whose products and services are predominantly manual like that of Delta State Polytechnic library, Otefe. It is evident from the literature reviewed that for an organization to succeed it must have sound marketing ability (Kotler and Keller, 2006).

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted qualitative research method to gather information about marketing of library products and services at the Delta State Polytechnic, Library, Otefe. The study made use of a combination of case study and survey research methods in a descriptive research design. The study population are all the seven librarians at the Delta State Polytechnic, Library, Otefe. (Note that librarians are library staff who have a professional degree (i.e., library and information science) either at first or master's degree level). This means a complete enumeration of the target population is taken as the size is small. This is recommended by Groves and Couper (2018) for a small population as it can easily be managed to produce data for all respondents in order to eliminate sampling errors and achieve high precision. The study therefore made use of in-depth interview to collect qualitative data as qualitative method focuses on a small sample. Data generated are analysed using content analysis.

FINDINGS

1. The findings of the study are presented below under the

themes discussed in the study objectives.

2. The perception of Delta State Polytechnic, Otefe librarians towards marketing of library services

As stated earlier seven librarians were interviewed to determine the perception of librarians toward marketing of library resources and services in the perception. A background information relating to the work experiences of the librarians were first examined. The interview results show that all seven librarians interviewed have more than 10 years working as librarians in academic libraries. This shows that they are supposed to have acquired experience enough to understand the concept of marketing as it relates to librarianship.

Respondent 1 stated that:

The library is meant to support the academic and research activities of the institution and so for us librarians to have more students and staff using the library instead of only internet, we are supposed to integrate the core principles of marketing into the practice of librarianship. Our profit in providing library services is not really in monetary form but in order to achieve maximum result which is library users' satisfaction, we must do rigorous marketing.

Respondent 2 stated that:

I was taught marketing in my

undergraduate study so I understand marketing of library services. In fact, I am in full support of applying proper marketing techniques in our services, this will help us to provide user centered information services to our patrons.

Challenges to effective marketing of Library services

The study also sought to determine the challenges to effective marketing of library services at the institution under survey. To get this the study examined the marketing techniques employed by librarians to market their information service. Face to face chat with users, orientation for new students and display of new arrivals were stipulated by all respondents as the major methods employed by the library. Talking about the challenges to marketing, the responses are summarized in the statements of respondents 5 and 6.

Respondent 5 stated that:

In our library the way we market our library services are limited. They have proved to be ineffective and insufficient especially in this era of ICT. We are challenged by many factors. Some of the factors include inadequate ICT facilities, absence of internet connectivity, inadequate professional librarians, low level information literacy on the part of librarians.

Respondent 6 stated that

The major problem we face is the lack of support from institutions management in the release of fund to upgrade the library. Staff need to learn new trends in their field; there is need for training and retraining. We are not sponsored to seminars and workshops to learn new skills in librarianship.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, for any library to remain relevant in the present information age the library must be prepared to continuously change with the information age.

The result of the research has revealed that patrons cannot be adequately served without marketing of library products and services. The Polytechnic management has to wake up to the responsibility of equipping the library with human and technological facilities for the library to meet up with her task of information provider of the institution.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, we recommended the following:

1. The under studied academic library should endeavor to provide library products and services that meet the changing needs of the digital

age information users.

2. Staff should be sent for retraining to upgrade their knowledge in current practices in librarianship.
3. The delta state polytechnic should equip the library with adequate staff and ICT facilities as proper marketing cannot be done without these factors.
4. There is also need for proactive leaders with innovation to influence management to implement innovative marketing policy that can improve users' impression of the academic as an inescapable.
5. It is highly recommended that academic libraries should employ the services of ICT experts and work with them for proper installation of ICT gadgets.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are indeed grateful to Almighty God for the mercies he bestowed on us mercies for seeing us through to the completion of this research.

Our profound gratitude goes to the federal government of Nigeria

for the initiative of TETFUND interventions which fully sponsored and funded this research and the management of the Delta State polytechnic ofefeghara for making us beneficiaries the Institution Based Research (IBR) grant. We

also acknowledge the personal effort, encouragement and intervention of the Rector, Professor Emmanuel Ufuophu-Biri towards completion of the research.

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