

Analysis of Social Learning Theory on Social Media Life Among Nigerian Youth

Wali, Ngozi Blessing

and

Kanaba, Dafe Richard

Abstract

The paper is on the analysis of social learning theory on social media life among Nigerian youth. Social media have fundamentally changed the way social interaction occurs among Nigerian youth by provide platforms for improving learning in a social context. This study try to analysis the positive and negative influence of the social media life on Nigerian youth, due to the fact that it has also exposed the youth to different varieties of social vices which has negatively questions the essence of social learning theory in character molding. However, it was recommended that the role models such as teachers, parents, pastors, uncles, aunties and society at large should provide a platform that will constantly sensitize the youth on a more effective way on the use of social media.

Keyword: Facebook, WhatsApp, Positive, Negative uses

Introduction

The new technology comes with great mixture of advantages and disadvantage which has caused a great change globally. Every human being has needs which range from basic to higher. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, man, among his basic needs has the need to belong to a group, love and beloved (Amogu, 2018). This made communication a basic human need and for that reason; man has always found a means of meeting this need either through interpersonal or mass communication. Unlike in the past, the people of the world are today living in a global village because of various breakthroughs in information technology. This can be seen as there is a transformation from what technology was in the past, especially with the advent of social media which has brought transformation such as the learning activities. According to Bryer and Zavatarro, social media is "the technologies that facilitate social interaction, make possible collaboration, and enable deliberations across stakeholders" (Ali, Igbal, & Igbal, 2017). Going by this definition, social media includes such tools as electronic blogs, audio/video tools like YouTube, internet and chat rooms, cellular and computer texting, and social networking sites (SNSs). Rosen in his study in 2011 found out that in terms of daily use of all social media collectively, those born between 1965 and 1979 (Generation X) consumes approximately 13 hours of social media per day; those born between 1980 and 1989 (Net Generation) consumes approximately 19 hours of social media per day; and those born between 1990 and 1999 (IGeneration) consumes approximately 20 hours of social media per day. So, the purpose of this

study is to analyze the Albert Bandura's social learning theory on social media life among Nigeria Youth.

Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory propounded by Albert Bandura emphasizes the importance of observing and imitating other people's actions in the learning process and social behaviour. He promoted new perceptions of personality by pointing out the importance of internal processes that can influence development better than the re-enforcement. The practical nature of his theory gave room for the creation of entertainment, education frame work that seek to combine the two processes to influence a person's behaviour in a highly effective way. Bandura paid special attention to aggression in his work which he pointed out that children who often witnessed certain types of behaviour in adults tend to copy them. Bandura (1977) pointed out the "observation learning could not occur except cognitive processes are at work to mediate in the learning process in other to determine weather a new process will be acquired. Therefore, he was of the view that individuals do not automatically observe the behaviour of a model and imitate it, rather there is some thought? prior to imitation and this consideration is called meditational process. That was why he proposed four meditational processes

1. Attention – he believes that the person must first pay attention to the model
2. Retention – the observer must be able to remember the behaviour that has been observed.
3. Reproduction – it is the ability to replicate the behavior that the model has just demonstrated
4. Motivation – his view is that re-enforcement and punishment plays important role in motivation.

Observational model

1. **A live model:** This involves an actual individual demonstrating or acting out a behaviour for example the teacher in the class-room an adult in the church or an uncle and aunty. The observed behaviour can be the way the model talks, walks, speaks, laughs, writes etc.
2. **A verbal instructional model:** It involves descriptions and explanation of a behaviour such as listening to tape recorder accounts of other peoples experiences. People can also learn through radio or television transmission and talks given on social vices like smoking, prostitution, alcohol intake, stealing etc
3. **A symbolic model:** it describes real or fictional characters displaying behavior in books films, television programs or online media Nigerian youths. It describes real or fictional characters displaying behaviour in books, firms, television programs or online media.

Albert Bandura of social learning revolutionised various field of psychology including social cognitive theory and personality. The Arthur belief that, he created a great frame work that can be applied for various episode of a persons life in order to realise the driving factors behind some of the typical behavioural patterns. Even learning the origin of his self efficacy and role models

that influence important choices that can significantly improve a persons life. Unfortunately, the advent of social media in Nigeria and various immoral activities displayed by the youth and imitated by them has to a greater extent promoted the theory in a bad light.

What is social media?

Social media according to Kaplan and Haenlein (2012) are “a group of internet-based application that build on the ideological foundations of Web 2.0. and that allow the creation and exchange of users generated content” Hayes (2015) sees social media as “internet-based tool and persistent channel of mass personal communication facilitating perceptions of interactions among user. To smith (2012), social media are “technology system that facilitate creation and sharing of information ideas, career interest and other form of expression via visual communities. However, the present study sees social media as computer-based technology that facilitate the sharing of ideas, and information via networks. Some social media application:

1. Face book
2. WhatsApp
3. Instagram
4. Twitter
5. Snapchart
6. Google
7. Skipe
8. Messenger
9. Telegram e.t.c

Brief history of Social Media

When we hear of the word ‘social media, we usually relate it to the 20th century, surprisingly the roots of social media date back to the 18th century.

Postal Services - The earliest methods of communicating handwritten messages across long distances were to physically deliver them in the form of postal services which go back to 550BC. This means of communication is considered as the primitive form of the current social media platforms

The invention of the Telegraph – In 1792, a revolutionary invention took place which now allowed messages, news, and information to be delivered faster and cheaper In the late eighteen hundred radio and television were discovered which are still in use today. The beginning of the 20th Century marked the rise of social media platforms at an unprecedented speed. First super computers were created in the 1940s, scientists and engineers began to develop ways to create networks between those computers, and this later leads to the birth of the *Internet*.

The earliest forms of the Internet, such as CompuServe, were developed in the 1960s. Primitive forms of the email were also developed during this time. By the 70s, networking technology had improved, and in 1979's UseNet allowed users to communicate through a virtual newsletter. By the 1980s, home computers were becoming more common, and social media was becoming more sophisticated. Internet relay chats, or IRCs, were first used in 1988 and continued to be popular well into the 1990s. The late nineties saw the rise of blogging and messaging sites which initiated the social media sensation that is still present today. Initially, social media apps were limited to desktops and laptops but soon shifted to mobile phones and tablets as well. Social media rose as high-speed wireless internet became more readily available in homes, businesses, and public spaces. After the invention of blogging, social media began to explode in popularity. Sites like MySpace and LinkedIn gained prominence in the early 2000s, and sites like Photobucket and Flickr facilitated online photo sharing. YouTube came out in 2005, creating an entirely new way for people to communicate and share across great distances. By 2006, Facebook and Twitter both became available to users throughout the world. These sites remain some of the most popular social networks on the Internet. Other sites like Tumblr, Spotify, Foursquare, and Pinterest began popping up to fill specific social networking niches (Deaton, 2015).

Today, 3.96 billion people use social media worldwide. The number of social media apps has increased exponentially and each with its distinct objectives.

Uses of social media

1. Social media allows you to do at least four important things:
2. Discover new ideas and trends like fashion.
3. Connect with existing and new audiences in deeper ways
4. Build, craft and enhance your brand.

For businesses, social media has created a way to send a brand's messaging to the right people at the right time. If your content stands enough to get them interested, it can drive traffic, sales, and even long-term loyalty. Businesses can also receive, review, and respond to customers' grievances faster and easier than ever before.

Analysis of Social Learning Theory on Social Media Life among Youths

Positive use

Social media in Nigeria has strengthened the effectiveness of social learning theory by helping youths, to create and exchange information in one way or the other via technological devices and ensures connections between friends, when they are not able to see each other. Brydolf (2007) points out that "social media help to develop important knowledge and social skills to become an active citizen who share and create content". However, Deaton (2015) conform to the objective of an effective learning environment that seeks to combine the theory and practice in dynamic

ways. Social media keep us up to day with the use of social things going on around our environment and things we are not familiar with. For example, the emergence of blogs make people to get the latest news, such as politics, business and entertainment; etc.

Social learning theory has also influence social media by providing a platform for Nigeria youths to develop skills, like writing, reading acting, calculations e.t.c. Copper (2013) opines that “social media affects not only our lives when we are active on a social media site, but also when we are offline. In recent time, Bandura’s observation learning theory has become so eminent in the academic and social life among students. The platform gave them the voice to express themselves and has also created various opportunity for learning, recruitment processes, business venture, social interaction and information dissimilation. However, Green and Peil (2009) noted that “social learning theory provide a framework for understanding, predicting and changing behaviour”. Williams (2010) posits that self-regulation is considered in social learning theory as when the individual has his own idea about what is appropriate or in appropriate behaviour and chooses actions accordingly.

Negative use social learning theory on social media

1. **Internet fraud:** Now days, some Nigerian youths use social media as a platform for internet fraud. In fact, these group of internet fraudsters are called Yahoo Boys. They are seen as the latest boys in town because they drive big cars, live in expensive houses and wear costly clothes. its negative effects on society have also brought social learning theory by Albert Bandura to question. Nabawi (2012) noted that “social interaction can significantly affect our perception especially in today’s technological advanced society”. Moreover, Part of the disadvantage of social learning theory is that very few people know their strength and weakness which according to this study may have accounted for this unnecessary competition being witnessed among Nigerian youths. Smart phones are personal belonging which can be held anywhere, it has also help in making the youth learn whatever they which to learn at their convenience which has got a lot of youths exposed to pre-mature sex, indecent dressing, pornography, drug addiction etc. Ayaz (2016) opines that “the Bobo Doll experiment by Albert Bandura analysed the behaveiour of children and the result proved that children generally tend to imitate the types of behavior they are expose to and that they are also influence by same sex models. Bandura (1977) posited “that humans are active information processors and can think about the relationship between their behaviour and its consequence”

But today, Nigerian youth are no more worried about the consequences of their behaviour. They are now after what is invoked. They expose pre-marital sex in social media, post nude pictures, save and watch different forms of sexual activities in social media. Networking: Presently, Nigerian youths use social media to promote (419) using networking as a tool to achieve it. Presently, some youths do register online App using different name or organization such as Ponzi schemes (investment scams that pay existing investors with funds collected from new investors), forest trading, etc., with the intention to exploit people of their hard earn money. In

most cases, they give out some account numbers, direct people to pay in money and receive from other with 25 – 50 percent interest on their capital. After a while, when they have accumulated a lot of interest from a particular site with no hope of paying back, they close the site and open a new one. Banjaun and Mared (2020) state that self-efficacy is central in understanding the social learning theory by Bandura as it posits that a child should believe in his/her ability to perform great in order to succeed. He also notes that poor self-efficacy is associated with the focus on negative outcome. Bandura emphasizes that the role of observational learning in personality development is that popularity of different types of media are directly responsible for the changes in the personality development of millions of children and youths. Therefore, it is pertinent for models, such as teachers, parents, political leaders etc., to live by example and monitor our children's activities in social media and also be conscious of the type of information that our children are expose to.

2. Poor academic performance among students: Today, student's no longer focus on learning. Their attention has been shifted towards gaining more likes and having more followers on Instagram and Tik-Tok. Social media has succeeded in rendering Nigerian youth lazy as they no longer engage their brain in meaningful activities. Mac Blain (2018) claims that "Bandura's open to stimuli and consequences do not always respond to serious changes and may not influence personality development but argued that motivation is a major factor that drives children behaviour even their ability to learn. However, Schill (2011) states that "the social media site encourages negative behaviour for youths and students, such as cultism, indecent dressing, prostitution etc. Studies have shown that the amount of time spent daily on social media is associated with negative emotions. A study by Kiera and Riehms found that adolescents who used social media for more than three hours a day may be at higher risk of mental health problems. Therefore, social learning procedures should be use to weaken undesirable behaviour by enacting stringent punishment on these negative aspects of the media, thereby reducing its acceptance in the society. This present study agrees with Bandura who opine that learners should engage in thought process prior to imitation to enable them determine what to imitate and what not, especially these days where social media have infiltrated into our thought process.

Technology and addition – Nowadays, youths spend quality time on social media engaging in one form of activities or the other such as chatting with their friends on WhatsApp or Facebook, playing games, Googling for information. Bittani (2008) noted that "due to the limited capacity for self-regulation and sustainability to peer pressure, children, adolescents and youths are at risk as they navigate and experiment with social media. According to Newman et al (2007) Bandura demonstrated that cognition plays a role in social learning and over the last 30 years. Social learning theory has become increasingly cognitive in its interpretation of human learning. Therefore, application of mental factor when it comes to observational learning is very vital; especially in the phase of this technological age that social media has become a great challenge to millions of Nigerian youths. Also, self-control is also very important in whatever activity we are engaging in. there is an adage that says that, "too much of everything is bad."

Sexual and violent activities in the media

Sexual activities and intimate situations shown in films are part of negative impact of social media on social learning theory. Anderson and Bushman (2002) opined that “violent images in movies, TV and computer games can act as trigger for aggression which to Bandura supported in his bobo doll experiment which he opens that children generally tend to imitate the type of behaviour they are expose to. Friendships and marriages are built and broken due to social media. Every embarrassment a person suffers in one’s life is available for the entire world to view on social media. Melville (2010) noted that increased popularity of social media has had a profound effect on today’s youths. Njoku (2014) opines that the observe can learn from model mistake as well as his or her successes. Therefore, people should be mindful of the type of information they share on social media. Even though social media creates job opportunities for the youths through some created sites which specializes in job recruitment, where youths get registered in order to receive job vacancy alerts, some of these youths have met with untimely deaths as a result of online job vacancies posted by some Nigerian people who now used such site to capture their victims for rape, money ritual, human butchering etc. That was why Bandura paid special attention to aggression in his work which he pointed out that children who often witnessed certain types of behaviour in adults tends to find them acceptable and integrate similar response pattern of behaviour.

Significance of social learning Theory to social media

The importance of social learning theory in media cannot be understated, particularly in light of the exponential growth in media formats over the past ten years. Initially, the only way the media could influence teenage minds and their social learning skills was through television, newspapers, or radio. However, since the Internet and fast broadband entered our lives, the social learning theory's importance in media has increased and its impact is hardly filterable. The ease with which today's social networking sites are accessible influences how teenagers behave. Since there are few restrictions and no bodily identities in the virtual world, it is simpler to assume a false identity and engage in activities that might be illegal in the real (non-virtual) world.

Young minds' social learning capacities and behaviour are impacted by spending so much time in the cyber world. Children acquire many of their defining characteristics from their continuous exposure to and involvement in the virtual world, as well as from television and newspapers. These behavioural characteristics are acquired as young people and persist into adulthood. These could have an impact on adult social learning processes.

Classroom implication of social learning theory

1. Teacher should encourage learning through observation and imitation.
2. Students should be provided with enough material during class-room instruction.
3. Teachers should engage in practical demonstrations of aspect of instructional content.

4. Explorative learning and use of firms. Should be encourage.
5. Active participation in the classroom should be encourage.
6. Teachers should be good models as student should learn by observing adults disposition and actions.
7. Students should encourage to join various school associations, clubs, e.t.c where. Through observation and imitation they could learn good morals and other healthy virtues.
8. Teachers should give accurate information and encourage learners to pay attention to details.
9. Field trips and excursions should be organize by schools to enable students have practical experience and interact directly with some of what have been taught in the class. (Eke and Onyekwu 2013). teacher or teachers – crosscheck and mention same word

Summary

Parents must consider that monitoring the social learning in media influencing their children may not be a viable option. However, spending more time trying to understand the young impressionable minds may be useful. For example, the language of adolescents is much different from that of adults and is always evolving.

If a social behavior of the child is unacceptable to the family, the source must be identified. Most of the time, the source can be found in the virtual world or other forms of media. Attempts at rectification should come from the same sources. For instance, parents might find an increasing streak of violence in children because of too much online gaming. Instead of simply reprimanding them, parents must bring attention to cases of children who have been victims of violent online games or virtual characters. And this should be illustrated using the same source--the Internet. This "preaching through interaction" helps young minds to understand concepts and behaviors better and faster, while at the same time averting the conflictual situation.

Conclusion

Overall, due to the elevated media exposure among young people, social learning in media has become much more important than ever before. Social learning theory detractors accuse the media of haphazardly disseminating information without any checks, warning that this could expose kids and teenagers to excessive violence and corruption. They might be influenced by this contact to acquire the noted undesirable behaviours. Supporters of the theory believe that because of increased exposure, the social learning theory will only help young minds to assess any circumstance better.

Suggestions

Based on the finding and conclusion the following were recommended:

1. Parents, teachers, caregivers, religious leaders, political leaders, etc., should sensitize the youths and children on appropriate use of the social media (educational activities) to better their lives.
2. They should also guide their wards and children on the proper use of media to discourage them from different forms of immoral activities going on in the social media today.
3. Time children spend on social media should be reduced.
4. Good habit should be promoted and rewarded while immoral behaviours should be punished
5. They should also be reminded of our core values as Nigerians.
6. Youth should be made to know that whatever behaviour we are observing and imitating must conform with our societal norms and values.

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