

Impact of Social Media Trends on Youths in Jos South Lga of Plateau State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the impact of social media trends on youths in Jos South LGA of Plateau State. In attempt to conduct a successful study, the researcher formulated 4 objectives and four corresponding research questions were also answered. The study scope was concerned with youths between 18-19 years age bracket youths. The study reviewed relevant literature. The design employed for the study was a survey research design specifically cross-sectional survey research design. The study population consisted of 25,000 youths from which a sample of 200 students were selected using simple random sampling technique. A structured questionnaire was developed and used for data collection for the study. The method used for data analysis was simple percentage. The study revealed that, youths in Jos south follow social media trends for various reasons of interest to them like dressing pattern, slangs, moving with bandwagon, knowledge acquisition, peer pressure and obscene contents and also that, social media trends affects youths of Jos south in different ways like attitude and manners of writing and speech among others. The study concluded among other things that, social media trends affects youths ways of dressing, attitude and eve manners of communication. The study recommended among other things that, there should be censorship and parental guide for the youths such that these youths will be guided and not misuse social media and also that, the government should enact laws and policies that will ensure the safe usage and utilization of social media.

Keywords

Impact, social media, trends, and youths.



I. Introduction

The world at large has become a global village with the growth in ICT, through various social media tools people around the world now interact with ease and at the comfort of their homes. Social media has provided platforms and avenue for people to exchange ideas, interact, communicate, transact, market, promote and even recruit or get employed through various social media tools. Social media also involves integration of digital media, which includes combinations of electronic text, graphics, moving pictures and sounds in a structured computerized environment that allows users to interact with the data for appropriate purposes. Studies have found that children and teenagers benefit from improving Communication, social linkages, and technological skills. Social media is really a significant aspect in this world. In general, social media is described as any interactive medium or application which enables people to communicate digitally and could be

differentiated from conventional media (e.g., television) by the way that users can both access and produce content (Carr & Hayes, 2015)

Social media has become one of the major channels of chatting through platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Telegram, and WhatsApp, amongst others. There has been an increase in the social media usage which has created new opportunity for browsing and learning. The use of social media is for so many reasons which may have favourable as well as adverse effect on the users depending on how it is being used and the purpose. The use of social media facilitates communication and collaboration for users to support interconnectivity for youths and users (Braumüller, 2020). Social media provides avenue for users to interact across the globe and it breaks all physical barriers to communication. This is possible because social media provide anonymous identity and gives room for safety chat. Due to lack of little or lack of censorship in the social media content exchange and the privacy provided users are secured and guaranteed of exchanging all kinds of information between two or more parties.

The internet usage effect of social media, in views of Muftah (2024) is that, students continue to spend more time on the social media than any site. Today most youths and students possess Facebook accounts and Whatsapp which are basically social media chatting application. Although, not restricted to just chatting but can also be use for business and other uses but largely youths use this social media application for chatting and interaction with friends and loved ones. Social media make known to it user happenings and event across the globe, this is because social media provides world interconnectivity (Mahbobeh, 2020). Through social media whatever may be happening across the world will be known to everybody user of social media around the world even at the moment such is happening.

Social media and activities that happen across social media come with trends: by trend it simply means changes or direction of movement (Yoserizal, 2020). This is so because social media connects a large number of users all over the world and whatever happens to be trending or changing from one end is seen in the other end which makes it social media trend. Social media trends include surge in social activities on social media. It also involves activities that are done on social media which are being copied by many (Prier, 2024). Such activities can be in form of slangs, dressing, fashion, hairdo, music, challenges and hook ups among many others. The trend in social media makes youth to imbibe various actions, activities, attitudes and behavior that may be alien to their society. Some social media trends which youths in Jos South exhibit includes coded communication, use of slangs, westernized dressing pattern, different colours of hairdo, foreign attachments and wigs, dances steps as well as music which is fast growing and gaining attention of majority across social media. Youths learn, imitate and imbibe all these which is now gradually becoming the culture of these youths and the younger ones are also learning from the youths as they localize and popularize such trends in the society (Yusuf & Calen, 2020).

Youths nowadays spend most productive time of their day on social media and follow trends of social media. In Jos South which is the concern of this study youths now exhibit different styles of dressing, hairdo, and slangs in communication. From the researcher's experience, youths in Jos South now wears shorts as trending dress style, youths colour their hair to different colours like green, yellow and red among others from the trends seen showcased on social media by celebrities since most social media trends includes activities of celebrities and dispositions of celebrities on social media. Some of the youths learn disposition and activities that are inimical to the morals and values of the

society. Such as gangsterism, abusive slangs, indecent dressing, drug usage and abuse, and pornography which is a one of the major problem facing the youths today. Most youths follow the social media trends of obscene contents and events which they also practice and leads to despicable acts such as rape, molestations, sexual harassment and the like which some of the youths engage in (Edward, & Calen, 2020). It is against this background that the researcher intends to investigate the impact of social media trends on youths in Jos South LGA of Plateau State.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Nigeria is faced with gross moral decadence and immorality of youths, some causes of this deteriorating moral decadence amongst the youths includes drug abuse, unemployment, parental and family value breakdown, corruption, and social media trends among others (Shittu & Gamde, 2021). Social media trends expose students to global events and happenings which are in most cases alien to the local culture but since social media have no restriction to users connectivity, youths enjoy unlimited access and freedom hence the youths learn and follow all kinds of trends on social media be it negative or positive. The youths may not be aware of the implication of such action but rather believe that they are enjoying the privilege of technological advancement and growth in ICT (Adu & Galloway, 2015).

With the social media trends, youths in Jos south now engage in activities that hitherto are not possible but now becoming a norm due to the privacy and unchecked freedom provided to users by social media. Youth engage in obscene activities and even pornography activities in the name of social media trends and usability (Ramler, 2021). Youths now dress like rascals and colour their hair which are not known to our culture prior to social media infiltration, youths now use slangs from abroad and speak coded slangs that sounds weird, youths also engage in some gambling and cyber crimes which they get introduced to by usually anonymous friends on social media. All these are challenges facing the youths in Jos South which requires urgent attention.

These days' youths are so engrossed in the social media that they are almost 24 hours online. Even in classrooms and lecture theatres, it has been observed that youths now chat while walking on the road, chat in the rest room, chat when eating and this way pay less attention to event and reality of activities around them which is to their detriment and the society at large. Times that ought be channeled towards positive activities like learning, academic research and innovating have been crushed by the passion for meeting new friends online, and most times busy discussing trivial issues which will not add value to the live so of these youths. With all these troubles which are eating deep into the fabric of the society, it become pertinent to ask the question what is the effect of social media trends on youths in Jos South?

1.2 Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in the study

1. What are the impacts of social media trends on youths in Jos south?
2. Why do youths in Jos south follow social media trends?
3. How does social media trends affects means of communication and behavior amongst youths in Jos South?
4. How can youths in Jos South be guided towards judicious use social media trends?

1.3 Significance of the Study

This study findings would hopefully benefit different stakeholders such as youths, parents, society, social media experts, and future researchers among others

II. Review of Literature

2.1 The New Media and Media Trends

The convergence of new methods of communication with new technologies shifts the model of mass communication, and radically reshapes the ways we interact and communicate with one another. Interactivity is present in programming work, such as video games. It's also viable in the 18 operation of traditional media. In the mid 1990s, filmmakers started using inexpensive digital cameras to create films. It was also the time when moving image technology had developed, which was able to be viewed on computer desktops in full motion. This development of new media technology was a new method for artists to share their work and interact with the big world. Other settings of interactivity include radio and television talk shows, letters to the editor, listener participation in such programs, and computer and technological programming. Interactivity can be considered a central concept in understanding new media, but different media forms possess different degrees of interactivity and some forms of digitized and converged media are in fact not interactive at all.

New media have created virtual realities that are becoming virtual extensions of the world we live in and it changes continuously because it is constantly modified and redefined by the interaction between users, emerging technologies, cultural changes, etc.

2.2 Impact of Social Media Trends on Youths

Social media trends involve events and changes which happens via the media usually from the various platforms such as facebook, intagram, twitter, whtasapp, and many others. Youths in Nigeria are highly patronizes the social media for various reasons and through this patronage the youths in Jos South trend with the social media trends as it were. Social media trends are constantly evolving in today's information age. Generation Z (individuals who are born between 1997 and 2012) are considered to be digital natives where they are surrounded by vast technological advances since birth (Traynor, 2019). In contrast to other generations like the Millennials (those born between 1981 to 1996) and Generation X (those born between 1965 to 1980), Generation Z grew up with social media, smartphones and rapid information sharing (Medone, 2019). There different types of social media and media trends, some examples include social networking sites, dating apps, gaming apps, blogging or blogging platforms, trending songs, trending dresses, trending slangs and many others. Globally, the top ten most used social media platforms where social media trends manifest are Facebook, YouTube, Facebook Messenger, Instagram, WhatsApp, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Snapchat and Skype (Global Web Index, 2020). One of the latest additions includes TikTok, an app that comprises short entertaining videos created and enjoyed by younger users.

Given the increasing popularity of social media in recent years and the trends that comes with it, is undeniable that social media trends play an important role in our society today and have great impact on the youths. Social media provides a new lens for people to exchange information and interact with others and the trends that come with it serves as emulating means for youths who follow social media trends accordingly. As youths enjoy their social connections with peers on social media platforms, the increased use of social media increase the trending of social media trends among youths. The trends and events

youth follow on social media can affect youths' mental health and wellbeing where they will feel anxious, depressed, lonely and the fear of missing out (Lozano-Blasco, Mira-Aladrén & Gil-Lamata, 2023). Youths also tend to compare their realities with other people's best moments in which depicts an inaccurate representation of a person's overall life. Besides, youths may experience cyber bullying from others on social media platforms and may also engage in cyber-crimes among other activities which are trends of social media and affects the youths as it were. As a result, youths will likely experience low self-esteem and psychological distress, anxiety or depressive symptoms.

These means that the social media trends indeed affect youths in different ways as far as this study in concern and youths of Jos South who are also users of social media and equally follow the trends that comes with it. The youths get to learn a lot of things as trend in social media which some of what the youths learn as social media trends are positive and some are negative. Some of the positive trends includes essay competition, educational and historical information, skills learning, online learning among others. Some of the negative trends the youths follow includes prostitution, pornography, immorality, cyber-crimes, and drug abuse among others. All these affects the youths in the study area and emerges as a result of social media trends which youths are followers to a large extent as it were.

The impact of social media trends on youths comes in different forms as it affects the youths in different ways (Ahmed & Qazi, 2011). Social media trends affects youths communications in Jos South, because youth's learn a lot from social media trends and the communication skills of youths through social media trends is also affected in different ways. Social media networks has become the central supporter for daily communication with friends, family and acquaintances and the trends of the social media trends are also followed by the youths. Youths follow the trend of interaction on social media trends and such reduces interpersonal relationship as well as the standard of inter-personal communication (Prier, 2020). These days, youths have adopted the use of abbreviations in their messages, such as 'tlyl' for 'talk to you later' and 'gr8' for 'great,' which can negatively affect grammar and promote the use of slang. While this trend has shifted communication from 'writing' to 'typing,' it is important to acknowledge the positive aspects of social media alongside its potential drawbacks.

III. Research Methods

The research methodology employed in this study was outlined in Chapter Three, detailing the research design, population, sample size and sampling techniques, methods of data collection, techniques of data analysis, and the challenges encountered. A descriptive survey design was adopted, with a specific focus on a cross-sectional approach to collect data and opinions from the target population within a limited timeframe. This design was chosen for its efficiency and accuracy in capturing the dimensions of social media trends and their impacts on youth in Jos South LGA, Plateau State. The study population consisted of 25,000 youths aged 18–30, based on 2019 INEC statistics in Zawan district of Jos South. A sample size of 200 respondents, evenly distributed across 20 wards in the study area, was selected using a simple random sampling technique. This ensured that every individual in the population had an equal chance of being included. The sample comprised both genders and was deemed appropriate for achieving a representative outcome.

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on the Impact of Social Media Trends on Youth Culture" (ESMTYC). The questionnaire had

two sections: Section A focused on respondents' demographic details, while Section B contained 20 close-ended items addressing the core research issues. Responses were measured on a four-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." The researcher personally distributed the questionnaires across various wards in the study area. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics, including frequency counts and percentages. These methods were chosen for their simplicity and suitability in describing field survey data effectively. Despite challenges such as limited time, financial constraints, and the need for extra hours of work, the researcher managed to collect quality data. However, time constraints limited the opportunity for repeat visits and deeper engagement with respondents, which could have enhanced trust and data reliability.

IV. Results and Discussion

4.1 Research question one: What are the impacts of social media trends on youths in Jos South LGA?

Table 1. Percentage of respondents opinion on research question one

S/n	Items	SA %	A %	D %	SD %
1.	Social media trends can affect youths attitude and Behavior in Jos South LGA	100 50%	40 20%	30 15%	30 15%
2.	Social media trends influence youth interaction in Jos South	120 60%	30 15%	30 15%	20 10%
3.	Social media trends affects the manner of speech And speaking among youths	80 40%	80 40%	20 10%	20 10%
4.	Social media trends affects writing ability of Youths in Jos South	80 40%	60 30%	20 10%	20 10%
5.	Social media makes youth dress in manners that That are foreign to them	60 30%	80 40%	40 20%	20 10%

Table 1 above depicts percentage opinion of respondents on research question one which seek to find out the impact of social media trends on youths in Jos South LGA. The analysis revealed that, over 140 students representing 70 percent of the respondents agreed to item one which states that, social media trends can affect youths attitude and behavior in Jos South LGA. The analysis also showed that, 150 students representing 75% of the respondents agreed that, social media trends influences youth interaction in Jos South as only 25% of the respondents disagreed. Item 3 in the analysis also revealed that, 160 respondents representing 80% of the respondents agreed that, social media trends affects the manner of speech and speaking among youths. On item four 140 students representing 70% agreed that, social media trends affects writing ability of youths in Jos South. Finally item five have it that, social media trends makes youths to dress in manners that are foreign to the society as 140 respondents representing 70% agreed and the remaining 30% disagreed to the item.

4.2 Research question two: Why do youths in Jos South follow social media trends?

Table 2. Percentage of respondents' opinion on research question two

S/n	Items	SA %	A %	D %	SD %
1.	Youths follow social media trends because of peer Influence	60 30%	80 40%	40 20%	20 10%
2.	Youths follow social media trends to learn current Happenings	100 50%	50 25%	30 15%	20 10%
3.	Youths follow social media trends to learn Dressing and slangs	60 30%	60 30%	30 15%	50 25%
4.	Pornography and obscene events makes youths Follow social media trends	100 50%	60 30%	20 10%	20 10%
5.	Entertainment is the reason why youths follow Social media trends	80 40%	80 40%	20 10%	20 10%

Table 2 above depicts percentage opinion of respondents on research question two which seek to find out why youths in Jos South follow social media trends. The analysis revealed that over 140 students representing 70 percent of the respondents agreed to item one which states that, youths follow social media trends because of peer influence. On item 2 the analysis also showed that, 150 students representing 75% of the respondents agreed that, youths follow social media trends to learn current happenings as only 25% of the respondents disagreed. Item 3 in the analysis revealed that, 120 students representing 60% of the respondents agreed that, youths follow social media trends to learn slangs and dressing. On item four 160 students representing 80% agreed that, pornography and obscene events makes youths follow social media trends. Finally item five states that, entertainment is the reason why youths follow social media trends as the response rate showed that 80% of the respondents agreed and the remaining 20% disagreed to the item.

4.3 Research question three: How does social media trends affect means of communication and behavior among youths in Jos South LGA?

Table 3. Percentage of respondents opinion on research question three

S/n	Items	SA %	A %	D %	SD %
1.	Social media trends affects youths style of communication by using abbreviations	60 30%	80 40%	40 20%	20 10%
2.	Social media trends makes youths speak bad english	100 50%	50 25%	30 15%	20 10%
3.	Social media trends expose youths to bad dressing Habits	60 30%	60 30%	30 15%	50 25%
4.	Social media trends affects relationship and attitude Of youths	100 50%	60 30%	20 10%	20 10%
5.	The way of life and behavior of youths in Jos South Is largely affected by social media trends	80 40%	80 40%	20 10%	20 10%

Table 3 above depicts percentage opinion of respondents on research question three which seek to find out how social media affects means of communication and behavior among youths. The analysis revealed that, over 140 students representing 70 percent of the respondents agreed to item one which states that, social media trends affects youths style of communication because of abbreviations and shorthand. On item 2 the analysis also showed that, 150 students representing 75% of the respondents agreed that, social media trends makes youth speak poor English as only 25% of the respondents disagreed. Item 3 in the analysis revealed that, 120 students representing 60% of the respondents agreed that, expose youths to bad dressing habit. On item four 160 students representing 80% agreed that, social media trends affects relationship and attitude of youths. Finally item five states that, the way of life and behavior of youths in Jos South is largely influenced by social media trends as the response rate showed that 80% of the respondents agreed and the remaining 20% disagreed to the item.

4.4 Research question four: How can youths in Jos South be guided towards judicious use of social media trends?

Table 4. Percentage of respondents opinion on research question four

S/n	Items	SA %	A %	D %	SD %
1.	Sensitizing youths on effects of social media Trends will make youths better	60 30%	80 40%	40 20%	20 10%
2.	There should be censorship of media to prevent Youths from accessing social media sites that Promotes obscene contents	80 40%	60 30%	30 15%	30 15%
3.	Parents should monitor use of social media of Their wards to prevent them from adult contents	60 30%	60 30%	30 15%	50 25%
4.	Youths should be properly educated on how to use social media for positivity	110 55%	60 30%	20 10%	10 5%
5.	Youths should be informed on the need to only Follow social media trends that can impact in their life positively	90 45%	60 30%	30 15%	20 10%

Table 4 above depicts percentage opinion of respondents on research question four which suggest ways of curtailing effects of social media trends on youths in Jos South LGA. The analysis revealed that over 140 students representing 70 percent of the respondents agreed to item one which states that, sensitizing the youths on effects of social media trends will make youths better. On item 2 the analysis also showed that, 140 students representing 70% of the respondents agreed that, there should be censorship of media to prevent youths from assessing social media sites that promotes obscene contents Item 3 in the analysis revealed that, 120 students representing 60% of the respondents agreed that, parents should monitor use of social media among their wards to prevent them from adult contents. On item four 170 students representing 85% agreed that, youths should be properly educated on how to use social media positively. Finally item five states that, youths should be informed on the need to only follow social media trends that can impart in their life positively as the response rate showed that 75% of the respondents agreed and the remaining 25% disagreed to the item.

4.5 Discussion

The analysis of findings revealed that social media trends significantly impact youths in Jos South LGA, influencing their attitudes, behaviors, communication styles, and lifestyles. The study showed that these trends affect youth interactions, speech manners, and writing abilities, often leading to negative outcomes such as bad English usage, poor dressing habits, and exposure to obscene content. Motivations for following social media trends include peer pressure, curiosity, entertainment, and fascination with slangs, dressing styles, and pornography. These influences often shape youths' behavior and relationships negatively. However, the study highlighted strategies for mitigating these effects, including sensitization programs, parental monitoring, media censorship, and promoting the positive

use of social media. These findings align with scholarly opinions, such as those of Medone (2019) and Traynor (2019), who emphasized the behavioral impacts of social media trends, and Ahmed and Qazi, (2024), who noted the tendency of youths to compare their realities with unrealistic portrayals on social media. Overall, the findings underscore the complex and often detrimental influence of social media trends on youth in the study area.

Summary of Findings

The findings revealed the following

1. That social media trends significantly influence the attitudes, behaviors, and communication styles of youths in Jos South LGA.
2. It was discovered that these trends affect speech manners, writing abilities, and social interactions, often leading to negative behaviors such as the use of slangs, bad English, and exposure to inappropriate content.
3. Youths were found to follow social media trends due to peer pressure, curiosity, entertainment, and influences from dressing styles and slangs.
4. That social media trends impact relationships and lifestyle choices, promoting behaviors like bad dressing and inappropriate communication.

V. Conclusion

The study concluded that, social media trends have a profound impact on the behaviors, communication, and lifestyle choices of youths in Jos South LGA, often promoting negative outcomes. However, with proper sensitization, parental monitoring, and targeted education, youths can be guided to harness social media trends for positive and constructive purposes, minimizing the adverse effects observed in the study.

Recommendations

1. Stakeholders, including schools and community organizations, should organize sensitization programs to educate youths on the potential negative impacts of social media trends and promote its positive use.
2. Parents should actively monitor their wards' social media activities and guide them toward responsible usage to prevent exposure to inappropriate content.
3. Government and media regulatory bodies should enforce stricter measures to censor social media platforms, limiting access to obscene or harmful content.
4. Youths should be encouraged to follow and engage with social media content that inspires positive behaviors, such as educational materials, skill development resources, and motivational trends.

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