

Social Media and Peace Information: A Case for Enhance Peace- Building Initiatives
Wonuola, Monsurat M¹. & Prof. Dr. Adisa, Rasaq M².

¹Department of Mass Communication, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Nigeria.

²Department of Mass Communication, University of Ilorin, Nigeria

Correspondence: mmwonuola@alhikmah.edu.ng

Abstract

The incessant occurrence of security breach among Nigerians especially youths is of global concern. This has prompted peace advocacy groups to devise alternative mean of promoting peace through social media platforms. This is because social media has been adjudged as a potent tool in promoting peace across the globe. Literature is grounded on social media and peace, there is a dearth of studies on the social media contents and peace building knowledge among social media users. This study therefore, examines the social media peace information and peacebuilding initiatives among Nigerian. The study was anchored by Norm Activation Model and Connectivism theories. Descriptive survey research method was employed while questionnaire served as the instrument to gather data from 336 undergraduates systematically selected from University of Ilorin and Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. The data gathered from the questionnaire were analysed with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0. Simple percentage and frequency tables were used to present the data. The findings revealed that the constant encounter with social media peace information coupled with the knowledge of ascribed responsibility of individuals by the youths enhanced their level of awareness of the need to promote peace in Nigeria, thereby, enhancing peace building knowledge among the undergraduates as it has motivated them to participate in peace advocacy campaigns and shun violence. The study recommended that policymakers should leverage on social media to promote peace and security in the country by creating platforms that can facilitate peaceful dialogue and participation of youths especially undergraduates in peacebuilding initiatives as this can foster unity and peaceful co-existence among various ethno-religious divides in Nigeria.

Keywords: Social media, social media usage, knowledge, peace information, peace building

Introduction

The Nigerian society is plagued by various forms of conflicts and attacks which have claimed many lives as well as, destruction of properties and displacement of people (United Nations Development Programme, UNDP 2021). Some of the violence that rampaged Nigeria at present include kidnapping, police brutality, political-related violence, terrorism, arm robbery, vandalisation, communal conflict, cyberbullying, etc. This violence has been attributed to various factors such as ethnic and religious differences, political instability, economic inequality, environmental degradation, etc. (Adisa & Oni, 2020). Meanwhile, several peace building initiatives have been put in place by the government, Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), Civil society organizations (CSOs) such as Agents for Citizen-driven Transformation (ACT), Managing Conflict in Nigeria (MCN), the Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption (RoLAC) (Justice, Conflict & Security in Nigeria, May 2020). However, less success has been recorded as Nigeria still records cases of violence particularly among youths who are frequently involved in violent conflicts (United Nations Development Programme, 2021). For instance, Building Blocks for Peace Foundation (n.d) posited that Nigerian youths are highly involved in ritual killing for economic gain. In addition, 95% of violence in Nigeria is perpetuated by youth (Theophilus, 2022). Therefore, there is a need to explore new strategies that can be used to promote peace among youths. One of such strategies is the use of social media. This is because social media has become a popular platform for information dissemination, advocacy and mobilization among youths (Njeru, 2021). Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. has become an essential tool for young people to voice their opinions, organize peaceful demonstrations and create online campaigns to advocate for peace (Wasserman, *et al* , 2018). For instance, in 2020, prior to #End SARS protest, Nigerian youths mobilized themselves through various social media platform to express their grievances about Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) (Abimbade *et al.*, 2021). This eventually transformed into #EndSARS protest in October 2020, as youths used social media to mobilize support for their cause in an attempt to end police brutality and promote good governance (*Vanguard News*, October 21, 2020). In addition, some peace advocacy groups such as the *Foundation for Peace Professionals* (FPP), *Search for Common Ground* (SFCG), *Nigerian Interfaith Action Association* (NIFAA), etc., have taken the peace campaign to social media platform (Osatuyi, 2013) in order to eliminate violent-related activities among Nigerians especially youth as this is germane to national development and unity.

Meanwhile, scholars such as Baytiyeh (2019) established that social media is a powerful tool for promoting peace as it provides a platform for dialogue, connection of individuals across borders, and amplification of marginalized voices. He, however, recommended that a comprehensive analysis of effectiveness of social media as a peace building tool should be

conducted. Furthermore, the study by Oyero et al. (2021) on the role of social media in promoting peace in Nigeria revealed that social media has contributed to the creation of a shared understanding of the cause of conflict and the need for peace. The study recommended further research into effectiveness of social media peace effort. In addition, in Ilorin, the capital city of Kwara State, social media especially the Facebook and X were deployed to foster peace among various religious divides in the city. For instance, in the crisis between 'Isese African Traditional religion and Islamic adherents in the State between June and August, 2023, Facebook and X were used to mediate peace among them and this eventually heralded peace. It is against this backdrop, that this study investigates influence of social media peace information on the knowledge of peace building among Nigerian youth. The study is guided by four objectives which are to: examine the extent to which Nigerian youths access social media for information on peace, identify the preferred social media platform for accessing information on peace among Nigerian youths; determine the role of the Nigerian youths towards peace building in the society; and investigate the perceived consequences of social media peace information on peace-building knowledge among Nigerian youths.

Literature Review

Peace building, social media and peace information were reviewed in order to properly situate the problem of the study.

Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding is a structural prevention that consists of strategies to address the root causes of a conflict (Carnegie Moscow Centre, 2020). Similarly, Smith (2018), while citing the Joint Utsein Study of peacebuilding, averred that peacebuilding is a measure to encourage the development of the structural conditions, attitudes and mode of political behavior that may permit peaceful existence and prosperous social and economic development. He added that the essence of building peace is to provide security, establish socio-economic foundations of long-term peace and generate reconciliation. This definition will be adopted for explaining the relationship between social media peace information and knowledge of peace building among Nigerian youths.

In addition, Lamidi (2019) defined peacebuilding as efforts to strengthen and solidify peace, rebuilding institutions and infrastructures of nations torn by war and conflict in order to prevent relapse into conflict. However, peacebuilding as a concern of this study has many definitions that can aid the establishment of sustainable peace. Broome (2017) stated that peacebuilding addresses the root causes of a conflict by making necessary adjustments in political and social processes. He added that peacebuilding attempts to establish confidence and trust between opponents and improves communication across conflict lines. This according to him will assist in developing cooperation, peaceful co-existence and creating institutions that will implement the changes. It cannot, however, eliminate conflict since conflict is inevitable in life, but can create a social order that can respond to disagreements and disputes through nonviolent means. This can be achieved through the promotion of transformative ways to deal with conflict (Broome & Collier, 2012). Meanwhile, the process of promoting transformative ways of dealing with conflict in non-violent ways entails the involvement of youths. This is because youths seem to be the catalyst of social change as they are the generation that can move the country forward. Hence, Nigerian youths are critical in peace building in order to enhance unity and peaceful co-existence in Nigeria.

Social Media, Peace Information and Peace building

Social media refers to the combination of social networking websites for instant messaging and voice application (Hootsuite's Digital Report, 2019). Social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp among others enable people to disseminate divergent viewpoints on issues by engaging with people from different tribes and culture. Social media according to LeFebvre (2017) is used to keep people informed of the happenings in the society. Sun (2021) explained that social media is endowed with unique features of massive information, rapid transmission and openness communication and instant interaction compare to traditional media. Hence, social media has the capacity to unite and divide people in conflict. This is in line with the submission of Fizentzou (2019) that technological advancement has revolutionized the social interactions of global society. Thus, social media can be used to mobilize supporters and shape the narrative about issues in a society.

Globally, social media is one of the popular online activities that people do engage in. The Hootsuite's Digital Report (2019) stated that 56 percent of the world's population is currently online while 45 percent uses various forms of social media platforms. The report added that globally, young people between age 18 and 34 constitute over half of the global social media audience while people around the age of 30 account for the largest share of the world's social media users. As at October 2023, social media users amounted to 61.4 percent globally with 84 percent of people between 18 and 29 and 81 percent of people between 30 and 49 as active users of social media (Global Social Media Statistics, 2023). The report added that Nigeria inhabited 31.60 million social media users equating to 14.3 percent of total population of global

social media users as at January 2023, in which 58.3 % are between age 18 and 34. Hence, the social media landscape is dominated by youth.

The domination of social media platforms by youth has prompted the Nigerian youths to employ various social media platforms to disseminate their demands to the government. For instance, social media platforms such as X formally known as Twitter was used to demand immediate government intervention on the kidnapping of 276 female students from Government Girls Secondary School, Borno State on the night between 14 and 15 April, 2014 by Boko Haram terrorists tagged “#Bring Back our Girls” (Foreign Affairs, 24 August, 2021; *The Guardian*, 20 June, 2021). Similarly, social media such as X, Instagram, Facebook, etc. was also deployed by the Nigerian youths to mobilize themselves for nationwide protest against Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) officials in October 2020, tagged #END SARS based on the atrocities committed by the SARS officers (Abimbade *et al.*, 2021) and this led to the disbandment of the SARS. Meanwhile, social media is a potent tool that has transformed the tools for contending parties, civil society, peace practitioners and the public to proffer peace in a society. This is because social media can transform a society from violence to peace as it can help to spread peace and encourage dialogue among people from different ethnic backgrounds and nationalities. For instance, a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), *Youths for Peace* aimed at fostering peace and security in Africa under vision 2026 used social media platforms to promote peace in Kaduna State (*Independent Newspaper*, March 31, 2019). Similarly, UNESCO organized training titled *Social media 4 peace* to enhance the promotion of peace by embarking on social media for peace project in Kenya (UNESCO, 29 November, 2023). Also, *the Global Peace Development and the Centre for Health and Development* also used social media to canvass for peace (Justice, Conflict & Security in Nigeria, May 2020). Moreover, the *African Radio Drama Association* in collaboration with *Community initiatives to promote peace* (ARDA-CIPP) used social media to promote peace among youths in four local government areas in Kaduna State; Kachia, Kajuru, Kaduna North and Zaria on September 25, 2023 (*Nigerian Tribune*, September 26, 2023).

Since the primary aim of peacebuilding is to enhance durable peace by preventing occurrence of violence (Idris, 2020), which can be achieved by addressing the root causes through reconciliation and transformation of violence to peace. Social media can promote peace through the creation and dissemination of peace-related messages; this can thereby, reshaping attitude and promoting tolerance and mutual understanding among people. This is because social media has created platforms for youth to connect with their peers globally (Elsaesser *et al.*, 2021). Hence, social media is a potent tool for building peace in a society through dissemination of peace information.

Theoretical Framework

The study is underpinned by Norm Activation Model (NAM) and Connectivism theories. Schwartz propounded the Norm Activation model in 1977 (Kim & Hwang, 2020). The model basically identifies the drivers that influence human intention towards altruistic behavior in a society (Fang, Chiang, *et al.*, 2019). Kim and Hwang (2020) posited that altruistic behavior is a pro-social behavior that always leaves positive impact on others. Hence, pro-social behavior encompasses behavior that promotes positive effect on human and non-human beings in communities. This implies that the model sees behaviors or intentions as a function of personal norm (PN). Personal norms according to Fang, *et al.*, (2019) are consequently regulated by awareness of consequence (AC) and ascription of responsibilities (AR). That is, a good behavior is triggered by the awareness of the consequences of a destructive behavior. Hence, the awareness of consequences of a certain action together with the sense of responsibility regarding the effect of a behavior influences people's intentions to act in a pro-social manner. This indicates that behavioral intention is a function of relationship between personal norms, awareness of consequences and ascription responsibility. This means that the awareness of the consequences of actions especially positive actions on people and society makes people to be committed to good behavior.

The theory is relevant as it emphasizes that the awareness of the consequences of peace information influences some Nigerian youth's intention to pro-social behavior by engaging themselves in peace information through social media. The awareness of the consequences of peace information also propels individual to seek content that promotes their interests as it facilitates identity-related gratifications (Slater, 2015). Hence, seeking peace information on social media by the Nigerian youths that have knowledge of the consequence of peace can facilitate peace building initiatives in Nigeria, i.e. social media content on peace can enhance support for peace building by promoting positive behavior on the need to shun violence and other actions that can set the country apart (Personal Norm). Meanwhile, social media has various contents that support individual's pro-social behavior based on ascription of responsibility. This has made individual or group to seek peace information in order to enhance peace building and national development in a society. Thus, individual that is conscious of his moral obligations in a society will seek peace in order to facilitate peace building in the country.

Connectivism theory on the other hand, was propounded by George Siemens and Stephen Downes in 2005 (Herlo, 2017) for the digital age. The theory is premised on the notion that digital technology such as social media, internet, email, etc.

connects people and creates learning opportunities through social interaction and information seeking. This implies that the theory views knowledge as a network and learning as a process of pattern of recognition. This means that the theory is a learning theory and it emphasizes that individual can learn better when interacting with others through digital technology. Hence, creation of peace information through collaboration with like-minded on social media can facilitate the need for peace advocacy among members that make up a group; thus, peace building effort. The theory is therefore, relevant to the study as it focuses on Nigerian youths that have moral obligations to enhance peace building (NAM) through social media and acquire knowledge on the need to promote peace education through social media (Connectivism) in order to foster peace building initiatives among Nigerians especially youth. At present, some peace advocacy group such as *Search for Common Ground* (SFCG), are using social media as learning environment to create room for people to acquire peace education since it is globally acknowledged that no meaningful development can occur in a non-peaceful society. Connectivism theory is relevant to this study as it helps the youth to learn about peace information and attitude that can facilitate unity in the country. In another words, the theory explains how exposure to peace-related content on social media can serve as a source of learning and inspiration for Nigerian youths. It provides a framework to examine how observing peacebuilding activities, narratives, and role models on social media can shape user's knowledge, attitudes and behaviours towards peacebuilding.

Method and Material

The study adopted survey research design in order to achieve the objectives of the study. The population of the study comprised the registered undergraduate students for 2023/2024 academic session and 2022/2023 academic session in the two Universities in Ilorin metropolis; Al-Hikmah University and University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Kwara State. The population of the registered regular undergraduates of University of Ilorin for 2022/2023 Academic session is 50,883 according to the Student Affairs unit of the University (Student Affairs, UNILORIN,2023) while Al-Hikmah University has 4,748 in line with the information from the Students Affairs Unit of the University. University of Ilorin had its 2022/2023 academic session between November 20223 and October 2024 due to national strike by the Academic Staff Union of the Nigeria Universities in 2021/2022 and Covid-19 break in 2020. Hence, the population of the study amounted to 55,631. Taro Yamene's model $n = \frac{A N}{1+n (e)^2}$ was used to determine sample size (Yamene, 1967). n = sample size, N =population size, e =limit of tolerable error always assumed to be 5% or 0.05; 1 = unity (always constant). The formula is restated as: $\text{population} = n = \frac{\text{population}}{1+(\text{population} (0.05)^2)}$ $n = \frac{55631}{1+55631 (0.05)^2} = 400$. Hence, the sample size of 400 was derived as adequate for the study. Purposive sampling technique was used to select students who access peace information through social media. This was done in line with the basis of the study. The questionnaire served as the research instrument. The study employed content validity and a pre-test method to ascertain the validity of the instrument. Content validity was achieved by subjecting copies of the instrument to vetting by two senior lecturers selected from the Department of Mass Communication and the Centre for Peace Studies, Al-Hikmah University. Their suggestions were incorporated. Thereafter, the pre-test method was adopted by distributing 30 copies of the instrument to 30 randomly selected undergraduates in Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin. The copies were retrieved and analyzed and the findings revealed that the instrument was valid as the variables therein measured what they were aimed at measuring. To ensure the reliability of the instrument, test-retest reliability technique was used in which the same copies of the questionnaire were re-administered to the same set of people after two weeks of the initial administration. The copies were collected and analyzed. The findings revealed that the instrument was reliable as the findings correlate with the initial findings.

The study sought the consent of the respondents by explaining the aims and objectives of the study to them. The researcher with the aid of two research assistants distributed the copies of the questionnaire to the students and waited for their collection. Meanwhile, only 336 copies were properly filled. Hence, the analysis of the findings was based on the number of valid copies of the questionnaire. The data gathered were analyzed with the aid of descriptive statistics using Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) Version 23. Frequency table and simple percentage were used to present the data.

Results and Discussion

Demographic Data of the Respondents

Table 1.

Demographic Distribution of the Respondents

Items	Frequency count	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	182	54.17
Female	154	45.83
Age		
16-20	109	32.44
21-25	137	40.77
26-30	90	26.79
Marital Status		
Single	274	81.55
Married	62	18.45
Total	336	100

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents by gender, age and marital status. The table showed that 336 respondents participated in the study. The male participants were 182 (54.17%) while 154 (45.83%) were females; 109 (32.44%) of the respondents were within the age range of 16-20 years, 137 (40.77%) of the respondents were between 21-25 years, while 90 (26.79%) of the respondents were between 26-30years. Therefore, male respondents who participated in this study were more than the female respondents, more respondents within the age range of 21-25 years participated in this study than respondents within other age range. Also, respondents that were single were more than the married respondents. Hence, majority of the respondents are between age 21 and 25. This is in line with the submission of the 2019 Nigeria's National Youth Policy and African Youth Charter that defined youth as individual between 18 and 35 and 15 and 35 years respectively (Unini, 2020).

Extent of social media usage for obtaining information on peace

In measuring the extent of social media usage for peace information among the respondents, always, frequently, actively, never and engagement were used. Hence, table 2 presents the findings.

Table 2.

The extent to which the selected youths used social media for obtaining information on peace.

Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total
I frequently come across posts or messages related to peace on social media	92 (27.4%)	138 (41.1%)	63 (18.8%)	43 (12.8%)	336 (100%)
I actively search for peace-related content on social media	112 (33.3%)	135 (40.2%)	47 (14.0%)	42 (12.5%)	336 (100%)
I always engage in peace-related information on social media	91 (27.1%)	140 (41.7%)	67 (19.9%)	38 (11.3%)	336 (100%)
I have never come across peace-related information on social media	42 (12.5%)	76 (22.6%)	144 (42.9%)	74 (22.0%)	336 (100%)
I always engage in discussions or conversations about peace-building issues on social media	109(32.4%)	138 (41.1%)	47 (14.0%)	42 (12.5%)	336 (100%)

Table 2 depicts the extent to which the respondents used social media for obtaining information on peace. The table showed that out of 336 (100%) respondents that participated in this study, 230 (68.5%) of the respondents frequently accessed messages related to peace on social media" while 106 (31.5%) of the respondents disagreed. 247 (73.5. %) of the respondents actively searched for peace-related content on social media while 89 (26.5%) of the respondents disagreed. 231 (68.8%) of the respondents always engaged in peace-related information on social mediawhile 105 (31.2%) of the respondents disagreed. 118 (35.1%) of the respondents have never come across peace-related information on social mediawhile 218 (64.9%) of the respondents disagreed. 247 (73.5%) of the respondents always engage in discussions or

conversations about peace-related information on social media while 89 (26.5%) of the respondents disagreed. This therefore, implies that the majority of the respondents are active users of social media for peace information as they always seek information-related messages via social media.

Preferred social media platform for obtaining information on peace building

In measuring the preferred social media platform among the respondents, social media platforms such as Facebook, X (Twitter), Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube were used. Table 3 presents the findings.

Table 3.

Preferred social media platform for obtaining information on peace building.

Item	Responses	Percentage
Facebook	168	50.0%
Instagram	39	11.6%
X (Twitter)	73	21.8%
YouTube	4	1.1%
WhatsApp	52	15.5%
Total	336	(100%)

Table 3 shows the preferred social media platform for obtaining information on peace building. 168 (50.0%) of the respondent preferred Facebook, 39 (11.6%) of the respondents preferred Instagram, 73(21.8%) of the respondents preferred X (Twitter), 4 (1.1%) preferred YouTube while 52 (15.5%) preferred WhatsApp. This indicates that Facebook is the most preferred social media platform that the respondents do access in obtaining information on peace.

Table 4.

The role of the Nigerian youths towards peace building in the society on peace

Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total
Facilitation of national development	162 (48.2%)	169 (50.3%)	3 (0.9%)	2 (0.6%)	336 (100%)
Agitation for division in the country	3 (0.9%)	1 (0.3%)	155 (46.1%)	177 (52.7%)	336 (100%)
Constitution of violence in the society	2 (0.6%)	2 (0.6%)	159 (47.3%)	173 (51.5%)	336 (100%)
Facilitation of peace building initiatives	186 (55.4%)	147 (43.8%)	2 (0.6%)	1 (0.3%)	336 (100%)
Promotion of national unity	132 (39.3%)	202 (60.1%)	1(0.3%)	1(0.3%)	336 (100%)

Table 4 presents the Nigerian youth's role in peace building in the society. The findings indicated that 331 respondents (98.5%) subscribed to national development while 5 (1.5%) disagreed. More so, 4 (1.2%) respondents agreed to agitation for division while 332 (98.8%) disagreed. In addition, 333 (99.2%) respondents agreed to the facilitation of peace building initiatives while 3(0.8%) disagreed. Furthermore, 334(99.4%) respondents succumbed to promotion of unity while 2(0.6%) disagreed. The findings from table 4, therefore, showed that majority of the respondents subscribed to promotion of national unity, peace building initiatives and facilitation of national development.

The perceived impact of social media peace information on peacebuilding knowledge

In measuring the perceived impact of social media peace information on peace building knowledge among the respondents, reduction of violent conflicts, improvement on peace knowledge, reduction of human right violation, shaping of thought, strengthened national cohesion and agitation for regional division were used. Hence, table 4.4 presents the findings.

Table 5.

The perceived impact of social media peace information on knowledge of peacebuilding

Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total
Social media peace information has resulted to reduction of violent conflicts among Nigerian youth.	127 (37.8%)	135 (40.2%)	43 (12.8%)	31 (9.2%)	336 (100%)
Social media has equipped me with skills of conflict prevention.	118 (35.1%)	158 (47.0%)	40 (11.9%)	20 (6.0%)	336 (100%)
Nigerian youths' exposure to social media peace information has enhanced mitigation of human right violation.	92 (27.4%)	173 (51.8%)	28 (8.3%)	43 (12.8%)	336 (100%)
Social media peace information has prompted my involvement in peace advocacy both physical and virtual.	128 (38.1%)	138 (41.1%)	12 (3.6%)	58 (17.3%)	336 (100%)
Social media peace information has strengthened the agitation for national cohesion among Nigerian youths.	115 (34.2%)	146 (43.5%)	17(5.1%)	58 (17.3%)	336 (100%)
Social media peace information has led to the agitation for regional division in Nigeria	23 (6.8%)	32 (9.5%)	122 (36.3%)	159 (47.3%)	336 (100%)

Table 5 presents the perceived impact of social media peace information on peace-building knowledge among the youths. The table indicated that out of 336 (100%) respondents, 262 (78%) of the respondents submitted that social media peace information has enhanced the reduction of violent conflict among youths while 74 (22%) disagreed. 276 (82.1%) of the respondents posited that social media peace information has equipped them with the skills of conflict prevention; 60 (19.9%) disagreed. 266 (79.2%) of the respondents agreed that Nigerian youths' exposure to social media peace information has enhanced mitigation of human right violation while 70 (20.8%) disagreed. 266 (79.2%) of the respondents concurred that social media peace information has prompted their involvement in peace advocacy both physical and virtual while 70 (20.8%) disagreed. 261 (77.7%) of the respondents agreed believed that social media peace information has strengthened the agitation for national cohesion among Nigerian youths while 75 (22.3%) disagreed. Finally, 55 (16.4%) of the respondents agreed that social media peace information has led to the agitation for regional division among Nigeria youth while 281 (83.6%) of the respondents disagreed. It can be deduced from table 4.4 that Nigerian youth perceived social media peace information to have impacted positively on them as it facilitates improved knowledge of conflict prevention among them, reduction of human rights violation and agitation for national cohesion.

Results and Discussion

The findings of the study are based on the four objectives. In respect to the extent of accessing social media by the youth, the findings indicated that majority of the respondents are active users of social media for peace information as they always seek peace-related messages via social media. This aligns with the submission of Palsdottir (2014) that young people from 18 years always access social media for information. The finding of Palsdottir (2014) however, contradicts the present study as it submitted that women used social media more than men whereas the present study indicated that men used social media than women in seeking peace information. This also concurs to the Conectivism theory that viewed digital technology such as social media, internet, email, etc. as avenue for social interaction and information seeking among youths. The finding implies that social media platforms remain the vibrant tools to connect with youth nowadays. This perhaps is responsible for the submission of some scholars such as Palsdottir (2014) that youths are active users of social media platforms.

Moreover, Facebook is the most preferred social media platform that the respondents do access for obtaining information on peace. The result corroborates with the submission of Butt (2020) that viewed Facebook as the most preferred social media for keeping in touch with friends and related easily with online friends. Meanwhile, the finding contradicts the view of Milla and Mataruna-Dos-Santos (2019) as they concluded that youth preferred X (Twitter) to other social media platforms. Hence, social media platforms such as Facebook, X, etc. is a potent channel to share messages that can propel youths to take actions especially messages that can enhance peace and unity among various ethno-religious divides in Nigeria. This is reflected in the October 7-20, 2020 #End SARS protest among Nigerian youths (*Vanguard news*, October 21, 2020) as Nigerian youths were mobilised through social media irrespective of their ethno-religious divides to demand end to police atrocities (Abimbade, et al., 2021).

In addition, the finding showed that majority of the respondents subscribed to promotion of national unity, peace building initiatives and facilitation of national development. This finding concurred to the tenets of Norm Activated Model (NAM) that posits that the awareness of the consequences (AC) of a certain action influences personal norm (PN) and the personal norm is regulated by awareness of consequence and ascription of responsibilities (AR) and these prompted pro-social behaviour (Fang, et al., 2019). Thus, recognition of individual roles in the society motivated the awareness of the consequences of peace building initiatives prompted pro-social behaviour among Nigerian youths.

Finally, the findings also revealed that Nigerian youths perceived social media peace information to have impacted positively on them as it facilitates improved knowledge of conflict prevention among them, reduction of human rights violation and agitation for national cohesion. This submission corroborates the findings of Prabantoro and Hariyanto (2019) that posited that social media has impacted positively on SMES as it has enhanced increase in sales. This finding also aligns with the submission of Vithayathil, et al, (2020) that concluded that social media marketing has motivated consumers to prefer online shopping. Furthermore, the finding supports the submission of Milla and Mataruna-Dis-Santos (2019) that social media has certain characteristics that interrelate with each other has a moderation effect. This is also in line with connectivism theory that views knowledge as a network of learning that can facilitate individual betterment through acquisition of knowledge via digital technology. The finding also corroborates Social Identity theory as it prompts individual to seek content that can enhance the gratification of identity-related gratifications which can consequently impact either positively or negatively on members of the group. This therefore, implies that individual engagement with like minds through social media can enhance gratification of individual interest. Hence, dissemination of peace information through social media among adherents of peace can enhance peace building knowledge.

Conclusion

The study examined impact of social media peace information on peace building knowledge among Nigerian youths. Specifically, undergraduates were selected from Al-Hikmah University and University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Kwara State in order to unravel the relationship between social media peace information and peace building knowledge. The study revealed that social media provides an avenue for the youths to obtain information on peace initiatives, engage in online discussions, participate in peacebuilding initiatives and promote national unity. Therefore, this study concluded that social media peace information has facilitated peacebuilding knowledge among Nigerian youths. This implies that further studies need to be carried out on social media content, peace and national security.

Based on the findings of this study, the study is significant as it serves as a call to policy makers on the need to facilitate the promulgation of law that can regulate the content of social media platforms as this is critical in ensuring dissemination of messages that can promote peace and unity in the country. In addition, the study is also significant to the stakeholders in peace especially individual, governmental organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations, etc. as it equips them on the need to facilitate digital media literacy among youths as this can enhance proper scrutiny of messages before dissemination via social media. Moreover, Government agencies, peace building organisations and civil society groups will benefit from the study as it will enable them to focus more on designing and disseminating proactive peace-oriented messages on social media that aimed at preventing violence in the country. The study will propel the policymakers on the need to leverage on social media to promote peace and security in the country by creating platforms that can facilitate peaceful dialogue and promote the participation of youths in peace-building initiative.

References

- ActionAid Nigeria (2023). Triannual newspaper. December 2022- March 2023, 17.
- Adisa, T. A. & Oni, J. O. (2020). The role of social media in promoting peace advocacy in Nigeria. *Journal of Global Peace and Conflict*, 8(1), 38-49.
- Abimbade, O., Philip, O. & Herro, D. (2021). Millennial activism within Nigerian twitterscape: From mobilisation #ENDSARS protest. *Social Sciences and Humanities Open*, 6 (1), 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2021.100222>
- Baytiyeh, H. (2019). Social media's role in peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery, *Peace Review*, 3(1), 74-82
- Broome, B. & Collier, M.J. (2012). Culture, communication and peacebuilding: A reflexive multi-dimensional contextual framework. *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication*, 5(4), 245-269. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17513057.2012.716858>
- Broome, B. (2017). *Intercultural communication core theories, issues and concepts*. Willey Online Library, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118783665.ieicc0059>
- Building Blocks for Peace Foundation (n.d.) Ritual killings for economic gain among youth in Nigeria. Bbforpeace.org

- Butt, A. (2020). University student's preference regarding social media content, internet usage and online friendship patterns. *Assian Association of Open Universitis Journal*, 15(2), 239-249. <https://doi.org/10.1108/AAOUJ-01-2020-0002>
- Carnegie Moscow Centre (2020). *A storm in January: Implications of the recent US-Iran crisis for the global order*. <https://carnegie.ru/commentary/80963>
- Elsaesser, C.M., Patton, D.U., Kelly, A., Santiago, J. & Clarke, A. (2021). Avoiding fights on social media: Strategies youth leverage to navigate conflict in a digital era. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 49(3), 306-82
- Fang, W., Chiang, Y., Ng, E., & Lo, J. (2019). Using the Norm Activation Model to predict the pro-environmental behaviours of public servants at the central and local governments in Taiwan. *Sustainability* 11(3), 37-42 <https://www.researchgate.net>>334
- Fisentzou, I. (2019). Blurred lines: Social media in armed conflict: Winner of the best in category social media technology and the law. *Legal information Management*, 19 (1), 65-67
- Foreign Affairs (24 August, 2021). A review of "Bring Back Our Girls". <https://www.foreignaffairs.com>
- Global Social Media Statistics (October, 2023). <https://datareportal.com>social-me>
- Herlo, D. (2017). Connectivism, a new learning theory. A proceeding at Edu world 7th International Conference. DOI:10.15405/epsbs.2017.05.02.41
- Idris, I. (2020). *Media communications on peacebuilding, social cohesion, and changing prevailing narratives on conflict*. [also available on]. Independent Newspaper. (2019, March 31). NGO urges social media users to promote peace. *Independent*. <https://independent.ng/ngo-urges-social-media-users-to-promote-peace/>
- Kim, J. J. & Hwang, J. (2020). Merging the norm activation model and the theory of planned behavior in the context of drone food delivery services: Does the level of product knowledge really matter?. *J. Hosp. Tour. Manag.* 42, 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2019.11.002>
- Lamidi, K.O. (2019). Peace building: Conceptual trajectory and imperative analyses in the third world countries. *Canadian Social Sciences*, 15(2), 53-64. DOI:10.3968/10843
- LeFabvre, R.K. (2017). Leveraging the voices of social media for peace and security. *S&F Sicherheit und Frieden*, 34(4), 231-235
- Milla, A.C. & Mataruna-Dos-Santos, L.J. (2019). Social media preferences, interrelations between the social media characteristics and culture: A view of Arab Nations. *Asian Journal*. 71, Doi:10.5539/ass.vi5n6
- Nigerian Tribune* (September 26, 2023). NGO trains 40 youths on usage of social media to promote peace in Kaduna. [Tribuneonline.ng](https://tribuneonline.ng)
- Njeru, A. (2021). Role of social media on community mobilisation. *Journal of Public Relations*, 1(1), 40-52. DOI:<https://doi.org/10.47941/jpr.655>
- Osatuyi, B. (2013). The role of the new media in politics: A case for Nigeria. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Economics and Management Sciences*, 4(1), 78-82
- Oyero, O., Abdulrauf, M. O. and Amaechi, U. N. (2021). The Role of Social Media in Promoting Peace in Nigeria: Implications for Youth Engagement in Peacebuilding. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 32(4), 569-589.
- Palsdothir, A. (2014). Preferences in the use of social media for seeking health and lifestyle information. 19(4), 642-657 <http://informationR.net/ir/19-4/paper.html>, [Peacebuilding in the Niger Delta— PIND Foundation](https://www.pindfoundation.org/peacebuilding-in-the-niger-delta)
- PeaceDirect (28 March, 2023). How Nigerian women build peace through grassroots initiatives <https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/how-nigerian-women-build-peace>
- Prabantoro, G. & Hariyanto, J. (2019). Social media preference as a media of business Marketing Communication of SMES in Rawamangun East Jakarta. Proceedings of the 5th annual International Conference on Management Research (AICMAR, 2018). <http://createcommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.01>
- Roose, K. (2018, October 28). On Gab, an extremist-friendly site, Pittsburgh shooting suspect aired his hatred in full. The New York Times. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com>
- Slater, M. D. (2015). Reinforcing spirals model: Conceptualizing the relationship between media content exposure and the development and maintenance of attitudes. *Media Psychology*, 18(3), 370–395. doi:10.1080/15213269.2014.897236
- Smith, C.B. (2018). Building peace through the political processes of the United Nations. [www.gmu.edu>Smith_921JPS](https://www.gmu.edu/>Smith_921JPS) PDF
- Sun, J. (2021). Research on the credibility of social media information based on user perception security and communication networks, 2021
- Swiss peace, UN DPPA (2021). Social media in peace mediation: a practical framework. reliefweb.int

- Tajfel, H., Billig, M. G., Bundy, R. P., & Flament, C. (1971). Social categorization and intergroup behavior. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 1, 149–178.
- Theophilus, E. (2022). Youth perpetuate 95% of violence in Nigeria *Daily Trust* (6 September, 2020) dailytrust.com
- The Guardian (June 20, 2021). The renovation, reopening of Chibok school (Editorial) guardian.ng-delive
- The Hootsuite's Digital Report (2019). the global digital state report . <https://wearesocialmedia.com>
- Ukoji, V.U, Ukoji, V.N. (2023). Trends and patterns of violence-related mortality in Nigeria: evidence from a 16-year analysis of secondary data Injury Prevention Published Online First: 21 September 2023. doi: 10.1136/ip-2023-044895
- UNESCO (29 November, 2023). Transforming higher education in crises and emergencies: WISE Conference ministerial round table. <https://www.unesco.org>event>
- United Nations Development Programme.(2021). Peacebuilding. Retrieved from <https://www.undp.org/our-work/peacebuilding>
- Unni, C. (October 31, 2020). Who is a youth in Nigeria? Why the definition by the national youth policy 2019 is not acceptable. Thenigerialawyer.com
- Vanguard News (October 21, 2020). October 20, 2020: We won't forget. <https://www.vanguardngr.com>oct>
- Vithayathil,J. Dadger, M. & Osiri, K. (2020). Social media use and consumer shopping preference. *International Journal of Information Management*, 54
- Wasserman, H. , Chuma, W. & Bosch, T. (2018). Print media coverage of service delivery protests in South Africa: A content analysis. *African Studies*, 77(1),145-156, DOI:10.1080/00020184.2018.1426312
- Yamene, T. (1967). Statistics: An introductory analysis (2nd Edition). New York: Harper and Row
- Zeitzoff, T. (2017). How social media is changing conflict. *Journal of conflict Resolution.*, 6(19), 1970-1991