Application of New Media in Peace Building and Conflict Resolution in Nigeria

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Abstract

The role of new media in conflict prevention, resolution and escalation is now a global concern to both peace and conflict scholars and public policy makers. The kind of information the media disseminate is critical to sustaining peace and harmony in society and vice versa. New media has a long history. The media have suffered deprivation in the hands of both military and civilian regimes. However, this has not in anywhere diminished the growth of the media in all its ramifications. Traditional media genre like newspaper, radio and television has received much recognition and seminal attention, but social or new media such as Twitter, Facebook, Blogging and other Internet based media are becoming more popular medium of information dissemination, especially in conflict situations across the country. Within this context, this paper examines the application of new media in peace buildings and conflict management in Nigeria. The paper utilizes, the descriptive research method whereby relevant literature, documents, and records were consulted and analyzed based on the existing literature. A content analysis of secondary data was done for the interpretation of the data. This allowed for the evaluation of existing knowledge for the purpose of relevance, consistency, replication and refutation. The paper argues that the role of the new media in peace building in Nigeria like most other conflict prone society is culpable of stoking conflicts and making reconciliation difficult for conflict parties. The paper concludes that the new media therefore must develop the capacity to help in the reduction of violence in the society

Keywords

Introduction

Social media is a group of online communication channels that are devoted to community-based inputs including microblogging, social networking, wikis, content sharing, social bookmarking, and social curetting. The word "social media" is a broad category of interactive websites and applications that let users generate and share ideas and material with other members of an online community. Aminu (2024) observed that 56 per cent of people worldwide are online and 45 per cent use social media, a percentage that is projected to rise over the next 20 years. Because social media has made everyone a potential online content creator, user, and target, it has significantly altered the function of traditional media. Social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter to mention a few can be utilized to maintain peace, if properly used. Social media has grown in importance as a mobilizing tool in recent years because it fosters political change, social movement, and discussion. It offers fresh resources to promote communication, gather information, and analyze conflicts.

These days, social media has spread and grown in popularity throughout the majority of industrialized nations in the West and throughout the world. Studies by Yar'Adua et al. (2023) have shown that social media use is widespread in the developed world due to people's growing engagement and creation of online content. Due to the convergence of social change and technology advancement, social media has grown in popularity. This has given users many chances to generate content, forge groups, settle disputes, and bring about peace in their local communities. However, social media use is increasing very slowly in developing nations like Nigeria since many individuals use it incorrectly to spread information that might empower people and cause violence and conflict.

Without new media technologies, modern societies would not have been possible to envision. This is true because new media technologies enable us to connect with each other in ways that were previously unthinkable. For example, in the nineteenth century, it could take weeks or even months for a message to get from the east to the west, north, and south. It may be communicated in less than an hour at the start of the twenty-first century. However, information may now be sent in a matter of seconds. People may now connect and receive information anywhere in the world, regardless of their location, thanks to the internet, which has overcome one of the biggest informational obstacles provided by distance (Sabiu & Aondover, 2023a). The well-known media critic and communication expert Marshall McLuhan foresaw this when he predicted that social media will detribalize people by turning society into a "global village."

The use of new media has grown to be integral to our daily lives. People can bank, shop, interact, and have fun with it. For example, the Internet's worldwide network uses computers to link people and information. In this sense, the Internet bridges the gap between individuals from different countries by serving as a New Media communication medium and enabling the interchange of ideas and knowledge (Mojaye & Aondover, 2022). Even in the context of the Internet, there are many ways to accomplish this, such as voice-over-internet telecommunications, email messaging, chat rooms, instant messaging apps, forums, and online video and audio streaming and downloads. The integration of cultures (people, habits, mores) through education appears to be an optimistic and long-lasting endeavour for conflict resolution in a community with ongoing religious, ethnic, or communal strife (Hassan et al. 2024). Among the media's main goals are raising awareness and educating people. Because of this, it is impossible to study conflict theory without taking into account the role that social media plays in the modern world, since it can either escalate hostilities or promote peace.

Peace and Conflict Resolution in the Era of New Media

The goal of the multidisciplinary discipline of peace and conflict resolution studies is to successfully resolve conflicts for all parties involved while also assessing, preventing, de-escalating, and offering solutions to conflict and violence through peaceful means (Owolabi & Hassan, 2023). The Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria has claimed the lives of over 20,000 people, primarily in the northeast. Kidnapping, terrorism, political thuggery, and armed robbery would worsen if evident cases of exploitation, religious dominance, political power struggles, corruption, and inequality were not addressed seriously. Peace is opposed by anarchy, instability, violence, conflict, etc. Peace and conflict resolution (PCR) advocates that people, religious communities, pursue peace by all means with every sense of responsibility in this era of current wave of violence in the world and in Nigeria.

Absolute peace does not exist in any culture; yet, peace continues to be a significant factor that all societal segments are concerned with. Nigerians must adhere to social media guidelines and fortify the foundation of PCR in Nigeria in order to solve some of the country's security issues and significantly lessen the conflict and violence that have paralyzed us (Maikaba & Msughter, 2019) People can learn more about peace building, peace advocacy, conflict management, and peace and security using social media platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp. This will enable them to be better prepared to settle conflicts and foster peace in their local communities. Yar'Adua and Aondover (2020) see peace as a process involving actions that are connected, either directly or indirectly, to promoting development and decreasing conflict, both inside particular civilizations and in the larger global community.

In a similar spirit, Sabiu and Aondover (2023b) described peace as the absence of conflict, violence, suffering, fear, and anxiety. A community in which members coexist in harmony is said to be in a state of peace. According to Galtung's (2011) concept, there are two different kinds of peace: positive peace and negative peace. Positive peace is the absence of indirect and structural injustice, inequality, and violence, inner peace at the individual level, policies, and unjust structures. Negative peace is the absence of direct conflict violence, and war at the international, national, community, and individual levels.

According to Abbas (2018), conflict is a hindrance to advancement, economic prosperity, and political stability as well as the general socioeconomic development of any society. Therefore, it's important to manage conflict well to prevent it from turning into war. Religious, ethnic, economic, and political conflicts are among the several categories into which conflict might fall. According to Galtung (2011), a number of deeply ingrained structural dysfunctions, including those related to chronic corruption, inflation, unemployment, poverty, and overpopulation, contribute to the phenomena of conflict in human communities. Galtung contends that conflicts inevitably arise in human relationships when prejudice, both political and economic, and intolerance are ingrained. In this study, conflict is the intensification of disagreement resulting from a conflict of interest.

The process of resolving conflict through a variety of techniques is known as conflict resolution. Its goals are to end conflict, address its underlying causes, put an end to hostile and violent conduct, and alter the conflict's structure. Among the methods of resolving conflicts are negotiation, which is a conversation between two or more people with the aim of coming to an agreement; mediation, which is facilitated by an impartial third party; and arbitration, which is typically utilized in labor/management and business disputes and involves a third party impartial who evaluates the case, hears from both parties, and makes a settlement decision. Social media

can be used as a platform for all of these strategies. Other strategies include community conferences, collaborative legislation, negotiated rule formulation, and youth peer mediation.

The majority of technologies referred to as "new media" are digital, and they frequently possess manipulable, networkable, dense, compressible, and interactive features. The internet, webpages, computer multimedia, computer games, CD-ROMS, and DVDs are a few examples. Television shows, feature films, periodicals, books, and paper-based publications are not considered new media unless they have digital interactivity-enabling technologies. Interactive communication over the internet, such as podcasts, RSS feeds, social networks, text messaging, blogs, wikis, virtual worlds, and more, is referred to as new media. With relatively basic tools that are frequently free or inexpensive, anyone may produce, alter, and share information with others through new media. A computer or mobile device with Internet connectivity is necessary for new media.

The term "new media" refers to a diverse range of communication technologies that, in addition to being novel and made feasible by digitization, have some characteristics in common. They are also readily accessible for use as personal communication devices. The creation and dissemination of messages are not the only, or even the primary, concerns of new media; processing, interchange, and storage are also key concerns. The new media are either not regulated or constitute an institution of both public and private communication. Unlike the major media, their operations are usually not as professionally or bureaucratically organized. These minor but noteworthy distinctions highlight how the new media are similar to the mainstream media in that they are both widely disseminated, theoretically open to everyone for contact, and, at the very least, unrestricted.

According to McQuail in Umaru and Wilson (2023) the key characteristics that set new media apart from "old" media are their interconnectedness, accessibility to individual users as senders or recipients, interactivity, open-ended nature and multiplicity of use, ubiquity, and "delocatedness." Stated differently, McQuail is arguing that new media are everywhere and are accessible to everyone, wherever they are. The various components of the mass communication process that are carried out through traditional mass media channels have been redefined by new media, particularly the internet. This is on top of their function in facilitating direct connection between a sender and a recipient through new media.

With a more dynamic sender-receiver interaction in a mass communication context, web-facilitated communication channels have completely altered journalistic information sharing and distribution. This is explicitly referred to as "new media." The term refers to media that is exclusively available online, that is, media that does not have a traditional or conventional counterpart. According to Msughter (2017), new media includes the newest types of digital mass communication that compete with radio, television, and newspapers. Examples of these include text-based blogs, wikis, and podcasts. The new media are avenues for mass communication that allow specific audiences to interact directly with message senders. According to Neuman (quoted in Levesque & Onguny, 2023), the following is how the new media is starting to affect communication: We are seeing the emergence of a global, interconnected web of text, audio, and video communications that will make it difficult to distinguish between public and private and interpersonal and mass communication.

However, social media like Skype, Linked-in, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube, blogs, Google, and other internet-based media are becoming more popular media for information dissemination especially in conflict situations around the world (Aminu, 2024). Journals, magazines, newspapers, televisions, radios, and other media have all received

recognition for their role in disseminating information. Among the social media platforms used worldwide is Facebook. In 2004, Mark Zuckerberg, a Harvard undergraduate, founded it. When Twitter first began in 2006, there were more than 300 million users by 2011. Users of this online social networking and microblogging service can communicate with one other by exchanging messages, videos, and images with no more than 140 characters. In 2005, Steve Chen and Chad Hurley started YouTube. It offers a venue for the sharing of video material.

Social media, which frequently has a significantly wider audience and costs less than traditional media, is having a growing impact on how people throughout the world obtain information. People may contribute information just as easily as they can absorb it because to two-way technologies like mobile phones and the internet. Youth have ample opportunity to communicate and socialize with people worldwide through social media in a smooth, rapid, limitless, and borderless manner. Internal disputes become globalized thanks to social media. Because contemporary electronic media is so widely available, people all over the world can instantly learn about the causes and effects of conflicts. At the communication level, social media is being used to reduce the causes of violence. It is a crucial instrument for developing interethnic discussion, regulating international elections, preventing gang violence, preventing protest violence, and resolving resource issues, among other effective violence reduction programs.

Social media is being used, particularly by youth, to bridge adversarial differences and promote interethnic conversation. Using a variety of social media channels, voting is actively monitored for everything from violence to fraud in an effort to break the cycle of conflicts. Additionally, transitional countries like Egypt are using social media to incorporate public participation into the constitution-writing process. Independent blogging and social networking platforms are simple to use; even someone with little experience with computers can use them. Even a smartphone can be used to generate and retrieve content, and it may be combined with ease. YouTube videos can be incorporated into blogs, Facebook pages, Instagram accounts, WhatsApp chat rooms, and Twitter accounts (Onyejelem et al., 2023). Facebook users can see a post from Twitter. Social media makes it simple and affordable to reach a huge number of people with a range of services. Violent disputes can be resolved with the help of social media. This can be achieved by using the networks to link the public with the government and security agencies, counteract rumors that threaten stability, and distribute messages that promote peace.

Social Media as Alternative Public Sphere

The public sphere theory forms the framework for this study. Created in the 18th century by Hauser in 1988, the public sphere is a discursive space where people could interchange their opinions so as to create a common, mutual judgment. In his seminal work, The Structural Transformation of Public Sphere, German sociologist and critical theorist, Jurgen Habermas viewed public sphere as various avenues where citizens can freely express, participate, communicate and share their understanding, ideas and information that involve political, social issues and other diverse things that affect their social coexistence; peace and conflicts inclusive (Onyejelem, 2018).

Ideally, these platforms comprise but are not limited to, clubs, coffee joints and saloon joints, assemblies and hangouts. In Nigeria, motor parks, viewing centres, tea joints, and market places could be instances of possible public spheres. Jegbefume and Ibrahim (2022) referred to such platforms as "open, inclusive, dialogic arena of rational-critical discourse untrammeled by either the state or the private sector and that acts as a check on state power." Nevertheless, with the advancement in information and communication technology, the character of Habermas'

public sphere theory has been advanced and transformed from an easily physical, locational stage to a more sophisticated, cyber-based but complicated communication space.

This is a space where concerned members of the social organisation gather (not physically) to exchange opinions regarding public affairs and deliberate sometimes in a critical and analytical manner. In other words, technology has created an alternative media for the expansion of public sphere. In a similar manner, Bello (2022) writes that the critical nature of the public sphere is endangered by the power of the traditional, mainstream mass media that transform most of the society into a passive public, the objectives of a consumer culture.

It is interesting to note, however, that the possibility of reaching larger numbers of persons allow internet users to create ties that would have been difficult to maintain, and these ties create 'networks'. Castells in Uzuegbunam and Omenugha (2018) recognises the importance of networks, affirming that power does not reside in institutions, but is rather located in the networks that structure society. To have control, networks need to be created that counteract other networks, making it a question of "networks vs. networks". It, therefore, suffices to note that for the new social media to thrive in Nigeria, the old networks characterised by the mainstream media, have to be challenged (Gambo et al, 2021).

In making a case for the use of the social media as a tool for engendering peacebuilding in Nigeria, two principles of the public sphere should be critically considered. Firstly, it is independent of government and corporate control or interference. It is a platform that is free and devoid of restrictions that hinder freedom of expression. Secondly, the discourse in the public sphere could be amiable, critical and rational. Thus, participants in this platform avoid sentimental and coloured responses to issues as may be seen in the mainstream media because of its many gatekeepers and ownership policies. This gives participants the opportunity to question some of their personal assumptions that may not be in conformity with rational discourse. The absence of dogmatism is ensured, and the sphere is to some extent, inclusive and equal.

Opportunities for Using New Media to Resolve Conflict and Promote Peace

With ownership pressures and neoliberal inclinations weighing them down, the mainstream media may not be able to make much of an impact on settling disputes and fostering peace in Nigeria. On the basis of this presumption, people are drawn to social media and the Internet as new forms of media. Without a doubt, the Internet has remained the most revolutionary development in the field of communication, altering not only how we communicate but also how we acquire and disseminate information and how traditional mass media interact with their viewers. With this empowerment, the user can now make as well as consume information and communication content, leading to the emergence of terminology like "prosumer," "co-creator," and "produser." Within this framework, the Internet is viewed as a new public domain for the progressively diverse, fractured, and segmented audiences of new media (Onyejelem, 2020).

Social media networks (SMNs) are defined for this study as online resources and tools that facilitate participation, cooperation, and online information exchange (Uzuegbunam & Omenugha, 2018). Furthermore, social media tools are websites—the most well-known of which are Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and blogs—that engage users while providing them with information. According to a January 2017 analysis by the Global Web Index, which examines the use and penetration of the Internet, social media, and mobile devices across various nations, Nigeria has a population of 189 million, but only 51% of them have access to the Internet (97.2 million). There were 18 million active social media users, while 157.7 million more people, or 83% of the population, had mobile subscriptions. Sixty-seven percent of people also owned and

used smartphones. In Nigeria, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram continue to be the most popular social media platforms, in that order.

According to Uzuegbunam and Omenugha (2018) the number of people subscribing to mobile internet services has increased dramatically in Nigeria due to the spread of mobile telecoms services. In addition to well-known sites like Facebook and Twitter, locally produced social media sites like blogs, NAIJA.com, Online Nigeria, Naira Land, All Africa, and YNaija.com have democratized the exchange and dissemination of information. Consequently, this is forming knowledgeable "social-intelligence literacy." These startling and increasing figures make it unsurprising that some Nigerians who previously could not afford to be connected due to social or demographic reasons can now easily obtain Internet access. These days, the majority of telecom service providers provide Internet connectivity in their standard service packages (Onyejelem & Aondover, 2024).

Modern mobile and social media technologies show how interactive communication is equally, if not more, crucial to activities aimed at promoting peace. According to a widely used formula, you cannot shoot while you are speaking. Best in Aminu (2024) summarizes the function of social and mobile media in promoting peace in this way:

> Mobile phones are quickly emerging as essential technology for facilitating this discourse on fostering peace. There are five mobile phone operators in Somalia, which frequently ranks first among failed states worldwide. Cybercafés, mobile devices, and other access points notwithstanding, social media platforms and techniques for keeping an eye on them are also developing as critical technology for promoting peace. Political advances and democratic reforms that pave the way for wider participatory governance are essential to establishing and maintaining peace. These developments, up to and including elections, can be supported by social media (p. 527).

Nigerian social spaces are becoming more open through social media. The government- and privately-owned mass media's monopoly on the creation, distribution, and consumption of information is now being disrupted by the new equalizer. As a result, we are seeing a rise in the number of bloggers, social commenters, digital activists, and social critics—all of whom are uncovering latent journalistic abilities. These people belong to a new generation of social activists who have taken advantage of new media technologies and are using them to spread the word, mobilize people, build networks, exchange ideas, critique, and let out their frustrations in order to discursively establish a new agenda for peace and conflict resolution in Nigeria. Once anyone may create an account on a social media platform, those who were previously voiceless could now have a voice; these voices can be multiple and possible.

Social media's ability to facilitate social mobilization, sensitization, and awareness building has given rise to a new generation of information democracy. According to Downing cited in Olorunnisola and Martin (2013), when evaluating the impact of new media technologies, some features include the capacity of people living in the diaspora to forge new social and political connections, the ability of marginalized groups to strategically use new media to influence mainstream media coverage of their causes, and the facilitation of open citizen-created journalism..

According to Soriano and Sreekumar (2012), the social media's diverse and composite features allow them to question national boundaries and limits, challenge traditional barriers and censorship, and change the quality of debate between individuals, minority nationalities, states, and international communities. Thus, social media provides a platform for marginalized and minority groups to create a forum and express themselves on sites like Facebook and Twitter.

According to Sabiu and Aondover (2023a) Facebook is currently accessible in more than 70 languages, including Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo, the local languages of Nigeria. On Twitter, hash tags are used to promote social events, share events, and join trending topics and conversations. This is undoubtedly one of the social networking sites' advantages.

Once more, YouTube serves as an example of a social network that might be effectively used to spread developmental messages because more and more Nigerians are using it to watch educational videos and a variety of entertainment content. Change agents, social workers, concerned citizens, activists, and social media users can share and disseminate videos, films, and documentaries that advance the nation's goals for peace and development by utilizing YouTube and other internet platforms' visual aesthetics. It is noteworthy, therefore, that those who spread hate speech and violence also use the Internet to communicate with governments and the general public (Onyejelem & Aondover, 2024). An unknown German professor is quoted by Uzuegbunam (2017) as saying that "[man] must always have an organ with which to express himself." If he is not allowed to use a pen and paper, he extends his arm and writes with a sword on men's bodies rather than paper.

It's also important to remember that social media can be utilized to produce breaking, first-hand accounts of crisis situations from around the nation that the traditional media may not be prepared or able to cover for various reasons. When citizen journalists are trusted to provide a first-hand news report of events, some inaccurate and unverified news reports from some sectional sectors that occasionally present exaggerated and unnecessary depictions of crises and conflicts should be avoided. Social media offers the benefit of wide distribution and vast space. Social media only functions in the virtual world, which is distinguished primarily by its size and capacity to exist everywhere at once. This overwhelmingly positive quality could be used to further national peace. The availability of traditional media no longer limits citizens since social media dissolves geographical barriers. Because of the decline in physical and financial barriers to political engagement, as well as the ability to reach a wider range of citizens, new (social) media have been cited with having this ability. This spatial capacity could be used to transport and disseminate developmental signals in a variety of localized and divided environments.

Social media can play a discursive function to a great extent. Twitter has become a focal point for provocative discourse and prioritizing vital problems among Nigeria's political and corporate elites. Facebook and other social media platforms take great satisfaction in offering engaging experiences to its users. The Twittersphere has developed into a forum for online audiences, including regular people, to interact and discuss current events that impact them. Social media hashtag politics promote greater online involvement and connection. Alternatives may take the place of harmful or dubious government policies and hate speech, which are criticized, contested, and denounced. According to Watson and Hagen (2015), social media has the power to influence relationships between citizens and crisis response organizations, which can significantly improve cooperation and group action. The foundation of these kinds of partnerships must be mutual trust and shared interests.

Social media can provide citizens who might not be able to speak truth to power with a platform and chance by serving as a breeding ground for subversive protest communication. According to Fahmi in Muhammad et al. (2024) new ICTs have "shifted their [activists'] campaigns and resources to alternative virtual venues" and "created new geographies of protest" (p.90). Online networks allow activists to mobilize and plan actions, as seen by the Occupy movements, on a local and international scale. Online platforms make it possible to create virtual venues where people can join in debates and protests, which helps to counteract the challenge of

traveling great distances to participate in social movement activities. Gbadeyan et al. (2024) claim that because social movements on the Internet are decentralized and lack hierarchies, they are able to elude surveillance and control. The study examines how Egyptians who took part in the 2006 Tahrir Square protests used modern ICTs. Similarly, Wilson (2009) concurs that social media has the power to bypass conventional top-down political hierarchies and reach international audiences, which has enhanced dissidents' ability to articulate their movements and galvanize support from the local and diaspora communities.

According to Emovwodo et al. (2024) tweets from self-described members of the Boko Haram sect that posted on the group's Twitter website are among the responses that people who commented on and tweeted about some crises occurrences in Nigeria. Their findings demonstrate how people can use social media, an inclusive and alternative platform, to express themselves and share their opinions about important events. While some people and organizations convey their feelings as assaulted victims, other tweeters and commenters share their opinions on possible ways to put an end to the protests. These results show how allowing individuals to air their grievances online could prevent or slow the escalation of hostilities and war.

Emovwodo et al. (2024) investigated how service delivery protests were covered in the print media in South Africa using a quantitative content analysis. Protests against government failure to provide basic social services, known as "service delivery protests," were instigated by residents and are perceived as an expression of a broader sense of disappointment with the post-apartheid democracy. They discovered that the neighborhood demonstrations are an example of bottom-up resistance, bringing up concerns about the politics of inclusion and exclusion. This is influenced by how the protests are covered by the media and how these organizations are given a voice in the mainstream media; for example, when the media primarily reports on violent protests or portrays protests as minor traffic annoyances. According to their results, the print media primarily mutes the voices of marginalized individuals, and language expressing emotion and activism is frequently disregarded as acceptable political discourse.

Challenges of Social Media and Conflict Resolution in Nigeria

This new relationship with technology, like many things, has its potential for abuse and does seem to be as seductive as a bottle of wine. Online communities are rapidly losing their etiquette and restraint. Liberty and outspoken culture are now synonymous with permission to offend and denigrate in a shameless new media system. As demonstrated by a recent social media incident in Nigeria, where a top official of the National Security and Civil Defense Corps was relieved of his duties due to an interview clip that Channels TV released online and garnered a lot of backlash, demonization, and abuse from users, people could also easily mistake the tendency to defame and slander for courage.

One of the social media activities that encourages mockery, character assassination, and aggressive language is the growing blog culture. Additionally, the writing style suggests a preference for sensationalism and provocation, which seems to be well-received by Internet users. If the social blogger is seen as such a champion of nationalism, does this mean that their style, language choice, and behavior are acceptable given their disenchantment with the political class, their depressing strain from the country's failures and dysfunctions, and their outrage at the flagrant misappropriation of national wealth? A social blogger's devotion to nationalism does not release them from the need to behave responsibly.

Bello (2022) claims that interethnic and interreligious conflicts and crises have arisen in the northern region of the nation as a result of ethnic and religious attitudes being expressed in the new (social) media. For example, the insurgents of Boko Haram have been able to upload

graphic images and videos of the group's activities on social media, including bombings, killings, and threats. When social media is utilized in this way, it fosters a culture of violence and retaliation, which unintentionally descends into chaos throughout the nation. Wilson (2009) also asserts that conflict can be inadvertently sparked, escalated, and intensified by new (social) media, as well as result in political violence.

Social media platforms have the potential to disseminate unfavorable remarks, conjecture, false information, partial truths, and rumors with little to no opportunity for verification. In certain situations, citizens may even put themselves or others in danger of bodily or social harm (Owens-Ibie, 2016). The menace of internet vigilantism is comparable. Watson and Hagen (2015, pp. 147–148) write about this phenomenon and describe conflict situations where people engage with one another in social media group settings and discuss and share visual evidence from those situations, such as pictures and videos. As a result, some people take it upon themselves to try and find the people who are responsible for the attacks. The authors (ibid) contend that in certain situations, such uncontrolled crowd sourcing behavior may put innocent people at risk of being wrongly identified and singled out, resulting in bodily harm, psychological pain, and social humiliation.

Nigeria has the issue of the "digital divide," or uneven access to digital resources and technologies, much like any other developing nation. In response to this issue, Odu in Musa (2015) writes:

Nigerian internet access is still not entirely "democratic or equitable" due to blatant regional disparities in its distribution. For the time being, social media is solely giving educated urban residents more voice in their demands for more political space and influence. Nigerian rural residents' voices are still weak and underrepresented in this development. Finding methods to interact with the underprivileged more and give them a larger portion of the benefits of this new information democracy and freedom would be a desirable development for the affluent elite. However, this is possible if the underprivileged have access to and availability of public sphere instruments (p. 531).

Additionally, there's a chance that social media will be widely used and celebrated for its ability to foster what Omenugha (2018) terms "slacktivist" and "clicktivist" attitudes. Morozov claims that this is feel-good online activism with no real political or social consequence, defined by pointing, clicking, posting, liking, and befriending people on social media without making an equivalent effort to mobilize people offline.

Conclusion

This research has included the traditional media, particularly as it is thought that they are "naturally attracted" to conflicts, albeit in an unsavory way. On the one hand, conflict seems to be the mainstay of journalism because it sells, as multiple studies have proved. However, our study has demonstrated that, for all of its advantages, social media may be a powerful tool in Nigeria for promoting peacekeeping and resolving disputes brought about by national divisions. Before this can occur, though, appropriate and peaceful social media activity needs to be promoted and pushed upon. In this regard, employing digital media tools for peace teaching is essential. The use of digital media technology may help make peace education more effective. As a preventive strategy, Nigerian policymakers should think about allocating sufficient attention to peace education and launching initiatives to promote peace via new digital media.

Raising awareness is a crucial component of peace education, and to do this, the conventional media must interject itself as well. This awareness must be focused on the undeniable influence of social media and how user-generated content has the potential to either

incite conflict or foster peace. It doesn't seem like the traditional media is producing this kind of conscious awareness right now. It is indisputable that audiences of new media need to possess certain literacies, such media literacy and digital literacy, in order to live and work in societies that are rich in information and media. If this isn't done, the new media's enormous potentials—among them those necessary for promoting peace and resolving conflicts—may go mostly unrealized.

Ultimately, the goal of this study is not to disparage one media system while praising the other, but rather to show that both have advantages and disadvantages when it comes to promoting peace and resolving conflicts, particularly in a country like Nigeria. It was also intended to start a discussion about the ambiguities surrounding the much-discussed use of new media in conflict resolution and peacebuilding in place of traditional media. Given that there doesn't seem to be a perfect balance between traditional and modern media, the discussion on the role of the media in resolving conflicts may, in fact, stay unresolved for some time to come. Since the world of new media is always shifting, it is getting harder to stay upbeat and excited about its enormous potential without also considering all of the potential drawbacks. Therefore, some complementarity is needed to create a synergistic cross-over between new and old media in order to accomplish this vital objective.

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