EVALUATION OF USAGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS FOR INFORMATION SHARING AMONG YOUTHS IN ORIIRE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, OYO STATE.

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Abstract

Accurate and timely information is a requisite for livelihood advancement. Social media platforms have become indispensable tools through which people exchange real-time information and ideas. Social media platforms avail youths opportunities to have access to information to improve their livelihood. This study evaluated the usage of social media platforms for sharing of information among youths in Oriire Local Government Area, Oyo State. The study described the socio-economic characteristics of the Respondents, identified social media platforms accessed by the Respondents, identified types of information shared through various social media platforms, elucidated factors that influence the choice of social media platforms used by the Respondents and assessed severity of challenges encountered by youths in usage of social media platforms.

A multistage sampling technique was employed to select 85 Respondents across the study area. Youths were randomly selected from the most active social media platforms which include; Facebook, WhatsApp and others based on the high level of usage. Data collected through well-structured interview schedule were analysed using descriptive statistics (frequency counts, Weighted Mean Score (WMS)) and inferential (Chi-Square) statistical tools were used to test the hypothesis.

Result revealed majority (51.8%) of the respondents were male. Adequately educated (70.6%) having tertiary education. The study revealed that religion ($x2 = 38.224$, $p = 0.000$), marital status ($x2 = 83.988$, $p = 0.000$), education ($x2 = 62.424$, $p = 0.000$), occupation ($x2 = 38.341$, $p = 0.000$), years of experience on livelihood activities ($x2 = 15.553$, $p = 0.000$), membership of association ($x2 = 35.588$, $p = 0.000$) have significant relationship with the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents which implies that they have significant effect on the choice of social media platforms used by the Respondents.

The findings established that majority of youths have a positive attitude towards usage of social media platforms in sharing information in spite of the challenge of poor power supply. It is therefore recommended that alternative cheap power sources such as the use of battery cells and power bank to charge mobile phones should be promoted among the youths.

Keywords: *Social media platforms, Information Sharing, Livelihood, Rural Youth, Evaluation*

Introduction

Recently, information has become the most indispensable requisite for development and livelihood options. Socio-technology development has evolved a wide range of channels for information sharing. Social media platforms are popular among younger generations (Duggan and Brenner 2013). With social media becoming increasingly popular media of information dissemination, a number of studies have been conducted to examine college students' social media usage for socialization or marketing purposes (Yang and Brown 2013). The main purpose of social media is sharing real time information, creating awareness, and provision of job opportunities for the youths.

Social media is an ever evolving field, with new apps such as TikTok and Clubhouse coming out seemingly every year, joining the ranks of established social networks like Facebook, Youtube, Twitter, and Instagram. Social media may take the form of a variety of tech-enabled activities. These activities include photo sharing, blogging, live streaming, social gaming, social networks, video sharing, business networks, virtual worlds, reviews, and much more. Social media helps in promoting products and services, as it enables the distribution of targeted, timely, and exclusive sales. Using social media platforms for youth engagement can help organization reach young people where they can be found online through search engines, communicate with young people in familiar settings and make ideas and opportunities accessible to other youth (Guanah, Egbra, Omedomero, Akumabor 2017). Mass media and Agricultural Extension Agents are major sources of information in the rural areas. However, proliferation of mobile network services has brought real-time information to rural dwellers through social media platforms. Consequent upon dearth of information between research centres and the rural dwellers due to the shortage of personnel in extension service system, poor infrastructural facilities and logistics whereby information could be conveyed to all the people that are residing in the rural area the evolution of social media platforms bridges the information gap. The social media platform an opportunity for connection with real time information and spontaneous feedback.

Social media platform avail youths many opportunities to have access to information to improve rural life. Accessing information through social media platform empower youths with more capacity to succeed and more livelihood options and consequently a better standard of living. And possibly by extension enhance and open their eyes and mind to the fact that social media platform could actually link them to the outside world where they can get better links to improve their standard of living. Arising from the above, this study intends to:

i.   describe the socio-economic characteristics of Respondent in the study area.
ii. identify the social media platforms that are available for usage in the study area.
iii. identify the types of information shared through various social media platforms by the Respondents
iv. elucidate the factors that influence usage of social media platforms used by the Respondents.
v.   assess the severity of challenges encountered by the youths in usage of social media platform.

Hypothesis of the Study

To achieve the objectives stated above, the hypothesis of the study is stated in a null form as;

Ho: There is no significant relationship between the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents and the factors that influence usage of social media platforms used by the respondents.

Methodology

A multistage sampling procedure was employed for the purpose of selection of Respondents for this study. The first stage was a purposive selection of 30% of the Agricultral Developmnet Program (ADP) cells in the ADP Block based on the availability of mobile network service. The cells include; Oriire I (Ikoyi, Aipo, Saamo, Iluju), Oriire II (Tewure, Oniyo, Eleruwa, Kedo), Oriire IV (Adafila, Kajola, Baba agba, Alawodi).

The second stage was a random selection of 10% of active Users of various identified social media platforms within the study area which include; Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and others based on the high level of Users.

Table 1:   Selection of Respondents Based on the Level of Users

Social Media	Identified Active Users	Percentage (10%) Selected
Platforms		
Facebook	**200**	**20**
WhatsApp	**150**	**15**
Instagram	**100**	**10**
YouTube	**100**	**10**
Twitter	**50**	**5**
Others	**250**	**15**
Total	**850**	**85**

By this, a total number of 85 Respondents were selected for this study.

Discussion of Results

Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Respondents
The study revealed a youthful Respondents category who are mostly enthusiastic Users of different social media platforms for social networking, information sharing and livelihood related contacts with the mean age of the respondents being 28years and male being 51.8 percent. Level of educational attainment is a factor of extent of usage of social media platform and the study revealed that 77.7percent of the Respondents are educated at least up to secondary school which give them some leverage on usage of gadgets. A reasonable size of the Respondents are either into Trading (42.2%) or Artisanship (41.2%). The study also revealed that 84.2percent of the Respondents belong to one association or the other, this enhances their propensity for usage of social media platform as groups interact and network through social media platforms.

Table 2: Distribution of the Respondents by Socio-Economic Characteristics.

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	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean
Age (years)			
11-20	14	16.5	28 Years
21-30	45	53.0	
31-40	26	30.5	
Gender			
Male	44	51.8	
Female	41	48.2	
Religion			
Christianity	71	83.5	
Islam	14	16.5	
Traditional	0	0	
Level of education			
No formal education	0	0	
Primary	19	22.3	
Secondary	35	41.2	
Tertiary	31	36.5	
Marital status			
Single	33	38.8	
Married	50	60.0	
Widowed	1	1.2	
Household size			
1-5	72	84.8	4 members
6-10	13	15.2	
Occupation			
None	6	7.1	
Clergy	0	0	
Trading	36	42.4	
Artisans	35	41.2	
Farming	8	9.4	
Years of experience on livelihood activities			
0-5	41	48.2	2 year
6-10	32	37.6	
11 and above	12	14.1	
Membership			
of association			
No	15	17.6	
Yes	70	82.4	
Category of association			
Religious	50	58.8	
Trade group	19	22.4	
Peer group	5	5.9	
Social group	11	12.9	
Belongingness to social group			
No	19	22.4	
Yes	66	77.6	
Total	85	100	

Source: Field Survey 2023

Social Media Platforms Available for Usage by Respondents
The study further revealed the extent of usage of various available social media platforms by the Respondents. Results showed that Facebook (97.6%), WhatsApp (92.9) and Youtube (74.1%) were the most used social media platforms respectively while LinkedIn (16.5%), Skype (12.9%), Eskimi (11.8%) are the least used social medial platforms among the Respondents. The most used platforms are mostly for social networking, information sharing and content creation meanwhile the least used social media platforms are mostly for professional and technical activities.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Social Media Platforms Available for Usage

S/N	Social Media Platforms Usage	Yes	No
	Facebook	83(97.6)	2(2.4)
	WhatsApp	79(92.9)	6(7.1)
	Twitter	46(54.1)	39(45.9)
	Instagram	59(69.4)	26(30.6)
	Telegram	31(36.5)	54(63.5)
	YouTube	63(74.1)	22(25.9)
	LinkedIn	14(16.5)	71(83.5)
	TikTok	24(28.2)	61(71.8)
	Google Plus	39(45.9)	46(54.1)
	Skype	11(12.9)	74(87.1)
	Snapchat	30(35.3)	55(64.7)
	WeChat	14(16.5)	71(83.5)
	Blogs	17(20.0)	68(80.0)
	Yahoo	15(17.6)	70(82.4)
	Eskimi	10(11.8)	75(88.2)

Types of information shared through various social media platforms

The study further considered various types of information shared through different social media platforms among the Respondents. The study revealed that of all the social media platforms Facebook and WhatsApp are mostly used in the study area. Facebook was mostly used for collaborative learning (80.0%), mental health and wellbeing (69.4%), emergency cases (63.5%), information on access to labour (47.1%), general security on investment (64.7%), learning of new skills (64.7%), information on livelihood opportunities (60.0%), entertainment and leisure (84.7%).

Meanwhile, WhatsApp was mostly used for sharing information on access to capital (63.5%), confirmation of delivery of goods and services (62.4%), information on activities or developments within the immediate environment (55.3%), arrangement of logistics (36.5%), arrangement of business meeting (51.8%), advertisement of products and services (68.3%), information on livelihood opportunities (60.0%), entertainment and leisure (82.4%).

	Types of information	Available Social Media Platforms								
		Facebook	WhatsApp	Twitter	Instagram	Telegram	YouTube	LinkedIn	TikTok	Google plus
1	Collaborative learning	68(80.0)	66(77.6)	2(2.4)	19(22.4)	9(10.6)	19(22.4)	1(1.2)	1(1.2)	8(9.4)
2	Mental health and wellbeing	59(69.4)	59(69.4)	9(10.6)	22(25.9)	13(15.3)	24(28.2)	6(7.1)	1(1.2)	13(15.3)
3	Information on access to Capital	42(49.4)	54(63.5)	5(5.90)	12(14.1)	7(8.20)	11(12.9)	-	-	6(7.1)
4	Emergency cases	54(63.5)	46(54.1)	8(9.4)	7(8.2)	15(17.6)	6(7.1)			4(4.7)
5	Information on access to labour	40(47.1)	37(43.5)	4(4.7)	8(9.4)	9(10.6)	8(9.4)	1(1.2)	1(1.2)	3(3.5)
6	Confirmation of delivery of goods and services	37(43.5)	53(62.4)	2(2.4)	15(17.6)	13(15.3)	5(5.9)	-	1(1.2)	2(2.4)
7	Information on activities/ Developments within the immediate environment	45(52.9)	47(55.3)	4(4.7)	13(15.3)	15(17.6)	9(10.6)	-	1(1.2)	8(9.4)
8	General security on investment	55(64.7)	47(55.3)	6(7.1)	6(7.1)	15(17.6)	12(14.1)	-	1(1.2)	6(7.1)
9	Arrangement of logistics	25(29.4)	31(36.5)	6(7.1)	4(4.7)	9(10.6)	5(5.9)	2(2.41)	1(1.2)	4(4.7)
10	Learning of new skills	55(64.7)	50(58.8)	8(9.4)	32(37.6)	21(24.7)	40(47.1)	4(4.7)	9(10.6)	20(23.5)
11	Arrangement of business Meeting	27(31.8)	44(51.8)	3(3.5)	6(7.1)	10(11.8)	)4(4.7)			5(5.9)
12	Advertisement of product and services	51(60.0)	58(68.3)	6(7.1)	20(23.5)	11(12.9)	8(9.4)	1(1.2)	3(3.5)	2(2.4)
13	Information on livelihood Opportunities	51(60.0)	51(60.0)	5(5.9)	12(14.1)	14(16.5)	8(9.4)	1(1.2)	-	7(8.2)
14	Entertainment and leisure	72(84.7)	70(82.4)	23(27.1)	40(47.1)	32(37.6)	42(49.4)	6(7.1)	12(14.1)	26(30.6)

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Extent of Factors Influencing Usage Social Media Platforms

The study identified various factors influencing usage of social media platforms by the Respondents. Regularity of power supply to power mobile phone (wms 2.46) was rated as the most influential factor to usage of mobile phone, level of education (wms 2.26) and youthfulness (wms 2.25) were rated second and third most influential factors. However, quest to enhance productivity (wms 1.13) and nature of livelihood activities (wms 1.13) were rated least factors influencing usage of social media platform by the Respondents. This corroborate Olaniyi et al (2019) who opined that youthfulness enhances innovativeness hence propensity for high usage of social media by the youths

Distribution of Respondents by Extent of Factors Influencing Usage Social Media Platforms

Factors Influencing Usage of Social Media Platforms	Very High Influence	High Influence	Mild Influence	Not an Influence	Weighted Mean	Rank
Regularity of power supply	54(63.5)	21(24.7)	5(5.9)	5(5.9)	2.46	1st
Cost of recharge voucher	24(28.2)	38(44.7)	13(15.3)	8(9.4)	2.11	4th
Information sourcing tendencies of the respondents	24(28.2)	33(38.8)	17(20.0)	11(12.9)	1.82	9th
Belongingness to association	18(21.2)	38(44.7)	13(15.3)	16(18.8)	1.68	12th
Accessibility to social media Platforms	24(28.2)	34(40.0)	10(11.8)	17(20.0)	1.76	10th
Youthfulness	43(50.6)	27(31.8)	8(9.4)	7(8.2)	2.25	3rd
Level of disposable income	20(23.5)	37(43.5)	14(16.5)	14(16.5)	1.74	11th
Level of education	44(51.8)	26(30.6)	8(9.4)	7(8.2)	2.26	2nd
Quest to increase productivity	10(11.8)	22(25.9)	22(25.9)	31(36.5)	1.13	15th
Availability of social media Platforms	20(23.5)	27(31.8)	16(18.8)	22(25.9)	1.53	13th
Nature of livelihood activities	16(18.8)	16(18.8)	18(21.2)	35(41.2)	1.15	14th
Purpose of usage	25(29.4)	39(45.9)	9(10.6)	12(14.1)	1.91	8th
Level of literacy of the Respondents	38(44.7)	24(28.2)	8(9.4)	15(17.6)	2.00	6th
Level of socialization	36(42.4)	29(34.1)	9(10.6)	11(12.9)	2.06	5th

Sources: Field Survey 2023   wms connotes: weighted Mean Score

Level of Severity of Challenges Encountered by the Respondents in the Usage of Social Media Platforms.

The study assessed the level of severity of challenges to usage of social media platform among the Respondents. The study revealed that poor power supply (wms 1.73), cost of access to internet (wms 1.46) and fluctuating network services (wms 1.27) respectively were the most severe challenges to usage of social media platforms among the respondents. Conversely, inability to understand the operations of social media platforms, poor understanding of message content (wms 0.71) and Cyberbullying (wms 0.68) were the least severe challenges encountered by Respondents in the usage of social media platforms for information sharing.

Distribution of Respondents by Level of Severity of Challenges Encountered by the Respondents in the Usage of Social Media Platforms

Challenges	Severe Challenge	Mild Challenge	Not a Challenge	Weighted Mean	Rank
Poor power supply	66(77.6)	15(17.6)	4(4.7)	1.73	1st
Cost of access to internet	45(52.9)	34(40.0)	6(7.1)	1.46	2nd

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Lack of capability to translate Lack of capability to translate	14(16.5)	32(37.6)	39(45.9)	0.71	0.71
Fluctuating Network service	37(43.5	34(40.0)	14(16.5)	1.27	3rd
Language barrier	15(17.6)	32(37.6)	38(44.7)	0.73	9th
Infidelity on social media Information	30(35.3)	41(48.2)	14(16.5)	1.19	4th
Circulation of information With outdated data	32(37.6)	33(38.8)	20(23.5)	1.14	1.14
Inability to understand how to operate social media platforms	17(20.0)	17(20.0)	17(20.0)	17(20.0)	10th
Exposure to social vices	25(29.4)	30(35.3)	30(35.3)	30(35.3)	6th
Cyberbullying	22(25.9)	14(16.5)	49(57.6)	0.68	11th
Cosmopoliteness	16(18.8)	41(48.2)	28(32.9)	0.86	8th
Platforms present	27(31.8)	25(29.4)	33(38.8)	0.93	7th

Sources: Field Survey 2023   wms: Weighted Mean Score

Test of Hypothesis

The null hypothesis for the study stated that there is no significant relationship between the socio-economic characteristics of the Respondents and the factors that influence the choice of social media platforms used by the respondents.

Results revealed a positive and non-significant relationship between Gender ($x^2 = 0.106$; $p \leq 0.745$) and factors that influence usage of social media platforms by the respondents. There is also a positive and significant relationship between religion ($x^2 = 38.224$; $p \leq 0.000$), level of education ($x^2 = 62.424$; $p \leq 0.000$), marital status ($x^2 = 83.988$; $p \leq 0.000$), occupation ($x^2 = 38.341$; $p \leq 0.000$), ($x^2 = 15.553$; $p \leq 0.000$), membership of association ($x^2 = 35.588$; $p \leq 0.000$) and factors that influence the choice of social media platforms used by the respondents. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

This result implies that level of education, occupation, years of experience on livelihood activities and membership of association significantly influence the usage of social media platforms and this may be attributed to the level of exposure they have through their educational background. However, gender has no significant relationship with the factors influencing usage of social media platforms and so the null hypothesis is accepted. This implies that gender has no effect on the factors that influence usage of social media platforms used by the Respondents.

Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted.

HA- The alternative hypothesis therefore stated that there is a significant relationship between the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents and factors that influence usage of social media platforms used by the respondents.

Chi-Square Analysis showing Relationship between Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Respondents and Factors that Influence Usage of Social Media Platforms by the Respondents.

Variable	X^2	P value	DF	Remarks	Decision
Gender	0.106	0.745	1	NS	Accept Ho
Religion	38.224	0.000	1	S	Reject Ho
Level of Education	62.424	0.000	2	S	Reject Ho
Marital Status	83.988	0.000	3	S	Reject Ho
Occupation	38.341	0.000	3	S	Reject Ho
Membership of Association	35.588	0.000	1	S	Reject Ho

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Conclusion

The study evaluated usage of various social media platforms for sharing information among youths in the study and noted that majority of youths have a positive attitude toward the use of social media in sharing information hence, the assumption that social media is largely beneficial as a channel through which real-time information could be conveyed to larger audience. WhatsApp and Facebook were the most used social media platforms among the respondents. Respondents identifies poor power supply as the most severe challenge to access social media platforms.

Chi-square analysis revealed a significant relationship between the socio economic characteristic of the Respondents and factors that influence the choice of social media platforms used by the Respondents.

Recommendations

Arising from the empherical findings of the study, the following recommendation were noted:

The study having identified erratic power supply as the most severe challenge towards usage of social media platforms recommends an alternative cheap power sources such as the use of battery cells and power bank to charge mobile phones to ensure an uninterrupted usage of social media platforms. Also, there should be adequate awareness about usage of social media platforms to bridge the information gap consequent upon shortage of personnel for rural development efforts, poor logistics and dearth of rural infra should be encouraged among youths in order to get a real time information which they can leverage on to better their life.

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