SOCIAL MEDIA AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA: IMPACTS ON PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

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Abstract
Social media and educational institutions are means of human emancipation from ignorance, the advancement human and the transfer of knowledge. The advent of social media has almost replaced completely the conventional/owned media, vis-à-vis the radio, television, newspapers and magazines. Social media and educational institutions in Nigeria though has its positive impacts, but are also embedded with many other vices. It is also a known fact, that democracy will only thrive when majority of the people are involved in governance, that's participatory democracy. Democracy without the people cannot be described as a real democracy and cannot withstand the test of time. The aim of this paper is to examine the impacts of social media and the educational institutions on participatory democracy in Nigeria. The paper adopts qualitative research methodology. Some of the major impact of social media and educational institutions identified by the paper are; sources of enlightenment, means of drug abuse and addiction, peddling of fake news and spread of violence. The paper recommends that, citizens that use either the social media or the educational institutions for illegal and unconstitutional activities should be sanctioned appropriately and brought to justice on time, as justice delayed, is tantamount to justice denied.

Keywords: Social media, educational institutions, participatory democracy, Nigeria.

Introduction
Social media and educational institutions are means of human emancipation from ignorance, diseases, poverty, the advancement human race and the transfer of knowledge. The advent of social media such as face book, twitter, instagram, whatsapp and others have almost replaced completely the conventional/owned media spaces, vis-à-vis the radio, television, newspapers and magazines.

Social media and educational institutions in Nigeria though has its positive impacts, but are also embedded with many other vices. It is also a known fact, that democracy, which was defined by a former American President, Abraham Lincoln as "government of the people, by the people and for the people" will only thrive when majority of the people are involved in governance, that's participatory democracy. Hence, a democracy without the people cannot be described as a real democracy and cannot withstand the test of time.

It is therefore imperative that all efforts must be made to ensure that both social media and our educational institutions are actually adding more values to our lives as a people and as a country and all hands must be on deck to ensure that both are maximized to yield the desired positive impacts in our socio-political and economic lives. The aim of this paper is to examine the impacts of social media and the educational institutions on participatory democracy in Nigeria.

Conceptual clarification
Social Media
Social media applications such as Facebook, Twitter, and You! Tube, are increasingly been adopted! by politicians, political activists and social movements as a means of engaging, organizing and communicating with citizens worldwide (Loader & Mercea, 2012). It is therefore no longer strange to locate the face book accounts, or the twitter handles of political figures such as the Presidents, the Prime ministers, Cabinet members, civil right activists, and engages them as frequently as the case may be.

These applications provide an unbridled opportunity for the users to have direct conversation with one another even when they are millions of miles apart from one another. It has therefore taken over those spaces that were before now left uncultivated by the owned media.

Nigeria as a nation- state formerly joined other countries on social media with the lunch and approval of licenses to Global Satellite Mobile (GSM) network service providers by the administration of Olusegun Obasanjo in the year 2000 (Punch, 2013).

The introduction of social media into the information space in Nigeria is now been used for various means in public participation by the citizens, such as canvassing for votes in elections, showing either support or displeasure towards the government and government policies, such as the #EndSASS Protest, occupy Nigeria effort on the increase in fuel price protest, enlightenments of the people on health related issues such as the deadly Coronavirus, the dreaded Ebola virus, HIV /aids and others. In essence, the advent of social media in Nigeria information space could be said to have increase the level of public participation of the citizens in one way or the other.

Educational Institutions

Education is a very important variable in participatory democracy, the more the citizens become enlightened and educated, the more they easily takes part in political activities in their environment, this will ultimately lead to greater involvement of the citizens in politics. The dire need of improving the quality of life through effective participation of people in politics and political process has informed the need for Citizenship Education in developing countries of Africa and Nigeria in particular. Traditionally, a person participates in political activities through knowledge, values and skills acquired from the elderly ones.

Education is considered as an instrument of social change, just as a vital participant in the development and improvement of any country. The connection among instruction and advancement is settled with the end goal that education is a key record of improvement (Kpolovie & Obilor, 2013). As specified by the National Policy on Education (NPE) (2004), education has been portrayed as an instrument second to none for influencing public turn of events. Instruction is a significant factor, one that is liable for the advancement and flourishing of the economy of the country. Instruction includes exercises of teaching, preparing and mentoring, which confer information and aptitude. It helps in the best possible childhood of kids and youths, particularly information on the right social conducts and acceptable behaviour in the society.

Gbenu (2012) sees education "empower people to become responsible individuals in the society. It furnishes people with the capacity that will empower them investigate the world, control it and set up themselves for purposeful productivity". Formal school training is basic to the instruction of the young ones, aside from this; it gives the chance to a young one to acquire better ability and information for the post elementary school level.

According to Frankena, Raybeck, & Burbules (2002), education began in pre-history, in a situation in which the elders enlighten the young ones in the adequate skills and knowledge that they need in other to fit into the society, using oral traditions, imitation, story-telling to transfer necessary knowledge, values, and skills from one generation to the other. As population and civilization sets in, formal school setting was developed to come with the emerging needs and challenges.

European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) (2009), asserted that, formal education occurs in a structured environment, with the aim of transferring knowledge, this usually occur within the four walls of the school, with classrooms comprising of many students learning together with a trained, certified teacher of the subject. Most school systems are organized around a set of values or ideals that govern all educational choices in that system.

From the foregoing, the educational institutions are thus, the structured formal setting that are established by law, with adequate legal framework to provide training, teaching, leaning and transfer of knowledge based on educated curriculum, provided, implemented and supervised by qualified personnel.

Participatory democracy

Pateman (2012) observes that participatory democracy is seen as the progenitor of deliberative democracy by most theorists. Hence participatory democracy theorists also tend to be deliberative democracy theorists. Consequently, deliberative democracy is participatory democracy regenerated. Therefore, one of the most important maxims of both participatory democracy and deliberative democracy is that it must be small enough in number to be genuinely deliberative and representative enough to be genuinely democratic.

Dinerstein & Ferrero (2012) opine that in a participatory democracy, also called a direct democracy, every citizen plays an active role in the government. Many people believe that for this type of government to be successful, it must be in a localized region with a relatively small population. This is because large numbers of eligible citizens might obstruct the workings of the government, instigating endless debates and votes and by so doing end up not really achieving anything positively meaningful and impactful. To this end, citizens must also have an active interest in the success of their governments for participatory democracies to work as intended; this is the bedrock and the real essence of participatory democracy. Furthermore, there seems to exist a dichotomy between the real policy that is participatory democracy and the real politics that is played out by the political elites.

Santos (1998) is of the view that "participatory democracy model allows citizens to prioritize what is important to them, rather than relying on their representatives alone to address issues for them and decide what is important". For example, the citizens in one area might place a higher priority on funding for schools and libraries, and the citizens of a neighboring area might place greater importance on building better roads or having a stable and an uninterrupted power supply (electricity). Therefore, when an elected representative alone decides what is most important, there is a chance that he or she will make a decision that is contrary to the desires and aspirations of the majority of the people in his or her constituency, possibly because of his or her own beliefs or political affiliation.

This further drives home the basic fact that plus or minus the presence of the elected representatives, the people are in the best position to actually identify what is most important to them. In some cases, the so-called representatives, after winning the seat in the parliament, often relocate their residence far away from the villages where they were elected to the fast developing, sophisticated and fascinating city lives, such as being witnessed in Nigeria (Oyediran et al. 2002). These so-called representatives are at greater disadvantage to actually determine and prioritize what is in the best interest of the community.

Adegboye (2013) distinguished various "political variants of participatory democracy to include, but are not limited to; consensus democracy, deliberative democracy, demarchy, and grassroots democracy. Deliberative democracy differs from the traditional democratic theory in the sense that authentic deliberation, not mere voting, is the primary source of law, authority and legitimacy". Any law or conclusion without authentic deliberation is therefore illegitimate, null and void and of no effects as far as deliberative democracy is concerned. In essence, the goals of participatory democracy can only be fully realized and achieved in small groups such as the villages or local communities and not at the provincial or national level due to the large population of participants that will be involved in the process. Demarchy is a hypothetical system where government is heavily decentralized into smaller independent groups and where randomly selected decision makers have been chosen to govern, and each group is responsible for one or several functions in the society. The system seeks to avoid problems with centralized and electoral governance, while still providing a stable democratic system. However, refocusing the term on community-based activity within the domain of civil society, based on the belief that a strong non-governmental public sphere is a precondition for the emergence of a strong liberal democracy, which will in turn make demarchy an effective and efficient form of democracy.

Aragon & Sanchez (2008) are of the view that, participatory democracy is a process emphasizing the broad participation of constituencies in the direction and operation of the political system. The etymological roots of democracy, Greek-demos and kratos simply imply that the people are in power, meaning that all democracies are supposedly participatory. However, participatory democracy tends to advocate more involved forms of citizen participation than the traditional

representative democracy. Participatory democracy strives to create opportunities for all members of a population to make meaningful contributions to decision making and seeks to broaden the range of people who have access to such opportunities. Consequently, it provides an avenue and a platform for the local people to have more says and broader participation in issues that are germane to them and issues that affect their day-to-day existence as a people.

Moreover, participatory democracy has been a feature of human society since the classical times. It is believed to have been a common practice of undeveloped people and hunter-gatherer tribes. In seventh and eighth century ancient Greece, the informal distributed power structure of the villages and minor towns began to be displaced with collectives of oligarchs seizing power as the villages and towns developed into city-states. A brief period where a region was governed almost totally by participatory democracy occurred during the Spanish civil war, from 1936-1938, in parts of Spain controlled by anarchist Republicans. In the 1960s, the promotion and use of participatory democracy was a central issue for elements of the American Left. In 2011, participatory democracy became a notable feature of the Occupy movement, with Occupy camps around the world making decisions based on the outcome of working groups where every protester gets to have his say, and by general assembly where the decisions taken by working groups are effectively aggregated together as a whole (Gelderloos, 2014).

Furthermore, participatory democracy is also a process of collective decision making that combines the elements of direct and representative democracy, where in citizens have the power to decide on policy proposals and the politicians only assume the role of public policy implementers. The electorates can monitor the politicians' performance simply by comparing citizens' proposals and wishes with the actual policies being executed by the politicians. In view of this, the absolute powers enjoyed by the politician are severely restricted to the barest minimum (Aragon & Sanchez, 2008). Participatory democracy therefore serves as an avenue for checks and balances on the elected representatives by the electorate or the local residents.

The Impacts of Social Media and educational institutions on participatory democracy in Nigeria

Having established the foundation on which this paper is based and having explained the basic concepts of the paper. It is imperative to now focus on the impacts of both social media and the educational institutions on participatory democracy in Nigeria.

Some of these impacts are thus discuss as follows:

Sources of enlightenment

Both social media and the educational institutions are sources of enlightenment. This is because knowledge is being acquired on a daily basis from both. New knowledge, skills and values are being leant from the two areas. Hence, when citizens have adequate knowledge about their socio-political and economic affairs, they are more likely to participate more in democracy in such a country. They are more likely to support government policies and programmed and be law abiding citizens, that needs minimum supervision on a daily basis (Tarp, 2016).

Means of drug abuse and addiction

According to Adejoh, Adisa, Onome, Anyimukwu, Olorunlana (2020), social media and the educational institutions are also avenue for free information. The evil effects of this interaction of the youth with social media are often felt profoundly in our educational institutions. This is because youth now have unhindered access to information, some of which are toxic and poisonous. Today, many youths are addicted to marijuana, cocaine, heroin, shisha and so on. The implication of this is that such youth will probably not have any interest in participatory democracy in the country, and when they do participate it is through electoral violence, snatching of ballot boxes, and incessant destruction of property and loss of lives.

Peddling of fake news

Fake and unverified news and information are often spread via the social media, when such news and information are given out; it has often led to ethnic and religious clashes. Many information painting a fake picture of injustice of one ethnic or religious groups over another have often led to unnecessary ethnic and religious crises laden with hatred and disdain for fellow Nigerians. This situation does not support a healthy participatory democracy in the country. This is because, out of over two hundred (200) million Nigeria estimated population, thirty three (33) million Nigerians,

which is more than the thirty (30) million Ghana's estimated population are connected to the internet (Datareportal, 2021). Such a huge number having ill feeling and hatred for one another through fake and unverified information can lead to the total collapse of the country (The Vanguard, 2020).

Spread of violence

The social media and our educational institutions have also become a ready-made avenue for the spread of violence. According to Aborisade & Adedayo (2018), violence among various street gangs, cults groups and other illegal associations are often settled on the floors of our educational institutions. Many of these groups are often heard counting scores of their opponents. Each bragging on the number of human souls, that has been wasted through the spread of violence. This situation does not support participatory democracy among the youth. Hence, the negative impact on participatory democracy in Nigeria.

Advance fee fraud-Yahoo Yahoo

This is another deadly hydra-headed malaise on both the social media and our educational institutions, this is because a good number of our youth are involved in this criminal activities. Their involvement in symphony peoples' money have led many victims to their early graves and many other on permanent health challenges such as high blood pressure, strokes and others. Thus, these incapacitated people are not only incapacitated physically, mentally and politically too. Hence, their involvement in political party activities and by extension, participatory democracy is minimal or zeros (The Guardian, 2017).

Conclusion

Social media is not just a platform for information, it is also a platform for both formal and informal forms of education, hence the use of social media in increasing and improving the level of education, beyond and across various borders of the world cannot be overemphasized, Nigeria as a country is not left out on the use of social media in increasing the level of education in the country.

Furthermore, social media also enhances and increases the level of citizens involvement and participation in politics as many political office aspirants and political parties now explore the social media to campaign for elections, air their views and attempt to sway the opinions of eligible voters towards their political ideas, therefore it is a veritable instrument for participatory democracy.

social media and educational institutions are interwoven and can jeopardize citizens' participation in democracy; they can also make or mar the corporate existence of a nation. In conclusion, the paper recommends that, citizens that use either the social media or the educational institutions for illegal and unconstitutional activities should be sanctioned appropriately and brought to justice on time, as justice delayed, is tantamount to justice denied.

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