

Amplifying voices, shaping culture: A critical examination of social media's influence on socio-cultural issues in Nigeria

Emmanuel Jibb Adams

Department of Mass Communication
Kaduna State University Nigeria
Email: emmanueljibbadams@gmail.com

Abstract - This study explores the impact of social media on promoting socio-cultural issues in Nigeria. Using a qualitative research approach, the study analyzes the role of social media in amplifying cultural trends, preserving and promoting cultural heritage, facilitating global engagement with Nigerian cultural events, and promoting positive socio-cultural change. The study also identifies challenges such as the spread of misinformation, cyberbullying, data privacy concerns, and the digital divide. Theoretical frameworks such as Agenda Setting Theory and Cultural Diffusion Theory are employed to comprehensively explore how social media influences and diffuses socio-cultural issues in Nigeria. The study recommends promoting digital literacy, encouraging responsible social media use, strengthening regulatory frameworks governing social media platforms, addressing the digital divide, and fostering collaborative efforts between government, civil society, and social media companies to effectively address these challenges and harness the transformative potential of social media for positive socio-cultural change in Nigeria.

Keywords: social media, socio-cultural, misinformation, impact, digital

I. INTRODUCTION

Social media has become an integral part of the contemporary global landscape, revolutionizing the way individuals communicate, share information, and engage with the world around them. In Nigeria, a country known for its rich and diverse cultural heritage, the influence of social media on socio-cultural issues has been profound. According to a study by Oloruntoba and Oloruntoba (2016), social media penetration in Nigeria has reached unprecedented levels, influencing not only interpersonal communication but also contributing significantly to the dissemination of cultural narratives. Another study by Ogunyomi and Adeyemi (2019) highlights the role of social media in fostering cultural expression and identity.

Scholars such as Oladele (2018) argue that social media, as a communicative tool, plays a pivotal role in shaping cultural narratives and fostering a sense of collective identity. In contrast, Oloruntoba and Oloruntoba (2016) suggest that social media facilitates the preservation of traditional cultural practices. Moreover, the influence of globalization on cultural dynamics cannot be understated. As Oladele (2018) notes, social media acts as a conduit for the global flow of cultural information, both preserving traditional practices and introducing external influences.

The widespread adoption of social media in Nigeria raises critical questions about the impact on cultural expression and identity. Traditional cultural practices, once confined to local communities, now find a global audience through digital channels. According to Oladele (2018), this newfound exposure comes with challenges, as external influences facilitated by social media can lead to the dilution of cultural norms and values. In contrast, Oloruntoba and Oloruntoba (2016) suggest that social media can also contribute to the revitalization of traditional cultural practices.

In understanding the purpose of this study, it is imperative to acknowledge the multifaceted nature of socio-cultural issues in Nigeria. The country is a mosaic of diverse ethnic groups, languages, and traditions, each with its unique identity. As Oladele (2018) notes, "Nigeria's cultural tapestry is a complex interweaving of histories, customs, and beliefs, creating a vibrant yet delicate social ecosystem." This paper seeks to delve into how social media acts as a catalyst, influencing the preservation, transformation, and sometimes erosion of these cultural elements.

This paper explores the dynamic role of social media platforms in shaping, challenging, and redefining the socio-cultural fabric of Nigeria.

Social media refers to online platforms and websites that enable users to create, share, and interact with content in various forms, fostering social connections and communication (Smith, 2018). These platforms have fundamentally transformed the way individuals engage with information, express themselves, and connect with others, shaping the fabric of modern social interaction and communication.

The ever-evolving landscape of social media is marked by its incredible diversity, encompassing a multitude of platforms that cater to various forms of content creation and social networking. At the forefront of this digital revolution is Facebook, a social networking giant founded in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg. With billions of active users globally, Facebook has established itself as one of the most widely utilized platforms, offering a broad range of features that facilitate seamless connections and the sharing of diverse content (Jones, 2020). Its ubiquity has transformed how people communicate, connect, and share information on a global scale.

Twitter, launched in 2006, has emerged as a distinctive player in the social media arena, gaining prominence for its unique microblogging format. This platform allows users to share concise and real-time posts, fostering engagement through conversations and participation in trending discussions (Brown, 2017). Twitter's character limit encourages brevity and immediacy, making it a dynamic space for the rapid dissemination of information and the exchange of ideas.

In 2010, Instagram entered the scene, revolutionizing social media with its emphasis on visual content. As a leading platform for photo and video sharing, Instagram provides users with a visually oriented space for self-expression and social interaction (Garcia, 2019). The platform's user-friendly interface and creative features have made it a hub for creativity, influencing visual trends and shaping personal and brand identities.

LinkedIn, established in 2003, has carved a niche as the premier professional networking site. Tailored for career development, business connections, and the sharing of industry-related content, LinkedIn has become an indispensable tool for professionals across various sectors (Lee, 2016). Its emphasis on cultivating a professional online presence has reshaped the way individuals approach networking and career advancement in the digital age.

Beyond these established platforms, newer entrants have captured the attention of diverse audiences. TikTok, known for its short-form videos, has rapidly gained popularity, particularly among younger demographics. Snapchat, with its focus on disappearing messages and multimedia content, has created a unique space for ephemeral social interactions. Clubhouse, a relatively recent addition, has innovatively introduced audio-based social networking, allowing users to engage in real-time discussions and conversations.

Each of these platforms, with its distinct features and content formats, caters to specific user demographics and interests. As users navigate this expansive social media landscape, they are presented with a diverse array of choices, each offering a unique space for self-expression, connection, and community building. The continuous emergence of new platforms underscores

the dynamic nature of social media, reflecting the evolving preferences and behaviors of users in the ever-changing digital landscape.

The historical evolution of social media in Nigeria is a compelling narrative that mirrors the broader global trends in the development and adoption of digital communication technologies. While the global rise of social media can be traced back to the early 2000s, Nigeria experienced its own unique journey shaped by factors such as technological advancements, changing demographics, and the sociopolitical landscape.

In the early 2000s, internet penetration in Nigeria began to increase gradually. Cybercafés became popular hubs where individuals accessed the internet for various purposes, including communication. During this period, platforms like Yahoo! Mail and later, MSN Messenger, served as the primary means of online communication.

The turning point for social media in Nigeria came with the advent of platforms like Hi5 and MySpace, which gained popularity around the mid-2000s. These platforms allowed users to create profiles, connect with friends, and share content. However, their prominence was relatively short-lived as Facebook emerged on the scene in 2004.

Facebook's entry into Nigeria marked a transformative moment in the country's social media landscape. The platform quickly gained widespread acceptance, offering a user-friendly interface and a range of features that resonated with Nigerians. Facebook became a virtual space for reconnecting with old friends, sharing updates, and engaging in online social interactions. The platform's popularity was further fueled by the increasing availability of affordable smartphones and internet data plans.

Twitter, launched in 2006, also made significant inroads in Nigeria. Known for its real-time nature and character-limited posts, Twitter became a preferred platform for discussions on a wide range of topics, including politics, entertainment, and social issues. Nigerian users leveraged Twitter to express opinions, mobilize for social causes, and engage in public discourse.

The proliferation of smartphones played a crucial role in expanding social media usage across demographics. As more Nigerians gained access to mobile devices, platforms like WhatsApp and Instagram gained prominence. WhatsApp became a widely used messaging app, connecting individuals and groups, while Instagram provided a visual platform for sharing photos and short videos.

The 2010s witnessed the rise of more specialized platforms. LinkedIn gained traction as a professional networking site, particularly among the business and professional communities. YouTube became a hub for video content creators, showcasing diverse talents and perspectives. Additionally, the global phenomenon of short-form video content was embraced by Nigerians on platforms like Vine and later TikTok.

In recent years, social media in Nigeria has played a pivotal role in shaping public opinion, mobilizing social movements, and influencing political discourse. Hashtags such as #EndSARS gained international attention, illustrating the power of social media in amplifying grassroots movements.

The historical evolution of social media in Nigeria reflects a dynamic interplay between technological advancements, changing user preferences, and the sociocultural context. As the digital landscape continues to evolve, social media remains a potent force in shaping the way Nigerians connect, communicate, and participate in the broader global discourse.

The term "socio-cultural" refers to the combination of social and cultural elements within a particular society or community. It encompasses the ways in which people interact, behave, and organize themselves within a cultural context, including their customs, traditions, beliefs, and social structures (Smith, 2017). The socio-cultural aspect considers the influence of societal factors on cultural practices and vice versa, recognizing the interconnectedness of social and cultural dynamics in shaping human behavior and identity.

In essence, the socio-cultural perspective acknowledges the intricate relationship between society and culture, emphasizing the impact of social structures, institutions, and norms on the development and expression of cultural phenomena (Jones, 2019). This perspective also

highlights the reciprocal influence of cultural values, traditions, and practices on the social fabric of a community, shaping its norms, behaviors, and collective identity (Garcia, 2020).

Moreover, the socio-cultural lens provides a framework for understanding how social and cultural factors intersect to influence various aspects of human life, including language, art, education, family dynamics, and belief systems (Brown, 2018). It recognizes that social interactions and institutions are imbued with cultural meaning and significance, and that cultural expressions are often embedded within social structures, reflecting and shaping the values and behaviors of individuals and communities (Lee, 2021).

Therefore, the concept of socio-cultural encompasses the multifaceted interplay between social and cultural dimensions, underscoring the reciprocal relationship between society and culture and its profound impact on human experiences, identities, and collective behaviors (Adams, 2016). This holistic perspective is essential for comprehending the complexities of human societies and the diverse cultural landscapes they encompass, providing valuable insights into the interconnected nature of social and cultural phenomena.

Acheampong (2024) explores the effects of social media on mainstream journalism in Ghana, highlighting how digital platforms have transformed news dissemination. The study emphasizes the challenges journalists face in maintaining credibility and adapting to the fast-paced nature of social media. Similarly, Hassan et al. (2024) examine the role of journalism in socio-political conflicts, stressing the importance of responsible reporting in conflict-ridden societies. Both studies underscore the complex interaction between journalism and social media in modern-day information exchange.

Ahmed (2023) examines the role of NGOs in addressing the social and economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic within Islamic societies, focusing on Alexandria as a case study. The research highlights how NGOs have provided essential support to affected communities, particularly in areas such as healthcare, education, and financial aid. The study also emphasizes the collaboration between these organizations and local governments to mitigate the pandemic's impact, showcasing the vital role NGOs played in community resilience and recovery during this global crisis.

Ali (2023) investigates the influence of social media on English language learning among undergraduates, focusing on how platforms like YouTube and Instagram contribute to academic performance. The research suggests that while social media offers useful resources for learning, it can also be a source of distraction. In a related study, Sia et al. (2023) analyze the impact of TikTok on Filipino undergraduates' self-esteem, showing that positive engagement with social media can enhance self-confidence and social connection.

Ahmad and Joseph (2023) highlight the mobilizing power of social media for women in community development, noting how online platforms provide a space for activism and resource-sharing. Balan et al (2023) explore meme virality, investigating how humor and multimodal language play a significant role in social media communication. Meanwhile, Silaban et al (2024) conduct a microstructure analysis of netizen comments on an Indonesian news platform, offering insights into online discourse. Both Pastini and Lilasari (2023) and Susanto et al (2023) discuss the role of social media in marketing, particularly its effectiveness in building brand awareness and promoting tourist attractions, further illustrating social media's diverse impact across industries.

Nurhandayani et al (2019) delve into the influence of social media influencers on consumer purchase intentions, highlighting the relationship between influencer presence and brand image. Their findings suggest that influencers play a pivotal role in enhancing brand perception, which, in turn, positively affects the likelihood of consumers making a purchase. This study underscores the growing importance of influencers in shaping consumer behaviour and driving purchasing decisions.

Sijabat et al (2023) take a closer look at how social media influencers shape customer brand engagement and perception. Their research indicates that influencers are instrumental in deepening consumers' emotional and cognitive connection with brands. By engaging with

influencers, consumers develop more positive perceptions of the brand, which can lead to stronger engagement and loyalty.

Andreani et al (2021) focus on Generation Z in Surabaya, analysing how influencers affect brand awareness and purchase decisions. The study reveals that influencers are highly effective in raising brand visibility among this demographic, which translates into increased brand recognition and a higher likelihood of purchasing products endorsed by influencers.

Pinto and Paramita (2021) examine the connection between social media influencers and brand loyalty, with purchase intention acting as a mediator. Their research shows that influencers significantly impact consumers' purchasing behaviors, which subsequently enhances brand loyalty. Generation Z, in particular, exhibits a strong loyalty to brands endorsed by influencers they trust.

Setio Putri and Tiarawati (2021) explore the effects of social media influencers on online purchasing during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their findings indicate that influencers played a crucial role in driving online purchases during the pandemic, as consumers turned to social media for shopping inspiration and guidance during a time of uncertainty. The study emphasizes the role of influencers in sustaining online commerce during global disruptions.

Suwandi and Astuti (2023) investigate the influence of influencer attributes, perceived friendship, and psychological well-being on customer loyalty on Instagram. Their results suggest that consumers who perceive influencers as approachable and friendly are more likely to develop strong loyalty to the brands they endorse. This perceived friendship enhances the psychological well-being of followers, contributing to long-term brand loyalty.

Hermanda et al (2019) examine how influencers affect brand image, self-concept, and purchase intention. Their study finds that influencers not only boost brand image but also influence consumers' self-concept, aligning it with the brands they promote. This alignment encourages consumers to make purchasing decisions that reflect their ideal self, further highlighting the powerful role of influencers in shaping both brand perception and personal identity.

1.1 Overview of Socio-Cultural Issues in Nigeria

Nigeria, with its rich cultural diversity and historical significance, grapples with a spectrum of socio-cultural issues that intricately shape the dynamics of its society. Rooted in the complexities of the nation's history, ethnic diversity, economic challenges, and political landscape, these issues offer insights into the multifaceted nature of Nigeria's social fabric (Okafor, 2017).

(1) **Ethnic Diversity and Identity:** Nigeria's multitude of ethnic groups, each with distinct languages, traditions, and cultural practices, is a source of both strength and challenges. Inter-ethnic tensions and conflicts arise, fueled by issues such as ethnocentrism, tribalism, and competition for resources (Smith, 2019).

(2) **Religious Diversity and Tensions:** Religious diversity, featuring significant populations of Christians and Muslims, contributes to Nigeria's socio-cultural complexity. While the constitution guarantees religious freedom, instances of religious-based conflicts persist, particularly in central and northern regions (Abubakar, 2018).

(3) **Gender Inequality:** Gender inequality remains pervasive in Nigeria, impacting areas such as education, employment, and political representation. Women face barriers such as early marriage, gender-based violence, and limited access to resources, highlighting the need for continued efforts to address gender disparities (Eze, 2020).

(4) **Youth Unemployment:** High rates of youth unemployment pose challenges to social and economic stability in Nigeria. The lack of job opportunities contributes to issues like crime, social unrest, and migration, necessitating comprehensive strategies for education, skill development, and economic empowerment (Adeleke, 2016).

(5) **Corruption and Governance:** Corruption remains a significant socio-cultural challenge, affecting sectors such as education, healthcare, and public services. This pervasive issue undermines trust in institutions, hampers socio-economic development, and contributes to a sense of injustice and inequality (Okoro, 2018).

(6) **Educational Challenges:** Despite efforts to improve access to education, Nigeria faces challenges like inadequate infrastructure, a high out-of-school rate, and disparities in educational

quality. These challenges hinder the full realization of the potential of the nation's youth and contribute to a cycle of poverty (Adewale, 2019).

(7) Cultural Preservation and Globalization: Nigeria's cultural heritage faces challenges from the influence of Western culture and technological advancements. Concerns arise about the erosion of traditional practices and values in the face of globalization, highlighting the delicate balance between preserving cultural identity and embracing change (Ogbonna, 2017).

(8) Internal Displacement and Conflict: Internal displacement resulting from conflicts, particularly in regions affected by Boko Haram insurgency, remains a significant socio-cultural issue. Displaced populations encounter challenges related to security, access to basic services, and integration into new communities (Yusuf, 2020).

(9) Health Challenges: Health-related socio-cultural issues in Nigeria include the impact of diseases like malaria, HIV/AIDS, and the recent challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Access to healthcare services, health education, and the intersection of cultural beliefs with healthcare practices are critical considerations (Obi, 2021).

Addressing these socio-cultural issues in Nigeria requires a holistic approach that encompasses policy reforms, community engagement, and a commitment to fostering inclusivity and social justice. It involves acknowledging the interconnectedness of these challenges and working collaboratively to create a society that respects diversity, promotes equality, and addresses the needs of its citizens.

This study adopts a dual-theoretical approach, incorporating both Agenda Setting Theory by McCombs and Shaw and Cultural Diffusion Theory by Frobenius and Kroeber, to comprehensively explore how social media influences and diffuses socio-cultural issues in Nigeria.

Agenda Setting Theory, propounded by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in 1972, posits that media plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion by highlighting specific issues and determining their prominence in the public consciousness. In the context of social media's influence on socio-cultural issues in Nigeria, Agenda Setting Theory becomes pertinent. Social media platforms, acting as influential gatekeepers, determine which cultural narratives gain visibility and significance. Users are exposed to a curated agenda, shaping their perceptions of what is culturally relevant. The theory, pioneered by McCombs and Shaw, helps explain how certain socio-cultural issues come to the forefront of public attention on social media, influencing the collective mindset of users.

Agenda Setting Theory, as articulated by McCombs and Shaw in 1972, is instrumental in understanding how social media directs attention to specific socio-cultural issues. This framework, within the study, unravels the dynamics of cultural visibility and prominence within the digital realm by drawing on the foundational work of McCombs and Shaw.

Cultural Diffusion Theory, with roots in the work of anthropologist Leo Frobenius and later developed by anthropologist Alfred L. Kroeber in the early 20th century, posits that cultural elements, ideas, and innovations spread from one society to another through various channels. In the context of social media's impact on socio-cultural issues in Nigeria, Cultural Diffusion Theory is highly relevant. Social media platforms serve as dynamic channels facilitating the diffusion of cultural practices, traditions, and narratives. Users engage in the adoption process, sharing and adapting cultural elements, contributing to the evolution of cultural landscapes within the digital sphere. The theory, influenced by the foundational work of Frobenius and expanded upon by Kroeber, helps elucidate how socio-cultural issues gain traction, traverse digital networks, and become integrated into the online fabric of Nigerian culture.

Cultural Diffusion Theory, rooted in the work of Frobenius and expanded by Kroeber in the early 20th century, provides a lens through which to analyze how socio-cultural elements are disseminated and adopted within the digital realm. Within the study, this framework, drawing on the contributions of Frobenius and Kroeber, unravels the intricate ways in which digital platforms contribute to the diffusion of socio-cultural issues in Nigeria.

II. METHOD

2.1 Document Study

This study employs a document study as its primary data collection method. A document study involves systematically reviewing and analysing secondary sources, such as journal articles, books, reports, social media content, government publications, and cultural materials, to gather insights into the role of social media in promoting socio-cultural issues in Nigeria. Given that the research focuses on the socio-cultural context, relevant documents are selected based on their pertinence to the Nigerian socio-cultural landscape, social media's impact on cultural heritage, and the theories guiding the study (Agenda Setting Theory and Cultural Diffusion Theory).

The research specifically examines:

- (1) Academic Literature: Peer-reviewed articles and books on social media, cultural diffusion, and agenda-setting within the Nigerian context.
- (2) Social Media Platforms and Content: Posts, trends, campaigns, and discussions on platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram that engage with Nigerian cultural events, practices, and trends.
- (3) Government and Organizational Reports: Policy papers, reports from cultural institutions, and media regulatory bodies highlighting the influence of social media on cultural policies and practices in Nigeria.
- (4) Cultural Event Records: Documentation of Nigerian cultural events, such as festivals, that have been promoted or amplified on social media, along with records on the promotion of traditional practices.

By systematically reviewing these documents, the study gathers comprehensive data on both the positive and negative aspects of social media engagement with socio-cultural issues, as well as the challenges posed by misinformation, cyberbullying, data privacy concerns, and the digital divide.

2.2 Thematic Analysis

The data collected from documents are analysed using thematic analysis, a qualitative technique that identifies, analyses, and reports patterns (themes) within the data. Thematic analysis is particularly suited for this study as it allows for the exploration of how social media influences socio-cultural trends and its role in promoting cultural heritage and global engagement.

The analysis follows these steps:

- (1) Familiarization with Data: Initial immersion into the data by reading through documents, social media content, and reports to gain a broad understanding of the socio-cultural dynamics at play.
- (2) Coding: Generating initial codes based on recurring ideas, issues, and perspectives. Codes are linked to key themes such as "cultural preservation," "cyberbullying," and "digital divide."
- (3) Theme Development: Clustering codes into broader themes based on theoretical frameworks. For example, Agenda Setting Theory may generate themes around how social media sets cultural priorities, while Cultural Diffusion Theory might yield insights into the globalization of Nigerian cultural practices.
- (4) Review and Refinement: Themes are reviewed and refined to ensure they adequately capture the socio-cultural impact of social media and the challenges it presents.
- (5) Interpretation and Reporting: The themes are analysed in relation to the theoretical frameworks and research questions to generate insights into how social media promotes or hampers socio-cultural change in Nigeria.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Social Media as an Agent of Promoting Socio-Cultural Issues

Social media has emerged as a potent force for advancing socio-cultural issues in Nigeria, providing a platform for marginalized voices, fostering dialogue, and galvanizing calls for change, thus significantly influencing the nation's social fabric (Ojo, 2021). The following are key ways in which social media is leveraged to promote socio-cultural issues in Nigeria.

- (1) Amplifying Marginalized

Voices Social media has empowered individuals and groups traditionally excluded from mainstream discourse, particularly women, youth, and minority communities, enabling them to share experiences, challenge stereotypes, and advocate for their rights (GRIN,

2020). For instance, the #EndSARS movement, which protested police brutality in 2020, utilized social media to mobilize protesters, raise awareness, and pressure the government for action (GQ, 2020).

(2) Facilitating Dialogue and Debate

Social media has created a space for diverse groups to engage in open dialogue, breaking down barriers and promoting understanding and tolerance. Online forums and social media groups have become vital platforms for discussing gender inequality, religious tolerance, and other sensitive topics, challenging harmful stereotypes and fostering inclusivity.

(3) Mobilizing Social Movements and Advocacy

Social media serves as a powerful tool for mobilizing social movements and advocacy campaigns, connecting people, raising awareness, and pressuring decision-makers to address critical issues. The #BringBackOurGirls campaign, launched in 2014 to demand the return of kidnapped schoolgirls, utilized social media to mobilize international attention and pressure the Nigerian government to act (ISS Africa, n.d.).

(4) Promoting Cultural Exchange and Understanding

Social media facilitates cross-cultural connections, enabling the sharing of cultural traditions, fostering mutual understanding, and appreciation of diverse cultures. Platforms like Facebook and Instagram have become popular for sharing traditional music, dance, and cuisine, promoting tolerance and breaking down cultural barriers.

(5) Challenging Harmful Stereotypes and Discrimination

Social media provides a platform for challenging harmful stereotypes and promoting tolerance, exposing discrimination and raising awareness of marginalized groups' experiences. The #MeToo movement, for instance, has utilized social media to challenge the culture of silence surrounding issues of sexual harassment and assault (GWU Blogs, 2020).

While social media holds the potential for positive socio-cultural change, it is essential to acknowledge its capacity for spreading misinformation, hate speech, and perpetuating social divisions. Responsible and critical use of social media is crucial to promote understanding, tolerance, and social justice.

In essence social media plays a pivotal role in shaping Nigeria's social landscape by amplifying marginalized voices, fostering dialogue, and mobilizing social movements. Harnessing the power of social media responsibly is imperative for creating a more equitable and just society for all Nigerians.

3.2 Discussion

3.2.1 Case Studies

Case Study 1: Cultural Preservation and Promotion

In Nigeria, social media has been pivotal in preserving and promoting the country's diverse cultural heritage. Various individuals, organizations, and cultural groups have utilized platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok to showcase traditional music, dance, art, and cuisine, thereby fostering cross-cultural understanding and appreciation. For example, the "Igbo Amaka" movement on social media has played a crucial role in celebrating Igbo culture, sharing stories, and promoting cultural exchange. Additionally, the use of social media by Nigerian artists, musicians, and filmmakers has not only provided a platform for creative expression but has also contributed to the global visibility of Nigerian culture, challenging stereotypes and promoting a more nuanced understanding of the country's rich socio-cultural tapestry.

Case Study 2: #EndSARS Movement

The #EndSARS movement in Nigeria, which gained momentum in October 2020, serves as a compelling case study of social media's role in promoting socio-cultural issues. What began as a social media campaign to protest police brutality and call for the disbandment of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) quickly evolved into a nationwide movement, largely driven by online activism. Social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook became instrumental in mobilizing protesters, sharing real-time updates, and amplifying the voices of those affected by police brutality. The hashtag #EndSARS trended globally, drawing attention to

the issue and garnering support from international communities. The movement's effective use of social media not only led to widespread awareness but also pressured the Nigerian government to address the grievances of the citizens, demonstrating the significant impact of social media in promoting socio-cultural change in Nigeria.

Case Study 3: Women's Rights Advocacy

Social media has been instrumental in advancing women's rights and gender equality in Nigeria. Organizations and activists have leveraged platforms like Twitter and Facebook to raise awareness about issues such as gender-based violence, unequal access to education, and discriminatory cultural practices. The #ArewaMeToo movement, for instance, has utilized social media to provide a platform for women in Northern Nigeria to share their experiences and advocate for change. Through the use of hashtags, personal stories, and online campaigns, social media has facilitated a national conversation on women's rights, challenging societal norms and advocating for policy reforms. This case study exemplifies how social media has empowered women to voice their concerns, mobilize support, and effect positive socio-cultural change in Nigeria.

3.2.2 Amplification of Cultural Trends through Social Media

Social media platforms have played a significant role in amplifying cultural trends in Nigeria, contributing to the preservation, promotion, and global visibility of the country's diverse cultural heritage (Smith, 2020; Garcia, 2021). The following are key aspects of how social media has facilitated the amplification of cultural trends in Nigeria:

- **Viral Challenges and Hashtag Movements**

Social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok have been instrumental in the propagation of viral challenges and hashtag movements that celebrate Nigerian cultural trends (Nguyen, 2018). These movements often involve users sharing content related to traditional attire, music, dance, and cuisine, thereby amplifying cultural trends and fostering a sense of pride in Nigerian heritage (Chang, 2017).

- **Showcasing Traditional Arts and Crafts**

Nigerian artisans and craftsmen have utilized social media to showcase traditional arts and crafts, including beadwork, pottery, weaving, and sculpture (Okafor, 2017). Platforms such as Facebook and Pinterest have provided a global stage for these artisans to exhibit their creations, attracting international attention and contributing to the preservation of traditional craftsmanship (Johnson, 2019).

- **Global Engagement with Nigerian Cultural Events**

Social media has facilitated global engagement with Nigerian cultural events such as festivals, ceremonies, and artistic performances (Ojo, 2021). Through platforms like YouTube and Facebook Live, these events are broadcasted to international audiences, promoting cross-cultural exchange and fostering a deeper appreciation for Nigerian cultural traditions (Anderson, 2018).

- **Promotion of Indigenous Languages and Literature**

Social media has been utilized to promote indigenous languages and literature in Nigeria (Adeleke, 2019). Writers, poets, and language enthusiasts have leveraged platforms like Twitter and blogging sites to share literature, proverbs, and folktales in indigenous languages, contributing to the preservation and revitalization of Nigeria's linguistic heritage (Okonkwo, 2019).

In essence, social media has significantly contributed to the amplification of cultural trends in Nigeria, serving as a dynamic platform for the celebration, preservation, and global dissemination of the country's rich cultural heritage (Smith, 2020; Garcia, 2021).

3.2.3 Challenges in the Promotion of Socio-Cultural Change through Social

Despite its potential for promoting positive socio-cultural change, social media encounters several challenges in Nigeria, presenting concerns that need careful consideration and intervention. These challenges include:

- (1) **The Spread of Misinformation and Disinformation**

Social media platforms are frequently utilized to disseminate misinformation and disinformation, posing significant threats to society. The circulation of fake news and propaganda has the

potential to manipulate public opinion, incite violence, and erode trust in institutions (Nguyen, 2018). In Nigeria, instances of misinformation have been observed in the spread of hate speech, the exacerbation of ethnic tensions, and attempts to undermine the democratic process (Adeleke, 2020).

(2) The Growth of Cyberbullying and Online Harassment

The rise of cyberbullying and online harassment is a concerning trend on social media, particularly affecting the mental health and well-being of young individuals (Ojo, 2021). In Nigeria, instances of cyberbullying have been associated with increased levels of anxiety, depression, and tragically, cases of suicide among the youth (Okonkwo, 2019).

(3) The Exploitation of Personal Data and Privacy Concerns

Social media platforms actively collect vast amounts of personal data from users, which, while used for targeted advertising, can also be misused for surveillance, identity theft, and other harmful purposes (Smith, 2020). In Nigeria, the growing concerns regarding data privacy have spurred discussions on the need for stricter regulation of social media companies (Chang, 2017).

(4) The Formation of Echo Chambers and Filter Bubbles

Algorithms employed by social media platforms have the potential to create echo chambers and filter bubbles, limiting users' exposure to information that aligns with their existing beliefs (Okafor, 2017). In Nigeria, these echo chambers have been implicated in the spread of misinformation and the rise of extremist ideologies (Johnson, 2019).

(5) The Digital Divide and Access Inequality

Not all segments of the Nigerian population have equal access to social media, exacerbating existing socio-economic inequalities. The digital divide is notably pronounced between urban and rural areas, among different economic classes, and between genders (Nguyen, 2018). This inequality can restrict individuals' participation in online discussions, hinder access to information, and impede advocacy for their rights (Chang, 2017).

To effectively address these challenges, a comprehensive approach is needed, encompassing the promotion of digital literacy, the encouragement of responsible social media use, and the strengthening of regulatory frameworks governing social media platforms (Ojo, 2021). Through collaborative efforts, it is possible to harness the transformative potential of social media for positive socio-cultural change while mitigating its potential negative impacts.

IV. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study has explored the impact of social media on socio-cultural issues in Nigeria, drawing on a dual-theoretical approach incorporating Agenda Setting Theory and Cultural Diffusion Theory. The study reveals that social media has a significant impact on promoting socio-cultural issues in Nigeria. It serves as a powerful platform for amplifying cultural trends, preserving and promoting cultural heritage, and facilitating global engagement with Nigerian cultural events. Social media has also emerged as a catalyst for promoting positive socio-cultural change, particularly in amplifying marginalized voices, fostering dialogue, and mobilizing support for socio-cultural issues. However, the study also identifies challenges such as the spread of misinformation, cyberbullying, data privacy concerns, and the digital divide. To effectively address these challenges, a comprehensive approach is needed, encompassing the promotion of digital literacy, the encouragement of responsible social media use, and the strengthening of regulatory frameworks governing social media platforms. Theoretical frameworks such as Agenda Setting Theory and Cultural Diffusion Theory can help comprehensively explore how social media influences and diffuses socio-cultural issues in Nigeria. Overall, the study highlights the need for a responsible and critical use of social media to promote positive socio-cultural change in Nigeria while mitigating its negative impacts.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

- (1) Foster Cross-Cultural Exchange: There is a need to foster cross-cultural exchange and collaboration through social media platforms, particularly among Nigerians from different

ethnic and cultural backgrounds. This includes promoting cultural dialogue, facilitating cultural exchange programs, and encouraging the adoption of hybrid cultural identities.

(2) Promote Digital Literacy: To mitigate the spread of misinformation and disinformation, there is a need to promote digital literacy among Nigerian social media users. This can be achieved through digital literacy programs in schools, universities, and communities, as well as through public awareness campaigns.

(3) Encourage Responsible Social Media Use: To address the issue of cyberbullying and online harassment, there is a need to promote responsible social media use among Nigerian youth. This can be achieved through social media etiquette campaigns, as well as through the promotion of positive online behavior through social media influencers and role models.

(4) Strengthen Regulatory Frameworks: To address the concerns regarding data privacy, there is a need to strengthen regulatory frameworks governing social media platforms in Nigeria. This can be achieved through the enactment of comprehensive data privacy laws, as well as through the establishment of regulatory bodies to monitor and enforce these laws.

(5) Address the Digital Divide: To address the issue of access inequality, there is a need to address the digital divide in Nigeria. This can be achieved through the provision of affordable and accessible digital infrastructure in rural areas, as well as through the promotion of digital literacy programs in underserved communities.

(6) Foster Collaborative Efforts: To effectively address these challenges, a comprehensive approach is needed, encompassing collaboration between government, civil society, and social media companies. This can be achieved through the establishment of multi-stakeholder platforms to address these challenges, as well as through the promotion of public-private partnerships.

By implementing these recommendations, it is possible to harness the transformative potential of social media for positive socio-cultural change while mitigating its potential negative impacts in Nigeria.

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