Social Media Contents on the Moral Values of Nigerian Universities' Students: A Study of the University of Port Harcourt

By
Progress Umor Daniel, PhD
&
Ophilia Tammy Aduura
Department of Mass Communication,
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education
progress.umor@iaue.edu.ng, tammyrites@gmail.com
+2348063507748, +2348036717753

Abstract

Virtually everyone uses social media as a necessary means of communication to enhance information sharing and gather societal values and morals. Currently, people use social media not only for moral communication, but also for exposing, private, and sensitive parts of their bodies. As a result, this study seeks to investigate the impact of social media content on the moral values of Nigerian university students. The study focused on the University of Port Harcourt. The study utilized the descriptive survey method, with the cultivation theory serving as the theoretical framework. Three research questions guided the study. The study's findings reveal that students at the University of Port Harcourt encounter social media platforms like TikTok, Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, Telegram, Google+, Pinterest, and X. The study concluded that students at all levels in Nigerian universities can use social media to improve their academic performance and learn morals that will enhance African cultural values. The study identified elements that can bolster moral content. Therefore, we encourage students to visit a place that upholds their moral values, as their personal reputations are at stake when they share immoral content. Such content reflects the experiences of children who lack parental guidance. The study, among other things, advised Nigerian university students to understand that African society and their families bear full responsibility for any misbehavior a child displays, even if the family doesn't care. As a result, social media should always be used for moral improvement and cultural value.

Keywords: Social media contents, Moral values, Information sharing, University of Port Harcourt , Society.

Introduction

Today's world has witnessed a significant advancement in the use of technological tools and internet-enabled devices to facilitate information exchange, leading to a reduction in distance barriers, increased accessibility, and real-time communication and information sharing across various audiences. Social media and other internet-driven platforms have facilitated this. Effective social media content often aligns with the preferences of the audience, as it provides interesting materials such as text, images, videos, and links that serve different purposes for content consumers. Individuals or businesses share these contents on their social media platforms to engage, inform, or entertain the audience through posts, updates, stories, podcasts, short videos, and other evolving modes that appeal to the audience. Individuals and businesses design and disseminate the contents to engage with the audience, convey messages, and foster interactions among them (Daniel, 2019).

Accessibility to information and the utilization of social media by individuals for self-communication are key factors. Wood (2006) thought that social media content is basic, meaning that each person's reception of the content involves internalising it and responding to the point of view being communicated in a way that is unique. This is because communication on social media has few or no editorial reviews, showing that the content creator has little power over the gatekeeping processes. This medium cuts through geographical space and location barriers. It has become revolutionary because of its emergence as the biggest game changer in communication, content sharing, and other aspects of social life (Daniel & Ochonogor, 2023). Through formal and informal expressions, social media has bridged the gap between members of society, resulting in equalization and altering media approaches. Daniel and Ochonogor (2023) have confirmed that the control and gatekeeping processes in the mass media, along with the high cost and limited access to airing or space on newspaper and magazine pages, have led many individuals to turn to social media as a platform for self-expression of their opinions, activities, and agitations.

Studies on social media and its content have shown that there are various social media platforms, and more are still emerging. Some of these platforms include: Facebook, X, Instagram, LinkedIn, Snapchat, TikTok, Pinterest, Reddit, YouTube, WhatsApp, Tumblr, Flickr, Quora, Periscope, Medium, Vimeo, Vine, Foursquare/Swarm, Yelp, Google+, Meetup, WeChat, Vero, Telegram, Discord, Mix, Gab, Minds MeWe, Steemit, etc. Each of them varies in their operational means of information dissemination, connectivity, and interactivity in such a way that they offer unique educational values to students and other users. While some of the channels allow for selective participation, others allow for universal participation through unrestricted opportunities to share and duplicate received messages, thereby making them available to many outside the confines of a group of friends or followers (Kente & Abimiku, 2022). Citing Sheedy (2011), Kente and Abimiku (2022) observed that social media have become tools that enable connectivity among people of all ages and genders, creating awareness on issues that may be of common interest to them.

Accordingly, Arijeniwa, Nwaoboli, Ajimokunola, and Uwuoruya (2022) pointed out that social media are platforms where people from all over the world generate content that is relevant to their culture and convert their local culture into global culture through the use of internet-enabling devices. Such cultural activities include, but are not limited to, music, dance, poetry, local food recipes, national games and sports, local events, religious and national events, their celebrations, and many other different activities that only exist in their own home society. Baran (2012) noted that the advent of social media gave birth to a new form of cultural expansionism known as cultural "commodification."

Africans, as well as Nigerians, are known for upholding high moral and cultural values, which are easily identified as proper home training that is inculcated as part of the child's upbringing. In most Nigerian communities, it is the responsibility of every member of society to provide that learning for the young members of society, but today social media has introduced the globalization of what can be termed "mixed culture," leading to the deterioration of indigenous culture and the subtle replacement with foreign culture. Arijeniwa et al. (2022) observed the globalisation of culture and the trending change in cultural values through the use of social media, which offers one-way transmission of ideas and

values that results in the displacement of indigenous culture. However, Orlu-Orlu (2013) noted that every media generation, driven by the dynamism and advancement of culture, alters lifestyles; consequently, the evolution of the media space shapes the nature of cultural change. The more the media changes, the more our cultural values change.

Social media, by its very nature, has created cultural gaps between the old people and the new generation, also known as the digital generation. This internet enablement creation has broken down the walls of indigenouship, as members of this community are no longer considered to be citizens of a particular society or culture, giving rise to fundamentals and the transformation that is usually created by cultural values and traditions (Orlu-Orlu, 2013). Daniel and Amangala (2022) believed that the mediated devices have caused a change in the principles or beliefs that guide individuals in determining what is right or wrong. What once served as the foundation for ethical behaviours and decision-making, influencing how people interact with others and navigate more complex dilemmas, has become a thing of the past due to changes in user privacy and accountability. People believe that social media users are fair and that the content they consume benefits them without harming others (Adedeji et al., 2022), which in turn promotes self-culturalization and interactions. This has resulted in the integration of personal opinions, needs, and values into a wider communication range, consequently diminishing the conventional norms within the local community and establishing a novel norm.

Indigenous cultural values are fast losing their significance due to the promotion of foreign cultures, which creates diffusions in cultural values, leading to a decade in cultural and religious values. Nwala, Daniel, Amangala, and Oruwari (2021) affirmed that this trend is more common and evident among the younger generation, who are tech-driven and own smartphones with one or more social media accounts. A typical example of this was the trending social media that led to the arrest and detention of several TikTok creators for allegedly violating cultural, religious, and moral sensitivities (www.restofworld.org/TikTok creators are being arrested for violating religious laws in Nigeria, retrieved November 15, 2023); similarly, foreign cuisines have become the primary delicacies that influence our preference for food over our local delicacies. Currently, some young people

view our local delicacies as mere objects of cultural celebration. Hence, this study is timely as it examines the effect of social media content on the moral values of Nigerian university students.

Statement of the Problem

Every society in the world today is using the media to promote their culture, norms, values and beliefs that are innate and unique to them to the outside world in a subtle and convert way. Using all forms of media to showcase the emergence of development, invitations are sent with little or no restrictions between the sender and the audience. Today, we can teach and learn both foreign and indigenous languages online. With the speed and spread of the internet enabling communication, some indigenous languages and cultures are running into extinction due to the globalisation of content.

Studies have shown the role played by social media in content generation and the dissemination of information, as well as the promotion of culture, is majorly foreign, and they are tools employed to culturally dominate the media in other underdeveloped societies. This perspective aligns with Okunna's (2002) claim that Western culture is imposed on developing countries through international mass communication, with the aim of establishing a uniform global culture. Khamidajon, Abdumannon, and Rasuljon (2020) observed that the problems of devaluation of culture in a traditional society are due to the fight between globalisation and modernisation as well as the development of cultures. As societies strive to be among the committee of states, the equivalent processes begin to be westernised and to be seen as members, which leads to the acceptance of change and, as such, leads to the western values dominating their cultural values. Also, Ahmad (2021) noted that the amount of time, specifically hours or minutes, an individual spends on social media watching content that is across the borders of one's geographical location exposes one to a wider range, which leads to the thought of acceptance as content-specific exposure is a predictor of cultivation.

With the growing number of young people on social media, constantly pressing their phones, taking self-images, and uploading their nude images, especially on TikTok, one wonders if there are moral and cultural values among our youths in

society anymore. Hence, this study is timely as it examines the effect of social media content on the moral values of Nigerian university students.

Research Questions

To ensure an effective guide and a positive outcome, the study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What kind of social media are students at the University of Port Harcourt exposed to?
2. How have social media contents influenced moral values among University of Port Harcourt students?
3. What are the moral values learnt by University of Port Harcourt's students on social media?

A Review of Related Literature

Oloyede and Oloyede (2022) investigated the effects of social media on the morality of youths in Nigeria, as well as the role of religion. The study aimed to investigate the impact of social media on individuals' morality, despite its benefits, and the role religion plays in mitigating the challenges facing human society. Additionally, the study explored potential solutions and safer approaches to social media use. The research design employed the survey method, which draws from literature and observation.

The study revealed that social media promotes numerous harmful social vices, resulting in moral decadence. The study concluded that there is a need to keep sharing content that is positive in order to reduce the amount of immoral content that is in circulation on social media platforms. Therefore, the study recommends that tech/app designers, policymakers, parents, religious leaders, and the youth themselves have a responsibility to act ethically in order to limit the range of immoral and inappropriate materials that young people engage in social media apps. This will ensure proper use and contribute to a more responsible and morally upright society. Although this study examined the effect of social media on the morality of youths in Nigeria and the role of religion, it did not attempt to look at how social media content has affected students in Nigerian universities, which is the gap that this study wants to fill.

Onah and Nche (2014) examined the moral implications of the social media phenomenon in Nigeria. The study aims to critically analyze the moral issues that have arisen in society regarding the use of social media, particularly among Nigerian youth. We will use both qualitative and quantitative analytical methods to examine the moral implications of the social media phenomenon in Nigeria. Despite its great benefits, social media has given rise to moral issues in Nigeria, particularly among the youth. Using qualitative and quantitative instruments for data analysis, it was found that social media have regrettably contributed to moral degeneration and decadence among youths in several ways due to the overwhelming popularity of young people in Nigeria as a result of the abuse and immoral postings of these network sites.

The study concluded that these social media sites offer benefits such as enhancing work efficiency, maintaining social bonds, and serving as a source of information. However, the moral implications of the abuse of these social media sites, especially by youths, have led to sexual promiscuity, internet crime, indecent dressing and sexual harassment, a loss of sense of the sacredness of human life and neighbourliness, impatience, and quick syndrome. Therefore, it's crucial for parents to guide and monitor their children, making sure they don't spend excessive time on their phones, and setting a strong moral example by instilling strong moral values. Furthermore, youths should refrain from every act of immorality, as this does not bode well for the future, as it is expected that they will be the leaders of tomorrow. This study examined the moral implications of the social media phenomenon in Nigeria, but it did not look at how the use of social media content has affected Nigerian university students; this is the gap that this study wants to address. Anyanwu, Ossai-Onah, and Iroeze (2013). The study investigated the use of social media tools among Nigerian undergraduates in three selected tertiary institutions in Imo State, Nigeria. The study aimed at evaluating the use of social media tools among Nigerian undergraduate tertiary educational institutions. The study's geographical focus was Imo State. The study adopted the survey design. We used the questionnaire as an instrument for data collection. According to the findings, Nigerian undergraduates have knowledge of social media tools and use them primarily for communication with friends and information sharing among fellow students. Facebook was found to be the most

commonly used social media tool among undergraduates in the institutions studied.

The study concluded that though undergraduates make use of social media, they are not directing it towards their academic pursuits. Furthermore, the various tertiary education institutions should implement appropriate orientation and ICT literacy courses to reorient the students' mindset. Furthermore, students can effectively utilize various social media platforms to achieve their academic objectives, which is a key motivator for attending higher education institutions. It is therefore recommended that proper orientation and subsidization be given to students in order for them to have a lower cost of internet services from the various network providers. While this study shares some similarities, it also differs due to its focus on the university's geographical location. This study deals with not just social media, but also the moral values based on the content.

Tayo, Adebola, and Yahya (2019) investigated social media usage and influence on undergraduate studies in Nigerian universities. The study examined how social media usage affects undergraduate students' studies. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The study population consisted of all undergraduate students at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. We randomly selected five faculties, and then used random and convenience sampling techniques to select 850 students. The study used a self-designed questionnaire as an instrument for data collection. The study concluded that social media platforms were used by undergraduates. WhatsApp accounted for 97%, Facebook for 85%, Instagram for 65%, YouTube for 62%, Twitter for 25%, LinkedIn for 21%, Google Plus for 15%, Snapchat for 10%, and Skype for 7%.

The study's findings showed that undergraduate students spend an average of 2-3 hours daily on social media, with their perceived uses being for socialization, information, academics, business, and entertainment. The study revealed that some undergraduate students were experiencing internet addiction, distraction, anti-social behavior, and cyber bullying, while others were using social media to improve their writing and spelling skills. Despite the widespread use of social media platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube for socialization, information, and academic purposes, the study cautions that

improper use can lead to addiction. This study investigates the use of social media among undergraduates and its impact on their academic performance, specifically focusing on the effects of social media content on students.

Laninhun and Amadi (2019) investigated the influence of social networking sites on the moral values of selected undergraduate students at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. The aim of the study was to examine the influence of social networking sites on the moral values of undergraduate students at the University of Ibadan and the moral values preferred by students based on the specific ways that social networking sites influenced the moral conduct of students. Technological Determinism Theory served as the theoretical framework. The mixed methods of quantitative and qualitative research, used with stratified and purposive sampling techniques, were used to select 220 undergraduates from eleven (11) purposively selected faculties in the university.

The University of Ibadan held four focus group discussions with 26 purposively selected participants across four selected undergraduate halls of residence. Findings indicated that the moral values applied by University of Ibadan undergraduates include, but are not limited to, love, honesty, respect, forgiveness, compassion, and responsibility. While the students considered knowledge or learning to be their most important moral value, love seemed to be their most applicable moral value. Furthermore, the results showed that social networking sites influenced moral values more negatively than positively. Additionally, WhatsApp was the social networking site that influenced respondents' moral values the most. The study recommended the need for social media regulation and social media literacy in Nigerian universities, as these students have the potential to become leaders in society. There are similarities with this study, but they differ in geographical location and scope. This study deals with not just social media, but also the effect of social media content on the students' moral values.

Okafor and Achokwu (2014) investigated the relationship between social media and changing socio-cultural values among Nigerian university undergraduates at Nnamdi Azikiwe University. The study was intended to determine the influence of social media usage on undergraduate students' social-cultural values. The survey method was used as the research design, with a questionnaire as the

instrument for data collection. Statistical tools such as quadratic test analysis, bar chat, and pie chat analysis were used.

Findings indicated that the majority of the undergraduate students make use of social media and that social media influences the social relationships of the undergraduate students. Furthermore, it was found that social media had a negative impact on the study culture of the undergraduate students at Nnamdi Azikiwe University. The study concluded that the use of social media by undergraduate students at Nnamdi Azikiwe University has negative influences.

Aligwe, Ugochukwu, and Nwafor (2017) examined social media use patterns and their implications among university undergraduate students in the South East of Nigeria. The objective of the study was to ascertain if university undergraduate students are aware and also have the knowledge that some of their online social networking practices are capable of denting their online reputations, and also to determine if Nigerian universities, particularly those in the South East zone, are doing anything to promote responsible social media use among their students.

The study, which was anchored on the social responsibility theory, adopted the mixed research methods of a survey questionnaire and an oral interview to generate data. Inferential statistics of t-test analysis and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used in testing the hypotheses of the study. The findings revealed that irresponsibility in social media usage among the students was a result of their unawareness that it was injurious to their online reputations, and that the level of irresponsibility in social media usage among university undergraduate students within the southern part of Nigeria has deepened due to a lack of social media education in their respective universities. It was recommended that the National University Commission (NUC) should introduce social media education as a general study course in Nigerian university curriculum and that the undergraduate students should register with media contents and reputation security/check alert to enable them track unwanted postings and tagging by friends.

Apuke and Iyendo (2017) carried out a study on the two sides of a coin: revisiting the impact of social networking sites on students' performance in selected higher

educational settings in Nigeria. The study aimed to investigate the access, utilization, and negative impact of social networking sites among students in higher educational settings. The study used a questionnaire as the data collection instrument and received two hundred and fifty valid responses from a sample of Nigerian higher education students.

The study found that all students in the selected higher institutions in Nigeria make use of social networking sites, and Facebook was ranked as the most utilized. Only a small proportion of these students use it for academic purposes, however. They revealed that they would rather use it for chatting with friends and family. Furthermore, the study found that excessive use of social networking sites has an impact on students' spoken and written grammar. The study concluded that higher institutions should integrate social media into their curricula for students to learn. In addition, lecturers should engage students on social media platforms and use them for communication as well as assignment submission. It was thought to encourage students to use social media for educational purposes rather than chatting alone.

Theoretical Framework

This study's theoretical foundation is cultivation theory. George Gerbner and his colleagues propound the cultivation theory. The cultivation theory holds that the media is so pervasive in content that it cultivates certain views across all segments of society. When Gerbner and Gross expanded the theory in the 1960s, the position was that the longer one spends on viewership of media content, such content has its own effects that gradually affect perceptions, attitudes, and the way an individual expresses a particular or general issue based on the content. Therefore, the act of spending prolonged time on social media by undergraduate students turns out to have either a positive or negative effect, depending on the content to which they are exposed.

Littlejohn and Foss (2009) affirmed that the theory is rooted in the effects that individuals have based on the extent to which they consume media messages; the more they give time to absorb the lesson and moral embedded within those messages, the more they conform to the contents. The relationship between consumption of media messages and the ability to absorb, retain, and hold a belief

that is consistent with the contents found in the messages is significant. These contents from long-term spending on social media form the perception, belief, attitude, and values that undergraduate students portray, shaping their cultural beliefs (Shrum, 2017), leading to violence and a negative attitude. The effects of these contents do not only affect the individual but also have the ability to sharpen the moral values and general beliefs of individuals, which such individuals have influence over (Mosharafa, 2015). The time spent on internet-enabled devices by students as well as on social media based on the outcome of the things they post is an indicator that students visit more negative sites than positive sites that should encourage teaching and learning in institutions of higher learning.

Tayo et al. (2019) noted that modern technology in communication has no doubt helped to serve as a means of connecting people, creating room for interactions. As a result, there is a rapid growth, which is making the youth spend more time on internet-enabling devices than spending time with their families in real life. This has led to the development of a new lifestyle, the introduction of different cultures, and the evaluation of moral values. Citing Boateng and Amankwaa (2016), Tayo et al. (2019) asserted that while in other societies, social media has influenced instructors, students, and other academic stakeholders to unite with each other in order to promote knowledge construction in teaching and learning, for the Nigerian university's undergraduates, it is where to show nakedness, which they practice from what they see on the social networks.

Research Method

The descriptive survey method served as the design for this investigation. The study's target population consisted of undergraduates from the University of Port Harcourt during the 2022-2023 academic session, with a population of 50111. The sample size for the study was 381, according to Krejcie and Morgan (1970). The cluster sampling technique was adopted, given that students have different characteristics, which included departments, different levels, and different disciplines; therefore, students were grouped into these characteristics to select 381 students who served as the respondents. A structured questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. In order to measure consistency, the instrument was subjected to face-to-face and constructive validation. The data were analyzed

using simple frequency counts and percentages. The collected data was analyzed and presented in tables.

Data Presentations and Analysis

Identified the kind of social media are students in Nigerian universities exposed to

Figure 1: Identification of the kind of social media students in Nigerian universities are exposed to

Figure 1 above illustrates the types of social media that students at the University of Port Harcourt interact with. TikTok had 20%, Facebook 17%, and WhatsApp 15%; YouTube, Instagram, and Snapchat all have 9%, followed by Telegram and Google+ with 6%, while Pinterest had 5% and X 4%.

Table 1: What are the reasons for utilizing social media contents?

S/No	Item	A4	SA3	D2	SD1	Total	WMS	Remarks
1	Sharing information about others	95	90	113	83	955	2.5	Accepted
2	Share information about myself to others	102	103	89	86	981	2.5	Accepted
3	Just to know about happenings in other places	106	81	84	109	944	0,4	Rejected
4	Communications with friends	98	99	100	83	972	2.5	Accepted
5	Establishing relationship with students from other institutions and the world beyond Nigeria	93	92	94	102	934	2.5	Accepted

6	Post personal activities such as goods and services	105	91	96	89	970	2.5	Accepted
7	For entertain and self-gratifications	103	89	95	93	962	2.5	Accepted

Sources: Field work 2024

Table 1 captures respondents' opinions about their reasons for utilizing social media content. The respondents indicated that they use social media to, among other things, share information, communicate with friends, post personal activities, and for self-gratification.

Table 2: Things that you have learned on social media as a student

S/No	Item	**A4**	**SA3**	**D2**	**SD1**	**Total**	**WMS**	**Remarks**
1	It has helped me in change the ways that I think about dressing	89	104	95	92	950	2.5	Accepted
2	It has help me in changing the ways that I look at people as it relates to gender issues	93	105	98	84	967	2.5	Accepted
3	Social media contents have help me to pray more	82	94	112	92	926	2.4	Rejected
4	I have been able to use it to obtain information about assignment given to us when I am out of school premises	98	84	94	104	936	2.4	Rejected
5	It has remodeled my total being	91	103	94	92	953	2.5	Accepted

6	I have been able to find relevant information related to my research topic	87	91	96	106	919	2.4	Rejected
7	I have been able to connect with students with similar interest in social life	102	90	102	86	968	2.5	Accepted
8	I have been able to know date and time for social activities within and out the campus	90	86	106	98	928	2.4	Rejected

Sources: Field work 2024

In Table 2 above, respondents were asked to provide their position on what they have learned on social media as students. The table indicates that their responses were more about self-gratification than academic performance.

Table 3: Ways that the social media contents contributed to moral values among Nigerian Universities students.

S/No	Item	**A4**	**SA3**	**D2**	**SD1**	**Total**	**WMS**	**Remarks**
1	Change in attitude from local to global thinking	89	97	111	83	952	2.5	Accepted
2	Change in lifestyle and dressing met with what is going on in the world as a student	112	104	85	79	1009	2.5	Accepted
3	Made me beliefs in my cultural	88	86	107	99	923	2.4	Rejected
4	One can have naked pictures and it does not mean anything	103	93	99	85	974	2.5	Accepted

5	Our culture is old and need to be modified to meet with today's world	96	104	99	81	975	2.5	Accepted
6	Reading more on the internet gives me a worldwide view on issues at home	112	85	87	96	973	2.5	Accepted
7	In as much as my profile has a name that is not my true identity, I can do anything and post	103	94	87	96	964	2.5	Accepted

Sources: Field work 2024

Table **3** provides detailed insights into the respondents' opinions about ways in which social media contents contribute to moral values among Nigerian university students. The table indicated that social media has changed from a local cultural belief and setting to a global mindset based on the fact that Web2 is global.

Table 4: Your position on social media value and moral especially on your handles

S/No	Item	A4	SA3	D2	SD1	Total	WMS	Remarks
1	Culture is good but for me here on social media	95	90	113	83	955	2.5	Accepted
2	I can't share information about my body on my social media handles	102	103	89	86	981	2.5	Accepted
3	I go to social media to learn about the ways of	106	81	84	109	944	0,4	Rejected

	life, value systems and morals							
4	I see information about people posting their private parts and it is okay with me	98	99	100	83	972	2.5	Accepted
5	I can share information about my body to someone that I have intimate relationship on our media handle	93	92	94	102	934	2.5	Accepted
6	I don't see anything bad sharing naked pictures as long as my face did not show	105	91	96	89	970	2.5	Accepted
7	Boy/girlfriend do a lot of things with our phones	103	89	95	93	962	2.5	Accepted
8	I do what I like on my handles because it belongs to me and not my community	98	99	100	83	972	2.5	Accepted
9	I don't care to know who is looking at my page, I just do my things and move on	93	92	94	102	934	2.5	Accepted

Sources: Fieldwork 2024

Table 4 provides detailed insights into the respondents' opinions about their position on social media values and morals, especially on their personal handles.

Data Discussion

The study investigated the impact of social media content on the moral values of Nigerian university students, using the University of Port Harcourt as a case study and the following research question:

RQ1: What kind of social media are students at the University of Port Harcourt exposed to?

Based on the findings from the pie chat, it was indicated that TikTok had 20%, Facebook had 17%, WhatsApp had 15%, and YouTube, Instagram, and Snapchat all had 9%, followed by Telegram and Google+ with 6%, while Pinterest had 5% and X had 4%. A similar study was also carried out by Tayo et al. (2019) on social media usage and influence on undergraduate studies in Nigerian universities. The study's scope and population were undergraduate students at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. The study indicated that social media platforms were used by undergraduates. WhatsApp had 97%, Facebook (85%), Instagram (65%), YouTube (62%), Twitter (25%), LinkedIn (21%), Google Plus (15%), Snapchat (10%), and Skype (7%). Comparing the study by Tayo et al., today the leading social media used by Nigerian university students are TikTok with 20%, Facebook with 17% against Tayo et al.'s 85%, WhatsApp with 15% against Tayo et al.'s 97%, and YouTube, Instagram, and Snapchat all have 9%, respectively, against Tayo et al.'s 62%, 65%, and 10%. Furthermore, Google+ had 6% against Tayo et al.'s 15%, and X had 4% against Tayo et al.'s 25%. while the findings in this study had Pinterest, which had 5%, and Telegram, which had 6%, but Tayo et al.'s study did not look at Pinterest and Telegram, respectively but this study has indicated that while in Tayo et al. (2019), there are social media that Nigerian university students are using, which is on the increase. Today, there is a reduction in some and increases in others due to self-gratifications and other reasons.

QR2: How have social media contents influenced the moral values of University of Port Harcourt students?

Findings based on the instrument indicated that respondents' opinions about how social media contents contribute to moral values among Nigerian university

students. The table indicated that social media has changed from a local cultural belief and setting to a global mindset based on the fact that Web2 is global. This is in contrast to Aligwe et al. (2017), who examined social media use patterns and image implications among university undergraduate students in the South East of Nigeria. The irresponsible act of students on social media has resulted in detrimental effects on their online reputations, the Nigerian university system, especially the University of Port Harcourt, and African culture. The level of irresponsibility in social media usage among undergraduate students has deepened due to a lack of social media education within the Nigerian university system.

QR3: What moral values do University of Port Harcourt students learn on social media?

Respondents from Table 5 indicated that social media content has changed the students from local cultural beliefs and settings to a global mindset based on the fact that Web02 is global. This affirmed the theoretical position of Littlejohn and Foss (2009) on the cultivation theory of George Gerbner and his colleagues, which believed that the longer one spends on viewership of media content, such content has its own effects that gradually affect perceptions, attitudes, and the way an individual expresses a particular or general issue based on the content. Based on the length of time spent on social media, the content that students are exposed to forms their perception, belief, attitude, and values that they portray, which in turn shapes their cultural beliefs (Shrum, 2017), leading to violence, a negative attitude, and a moral decade. Mosharafa (2015) also noted that the effects of these contents do not only affect the individual but also have the ability to sharpen the moral values and the general beliefs of individuals that such individuals have been influenced by. The outcome of their social media posts is an indicator that students visit more negative sites than positive ones that should encourage teaching and learning in higher education institutions.

Conclusion

Everyone should utilize social media as a vital tool for communication, fostering the exchange of information and enhancing moral and societal values. As such, students at all levels in Nigerian universities can use this to improve their academic performance and learn new things that will enhance African cultural

values. Other sites, such as social media, can enhance moral content. Students are, therefore, encouraged to visit that sit that will enhance their moral values because, as individuals, families, and family names are on the line when they post things that are not moral. Such content portrays what it looks like for children without home training.

Although findings indicated that university students do not use social media for moral activities, especially TikTok, the TikTok can be used to post videos of breakthroughs in areas of study rather than posting naked videos and other things that do not in any way add value to them or their family name if their identities are exposed through the person, they share information about on their handles.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the study recommended that

1. The study recommended that students in Nigerian universities should know that in African society, families receive all the blame for all the wrongdoing that a child does, even when it was done without the concern of the family. As a result, social media should always be used for moral improvement and cultural value.

2. As a matter of fact, as part of the 70th percent of NUC CCMAs, programs that will enhance professional use of social media should be introduced in our universities as GNS courses that enhance Nigerian cultural values. Lecturers should engage students on various social media platforms and use them for teaching, learning, and assignment submission. It was believed that it would keep students busy with the use of social media for educational purposes rather than chatting alone.

3. Parents should also keep an eye on what their children are doing by being true friends with them. Older family members should engage with the younger ones to show them leadership and moral values, as the damage caused by their younger ones is not just to them but to all members of the family.

References

Ahmad, M.B. (2021). Television and cultivation of violence among youths in modern society. In E. M. Mojaye (Ed.). Media Systems of Communication, pp 141 – 162. Babcock University Press

Aligwe, H. N., Ugochukwu N. S. & Nwafor K. A. (2017). Social Media Use Pattern and the Image Implication among University Undergraduate Students in South East, Nigeria. *Idosr Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 2(2): 231-249,

Anyanwu, E. U., Ossai-Onah, V. O. & Iroeze, P. (2013). Use of social media tools among Nigerian undergraduates in three selected tertiary institutions in Imo State, Nigeria. *Journal of Information and Knowledge Management* 4(2), 46 – 52

Apuke, O. D. & Iyendo, T. O. (2017). Two sides of a coin: revisiting the impact of social networking sites on students' performance in selected higher educational settings in Nigeria. *Sci.Int.(Lahore),* 29(6),1265-1275

Arijeniwa, A. F., Nwaoboli, E. P., Ajimokunola, P. O. & Uwuoruya, I. D. (2022). Social media, cultural commodification and the promotion of synthetic values in Nigeria. In E. S. Asemah, D. O. Ekhareafo & T. Santas (Eds.). *Discourses on Communication and Media Studies in Contemporary Society.* Pp 291 – 300, Jos University Press

Daniel, P. U. & Amangala, O. T. (2022). Utilisation of Garden City and Radio Rivers FM stations for teaching and learning during the 2020 Covid-19 lockdown in Rivers State. In Asemah, E. S., Ekhareafo, D. O. & Santas, T., (Eds.). *Communication, environment and development,* 275- 281. University of Jos Press.

Daniel, P. U. & Ochonogor, I. C. (2023). Communication, good governance and human development. In O. Onuchuku & P. C. Mmom (Eds.). *Leadership, Governance and Sustainable Development in Nigeria. A book in Honour of His Excellency Nyesom Ezenwo Wike.* Pp 417 – 430. Pearl Publishers International Ltd

Daniel, P. U. (2019). Radio as a tool for attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs) 4 in Rivers State. *Icheke: A Multi-Disciplinary Journal of the Faculty of Humanities*. 17(2), 277 – 295.

Kente, J. S., & Abimiku, M. S. (2022). Use of social media for endsars protest mobilisation in Nigeria. In E. S. Asemah, D. O. Ekhareafo & T. Santas

(Eds.). *Discourse on Communication and Media Studies in Contemporary Society.* Pp 97 – 104, Jos University Press

Khamidajon, U., Abdumannon, S. & Rasuljon, S. (2020). Devaluation of the National Culture in the Traditional Societies in the Period of Globalization. A Paper presented at the 4th International Academic Conference on Humanities and Social Science, 18 – 20 September, 2020.

Laninhun. B. A. & Amadi, P. O. (2019). Influence of Social Networking Sites on the Moral Values of Selected Undergraduate Students of the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. Ibadan Journal of Humanistic Studies, 29(1), 23 – 31

Littlejohn, S. W. & Foss, K. A. (2009). Encyclopedia of communication theory. Sage Publication

Mosharafa, E. (2015). All you need to know about: The cultivation theory. Global Journal of Human-Social Science: An Arts & Humanities - Psychology, 15(8), 24 – 38.

Nwala, B. A., Daniel, P. U., & Odum, U. (2020). Use of social media for community development in Port Harcourt City, Rivers State. *In D. Gambo, & H. Batta, (Eds.). Digital media communication and civil engagement in Nigeria, (85 - 98*). Uyo, Nigeria: African Council for Communication Education (ACCE).

Nwala, B. A., Daniel, P. U., Amangala, O. T & Oruwari, S. (2021). Newspaper coverage on rape cases: Characterizing agent for societal change in Nigeria. In I. C. Mmejim & A. F. D. Dagogo (Eds.). *Saving the soul of education in Nigeria*, (420 – 435). A Festschrift in Honour of Professor Jessica Ezekiel-Hart. Perl Publishers International Ltd

Okafor, G. O. & Achokwu, L. N. (2014). Social media and changing socio-cultural values among Nigeria university undergraduates: A study of Nnamdi Azikiwe University. *International Journal of Art and Education Research*, 3(3), 910 - 924

Oloyede, M. O. & Oloyede, G. K. (2022). Effects of social media on morality of youths in Nigeria and the role of religion. Accra Bespoke Multidisciplinary Innovations Conference (ABMIC)

Onah, N. G. & Nche G. C. (2014). The moral implication of social media phenomenon in Nigeria. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(20), 2231 - 2237

Shrum, L. J. (2017). Cultivation theory: Effects and underlying processes. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/314395025, retrieved 08/12/2023

Tayo, S. S., Adebola, S. T. & Yahya, D. O. (2019). Social media, usage and influence on undergraduate studies in Nigerian universities. International Journal of Education and Development using Information and Communication Technology, 15(3) 53-62

Wood, J. T. (2006). *Communication in our lives (fourth ed.).* Thomson Wadsworth