THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF EDO STATE

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BEING A PROJECT WORK SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY IN PARTIAL FUFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF A BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (BSc) DEGREE IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

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CERTIFICATION

We, the undersigned certify that this project was carried out by **Gift Idebasun IDEMUDIA,** with the Matriculation Number; **SSC1809604** in the Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria, in partial fulfillment for the award of Bachelor of Science Degree in Political Science.

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(Project Supervisor)	**(Head of Department)**
Date_____	**Date_____**

DEDICATION

This project work is dedicated to God Almighty for His mercy and grace and to my family whose resources was sacrificed for this purpose.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the Impact of Social Media on COVID-19 Pandemic in Nigeria citing Edo State as its case study. Social media is fundamental in the dissemination of information about the deadly coronavirus as it has always been with several other phenomena. From the city of Wuhan, China, the deadly pandemic brought huge devastation to the international community. In the wake of this, Edo State which is one of Nigeria's states isn't spared as the visibility of the spread called for precautionary measures. To further understand the impact or role of social media, the study keenly adopted both primary and secondary sources of data. In the primary source, the quantitative methodology was adopted with questionnaires issued to respondents in both Ekpoma, Auchi and Oredo to make up for the three Senatorial Districts in the State. While secondary data such as newspapers, magazines, texts, the internets was employed for historical analysis. The findings of the study showed that the social media was instrumental in combating the COVID-19 pandemic in Edo State showing a positive relationship between the variables. Finally, the study recommended the importance of government assistance in boosting the position of technology in Edo State and Nigeria at large.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The Social Media is perceptiblyleading other mass media of communication all over the world. Also referred to as New media or Social networking sites, social media include some websites and applications designed, hosted and powered by the Internet to enable people (the users) interact, transact, share information and ideas. Some of them are Badoo, BumbleBuzznet, Classmates, Facebook, Flickr, Friendica, Friendster, Happn, Hotor Not, and Hi5.

Others are Instagram, Kik, Kuaishou, Likee, LINE, LinkedIn, Live Journal Lovoo, Moco Space, Musically, My Space, Ning, Ok Cupid, and Pinterest. There are also Quora, Reddit, Zoosk, Zoom, YouTube, WhatsApp, WeChat, VK, Viber, Twoo, Twitter, Tumblr, Tinder, TikTok, Telegram, Tagged, Snapchat, StumbleUpon, Skype, Skout, and Signal. (Hudson, 2020; Gkgigs, 2021). Its popularity is probably because it performs virtually all the functions being of the traditional or mainstream media (radio, televisions, newspapers and magazines) at low-cost, timelyand users' convenient. Among their functions are news dissemination, cultural propagation,status conferral, agenda setting, education and entertainment. White (2021) identifies its other functions to include provision of safety

tips, prevention of misinformation, fundraising and collaboration. This is possible because Gkgigs (2021) observes that 60% of the world population are on Social Media.

The Coronavirus (Covid-19) is an infectious disease which causes respiratory infections ranging from the common cold to more severe respiratory difficulties. It originated from the Hunan seafood market at Wuhan, China where live bats, snakes, raccoon dogs, wild animals among others were sold in December 2019 (Shereen et al., 2020, pp. 91–98) and was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization on 11 March 2020 (WHO, 2020). Since its identification, the virus is said to have accounted for about 512,311 deaths globally out of a swooping statistic of 10,514,028 positive cases which sadly increases exponentially daily (WHO, 2020). The first victim of the virus in Nigeria was an Italian man who arrived in the country on the 25 February 2020. He was admitted to an Isolation Centre in Yaba, Lagos after showing symptoms of the virus (NCDC 2020). Subsequently, the cases increased and, as at the time of this paper, almost 28,711 positive cases and 11,665 recuperated persons have been identified (NCDC, 2020).

Experts believed that the social media has impact on the world population. Some of them including Gonzalez-Padilla &Tortolero-Blanco (2020), Ahmed (2020), Taylor (2020) and Okwodu (2020) disclose that the impact was more felt at the wake of coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The pandemic, which ravaged the world, is reported to have increased the numbers of social media users astronomically. It was on social media the World Health Organisation (WHO), various countries and the National Centre for

Disease Control (NCDC), States governments and others broke the news of the virus, how they could be prevented, and other relevant information. It was also utilized in popularizing coronavirus precautionary measures like social distancing, physical distancing, lockdown, vaccines, face or nose masks usage, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), ventilator, etc.(White, Thornton, Upham, andDolcourt, 2020).

Most of these organisations and states either designed or redesigned their websites and myriads of social media platforms for timely update of their citizens on COVID-19 and other related matters. In Nigeria, specifically, the federal government, the 36 states government and organisations, also employed it to appeal for financial or material supports from the public in order to fortify their members well to combat and contain the spread of the virus. They also utilized it for disseminating information about aids, donations or supports received from individuals, religious institutions, and corporate entities. It is against this background that this study intends to assess the impact of social media in the fight against the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in Nigeria, particularly Edo State.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The COVID-19 pandemic is undoubtedly one of the most devastating disease the world has experienced. The deadliness and swiftness in transferring and the danger of its contraction constitutes an unpleasant phenomenon any individual or humans within and a state should be concerned about. In the wake of the spread of the deadly pandemic, quite

a number of international and domestic health agencies, as well as governments of states and sub-states or nationals sought several viable mechanisms for communication. The point was to enlighten the citizenry on the deadliness of the virus, and as well, proffer via the mechanisms which the social media constituted an aspect, precautionary measures that would aid the reduction of contraction.

In view of the foregoing, one expects positivity following the adoption of the social media platforms as pertinent ones for disseminating and communicating to the dynamics of the situation to the general. While this is key, one is bound to ponder how impacting such mechanism is to the nation and globe. But for purpose of this study, our concentration lies in Edo State, and whether the impact of the social media reflected positive in the wake of the pandemic.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study was guided by the following objectives:

1. To find out the impact of social media in Edo state in the fight against coronavirus.
2. To find out if the numbers of social media users increased in Edo state since the wake of coronavirus pandemic.
3. To find out if the social media is being utilized in the fight against the spread of coronavirus in Edo state.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What is the impact of social media in the fight against coronavirus pandemic in Edo state?
2. Did the number of social media users increase in Edo state in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic?
3. Was social media effective in the fight against the spread of coronavirus in Edo state?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

1. There is a significant relationship between social media and the fight against coronavirus pandemic in Edo state.
2. There's a significant relationship between social media users increased in Edo state in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

1.6 Research Significance

The significance undoubtedly cannot be overemphasized as it will serve as enlightenment to requisite health agencies domestically and globally aiding them with suitable means of communicating to their citizenry and the global scene when phenomenon such as the deadly COVID-19 constitute the enemy to good health.

On the other hand, this research will be useful to potential investors in the mass media sector, as well as health practitioners, government officials, and individuals looking for

effective ways to raise awareness about viruses and diseases and the importance of living a healthy lifestyle. Furthermore, future academics doing research on admass media campaigns against illnesses and viruses might benefit from the findings.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The study focuses on reaching out to one community each from the three Senatorial districts domiciled in Edo state. The three Senatorial districts are namely: Edo North; Edo South and Edo Central Senatorial districts. In tandem with the above, Auchi, Oredo and Ekpoma.

1.8 Research/Study Limitation

Finance is the hub of the wheel in the conduct of any research work. This is so because the research work may need certain fundamental materials, and possibly funds for migration from one geographical location to the other. Based on monetary constraint, the study is only able to assess three communities as representatives for each of the Senatorial districts in Edo state thereby restricting its focus.

Also, the barriers of language, lack of willingness of some members of the population under study poses a limitation due to their level of enlightenment and communicative level.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the literature review of the topic under study and it is devoted to the review of previous study, the essence of this is to know what others have done concerning the subject matter. Therefore, this chapter covers origin of the Historical Evolution of Social Media, Brief History of COVID-19 Pandemic, COVID-19 in Nigeria and the Gratifications theory in Perspective.

2.2 The Historical Evolution of Social Media

Social media which is defined as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content" (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010) have make a revolutionary change in the lives of individuals as well as promotional strategies of organizations. With social media people can undertake several activities like collaborating, exchanging information, sharing and sending messages over an electronic medium, engaging collectively and interacting, sharing contents like ideas, text, photos,

images and video and they are creators and co-creators of this material (Thackeray et al., 2008) and also it has become a mandatory element in many companies' marketing strategy rather than merely an optional element of the promotional mix (Hanna et al., 2011). The purpose of this pa per is to provide historical roots and evolution of social media. The developments in the field of social media have been presented chronologically in the subsequent sub sections of the paper followed by a brief summary of the important developments in social media. Studying history of social media can help us better understand just how much, and how quickly, the world around us is changing.

The primitive postal system dated back to 550 B.C when messages were delivered over long distances by the horse riders, evolved into a sophisticated mode of communication over a period of time. In 1792 Telegraph was invented, which facilitated long-distance transmission of messages without the physical exchange of an object. Developed in 1865, the pneumatic post which in order to carry capsules from one area to another used the underground pressurized air tubes and was a fast way of delivering letters. Subsequently the revolutionary means of communication viz telephone and radio were invented in 1876 and 1895.Twentieth century marked revolutionary change in technology. Super computers came up in 1940s and thereafter networks between the computers started developing which later led to the development of internet.

In late 1970s, Bulletin Board Systems (BBS) came into inception which were the first kind of social networking site that permitted its users to log on and interact with one

another, similar to the way we do currently although at a much fast pace now. Users were accommodated on personal computers and get dial in through the modem of host computer (Emerson, 1983). There are various kind of technologies prevailing that support virtual community communication. But, if we go through the communities which are interacting through “bulletin board technology”, the user can send a message to anyone in the community or even to the general public. Computer-based message systems especially the computer mail systems that support some form of BBS were found very useful. The computer mail system covers diversified areas viz, “organising the service”, “accessing messages from personal workstations”, “naming”, “translation between different mail systems and usage of computer mail” and also “bulletin board systems”. Figures collected from various computers interacting through UseNet indicated that 25% of the users practice bulletin board system whose usage frequency is at par with the popular computer software packages (Edighoffer, 1986). Schroeder et al. (1984) reported that “Grapevine” which is a computer mail system, served more than 4,400 users in 1983, with each user sending two messages and reading eight messages on an average daily. Bulletin boards also offered a unique feature that anyone could witness the community interaction without actually registering on it. This conversation in the community can also be preserved indefinitely, providing the potential members to access the interaction before joining. Although in order to avoid congestion, in a chat room, at a time only a few numbers of people can communicate, whereas a huge number of people can engage

in the various aspects of a bulletin board community at a given time (Ridings &Gefen, 2004).

UseNet, one among the oldest computer network communications systems initiated in the year 1979 almost a decade prior to the development of World Wide Web. These newsgroups were developed as discussion forums which allowed the users to exchange user-generated content and were a prominent source of consumer information (Bickart& Schindler, 2001). UseNet permitted its users to communicate with each other with the help of a virtual newsletter (Hendricks, 2013); it was required to develop the newsreader clients, an antecedent to RSS (Rich Site Summary) feed readers which normally follow blogs and news sites and allow its users to post articles or posts to newsgroups. UseNet didn't have an administrator or a centralised server which distinguished them from Bulletin Board Systems. Group sites like Google Groups and Yahoo! Groups practice a number of conventions given by the UseNet systems (Emerson, 1983).

Online services like Prodigy and CompuServe, considered to be the first real "corporate" attempt at accessing the Internet. CompuServe, developed in 1969 was the earliest form of internet and was a pioneer to offer chat service to its users. Its competitor, Prodigy offered a similar service at a much affordable price (Hendricks, 2013). They were followed by Genie (General Electric Network for Information Exchange) launched by General Electric in 1985 which was a text base service. It also offered features like games, shopping, mails and a forum known as 'Round Tables' (Emerson, 1983) and was

considered to be the competitor of CompuServe. In 1986 Listserv was launched which was considered to be the first electronic mailing list software application, earlier to which email lists were managed manually. Listserv allowed the sender to send an email which may reach several receivers at the same time. Alongside Genie in 1980s, WELL (Whole Earth Lectronic Link), Listserv, and IRC (Internet Relay Chat) were launched. "WELL" was one among the oldest operating virtual communities created by Stewart Brand and Larry Brilliant at Sausalito, California (Ritholz, 2010). Internet Relay Chat, invented in 1988, offered features like sharing of files, links and keeping in touch. It fast emerged as an instant message sharing program for personal computers (Emerson, 1983). Internet Relay Chat, a type of real-time chat, also called as "internet text messaging or synchronous conferencing" is created for group communication (Ritholz, 2010). Reaching the 1980s, with home computers becoming popular, social media also became more sophisticated and Internet relay chats, continued to be quite popular during the 1990's (Hendricks, 2013).

In 1995, the social networking site Classmates.com was launched followed by SixDegrees.com in 1997. These sites were considered to be the pioneer recognizable social network sites in which the users could create their profile, list and surf their friends (Winder, 2007). Few features of SixDegrees were similar to a few dating sites which existed earlier for example AIM and ICQ buddy which allowed people to use individual features of SNS (Social Networking Sites). Six Degrees offered multiple features on a single site for the first time and it advertised itself as a tool using which the users may

connect with each other and send messages. Although SixDegrees.com had several millions of users, it closed down in the year 2000. A number of service providers like Asian Avenue, Black Planet, and MiGente came up during 1997 to 2001, combining different features like creating profile, sending friend requests and identifying friends on their personal profiles (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). In the year 1999, Live Journal was launched in which people could mark others as their friends and invite them to follow their journals. In the same year Korean virtual worlds site "Cyworld" was launched followed by the Swedish web community "LunarStorm" with similar features like guestbook, friend list and diary pages (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). The launch of Ryze.com in the year 2001 marked the next wave of social networking sites as it was more oriented towards business and helped its users to leverage their business networks (Festa, 2003).

Technology started to catch up 2002 onwards when Friendster was launched which changed the game by giving its users control over whom they want to connect with rather than a computer managed environment (Winder, 2007). Founders of the popular sites viz: Ryze, Tribe.net, LinkedIn, and Friendster were closely connected with each other, believed that they will never become business rivals and would support each other (Festa, 2003). Ryze met an end as it could never attain mass popularity. Tribe.net concentrated on a niche; Friendster, the most popular site among these contemporaries, launched in 2002 to compete with a dating site Match.com also proved to be a disappointment (Cohen, 2003). Winder (2007) reported that Friendster expanded its services by providing more

facilities to its users like control over whom they interacted with rather than simply providing them a computer-managed environment.

According to Mew (2006) only those could join this site who were invited by any current user of Friendster. Friendster's popularity plunged with over 300,000 users leaving it due to technical and social problems. Out of the four popular networking sites, LinkedIn sustained successfully as a provider of business service and by assisting people to harness their social networks for jobs (Boyd, 2004). There was an influx of social networking sites 2003 onwards. Shirky (2003) social software analyst coined the term "YASNS (Yet Another Social Networking Service)''to all such sites. Facebook came into inception in 2004 as "Harvard only site" which later opened up for students for high school and then to those older than 13 years of age (Boyd, 2007). Facebook and Twitter, both became widely available to the users across the world by 2006 and continued to be among the most popular social networking sites. Some social networking sites like Pinterest, Foursquare, Tumblr and Spotify catered to specific niches (Hendricks, 2013). With the growth of social media and user-generated content, more social networking sites based on sharing of content like FM (music), YouTube (video sharing) and Flickr (photographs sharing) came up (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Some websites became popular to the extent of becoming the national social media like that of Google's Orkut which was termed by Fragoso (2006) as "Brazilian Invasion". Orkut leveraged on other SNSs like Friendster on the ground that it does not provide information about the recent visitors to a profile which was considered to be a lure on Orkut as it permits to snoop into other users'

profiles, scrapbook and albums (Fragoso, 2006). MySpace gained popularity in the year 2003 leveraging on the rumour that Friendster is going to charge its users. As a result, the users joined MySpace as an alternative. As an added advantage, MySpace added features which distinguished it from others social sites first of all on the basis of user demand it is regularly adding features (Boyd, 2006) and secondly by permitting users to personalize their pages. Teenagers joined MySpace en-masse in 2004. One of the differentiation features offered by MySpace was that users could customize their profile and provide their detailed information along with their interests; users could also download music from MySpace which has a special profile for musical artists (Natta, 2010). These individual sites became popular in specific regions of the world like “Friendster” got momentum in the Pacific Islands, “Orkut” before gaining popularity in India was in Brazil as the most popular site (Madhavan, 2007). “Mixi” became popular in Japan, “Lunar Storm” grew in Sweden, “Hyves” gained popularity in Dutch, “Grono” got famous in Poland, “Hi5” became popular in Europe, Latin America, and South America. “Bebo” became popular in Australia, New Zealand, and United Kingdom. QQ, the Chinese messaging service became popular worldwide by adding profiles and making friends visible (McLeod, 2006).

“Facebook” gained popularity as a social networking site across several markets, viz: Malaysia, Philippines, Hong Kong, Australia, Singapore, Indonesia, Vietnam and New Zealand. On October 24, 2007, 1.6% share of Facebook was purchased by Microsoft and thus Microsoft getting rights to place international advertisements on Facebook (Stone,

2007). By the third quarter of 2017, monthly active users of Facebook had reached 2.07 billion (Statistica, 2017) as compared to July 2010, when it had 500 million active users (The Guardian, 2010), thus verifying the fact that the statistics of users of this site is on the rise. Instagram reached the count 500 million users in the first half of 2016 (Murgia, 2016). Besides these many social networking sites and social media platforms like Periscope, Minds, Gab.ai, Mastodon etc. emerged during past few years.

As evident from the developments that took place in social media over past years, we can say that the trend of these developments is likely to grow at a exponential pace in the future also. Newer types of social networking sites are connecting different types of individuals for different purposes. The usage of social media has seen immense growth in terms of users across the world including developed as well as developing countries. Usage of social networking sites has grown immensely over past decade. About 70% adults in America used minimum one SNS in 2017 (Pew Research Center, 2017). As estimated average person, in his or her lifetime, spends five years and four months on accessing social networking sites (Campbell, 2017). Smith (2017) observed that with more and more people joining internet, the number of Facebook users is also on rise. The usage rate is significantly increasing in countries like India and Indonesia; with massive populations and rapidly expanding internet penetration rates, these countries provide the platform of new Facebook users in the future. Livemint (2018) also reported that India has become highest audience country of Facebook, the popular social media platform and has crossed 241 million mark as compared to US where the number of active users of

Facebook is 240 million. Thus, entire world now, has starting using some or the other form of social media; businesses are now largely dependent on social media for promotion of their products; consumers seek information from social media; different types social media cater to specific needs of different individuals and groups. As more and more people are becoming dependent on social media for different purposes, in the future also there is likelihood of emergence of even more sophisticated form of social media which will cover the masses across the world. Based on the available literature and trends, we can conclude that the times to come will witness even more developments in the field of social media which will take communication technology by stride. Studying history of social media can help us better understand just how much, and how quickly, the world around us is changing.

2.3. Brief History of COVID-19 Pandemic

Members of the Coronaviridae (CoV) family are characterized by a single-stranded, positive sense RNA with a helical capsid. This enzoonotic virus can remain viably infectious even after capsid destruction through its ability to replicate within the cytoplasm of infected cells. Although this family of viruses is mostly associated with the common cold, there are much more virulent species within the taxa (Brian and Baric, 2005). Notably, the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) CoV epidemic was thought to originate in bats, with the civet cat being the intermediate host prior to human infection (Guan et al., 2003). In 2007, Cheng et al. (2007) published an ominous report

alluding to the potential fora catastrophic reemergence of a SARS-like disease, referencing the large reservoir of virus in mammals. In December 2019, a cluster of patients in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, presented with severe atypical pneumonia, and experts named the illness coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19; European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, 2020). Although the source of this viral outbreak remains elusive, the original 27 cases were linked to Southern China's Wuhan Seafood Wholesale Market (European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, 2020). This market is known for selling various bush-meat and other wild animals to the public for consumption, which was speculated to include an unidentified intermediate host for COVID-19. As in SARS-CoV, bats are understood to be the main host of the COVID-19 virus.

On January 20, 2020, a 35-year old man residing in Washington state with recent travel exposure in Wuhan, China, was identified as the first case of COVID-19 in the United States (Holshue et al., 2020). The reproduction number of the virus is estimated to be an average of 3.28 (mean R0 = 3.28), indicating that each infected person is likely to pass the disease to >3 people (Liu et al., 2020). Fear of an increasing epidemic emerged with the identification of four cases in Thailand, Japan, and South Korea. An extended latency phase was postulated to occur, during which infected individuals remained asymptomatic, as two of four cases reported no contact with the Wuhan Central Hospital or the aforementioned market (Rothe et al., 2020). Within 60 days, in response to the surge in medical need overloading medical care capacity in Wuhan, the Chinese government

constructed and designated two new hospitals to care for the additional patients. In addition, reverse transcriptase polymerase chain reaction, and next-generation sequencing tests were made readily available to collect specimens of sputum, blood, stool, and bronchoalveolar lavage fluid cultures, which lead to the discovery of a novel coronavirus, SARS CoV-2, now known as COVID-19 (Wu et al., 2020a). Evolving epidemiologic evidence determined COVID-19 s capacity to spread through human-to-human droplet transmissions, with airborne transfer under investigation (Wu et al., 2020b). A subsequent study identified the presence of the virus in stool samples of an infected host, suggesting the potential for fecal-oral spread (Holshue et al., 2020). A latency period of up to 2 weeks resulted in the rapid spread of COVID-19 through asymptomatic individuals harboring the disease, with international travel hubs playing a vital role in global transmission. Modern Internet infrastructure led to rapid generation of global index cases (Dong et al., 2020). In late January 2020, the first U.S. travel restrictions targeted travel from China,the source of the outbreak. Weeks later, additional travel bans included travel from Europe and the United Kingdom.

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a pandemic on March 11, 2020, with a global case total of >100,000. As of July 21, 2020, the worldwide total number of confirmed COVID-19 cases eclipsed 14.8 million with >600,000 deaths across six continents (Fig. 1). The United States surpassed China in the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths by March 31, 2020, and the current total number of cases as of June 21, 2020 exceeds 3.8 million with >140,000 deaths, with reports in all 50 states

(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2020a). To help curtail the spread of COVID-19, cruise ships were detained to hold passengers onboard in a 14-day quarantine. For example, a Diamond Princess cruiseship harboring infected persons was docked outside California (Saey, 2020). This Diamond Princess cruiseship had >700 infected crew and passengers onboard a tightly packed vessel harbouring>3700 individuals. Cruise lines create the perfect environment for infection to run rampant, as seen in the past with norovirus outbreaks causing widespread gastrointestinal distress. Unfortunately, passengers not infected had to wait through the same protocol until the ship was able to dock safely. For this reason, the CDC issued a public warning against traveling on any cruise ships for the time being, especially for high-risk individuals (CDC, 2020b). As of March 14, the CDC Director issued a no-sail order, and cruise ships remained voluntarily out of service from U.S. ports for the next 30 days (CDC, 2020c). The no-sail order was extended on April 9 to continue for a 100-day period unless the CDC Director or Secretary of Health and Human Services declares COVID-19 to no longer be a public health emergency, whereby the order can be terminated early.

2.4. COVID-19 In Nigeria

The year 2020 was welcomed by a deadly viral outbreak called coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), previously known as 2019- novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV). COVID-19 was reported from Wuhan, the capital and major business city of Hubei province, China (Wuhan city, 2020). In a very short time, the disease spread across China and cases were

reported with an exponential increase in morbidity and mortality rates. The disease has evolved and continues to be a very serious emergency across the globe. On March 11 2020 the WHO declared COVID-19 a pandemic, having met the epidemiological criteria of having infected>100,000 people in at least 100 countries (Callaway, 2020). Symptoms exhibited by COVID-19 disease range from fever, cough, respiratory symptoms, shortness of breath, and breathing difficulties (World Health Organization (WHO), 2020). Fatal outcomes can include lower-respiratory tract illnesses, such as pneumonia and bronchitis, or acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDs) and severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in severe diseases. These complications are more pronounced in patients with underlying health conditions such as cardiopulmonary disease, immuno-compromised individuals, infants and the elderly (Centre for Disease Control Prevention (CDC), 2020).

The global mortality rate of COVID-19 is currently estimated to be 3.41% (COVID, 2020). The virological characteristics of COVID-19 may suggest lower survival rates of these pathogens in tropical Africa. However, shortly after the virus appeared in late 2019, experts warned of the risks of it spreading in Africa because of the continent's close commercial links with Beijing and the fragility of its medical services. On the African continent, although there had been pockets of recorded infections, Nigeria's first index case arrived on February 28 2020; since then the cases have risen every day to 323 confirmed cases and 10 deaths as of 13th April 2020 (Wikipedia, 2020). Currently, the case fatality ratio of COVID-19 infection in Nigeria is 0. 03 (i.e. 3% of total confirmed

cases). This value is less than that calculated from the global figures (CFR = 0.06). The actual numbers of people infected are unknown, as apparently healthy peoples are not tested unless they have a travelhistory to high-index countries within a stipulated time period. Given this, we suggest that the number of infected people could be more in Nigeria. This could lead to underreporting of COVID-19 associated deaths, as already suggested in other countries (African News, 2020). Although the recorded cases and estimated mortality rate may seem low (Table 1), it is important to note that Nigeria is the largest black nation with a population of>200 million people and with about 3.1% elderly population. Adjusting for this highest-risk population (i.e. older population), Nigeria has about 6.4 million people aged>65 years that are at risk of this infection. This is aside from other vulnerable populations such as those with pre-existing underlying health conditions like diabetes, high blood pressure, other cardiovascular diseases, and cancers. In addition, it is currently projected that Africa will have its fair share of the worst effects of this disease by the end of the pandemic (The Economist,2020).More so,Africancountries are knowntohave fragile health systems and this remains a source of concern, especially inthe event ofincreaseoutbreaks.Ifthese cases continue to escalate, it has been estimated that between 9–11% of infected patients will eventually need critical care and require intensive care (ICU) (Africa in Focus, 2020; Remuzzi and Remuzzi, 2020).

Africa's current national health systems cannot effectively respond to the growing needs of those already infected patients, especially those requiring admission into ICU for

ARDs and SARS COV-2 pneumonia. An inventory of ICU units in Africa would reveal dilapidated and obsolete facilities available for the management of such patients that may require these facilities. In the few instances where modern facilities are present, they are reserved for the elites. The arrival of the virus into the continent has seen an influx of philanthropic gestures aimed at providing palliative measures such as ambulatory services and makeshift facilities. However, COVID-19 has once again brought to the fore the underlying need, as a matter of urgency, to dedicate resources for the provision of standard critical care facilities such as modern equipped laboratories, resilient ICUs and hospital facilities including beds, ventilators and human resources training. There is therefore an emergent need to scale up the ICU units in Africa, including Nigeria. The provision of quarantine or isolation facilities can also be a challenge in Africa. The continent may lack the expertise for timely tracing of contacts with an infected victim. COVID-19 pathogen represents a particular challenge in that it is difficult to detect. The virus may be present in an individual who has few or no symptoms, allowing it to spread quietly in African countries that typically have a shortage of equipment, especially diagnostic tools. This was the case of the Italian index case who was only detected in Nigeria 48 hours after entering into the country (Centre for Disease Control Prevention (CDC), 2020).

In the eventuality of the current predictions of more cases, Africa ultimately stands disadvantaged with fragile economies and health systems. The effect will be more evident with higher recorded deaths. Hence, the need for a coordinated international

response to the current pandemic COVID-19 virus cannot be overemphasized, especially in Africa. It is necessary for African leaders and policymakers to utilize the rare opportunity opened up by the COVID-19 outbreak to begin strengthening of the public health systems and disease surveillance, while managing suspected cases of COVID-19 to avert impending disaster through further negligence in Africa. The current collaborative efforts from the World Health Organization, federal and state government health ministries, health institutes, non-governmental organizations, and researchers are what is needed. The Africa Center for Disease Control (Africa CDC) has been at the frontline of leading the continent's response to the COVID-19 outbreak. The Africa CDC has been building nations' capacities for preparedness and response to the disease, including prompt case identification, diagnosis and use of smart approaches to educate and sensitise the continent about the infection.

Similarly, the efforts of the African WHO Regional office is quite commendable. The office has consistently provided updated information about the evolving disease and has provided diagnostic materials to member countries, with the aim of halting or at best limiting the spread of the infection across Africa. To further strengthen countries' preparedness there has been ongoing sensitisation of communities, training of healthcare workers and strengthening of surveillance mechanisms in communities. For Nigeria, with the largest population on the continent, it is important to emphasise that improving the surveillance systems will go a long way in containing importation of the deadly virus and the consequent spread within the African region. Strengthening regional cooperation of

all health institutions in Africa and activation of stricter policies at the ports of entry will go a long way to forestall unexpected outbreaks going forward. Furthermore, efforts towards early detection and diagnosis would be better if time lags between tests and diagnosis were reduced, to encourage more people to test and contain the spread of COVID-19. To conclude, in the coming days, more robust collaborationwith global and regional partners will be very crucial to fast-track the acquisition and utilisation of available resources and potential interventions.

2.5. Gratifications Theory in Perspective

This study rests upon Uses and Gratifications theory. The theory was initially introduced by Elihu Katz in the early 1970s to explain how people select specific media and make use of same to their benefits (Spring, 2020 and Halphen et al, 2019). Uses and gratifications theory also attempts to explain the impact of media message on people. It extends to also examine the functions of a medium, with focus on the assumption that motivation of an audience is a crucial factor (Spring, 2020). Further, the theory elucidates that the motivation of an individual to connect with others determines his choice of a particular media, and that this also affects the usage and interpretation of the content obtained from the selected media (Chen and Conroy, 2016). In other words, people choose a specific media type or form on the basis of their wanting to connect with other users, and by extension, this factor also impacts on the way they interpret the messages and content therefrom. Uses and gratification theory was initially developed to explain how people select and use traditional media, but has in recent times extended to understanding the use of Internet and even social media (Thompson, Wang and Daya,

2019). Researchers such as Apuke and Omar (2020) in a study to understand fake news sharing amongst social media users with reference to COVID-19 found that people can gain gratifications from using social media which can also lead them to share fake news.

Similarly, Dunne, Lawlor and Rowley (2020) conducted a study on the use of social networking sites amongst young people with focus on U & G and found out that people use SNS for relationship conservation, information seeking, and peer approval. Gratifications such as status-seeking and information seeking were the findings of a study by Thompson, Wang and Daya (2019). Uses and gratifications theory is the theoretical framework for this study as it helps to understand why people choose social media as platform to seek information and the gratifications derive therefrom. It also helps justify why social media weighs so much influence and therefore becomes a source of concern with regards to the fight against COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria.

CHAPTER THREE

3.1. Research Design

This is the arrangement of condition for the allocation and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine important information to the research aim with economy in procedure. It is also the overall strategy the researcher chooses to integrate the diverse components of the study in a coherent and logical way, thereby ensuring the issue of the research problem is effectively addressed. It also constitutes the blueprint for collection, measurement and analysis of data (De Vaus, 2001). It is the aforementioned basis that

this research sees the whole study and realizes the place and pertinent successive step that will be required to understand the impact of social media on the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria (Edo State in perspective).

3.2. Sources of Data

Here, the researcher source for data to enable him solve the problematic of the study. The sources in this light includes primary and secondary sources of data collection.

Primary Sources of Data Collection

The researcher here adopts the survey system of collecting data from the respondents through the use of structured questionnaires. This simply implies that data collected here are raw and goes a long way to aid the researcher for quality work.

Secondary Sources of Data Collection

Here, data is collected from textbooks, journals, magazines, newspapers, online materials, etc. used by other researchers. In the aforementioned case, data has already been used by previous authors or researchers.

3.3 Population of the Study

The population of study is generally a large collection of individuals or objects that is the main focus of a scientific query. Researchers often cannot test every individual in the population because it too expensive and time consuming. A population is a theoretically

specified aggregation of survey elements. The population of interest should be clearly specified by the researcher (Osemwota, 1996:132). Population of this study comprises of three Senatorial Districts in Edo State namely Edo North, Edo South and Edo Central with Auchi, Oredo and Ekpoma representing the aforementioned.

3.4. Sample Size

Sampling is the process of selecting units (people, organizations, etc.) from a population of interest so that studying we may fairly generalize our results back to the population from which they chosen. The sample size is a frame sampling unit. It is the actual list of sampling from the sample or some stage of sample is collected (Osemota, 1996:132). The sample size of this study is drawn from three clans or communities where a total of 30 questionnaires will be administered to members of the communities comprising adults and youths.

3.5. Sampling Technique

The sampling technique refers to the various methodology or process adopted in the collection of data for the study. The non-probability sampling specifically the convenience, expert and snowball sampling.

3.6. Administration of Research Instrument

The research instrument is required by researchers to collect data for both qualitative and quantitative analyses as well as decision making. Questionnaires would be administered

to respondents drawn from 3 clans of the districts of study. Therefore 30 questionnaires would be administered to 3 clans as follows:

Auchi (10), Oredo (10), Ekpoma (10).

3.7.Statistical Tools of Data Analysis

Data for this study would be generated using short structured questionnaires. The use of quantitative data analysis by simple percentage has been employed for the purpose of this study. In using the aforementioned methodology, four operations have been carried out simultaneously: Editing, Grouping, Statistical tabulations, Analysis.

3.8. Research Instrument

The study would employ the use questionnaire in the collection of data where short structured questions have constructed and administered.

3.9. Validity and Reliability of Research Instrument

In order to promote validity and reliability criteria for this study, the questionnaires would be administered to respondents from the selected clans which representing the three Senatorial Districts of Edo State. This is simply to ensure that none of the targeted sample sizes are missed. To ensure validity and reliability, the questionnaire have been

structured using the Likert principle of not just limiting respondents to ‘yes’ or ‘no’ response only.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

This chapter is concerned with the presentation and analysis of data derived from our survey through the administered questionnaires. Online questionnaire format was employed to garner answers from the senatorial zones with a total of ninety-seven responses gained.

The data presentation and analysis followed this order, first, the presentation and analysis of data on the profile or social characteristics of this survey results on the impact of social media on the COVID-19 in Nigeria and thereafter the testing of hypotheses, and lastly the discussion of the findings of the study.

4.1 TABLE 1: SOCIAL PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS AND ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH VARIABLES

VARIABLE A: Sex Distribution of Respondents

Sex	**Male**	**Female**	**Percentage**
Auchi	3	10	50
Oredo	2	5	26.9
Ekpoma	2	4	23.8
Total	7	19	100

In this table, out of the 26 respondents, 13 representing 50% are from Auchi, 7 representing 26.9% from Oredo and 7 representing 23.8% from Ekpoma.

VARIABLE B: Qualification

Educational Qualification	**Number**	**Percentage**
SSCE	8	30.7
BSc	18	69.3
Total	26	100

The above table indicates that 30.7% of the respondents are Secondary School Certificate Education (SSCE) holders while 69.3% of the respondents are Bachelor of Science (BSc) holders.

VARIABLE C: Occupation

Occupation	**Number**	**Percentage**
Students	25	96.1
Others	1	3.9
Total	26	100

The above table shows the occupational stance of respondents. While 96.1% are tertiary institution students, 3.9% of the respondents are involved in other occupational activities.

VARIABLE D: Religious Affiliation

Religion	**Number**	**Percentage**
Christianity	26	100
Total	26	100

The religious affiliation table constitutes the last of the respondents' profile. The table indicates the religious stance of the respondents. And as signified above, 100% of the respondents are Christians.

TABLE 2:

Are you aware of the impact of social media during the wake of COVID-19 in Edo State?

Response	Yes	No	Total
Number	25	1	26
Percentage	96.1	3.9	100

This table examines respondent's perspectives on their awareness of the impact of social media during the wake of COVID-19 in Edo State. 96.1% claimed to be aware while 3.9% claimed to be unaware.

TABLE 3:

Social media is relevant for disseminating vital information?

Response	Yes	No	Total
Number	24	2	26

Percentage	92.3	7.7	100

The table examines respondent's perspectives on the relevance of social media in dissemination of vital information. While 92.3% agreed, that is said yes, 7.7% disagreed.

TABLE 4:

The impact of social media during the wake of COVID-19 in Edo State was positive?

Response	Yes	No	Total
Number	24	2	26
Percentage	92.3	7.7	100

The table examines respondent's perspectives on the positive effect of social media during the wake of COVID-19 pandemic in Edo State. While 92.3% affirmed its positive impact, 7.7% affirmed otherwise.

TABLE 5:

The impact of social media during the wake of COVID-19 in Edo State was negative?

Response	Yes	No	Total

Number	2	24	26
Percentage	7.7	92.3	100

The table examines the perspectives of respondents on whether the impact of the social media during the wake of COVID-19 in Edo State was negative. While 7.7% affirmed to its negative stance, 92.3% affirmed otherwise.

4.2. TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS

Hypothesis 1

There is positive impact of social media in the fight against coronavirus pandemic in Edo state.

To measure this hypothesis, we utilized the data from tables 4 and 5 which recorded the answers of respondents on the positive and negative impacts of social media in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic in Edo State.

TABLE 4:

Response	Yes	No	Total
Number	24	2	26
Percentage	92.3	7.7	100

TABLE 5:

Response	Yes	No	Total
Number	2	24	26
Percentage	7.7	92.3	100

As stated in the above tables, it was observed from the responses shown in the data that 92.3% out of 26 affirmed to the positive impact of social media in table 4 while in table 5, 92.3% out of 26 do not affirm to the question the negativity of the social media. Hence, a

significant relationship exists between the social media in the fight against COVID-19 in Edo State.

In line with the foregoing therefore, an acceptance of Research Hypothesis which is HR replicates the case.

Hypothesis 2

The number of social media users increased in Edo state in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

To measure this hypothesis as well, we utilized data from tables 4 and 5 respectively.

Response	Yes	No	Total
Number	24	2	26
Percentage	92.3	7.7	100
Response	Yes	No	Total
Number	2	24	26
Percentage	7.7	92.3	100

Again, the data from the above tables gives answers to the questions on positive and negative impacts of social media during the wake of COVID-19 pandemic in Edo State with statistical affirmation or increase pointing the positive impact in the fight of the deadly pandemic. In tandem with the foregoing, it is in order to deduce that the level of

affirmation of the positive or relevance of social media affirms increase in its application or usage as a platform for disseminating pertinent information and one of the fundamental instrumentality for combating the deadly virus.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

5.1. SUMMARY

This research work is carried out to evaluate the impact of social media in the fight against COVID-19 pandemic in Edo State. The study was conducted in Edo State in the three Senatorial zones of the State with Ekpoma, Auchi and Oredo representing each of the senatorial zones or districts.

The adopted tools and techniques for the research was administration of questionnaires. The research deemed it imperative to garner responses from 30 respondents but was only able to garner that of 26 respondents across the three senatorial districts in Edo State.

After the analysis and data presentation, the findings show that the impact and usage of social media during the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic in Edo State undoubtedly positive.

5.2 CONCLUSION

To a large extent and with responses gathered, this study has been able to achieve its objectives gaining knowledge of the impact or positive effect of social media during the wake of COVID-19 pandemic in Edo State. The fundamental objective on disseminating information cannot be overstretched. The truism is, the social media owing to its swiftness became important in the combat against COVID-19. A narrative affirmed by several respondents.

5.3 RECOMMENDATION

Sequel to the findings of this study, the researcher recommends the following:

One of the pertinent responses of the respondents which contributed in no small measure in affirming our research hypothesis points to the positive impact of social media in combating the deadly pandemic. While this should this recommended by this research in order to combat other health menaces, it is imperative that government assist in boosting the technological stances for requisite sophistication.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE,

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES,

UNIVERSITY OF BENIN,

BENIN CITY.

Dear Respondent,

I am a final year student of the above named Department and University, undertaking a research on the impact of social media on the COVID-19 in Nigeria, a case study of Edo State.

The research is purely an academic issue and not intended for any other purpose. Any information given therefore will be treated with absolute confidentiality.

You are therefore kindly requested to respond to the questions in all manner of honesty.

Thank you for your anticipated cooperation.

QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A: PERSONAL DATA

Instructions: Mark **( )** on the option you choose.

Please, kindly ensure that the respond given represent your honest opinion.

GENDER: FEMALE [ ] MALE [ ]

QUALIFICATION: SSCE [ ] OND [ ] HND [ ] BSC [ ] MSC [ ] PHD [ ]

OCCUPATION: STUDENT [ ] CIVIL SERVANT [ ] OTHERS [ ]

RELIGION: [ ] MUSLIM [ ] OTHERS [ ]

SECTION B

Are you aware of the impact of social media during the wake of COVID-19 in Edo State?

Yes { } No { }

Social media is relevant for disseminating vital information?

Yes { } No { }

The impact of social media during the wake of COVID-19 in Edo State was positive?

Yes { } No { }

The impact of social media during the wake of COVID-19 in Edo State was negative?

Yes { } No { }