

**THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS IN ENHANCING PEACE IN
NIGERIAN HIGHER INSTITUTIONS**

BY

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**BEING A PROJECT WORK SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF BACHELOR OF ARTS (B.A) DEGREE IN
MASS COMMUNICATION**

OCTOBER, 2020

DECLARATION

I, **DESTINY ESOSA AIGBEDION**, declare that this work entitled “**THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS IN ENHANCING PEACE IN NIGERIAN HIGHER INSTITUTIONS**” was written by me and is as a result of my research effort under the supervision of **DR. DANIEL EKHAREAFO**. I further wish to declare that to the best of my knowledge and belief, this work has not been previously presented in any form whatsoever for any application for a Bachelor of Arts (B.A) degree in Mass Communication or the award of any other degree elsewhere.

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CERTIFICATION

I, the undersigned certify that this project was done by **DESTINY ESOSA AIGBEDION** under my supervision and has been approved and accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Bachelor of Arts (B.A) Degree in Mass Communication in the University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria.

DR. DANIEL EKHAREAFO
Project Supervisor

Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to Jesus Christ, Collins Osasere Eguakun, and Judith Eguakun.

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LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Response Rate of Distributed Questionnaire - - - -	38
Table 2: Age Range of Respondents- - - -	39
Table 3: Sex Variation of Respondents - - - -	39
Table 4: Marital Status of Respondents - - - -	40
Table 5: Respondents' Religious Affiliations - - - -	40
Table 6: Academic Level of Respondents - - - -	41
Table 7: Are you on any social media platform? - - - -	41
Table 8: If yes, how long have you been using the social media? - - - -	42
Table 9: Do you think social media can be used to enhance peace in Nigerian higher institutions? - - - -	43
Table 10: How effective do you think the social media is in enhancing peace in Nigerian higher institutions? - - - -	43
Table 11: Do you use the social media to enhance peace in Nigerian higher institutions? - - - -	44
Table 12: Do you think the social media is underutilized in enhancing peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions?- - - -	45
Table 13: In what ways can social media platforms help enhance peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions? - - - -	45
Table 14: To what extent has social media platforms enhanced peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions? - - - -	46

Table 15: What are the significance of social media’s peace enhancement to Nigerian tertiary institutions? - - - - - 47

Table 16: What are the limitations of UNIBEN students in promoting peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions via social media? - - - - - 48

Table 17: Do you think social media users sometimes escalate conflict in Nigerian tertiary institutions through their posts and tweets? -- - - - 48

Table 18: Do you recommend peace keeping bodies and the Nigerian government sensitize social media users on the need to use the social media for peace enhancement? - - - - - 49

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Cover page	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	i
Title Page	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	ii
Declaration	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	iii
Certification	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	iv
Dedication	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	v
Acknowledgements	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	vi
List of Tables	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	vii
Table of Contents	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	viii
Abstract	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	xi

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
1.3 Objectives of the Study	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
1.4 Research Questions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
1.5 Scope of the Study	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
1.6 Significance of the Study	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
1.7 Limitations of the study	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
1.8 Operational Definition of Terms	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9
2.2 Conceptual Review	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9
2.2.1 Social Media	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9

2.2.2 The Advantages of Social Media	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12
2.2.3 The Disadvantages of Social Media	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14
2.3.1 Conflict, Social Media Surveillance and Peace Keeping-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	16
2.3.2 The Social Media and Conflict Management	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	19
2.3.3 Causes of Conflicts	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	21
2.3.4 Phases of Conflict	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	24
2.3.5 Consequences of Conflict and the Need for Peace in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	26
2.4 Empirical Review	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	28
2.5 Theoretical Framework-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	31

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHDOLOGY

3.1 Introduction-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	34
3.2 Research Design-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	34
3.3 Population of Study	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	34
3.4 Sample Size-	-	--	-	-	-	-	-	-	35
3.5 Sampling Technique	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	35
3.6 Research Instrument	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	36
3.7 Validity of Research Instrument	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	36
3.8 Reliability of Research Instrument	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	37
3.9 Method of Data Analysis	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	37

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	38
4.2 Data Presentation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	38
4.3 Answering of Research Questions-			-	-	-	-	-	-	49
4.4 Discussion of Findings	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	53

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary --	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	55
5.2 Conclusion -	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	56
5.3 Recommendations -	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	56
REFERENCES -	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	58
APPENDIX-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	61

ABSTRACT

This study examined the role of social media platforms in enhancing peace in Nigerian higher institutions using the University of Benin as case study. The research objectives were to find out ways social media platforms can help enhance peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions; establish the extent to which social media platforms are enhancing peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions; examine the significance of social media's peace enhancement to Nigerian tertiary institutions; and x-ray the hindrances of social media in promoting peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Furthermore, the study was anchored on the Media Framing theory and the research methodology was the survey using questionnaire as the research instrument. 270 copies of questionnaire were distributed to the research respondents, and while 251 were returned, 19 copies were unreturned. Findings from the study showed that there was a high usage of social media by Nigerian higher institution students; social media is effective in enhancing peace in Nigerian higher institutions but is under-utilized by students in conflict resolution and peace keeping; and that the ways social media platforms can help enhance peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions include publishing unbiased stories and pictures of the conflicts, making objective judgments and recommendations to the conflicts, and by supporting peace keeping bodies in resolving the conflicts. Based on the findings, it was recommended that Social media users, especially higher institution students should report and help enhance peace among Nigerian higher institutions through conflict resolution and peace-keeping strategies and that social media users should be mindful of their actions and inactions towards conflicts in Nigerian higher institution as such actions and inactions could escalate or de-escalate conflicts.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

One of the roles of any responsible social media is to inform, educate, and help promote peace and resolve conflicts through its reportage, tweets, statuses and contents. Peace can be defined as a state of harmony and reconciliation which leads to unity. Peace is the absence of conflict. On the other hand, conflict can be defined as a dynamic disagreement between people with incompatible opinions or principles (Anyanwu, 2014). In other words, it refers to some form of friction, or discord arising within a group when the beliefs or actions of one or more members of the group are either resisted or unacceptable to one or more members of the other group. This therefore means that conflict often arises when there is a state of incompatibility between two or more parties.

In the views of Wilmot and Bright (2010), conflict is a felt struggle between two or more independent individuals over perceived incompatible differences in beliefs, values, and goals, or differences in desires for esteem, control, and connectedness. In another definition, Darling & Christelow (2011) sees conflict as a state of incompatibility. As a state of incompatibility, conflict is described as a situation in which the concerns of two or more individuals operating within the unit appear to be contrary thereby breeding conflict. Incompatibility breeds conflict because it is a psychological state in which people cannot get along with one another in an organization (Christelow, 2011). Conflict arises when behaviour is laced with emotions, which is expressed in an aggressive form.

Brody (2013) posits that conflict can also be seen as an opposition arising from disagreement about goals, thoughts, or emotions with or among individuals, teams, departments, or organizations. Opposition in this context is all about blocking an individual or a group from achieving set goals, and this often leads to conflict because of the instant unconcealed reaction that will be put up by the party being opposed. Conflict occurs when some sort of social cords bind people. It does not occur in isolation, rather, people must be relating or be depending on one another for it to occur.

The need for peace building has been in existence right from creation when Lucifer had a conflict with Jehovah. and refused to make peace with his creator. Kane (2010) observes that conflict is one major hindrance to the progress of any society and only the promotion of peace is its true panacea. Conflict promotes stagnation as well as backwardness of the socio-economic make up of any given society. It equally enhances bitterness and hatred amongst the inhabitants of such society but peace promotes love, understanding, and progress. Scholars versed in Development Communication such as Bright (2010) argue that no development agenda be it political, economic, social, etc can succeed without peace. They further state that peace facilitates developmental pursuit, while further enriching the people the people in all facets

Several tertiary institutions in Nigeria have had and continue to have various measures of conflict and a continual need for peace. Some of the conflicts are between members of staff of the citadel with the students, and external publics; some are between fellow students, some of the conflicts are managerial problems, some are inter-citadel

conflicts, to mention only but a few. Nonetheless, the outcomes of these conflicts are always discomfoting but lead to development if well resolved.

Lending voice to peace building, Obot (2014, p.103) opines that “conflict, being a communicative behaviour, can only be resolved through a communication process, often made easier or more effective through the utilization of the mass media. When used with a high sense of social responsibility, the mass media can be indispensable in conflict resolution”.

Furthermore, Obot (2014, p.107) asserts that “in resolving conflict in modern societies, the media to a great extent provide a rendezvous for all the interest groups or aggrieved parties to ‘sit’ and express their minds on issues in contention”. This will be possible by providing and guaranteeing every citizens easy access to media facilities. All the groups in a conflict have to be represented in news, tweets, posts, and other programmes in which issues in conflict are discussed as the fact that divergent views are represented in the media platforms usually goes a long way to calm frayed nerves.

Moreover, like in the village square where there is always a mediator, persons who are neutral to the conflict, but whom aggrieved parties hold in high esteem and whose opinions are generally respected should be selected to comment on or participate in social media platforms which feature the conflict. Through this agenda-setting approach, the aggrieved parties would be slowly driven to a point of reconciliation.

This thus shows that in this era where social media is at the fingertips of everyone emphatically youths in tertiary institutions, it is indispensable in peace building, conflict

management and resolution in tertiary institutions. Anyanwu (2014, p.113) lends credence to this when he asserted that “there is no conflict so great that it dominates the freedom of a nation and its people which cannot be settled by the media”.

Considering the many invaluable abilities of social media, this study examines role of social media platforms in enhancing peace in Nigeria higher institutions with a view to finding out if Nigerians are using the platforms to promote peace or escalate conflict.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Several studies such as White (2010) have found that much as the social media is said to wheel the power of building peace and managing conflicts, conflict resolution experts have however contended that the mass media can as well trigger or escalate conflicts. In other words, social media platforms are double-edged swords. In the wrong hands, they can cause more havoc either by paying too much attention or simple inattention to conflicts.

Obot (2014, p.103) confirms the above views by stating that “the mass media are by themselves social structures and can either serve as tool for conflict exacerbation or vehicle for conflict resolution”. Also, although the social media is perceived as an institution of society that can contribute to peaceful resolution of crisis, in reality, we find that the social media users often either consciously or unconsciously contribute to the escalation of conflict in tertiary institutions rather than promoting peace. This is done when social media users generate and escalate conflicts through inciting coverage,

inadequate reporting, none reporting of conflicts and biased analysis and interpretation of conflicts in Nigerian tertiary institutions etc.

Furthermore, this researcher has found out that irrespective of the act that there are several studies on the roles of the mass media in peace building and conflict resolutions, only a few studies have comprehensively carried out researches on the role of the social media in enhancing peace in tertiary institutions. This study thus intends to fill up this literature gap and make recommendations based on our findings on how conflicts can be resolved or managed in Nigerian tertiary institutions using the social media.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to:

- (1) Find out ways social media platforms can help enhance peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions;
- (2) Establish the extent to which social media platforms are enhancing peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions;
- (3) Examine the significance of social media's peace enhancement to Nigerian tertiary institutions;
- (4) X-ray the hindrances of social media in promoting peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions

1.4 Research Questions

This study shall be established on the following research questions

1. In what ways can social media platforms help enhance peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions?
2. To what extent has social media platforms enhanced peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions?
3. What are the significance of social media's peace enhancement to Nigerian tertiary institutions?
4. What are the hindrances of social media in promoting peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions?

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study examines the role of social media platforms in enhancing peace in Nigeria tertiary institutions. Bearing in mind that there are many social media platforms in Nigeria as well as tertiary institutions, for efficient study, this research shall be delimited to studying the roles of Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter and Instagram in promoting peace in Edo State tertiary institutions.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study shall be significant to:

1. **Mass-communication students:** The findings from this study would serve as a building block for mass communication students in carrying out other similar studies in this area of knowledge.

2. **Media Practitioners and social media users:** The findings of this research would serve as a reference document for media practitioners and social media users on how best to cover resolve conflicts in tertiary institutions with a view to building a peaceful, religiously and politically tolerant, and prosperous equal society.
3. **The Intelligence Community:** The intelligence community such as Police, SSS, soldiers etc will equally find the result of this study very useful, since it will promote the need to build a common bridge between the media and intelligence communities, which will ultimately fast-track the resolution of crises in Nigerian tertiary institutions and the society at large.
4. **Tertiary Institutions:** In addition, tertiary institutions (lecturers and students) will find this work very helpful in the teaching, learning and resolution of conflicts via peace enhancement through the social media.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The researcher encountered a number of factors that constituted limitations to this study. These factors include limited materials related to the study, lack of fund to source for research materials, and time constraint. Nonetheless, these limitations did not prevent the researcher from carrying out a concrete research as the limitations were eventually overcome.

1.8 Operational Definition of Terms

For the purpose of clarity, key words or concepts as used in this study have been defined operationally. They are:

Peace: This is a state of harmony, love, and unity in tertiary institutions.

Social Media: These are internet-based applications that allow the creation and exchange of content which is user generated. In other words, social media are online channels of communication and information dissemination.

Reportage: This can be defined as the journalistic presentation of news on the media.

Tertiary Institutions: These are higher establishments of learning such as the University of Benin, Ambrose Alli University and the University of Lagos.

Conflict: This refers to an active disagreement between people in tertiary institutions with opposing opinions or principles. It is some form of friction, or discord arising within tertiary institutions when the beliefs or actions of one or more parties of the institutions are either resisted by or unacceptable to one or more parties of another group.

Conflict Resolution: This refers to the process of resolving conflicts by ensuring peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter positions the study within the existing research and provides a framework for understanding the social media's role in enhancing peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions. It draws on different themes which have been studied by other scholars and which connect the aims and research questions in this study to a wider research perspective

2.2 Conceptual Review

2.2.1 Social Media

Social media are online channels of social communication. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010 p. 61) defined social media as “Internet based applications that allow the creation and exchange of content which is user generated”. They stated that social media was first known in 1979, when Tom Truscott and Jim Ellis from Duke University created the Usenet, a worldwide discussion system that allowed Internet users to post public messages. Social media can also be defined as forms of electronic communications (such as Web sites) through which people create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, etc. According to Akuezuilo and Agu (2010), the term social media is usually used to describe social networking sites such as:

Facebook: This is an online social networking site that allows users to create their personal profiles, share photos and videos, and communicate with other users

Twitter: This is an internet service that allows users to post "tweets" for their followers to see updates in real-time

LinkedIn: A networking website for the business community that allows users to create professional profiles, post resumes, and communicate with other professionals and job-seekers.

Pinterest: Pinterest is an online community that allows users to display photos of items found on the web by "pinning" them and sharing ideas with others.

Snapchat: This is an application for mobile devices that allows users to send and share photos of them doing their daily activities.

Whatsapp: An application for mobile devices that allows users to send, share their photos, videos and other information friends. It can also be referred to as a freeware, cross-platform and end-to-end encrypted instant message application for smart phones and personal computers. It uses the internet to send messages, documents, files, calls, contacts, and user location.

Social media technologies take many different forms including blogs, business networks, enterprise social networks, forums, microblogs, photo sharing, products/services review, social bookmarking, social gaming, social networks, video sharing, and virtual worlds. Wills (2011) observed that the development of social media started off with simple platforms such as sixdegrees.com. Unlike instant messaging clients such as ICQ and AOL's AIM, or chat clients like IRC, iChat or Chat Television, sixdegrees.com was the first online business that was created for real people, using their

real names. However, the first social networks were short-lived because their users lost interest. The Social Network Revolution has led to the rise of the networking sites. The research of Wills (2011) shows that the audience spends 22 percent of their time on social networking sites, thus proving how popular social media platforms have become. This increase is because of the smart phones that are now in the daily lives of most humans.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2010), social media is the integration of digital media including combinations of electronic texts, graphics, moving images and sound into a structured computerized environment that allows people to interact with the data for appropriate purposes. The digital environment can include the internet, telecoms and interactive digital television. According to Biener, Ji, Gilpin, & Albers (2011), social networks are online services, platforms or sites that focus on building and reflecting social relations among people, who for example share interests and activities. Social networking sites are websites that allow those who have account with them to communicate with a selected group of friends (Biener, et al, 2011). Social networks comprise a representation of each user (often profile) and his or her social links and variety of additional services (Duncan, White, & Nicholson, 2010). Most of the social networks are web-based and provide means for their users to interact via the internet, such as e-mail and instant messaging. Social networks allow activities, events and interact within their individual networks.

Idakwo (2011) noted that the web is becoming part of general business for communication, sales and services. It is changing business practices. Its technical

limitations affect the amount of material and speed of access to materials. The web primarily depends on phone line connections, so the better they are across a territory, the more reliable the services. The inherent limitations of passing large amounts of digital information down phone lines affected by the type and quality of media that can be used effectively, as well as the nature of the interaction allowed on the web. There are ways to increase the performance by improving the technical limitations which depend on having a readily available infrastructure that can derive more data faster and reliably, called broadband.

There have been some related literatures on the influence of social media language on students' academic performance and their use of the English language. According to Pandey (2010), information and communication technology (ICT) plays a significant role in education. The nature of learning is frequently identified with the utilization of ICT instruments in learning. Pandey (2010) noted that social media is able to enhance learners' critical thinking skills and information handling skills. In spite of the fact that social media provides different advantage in learning in schools, it is important to examine its roles in enhancing peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

2.2.2 The Advantages of Social Media

1. **Enhancing Peace:** Social media can be used to enhance peace and resolve conflicts through its tweets, statuses, posts, pictures, updates, and videos. Also, through education, entertainment, and surveillance function, the social media can

be used to compliment the efforts of peace keeping bodies such as the police to resolve conflicts.

2. Improving one's writing and reading Skills: Social media often involves writing and reading. Thus, with social media, one's writing and reading skills can be enhanced.

3. Staying Connected

The main purpose of social media is to be able to stay connected to friends and families in today's fast paced and ever changing worlds. One is able to rekindle old friendships, share family photos, and special events in your life with just about everyone you know, at the same time.

4. Finding People with Common Interests

Social media is also a great way to meet entirely new people. One can seek out groups that are focused towards your special interests and hobbies and connect with local people that share the same interests. Online and social media dating is almost more common than traditional dating is in today's world.

5. Serves as an Invaluable Promotional Tool

Companies, artists, and musicians can reach an impossibly large and diverse amount of people using social media sites. This allows them to promote and market themselves and their products in a way that has never been seen before.

6. Quick Spread of Information

Breaking news and other important information can spread like wildfire on social media sites. Important things like recalls, storm information, or missing children are all communicated and taken seriously very quickly.

7. Helps to Catch and Convict Criminals

People often do not think of the consequences of what they post of these social sites. Pictures of themselves doing illegal things, or even bragging posts about crimes they have committed are all things that law enforcement use to persecute these criminals. They also use these sites to identify and solve existing cases.

2.2.3 The Disadvantages of Social Media

- 1. Escalation of Conflicts:** Social media can enhance conflicts through its biased reportage of conflict sensitive stories as well as the interpretation and analysis of the stories.
- 2. Can decline People's formal writing skills:** Due to the fact that social media language is often informal, contains a lot of abbreviations, Pidgin English and slangs, it could decline individuals' use of formal English language on social media and outside social media due to addiction to the informal form of communication.
- 3. Perpetuates False and Unreliable Information**

Just like stated above, anything can spread to millions of people within hours or days on social media. This also, unfortunately, includes things that are false or made up. This information can cause panic and severe misinformation in society.

4. A Bane of Major Relationship Problems

Online social interactions with social networking have not only been starting new relationships, but ending many others. It is very simple to communicate and share pictures or plans with a person on social media and keep it completely under wraps. This new temptation has been driving wedges into people's real life, offline relationships, often time ending them for good. Social networking puts trust to the limit.

5. Cyber Bullying

Having access to people's lives at all times is not always a good thing. A new trend of cyber bullying is wreaking havoc all across the world. This is especially true with young kids. They are publicly harassing one another, and posting mean or slanderous things which are broadcasted to the entire cyber world.

6. Used to Profile and Discriminate People in the Job World

Just about everyone has a social media account that shows what they look like, the type of life that they live, and how old they are. Employers are using this to their advantages in some very unsettling ways. Jobs that are looking for a certain criteria of person, but cannot legally express these criteria, are using social media to pre-screen their applicants.

7. Addiction

One of the biggest problems with the social media craze is that people are becoming more and more addicted to using it. It is the number one time waster at work, in school,

and at home. All of this has caused people to have literal withdraws from their social networks.

8. Peer Pressure

According to recent research about social media networks and Internet usage, social networking sites like Facebook and Whatsapp have become so popular that many university students will get an account even if they do not want to (Peter, Schouten, & Valkenburg, 2016). This shows that joining a SNS signifies more than just going on a website; it is way of “fitting in” with peers, just like many other types of groups in high school (Peter, Schouten, & Valkenburg, 2016). In fact, SNS may be predictors of self-esteem and well-being in students, and they have become a fundamental role in student’s life (Peter, Schouten, & Valkenburg, 2016). A student stated in a research study by Dr. Danah Boyd at Berkeley University: “If you’re not on MySpace, you don’t exist” (Boyd, 2007).

2.3.1 Conflict, Social Media Surveillance and Peace Keeping

In any situation involving more than one person, conflict can arise. The causes of conflict range from philosophical differences and contrary goals to power imbalances. Unmanaged or poorly managed conflicts generate a breakdown in trust and loss of productivity. Adeyemi (2011) defines conflict as a fight or struggle, especially a protracted one; a sharp disagreement or opposition, as of interests or ideas; an emotional disturbance resulting from a clash of opposing impulses or from an inability to reconcile impulses with realistic or moral considerations. Although conflict is seen as always

negative, and thus avoided by many, it is not. In fact, conflict can be considered as an opportunity for growth if it is wisely managed.

Amongst the core responsibilities of the media (social), is the surveillance function. Here, the social media are expected to bring to the consciousness of the public impending and already occurred abnormalities. This function places a demand on the social media to cover, analyze and report significant developments within and outside a given society. Ahmed (2011), while writing on social media surveillance asserts that it is a process of collecting and distributing information about local, national and international events and conditions.

Also, Aka (2011) further affirmed that they (mass media) watch over, guard and alert society of impending problems and often proffer the way forward. The media normally report what is wrong in the society and take bold and firm stand on its inadequacies like drug addictions, fake drug importation, hard drug trafficking, armed robberies, hired assassinations, smuggling, environmental degradations, economic sabotage, lack of basic social amenities, high unemployment rate, downturns in education, poor healthcare, the outbreak of epidemics etc., in their watchdog and surveillance functions (Aka, 2011).

Furthermore, the surveillance function or role of the social media presupposes that the social media are the eyes and ears of the public. The social media provides information and alert their heterogeneous audiences of the changes that take place around them. The media consistently survey the environment and transmit issue or messages to

the audience in order to reduce uncertainties and consequently react to the conflict or change in a rational way (Aliyu, 2011).

Aliyu further asserts that the media in discharging their surveillance function, usually scout round the environment and bring news of social, economic and political developments, dangers that are threats to national stability, threats to public welfare, environmental pollution and degradation as well as scandals of varying dimensions to the people. Asunza (2010) notes that in the surveillance function of the media, the press plays the role of an observer, which is a necessary component for enforcing economic, political, cultural and even moral stability. Chigozie (2009, p.129) asserts that “in this role, the media highlight aspects of the society and report as news”. The surveillance role of the media is of two types-the instrumental surveillance and the warning/beware surveillance. According to Bakko (2008), the instrumental surveillance has to do with the transmission of information that is useful and helpful in everyday life. News about what films are playing at the local theatres, stock market prices, new products, fashion, ideas, recipes, teen’s fads, and so on, are examples of instrumental surveillance.

On the other hand, Bamimo (2011) clarifies that warning or beware surveillance occurs when the media inform us about threats from hurricanes, erupting volcanoes, depressed economic conditions, increasing inflation, or military attacks. In crisis or conflict, this type of surveillance is called early warning. It generally refers to the set of activities that aim to collect, collate and analyze data in order to detect and identify signs of an emerging conflicts before it explodes into uncontrolled violence (Bayo, 2011).

Following on the explanations and analysis above, it is pertinent to assert here that media surveillance is imperative in conflict reporting. As stated earlier, media surveillance involves amongst others, pre-information on a looming abnormality, disaster, unrest or conflict. Lasswell (1984) cited in Chigozie (2010) gave credence to the above assertion when he opined that they (mass media) watch over, guard and alert society of impending problems and often proffer the way forward. Chigozie (20010) affirms that surveillance and interpretation are critical to conflict reporting.” The implication here is that the media, while discharging their surveillance role, must effectively reflect it in conflict reporting. This, according to Bashir (2016) will reduce uncertainties and increase the probability that the audience will react to the conflict in a rational way.

2.3.2 The Social Media and Conflict Management

Beyond the reportage of conflict, the social media have been seen to be very valuable in conflict management. They have been adjudged by conflict resolution experts as indispensable tools for the management of conflict.

Nwosu, (2004, p.15) affirms that:

The (social) media are considered to be very important in conflict management because they are information merchants, conduits or carriers of various shades and colours of information. And in times of conflicts, or even wars, adequate or inadequate management of information is considered to be a critical factor in the emergence, escalation or reduction of tension points at various levels, tensions which depending on how they are managed, can determine the end or continuation of conflicts.

Giving support to Nwosu's view, Obot (2014, p.103) opines that conflict, being a communicative behaviour, can only be resolved through a communication process, often made easier or more effective through the utilization of the mass media. When used with a high sense of social responsibility, the mass media can be indispensable in conflict resolution".

Furthermore, Obot (2014) asserts that in resolving conflict in modern societies, the social media to a great extent provide a rendezvous for all the interest groups or aggrieved parties to 'sit' and express their minds on issues in contention. This will be possible by providing and guaranteeing every citizens easy access to media facilities. More so, Nwosu, (2004, p.15) affirms that "the overwhelming influence of the mass media is felt most in those conflicts that get to the level of wars, ethnic, sectional or communal and religious conflicts or crises that result in blood-letting". The numerous conflicts and or crises to which our nation (Nigeria) is prone have to a very large and admirable extent been solved through media attentiveness and alertness. The Ife-Moda-Keke and, Umeleri-Aguleri Wars, the Warri riots, the Kano uprisings etc have all been settled one way or the other through the mass media effort (Anyanwu, 2014).

Cufa (2011) x-rayed the tasks of the mass (social) media in peacekeeping as:

- (a) Increasing the quantity and quality of public communication.
- (b) Providing early warnings of situations that might lead to conflict as well as alerting leaders and attentive publics to opportunities for increasing understanding.

(c) Stimulating the use of mechanism such as negotiation, mediation and arbitration for conflict resolution and management and providing information that facilitates these processes.

(d) Helping to create a mood in which solutions are more likely to sought and accepted.

(e) Mobilizing or helping to establish contacts among those interested in finding peaceful solutions, and helping to build opinions favouring such solutions.

Through adequate, balance and objective reportage and the adoption of peace journalism, publications, discussions, etc, the social media can contribute to conflict resolution.

2.3.3 Causes of Conflicts

Conflicts in recent years have become almost a life style in Nigeria. This is as a result of differences in beliefs and values of different communities. Nigeria is made up of over 450 ethnic groups and in Edo state; there are 18 communities (local government areas). Therefore, to successfully live together without conflicts in this kind of setting is almost a near impossibility. Various factors have been identified by scholars as responsible for conflict in Nigeria. The causes vary from one area to another. Yecho (2016) indicated the causes of conflicts are not static but rather dynamic and varied in nature depending on the socio-economic and geopolitical circumstances at the time. According to Onwudiwe (2004), the causes of conflicts are population explosion, economic migration, and the anti-poor policies of the government.

On the other hand, Daskat (2011) opines that conflict arises as a result of politics, politicians, and their pursuit of group advantage. Albert (2001) identified indigene/settler problem, religious differences, ownership of land and its resources, goals and aspirations of people as some of the factors that can ignite conflict in the country. Conversely, Fedler, Bender, Davenport, and Drager (2000) indicated political struggle and colonization, while Lyam (2010) mentioned loss of soil fertility, soil erosion, deforestation, bush burning and flooding as some of the causes of communal conflicts. In the same vein, Yecho (2006) pointed out that the fundamental causes of societal conflicts are poor economic conditions, high level of illiteracy, the quest for, and fear of domination by other groups, land disputes, market ownership, chieftaincy tussle and party politics.

In addition, Guma (2010) indicated that increased demand for land for agriculture, unemployment, rural hunger, poverty impoverishment as communal conflict triggers deprivation, exploitation and domination of minority groups by major ethnic groups and leadership problem were highlighted by Angya and Doki (2006) as factors that can exert communal conflicts. Equally, religious differences, competition for livelihood resources and traditional chieftaincy tussles were enumerated by Halaru (2010) as potential conflict triggers in the country.

In summary, the causes of communal conflict from the above analysis are:

1. **Poor Communication and comprehension:** Poor communication and comprehension leads to conflict. Thus to avoid conflicts, all parties must make efforts to communicate and comprehend effectively.

2. **Economic factors:** These are factors that manifest in the form of competition for inadequate resources such as land and its content; problems of distribution of available resources; unemployment and poverty.
3. **Social factor:** This has to do with issues that border on deprivation, envy, jealousy, marginalization and exploitation of people.
4. **Political factor:** this relates to the contest for available political positions in a community and leadership failure. Also added to this, is traditional chieftaincy tussle imminent in communities.
5. **Ecological factor:** This factor manifests in the forms of encroachment problem, farming and pastoral problems, deforestation, flooding, soil erosion, and bush burning. Conflict creates room for people to drift from place to place as a survival mechanism and in search of livelihood.
6. **Colonial factor:** Colonialism is believed to be the background cause of conflict in Africa, and Nigeria inclusive. Most of the communal conflicts have direct attachment to colonial formation, while others manifesting in the post-colonial period have explanation in colonialism.

2.3.4 Phases of Conflict

Conflict is not a one day occurrence but a cycle of crises which when not contained on time could escalate to a violent conflict between parties. It is now generally believed that conflict most times evolve in cyclical phases that are closely related. The phases of conflict according to Moller (2011) are:

1. Latent Phase: This is the first phase of conflict cycle where a conflict is dormant and barely expressed by the conflicting parties that may not even be conscious of their conflicting interests or values. At this phase, a conflict can easily be “nipped in the bud” through a preventive action on the basis of early warning in principle.

2. Manifest Phase: At this phase, conflicting parties express their demands and grievances openly, but only by legal means. It is easier to identify both problems and stakeholders, at this stage while preventive action can still be taken to prevent conflict escalation. Here, mediation efforts geared towards compromise solutions still stand a reasonable chance of success provided violence has not occurred.

3. Violent Phase: This phase is characterized by direct physical attacks and confrontations leading to spilling of blood and loss of life of both conflicting parties and innocent people and thereby produce additional motives for struggle elongation. Moreover, people having their various private agendas and that are personally benefiting or profiting from the continuing conflict often usurped the initial/existing leadership structure in order to have influence and control over their groups.

4. Escalation Phase: Under this phase, violence breeds further violence, producing an escalatory momentum. Moreover, the longer the struggle has lasted, and the more destructive it has been, the more do the warring parties (and especially their leaders) have to lose by laying down their arms. Only victory can justify the preceding bloodshed; hence, the tendency to struggle on as long as there is even a slight hope of prevailing.

5. Contained Phase: Escalation comes to an end in this phase. This could be because the conflicting parties have temporarily exhausted their supply of weaponry, leading to lower intensity. At this phase, there appears hope for negotiations and mediation efforts by the intervention of a third party aiming towards a possible resolution of the conflict.

6. Mitigated Phase: Mitigated phase of any conflict is the period during which the basic causes of the conflict remain in place, but the conflict behaviour and attitude has been significantly changed with reduced or less violence and more mobilization and negotiation.

7. The Resolution Phase: This phase is the most perceived critical phase of all the phases, as success or failure of post-conflict peace-building will determine whether conflict will flare up again. For a tangible and enduring or sustainable success to be accomplished, both the underlying causes of the conflict and its immediate consequences must be addressed. This include reordering of power relationships, bringing some of those responsible for the preceding bloodshed to trial and facilitating reconciliation between the opposing sides as a precondition of future coexistence. At this stage, the importance of external actors is very crucial in the following areas such as provision of

various forms of assistance and support to the emerging parties after the resolution of the conflict.

2.3.5 Consequences of Conflict and the Need for Peace in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions

Peace is very important to any organization, society, institution and even individuals. This is because conflict has various consequences on various parties. While in some instances, the consequences may be trivial, in others, it can be violent, destructive and can lead to war and deaths.

The destructive tendencies of conflicts are such that have largely affected the developmental prospects of many Nigerian tertiary institutions. The consequences range from mere envy, suspicion, jealousy to large scale destruction of lives and properties. Absence of peace in a tertiary institution can make various parties such as members of staffs, students, and the internal and external publics of the institution live with mutual distrust and enmity. In extension to the consequences of conflict on tertiary institution parties, it can lead to destruction of lives and property, trees and arable crops, livestock, houses, schools, markets and hospitals and these have overwhelming negative influence on food security by worsening the already existing food problems with its attendant problems of malnutrition, under-nutrition and abject poverty (Lynch and McGliddrick, 2015).

This shows that conflict is highly destructive in nature. It has the deficiency of causing humanitarian problems such as internally displaced persons. Little wonder

Olusola (2014) was of the opinion that the result of numerous natural disasters and human-made violent clashes has produced unmanageable proportion of internally displaced persons estimated recently to be well above 750,000 within Nigeria.

Conclusively, the consequences of conflict on tertiary institutions and the society at large can generally be summarized as:

1. **Poor organization management:** Tertiary institution can face the problem of poor management as a result of conflict and this could lead to the collapse of institution.
2. **Poor image:** The image of an institution could reduce in the eyes of right thinking members of the society as well as the institution's external and internal publics. This is because an institution that is always at loggerheads with other institution's and its publics may not be highly regarded enough to teach people about conflict resolution and peacekeeping which are very essential for every individual.
3. **Social problems:** This includes the experiences of hunger, development of psychological problems, loss of lives, abuse of human rights, and increased level of insecurity.
4. **Humanitarian problems:** This relates to the problem of displacement of persons and leads to refugee dynamics in extreme cases.
5. **Physical problems:** This involves the destruction of properties and material resources such as houses, land, crops etc.

6. **Health problems:** This manifests in the experiences of stress, malnutrition, and injuries.

2.4 Empirical Review

Although various researchers have carried out studies on the roles of the mass media in curbing conflicts, there are however a few researches that have dealt on the roles of the social media in enhancing peace in Nigeria higher institutions. According to Pate, (2012) in his study “Reporting conflict for newspaper and magazine in democratic Nigeria”, the objectives of the study were to find out the causes of conflict in Nigeria in the democratic era, find out the frequency of conflict reportage in Nigerian newspapers, prominence of conflict reportage and the direction of conflict reportage in Nigerian newspapers. The study was anchored on the Agenda setting theory and the research design was content analysis. Findings from the study showed that the return to democracy after many years of military rule is one of the causes of expression of bottled up grievances thus leading to conflicts. The scholar also found out that perceived marginalization, fear of domination and lack of commitment on the part of leaders and government towards resolving these conflicts contribute to the recurrence of the conflicts.

Furthermore, the study found out that there was a high reportage or frequency of conflict reportage in Nigeria newspapers and that the directions were majorly neutral. Based on the findings, the study concluded that there is an increasing concern among modern scholars from various areas of study that the reoccurrence and frequency of conflicts is not only hindering unity and national development, but is also dangerous to

the continued existence of the state. It added that conflicts are unavoidable phenomena in all human societies and are inherent in human relationships and that conflicts have both positive as well as negative sides.

Conversely, the study recommended that newspapers should not just report stories of conflict frequently, but report them in ways that will help curb such conflicts and prevent future ones. The above study is related to the current one in terms of findings and recommendations but differ in terms of research methodology.

In another study by Mu'azu's (2014) titled "Legal and ethical issues in reporting conflict", the study sought to find out the causes of conflict in Nigeria and the legal and ethical issues related to them. Findings from the studies revealed that the factors responsible for protracted conflicts in Nigeria are multi-dimensional and have religious, political and tribal undercurrents. Some other factors were recognized to be colonial legacy, manipulation of ethnic and religious identities, worsening economic conditions and unemployment, ignorance, religious fundamentalism, weakening of state power and relevance, land and boundary matters, widening inequality and poverty among others.

The study thus recommended that the dangers posed by conflicts should not be ignored by security agents, stakeholders involved in conflicts, as well as political, traditional and religious leaders as there is the need for peace, unity and progress in the country.

Concerning the role of the mass media in conflicts and the effects of this in enhancing peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions, Preye (2011) observed that not many

academic works are available in the state. However, those available for review argued that the social media cannot be ignored in conflict escalation, de-escalation, mediation, management and resolutions.

On the issue of objectivity of the mass media and media practitioners, most of the writers (such as Okafor, 2011), agreed that though objectivity is not attainable, it should be the goal of the media in order to de-escalate and manage protracted conflicts. Objectivity according to Okafor (2011) is being held back because of the nature of the mass media, ownership structure, geographical locations and religious affiliations of the owners and editors of media organizations among other factors. Okafor (2011) did not however give much attention to the sensitive nature of peace enhancement in Nigerian tertiary institutions and the need to develop a new approach to the reportage of conflicts by media practitioners – what is now being referred to as conflict sensitive journalism or peace journalism.

Ozoh (2010) among other things suggested various ways of curbing conflicts, but that not much has been done on the role of the social media as an institution in escalating or de-escalating, management and resolution of these crises. An appraisal of the work of Ozoh (2010) reveals also practical “resemblance” among most of them in the area of causes and effects of conflicts.

The main limitations noticed in some of these works, positions, theories and perspectives on conflicts reviewed so far are that most of them only attempted to expose the causes of these conflicts and not recommendations. Others chronicled some of the

major conflicts over a period of time, while the rest touched on the adverse effects of these protracted conflicts. Some of the scholars have tended to lay emphasis on a single factor for explanation without recognizing the multi-causal nature of these conflicts.

From the foregoing, one would observe that not much attention was given in a comprehensive manner to the role of the social media in escalating or de-escalating conflicts in Nigerian tertiary institutions. There is therefore, the need for research on the role of the mass media during conflicts and the effect of this on national development and the need for social media users to embrace peace journalism and use the social media to enhance peace.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

The theory that guided this study was the Media Framing Theory.

Media Framing Theory

The media framing theory, as observed by Uwakwe (2015) was first introduced by sociologist Erving Goffman in the 1970s to systematically explain that humans use their ingrained expectations to make sense of their lives. Myles (2009) lent credence to the above when he used the idea of frames to label "schemata of interpretation" that allow individuals or groups "to locate, perceive, identify, and label" events and occurrences, thus rendering meaning, organizing experiences, and guiding actions.

Media framing theory is equally said to be an extension of the agenda-setting theory. McCombs, Shaw and Weaver (1997) refer media framing as the second level of agenda-setting. According to Umar (2012), the theory of media framing is based on the

assumption that audience understanding of an issue is strongly dependent on the way that issue is characterized in news reports. In other words, the media can 'frame' a social issue in such a way as to give it a meaning different from the original intent. Given that most media messages seek to elicit emotional response from the audience, news stories are systematically framed and presented with emotional appeals.

According to Scheufele and Tewksburg (2007), news framing plays on the fact that audience respond differently to social issues based on the way they are presented by the news media. They propose a framing model with the central idea that frames from news activate certain inferences, ideas, judgment and contrast concerning issues and policies. They argue that how news stories are placed- either presented with an imposing banner to get public attention and sympathy or tucked inside the newspaper for an interested reader to find, plays a great role in how audiences view the issues.

Media frames are very important to communal conflict resolution in many ways because the media can frame conflict situations in ways that can significantly affect them by creating mutually incompatible interpretations of events. Kauffman, Elliot and Shmueli (2013:2) maintain that disputants in a communal conflict always construct media frames to suit their points of views because frames are often built upon underlying structures of beliefs, values and experiences.

In communal conflicts, opponents often use unsuspecting journalists (and sometimes-conniving ones) to produce media frames that will serve not only as an aid to construing events in their favours, but also to promote tactical advantages or benefits

during the conflict. Community leaders often use the media as tools for framing aimed at justifying acts of selfishness, convincing a larger audience, building communal bridges of convenience, or adopting support for specific outcomes. Thus, one can safely conclude that the factors that influence the direction communal conflicts take are multifaceted.

When various parties in tertiary institution form perceptions of a given conflict, they gradually start forming positions which are usually for or against the parties in the conflict. This eventually leads them into taking actions that could either escalate or mitigate the conflict.

A peace-motivated social media message on the other hand can be framed in such a way as to result in the resolution of tertiary institution conflict. By focusing on the core issues and by providing avenues for various opinions to be aired, an understanding of the viewpoint of others is achieved shifting focus from a win-lose state to a win-win situation. Chong and Druckman (2008:104) state that the media framing theory is premised on the fact that individuals and/or groups can view issues from difference world views and perspectives and that these differing views form the basis from which decisions are reached.

This theory is therefore relevant to this study as it helps us understand how that the social media's framing of conflicts in Nigerian tertiary institutions can either help resolve such conflicts or escalate them depending on how the stories are framed.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter examined the research method used to gather data for the research. A research method is essentially a method of inquiry that is scientifically adopted to generate reliable and valid facts which could be analyzed and interpreted and from which reliable conclusions could be reached (Sommer, 2014).

3.2 Research Design

A research design basically means the plan or technique of shaping the research. The research design that would be adopted for this study would be survey research design. Survey research is concerned with the collection of data for the purpose of describing and interpreting existing conditions, prevailing practice, beliefs, attitudes and ongoing process. In this case the survey research is appropriate as it allows collection of data from subset of the population for intensive study and analysis through the use of questionnaire.

3.3 Population of the Study

Population can be defined as a complete set of individuals, objects, or subjects with some common and observable characteristics or properties. The population of the study comprised of all the students in the mass communication department as at the time of carrying out this study. According to the data garnered from the mass Communication department in the University of Benin, the population of the Mass communication department was 835. Thus, the population of this study was 835

3.4 Sample Size

The sample size of this study was determined by the Taro Yamane's sample size calculation propounded by Taro Yamanes (1967). The formular for the calculation is:

$$n=N/[1+N(e)^2]$$

where n is the sample size

N refers to the population of the study

E refers to the sampling error (usually 0.05 acceptable error)

^ means raised to power of

Therefore,

$$n= 835/[1+ 835(0.05)^2]$$

$$n=835/[1+ 835(0.0025)]$$

$$n=835/[1+ 2.0875]$$

$$n=835/3.0875$$

$$n=270$$

Thus our sample size was 270.

3.5 Sampling Technique

The sampling technique that was used in this study was the random sampling technique because it is convenient in helping generate data for this study. The researcher distributed the questionnaire to Mass Communication students in the University of Benin.

3.6 Research Instrument

The instrument used to collect information from the respondents was self-structured questionnaire. The instrument had sections A and B. Section A elicited bio-data information of respondents. Section B contained items used to elicit data used to answer research questions from the respondents which was used to answer the research questions raised in chapter one. The questionnaire was constructed in a four (4) rating scale of Strongly Agree (4 points), Agree (3 points), Disagree (2 points) and Strongly Disagree (1 point).

3.7 Validity of Research Instrument

Validity is a researcher's ability to draw meaningful and justifiable inferences from scores about a sample or population (Patton, 2012). This is in line with Osuala (2011) who purported that validity determines whether the research truly measures that which it was intended to measure and the truthfulness of the research results. To ensure that the instrument meets the expected standard of validity, consultations were made with the research supervisor before distribution of the research instrument. The supervisor examined the test items for its appropriateness, clarity of statement whether or not the test items were well structured, and suggestions and criticisms made to improve the test quality of test items would be incorporated into the final copy of the questionnaire.

3.8 Reliability of the Instrument

In order to determine the internal consistency of the instrument for data collection, the reliability of responses to the items of the instruments were analyzed using the Cronbach Coefficient Alpha formula for reliability. Split-half method was used in the analysis. The analysis gave 0.77 reliability coefficient. According to Somer (2014) a reliability estimate of 0.70 and above is considered high and therefore the instrument was considered reliable for the study,

3.9 Method of Data Analysis

Data collected from the field were analyzed using univariate (frequency and percentage distribution) level for research questions and bio-data of respondents. Furthermore, SPSS version 21 was used for data analysis and findings were presented in frequency distribution tables.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter analyzed, presented and interpreted the data gathered from the field work of this study. The gathered data were presented in tables using the simple percentage calculation. Furthermore, the results of the findings were discussed as well as its implications on the roles of social media platforms in enhancing peace in Nigerian higher institutions. In gathering the requisite data for the research, the researcher randomly distributed 251 copies of questionnaire to undergraduate students of the department of Mass Communication, University of Benin. The response rate of the distributed questionnaire is presented in table 1 below, while the demographic and psychographic responses of the respondents are analyzed, presented and discussed in subsequent tables.

4.2 Data Presentation

Table 1: Response Rate of Distributed Questionnaire

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Questionnaire Distributed	270	100%
Questionnaire Returned	251	92.9%
Questionnaire Unreturned	19	7.3%

Source: Field survey, 2020.

The above table indicates that there was a high response rate to the research instrument. As indicated on the table, 270 (100%) questionnaire were distributed to the

research respondents, and while 251 (92.9%) were returned, 19 (7.3%) copies of questionnaire were unreturned. The researcher could not retrieve the entire questionnaire because some of the respondents did not return them.

Table 2: Age Range of Respondents

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage
15-19	132	52.9%
20-29	78	31.1%
30-39	41	16.3%
40 and above	0	0%
Total	251	100%

Source: Field survey, 2020.

The above table indicates that respondents aged 15-19 dominated the scope of this study. The above table also indicates that the opinions of all adult age groups of ages of undergraduate Mass Communication students of the University of Benin were represented in the study thus giving a generic view of the opinion of the people.

Table 3: Sex Variation of Respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	112	44.6%
Female	139	55.4%
Total	251	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

Data on the table above reveals that 112 (44.6%) of the respondents were males, while 139 (55.4%) of the respondents were females. Thus, the study represents the opinion of both the male and female gender and is thus gender-balanced.

Table 4: Marital Status of Respondents

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	227	93.0%
Married	24	7.0%
Divorced	0	0%
Total	251	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

The above table reveals that majority of the respondents were single. However, the dominance of the single respondents over the married and divorced ones did not in any way negatively affect the findings of this study as the study was not geared towards, or was to be validated by the marital status of the respondents.

Table 5: Respondents' Religious Affiliations

Religion	Frequency	Percentage
Christian	240	96.0%
Muslim	11	4.0%
Others	0	0%
Total	251	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

The above table reveals that majority of the respondents were Christians while only 4.0% of them were Muslims. This is not surprising considering that Edo State and UNIBEN at large is populated by Muslims.

Table 6: Academic Level of Respondents

Level	No. of Respondents	Percentage
100	58	23.1%
200	59	23.5%
300	55	21.9%
251	79	31.5%
Total	251	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

The above table indicates that most of the respondents were in 400Level although questionnaires were distributed to respondents in each of the academic levels. There was however a higher response rate in 400Level perhaps because they understood more about the questionnaire and were more proximate to the researcher especially in terms of distributing and retrieving the questionnaire.

Table 7: Are you on any social media platform?

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	175	69.7%
Agree	76	30.3%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%

Total	251	100%
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Source: Field Survey, 2020.

The above table indicated that all the respondents were at least on one social media platform. The reason for this could be attributed to the high accessibility of internet and android phones as well as the socialization benefits of social media to the students.

Table 8: If yes, how long have you been using the social media?

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1month to 4years	76	30.3%
5years to 10 years	105	41.8%
11 years to 15 years	57	22.7%
Above 15years	13	5.2%
Total	251	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

The above table shows that 76 (30.3%) of the respondents had been on social media between 1 month to four years; 105 (41.8%) respondents had been on it within five through ten years, 57 (22.7%) of them had been on it within 11-15 years; while the rest 13 (5.2%) respondents had been on social media for more than 15 years. This shows that majority of the respondents had been on social media for a long period and thus possess adequate knowledge necessary to providing answers to the questions in the research instrument.

Table 9: Do you think social media can be used to enhance peace in Nigerian higher institutions?

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	104	41.4%
Agree	147	58.6%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Total	251	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

The above table reveals that all the respondents agreed social media could be used to enhance peace in Nigerian higher institutions. This is an indication that social media is not just meant for socialization purpose, but could also be used to curb conflict in Nigerian tertiary institutions through posting peaking keeping messages in relation to Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Table 10: How effective do you think the social media is in enhancing peace in Nigerian higher institutions?

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Very Effective	102	40.6%
Effective	128	50.9%
Not Effective	21	8.4%
Total	251	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

According to the data on the above table, 102(40.6%) respondents believe that social media is very effective in enhancing peace in Nigerian higher institutions; 128

(50.9%) respondents said it was effective; 21(8.4%) respondents said it was not effective.

The import of the data is that the social media is very effective in enhancing peace in Nigerian higher institutions.

Table 11: Do you use the social media to enhance peace in Nigerian higher institutions?

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	55	21.9%
Agree	71	28.3%
Strongly Disagree	80	31.9%
Disagree	45	17.9%
Total	251	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

Statistics on the table above shows that 55(21.9%) of the respondents strongly agreed they used the social media to enhance peace in Nigerian higher institutions; 71(28.3%) respondents agreed; 80 (31.9%) respondents strongly disagreed; while the rest 45(17.9%) of the respondents disagreed they used the social media to enhance peace in Nigerian higher institutions.

Table 12: Do you think the social media is underutilized in enhancing peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions?

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	163	64.9%
Agree	71	28.3%
Strongly Disagree	4	1.6%
Disagree	13	5.2%
Total	251	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

The above table shows that majority of the respondents strongly agreed the social media is underutilized in enhancing peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions. The reason for this is not far-fetched. Most Nigerian university students are ignorant of Obot's (2014) findings which showed that the social media are by themselves social structures and can serve as vehicle for conflict resolution.

Table 13: In what ways can social media platforms help enhance peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions?

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
By publishing unbiased stories and pictures of the conflicts	0	0%
By making objective judgments and recommendations to the conflicts	0	0%
By supporting peace keeping bodies in resolving the conflicts	0	0%
All of the above	251	100%
Total	251	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

The above table shows that there are various ways social media platforms can help enhance peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions. As seen on the table, the ways

include publishing unbiased stories and pictures of the conflicts, making objective judgments and recommendations to the conflicts, and by supporting peace keeping bodies in resolving the conflicts. Nwosu, (2004, p.15) affirmed that “the (social) media are considered to be very important in conflict management because they are information merchants, conduits or carriers of various shades and colours of information”.

Table 14: To what extent has social media platforms enhanced peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions?

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
A great Extent	73	29.1%
A Little Extent	161	64.1%
No Extent	17	6.8%
Total	251	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

Data on the above table showed that 73 (29.1%) of the respondents affirmed that social media platforms have to a great extent enhanced peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions; 161(64.1%) respondents said the enhancement was only to a little extent; while 17(6.8%) of the respondents said social media platforms have not enhanced peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions. The import of the data is that social media platforms have not really enhanced peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Table 15: What are the significance of social media’s peace enhancement to Nigerian tertiary institutions?

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
It leads to peace in Nigerian higher institutions	73	29.0%
It helps prevent waste of resources via higher institution’s conflicts	10	3.9%
It helps protect the image of the higher institutions	9	3.6%
All of the above	159	63.3%
Total	251	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

The above table reveals the significance of social media’s peace enhancement to Nigerian tertiary institutions. According to the collated statistics, the benefits are that it leads to peace in Nigerian higher institutions; helps prevent waste of resources; and helps protect the image of the higher institutions. The social media from statistics on the above table are thus very important in peace keeping and conflict resolution in tertiary institutions.

Table 16: What are the limitations of UNIBEN students in promoting peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions via social media?

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Ignorance of the students on the need to promote peace in Nigerian higher institutions via social media	62	24.7%
Lack of interest in the conflicts of Nigerian higher institutions	45	17.9%
Illiteracy and poverty	30	11.9%
All of the above	114	45.4%
Total	251	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

According to the above table, ignorance of the students on the need to promote peace in Nigerian higher institutions via social media; lack of interest in the conflicts of Nigerian higher institutions; and illiteracy and poverty are the limitations of UNIBEN students in promoting peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions via social media.

Table 17: Do you think social media users sometimes escalate conflict in Nigerian tertiary institutions through their posts and tweets?

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	140	55.8%
Agree	102	40.6%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Disagree	9	3.9%
Total	251	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

The above table shows that 140(55.8%) of the respondents strongly agreed social media users sometimes escalate conflict in Nigerian tertiary institutions through their

posts and tweets; 102 (40.6%) respondents agreed; none (0%) of the respondents strongly disagreed; while 9(3.9%) of the respondents disagreed that social media users sometimes escalate conflict in Nigerian tertiary institutions through their posts and tweets.

Table 18: Do you recommend peace keeping bodies and the Nigerian government sensitize social media users on the need to use the social media for peace enhancement?

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	150	59.8%
Agree	101	40.2%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Total	251	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

The above table reveals that all the respondents highly recommend peace keeping bodies and the Nigerian government sensitizes social media users on the need to use the social media for peace enhancement. This is very important because it would help tertiary institution students who are on social media concentrate their social media energy not just in socialization but also in the promotion of peace within tertiary institutions.

4.3 Answering of Research Questions

Research Question One: In what ways can social media platforms help enhance peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions?

The above research question was answered using the data on table 7, 8, 9 and 13. According to table 7, all the respondents were at least on one social media platform. The reason for this could be attributed to the high accessibility of internet and android phones

as well as the socialization benefits of social media to the students. Furthermore, table 8 revealed that 76 (30.3%) of the respondents had been on social media between 1 month to four years; 105 (41.8%) respondents had been on it within five through ten years, 57 (22.7%) of them had been on it within 11-15 years; while the rest 13 (5.2%) respondents had been on social media for more than 15 years. This shows that majority of the respondents had been on social media for a long period and thus possess adequate knowledge necessary to providing answers to the questions in the research instrument.

Also table 9 revealed that all the respondents agreed social media could be used to enhance peace in Nigerian higher institutions. This is an indication that social media is not just meant for socialization purpose, but could also be used to curb conflict in Nigerian tertiary institutions through posting peaking keeping messages in relation to Nigerian tertiary institutions. In direct response to the above research question, table 13 revealed that there are various ways social media platforms can help enhance peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions. As seen on the table, the ways include publishing unbiased stories and pictures of the conflicts, making objective judgments and recommendations to the conflicts, and by supporting peace keeping bodies in resolving the conflicts. Nwosu, (2004, p.15) affirmed that “the (social) media are considered to be very important in conflict management because they are information merchants, conduits or carriers of various shades and colours of information”.

Research Question Two: To what extent has social media platforms enhanced peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions?

The study answered the above research question using the data on table 10, 11 and 14. According to the data on table 10, 102(40.6%) respondents believe that social media is very effective in enhancing peace in Nigerian higher institutions; 128 (50.9%) respondents said it was effective; 21(8.4%) respondents said it was not effective. The import of the data is that the social media is very effective in enhancing peace in Nigerian higher institutions.

Furthermore, table 11 showed that 55(21.9%) of the respondents strongly agreed they used the social media to enhance peace in Nigerian higher institutions; 71(78.3%) respondents agreed; 80 (31.9%) respondents strongly disagreed; while the rest 45(17.9%) of the respondents disagreed they used the social media to enhance peace in Nigerian higher institutions. In addition, table 14 revealed that 73 (29.1%) of the respondents affirmed that social media platforms have to a great extent enhanced peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions; 161(64.1%) respondents said the enhancement was only to a little extent; while 17(6.8%) of the respondents said social media platforms have not enhanced peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions. The import of the data is that social media platforms have not really enhanced peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Research Question Three: What are the significance of social media's peace enhancement to Nigerian tertiary institutions?

The above research question was answered using the data on tables 15 and 17. According to the table 15, the significance of social media's peace enhancement to Nigerian tertiary institutions are that it leads to peace in Nigerian higher institutions; helps prevent waste of resources via higher institution's conflicts; and helps protect the image of the higher institutions. The social media from statistics on the above table are thus very important in peace keeping and conflict resolution in tertiary institutions. Furthermore, table 17 showed that 140(55.8%) of the respondents strongly agreed social media users sometimes escalate conflict in Nigerian tertiary institutions through their posts and tweets; 102 (40.6%) respondents agreed; none (0%) of the respondents strongly disagreed; while 9(3.9%) of the respondents disagreed that social media users sometimes escalate conflict in Nigerian tertiary institutions through their posts and tweets

According to Mu'azu's (2014), the factors responsible for protracted conflicts in Nigeria are multi-dimensional and have religious, political and tribal undercurrents. In extension to the consequences of conflict on tertiary institution parties, Lynch and McGlddrick (2015) observed that it can lead to destruction of lives and school properties, trees and arable crops, livestock, houses, etc and these have overwhelming negative influence on food security by worsening the already existing food problems with its attendant problems of malnutrition, under-nutrition and abject poverty. The social media is thus significant in resolving these problems.

Research Question Four: What are the hindrances of the usage of the social media in promoting peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions?

The above table was answered using the findings on table 16 and 18. According to table 16, ignorance of the students on the need to promote peace in Nigerian higher institutions via social media; lack of interest in the conflicts of Nigerian higher institutions; and illiteracy and poverty are the limitations of UNIBEN students in promoting peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions via social media. Table 18 further showed that all the respondents highly recommend peace keeping bodies and the Nigerian government sensitizes social media users on the need to use the social media for peace enhancement. This is very important because it would help tertiary institution students who are on social media concentrate their social media energy not just in socialization but also in the promotion of peace within tertiary institutions.

4.4 Discussion of Findings

This study has found out many things. In the first place, it was found out that the social media plays a pivotal role in enhancing peace in Nigerian higher institutions. Furthermore, the study found from table 7 and 8 that there is a high usage of social media by tertiary institution students in Nigeria. As seen on table 8, 76 (30.3%) of the respondents had been on social media between 1 month to four years; 105 (41.8%) respondents had been on it within five through ten years, 57 (22.7%) of them had been on it within 11-15 years; while the rest 13 (5.2%) respondents had been on social media for more than 15 years. The reason for the high usage of social media by the students was

attributed to the benefits of social media which include high accessibility, information dissemination, socialization, etc.

In addition, the study found out that the social media is effective and can be used to enhance peace in Nigerian higher institutions but that it is under-utilized in conflict resolution and peace keeping by Nigerian higher institution students on social media. Nonetheless, it was also found out that the various ways social media platforms can help enhance peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions include publishing unbiased stories and pictures of the conflicts, making objective judgments and recommendations to the conflicts, and by supporting peace keeping bodies in resolving the conflicts.

On the other hand, ignorance of the students on the need to promote peace in Nigerian higher institutions via social media; lack of interest in the conflicts of Nigerian higher institutions; and illiteracy and poverty were found to be the limitations of UNIBEN students in promoting peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions via social media.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

This study examined the role of social media platforms in enhancing peace in Nigerian higher institutions. The research objectives were to find out ways social media platforms can help enhance peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions; establish the extent to which social media platforms are enhancing peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions; examine the significance of social media's peace enhancement to Nigerian tertiary institutions; and x-ray the hindrances of social media in promoting peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Furthermore, the study was anchored on the Media framing theory and the research methodology was the survey using questionnaire as the research instrument.

Findings from the study showed that:

1. There is a high usage of social media by Nigerian higher institution students;
2. Social media is effective in enhancing peace in Nigerian higher institutions but is under-utilized by students in conflict resolution and peace keeping
3. The various ways social media platforms can help enhance peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions include publishing unbiased stories and pictures of the conflicts, making objective judgments and recommendations to the conflicts, and by supporting peace keeping bodies in resolving the conflicts; and that

4. The benefits of social media's peace enhancement to Nigerian tertiary institutions are that it leads to peace; helps prevent waste of resources; and helps protect the image of the higher institutions.

5.2 Conclusion

The effective usage or non-usage of social media in enhancing peace in Nigerian higher institutions as well as the direction and frequency they choose in the representation of conflicts in higher institutions go a long way in influencing the escalation or de-escalation of such conflicts. In the same vein, the nature that students engage in reporting and interpreting conflicts and other social upheavals on social media can affect the way stakeholders in the conflict perceive and react to the conflict.

Based on the findings of this study, higher institution students, using UNIBEN as case study showed little interest in enhancing peace among Nigerian higher institutions via social media and were more interested in using the social media for socialization and breaking boredom. This is reflective of the fact that the social media do not give adequate prominence in enhancing peace among Nigerian higher institutions irrespective of the fact that they are effective in doing so.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations have been made:

1. Social media users, especially higher institution students should report and help enhance peace among Nigerian higher institutions through conflict resolution and peace-keeping strategies.

2. Social media users should be mindful of their actions and inactions towards conflicts in Nigerian higher institution as such actions and inactions could escalate or de-escalate such conflicts.
3. Social media users in Nigerian higher institutions should do more in terms of critically interpreting and investigating conflicts before passing judgements instead of just relying on news reports, rumours, and subjective narratives by interested stakeholders in the conflict.
4. Since framing has a lot to do with how people perceive risk and danger, the language of messages on social media must be carefully selected. Instead of inflammatory language, more of therapeutic (calming) language should be used. This implies that emphasis of reports on conflicts in tertiary institutions should not only be on lack of preparedness of the institutions' managers and security agencies but also on the areas and ways the social media, non-governmental organizations, traditional councils, and security agencies have in time past succeeded in fighting, curbing or resolving various conflicts peacefully in higher institutions.
5. Social media reports in enhancing peace in higher institutions should be geared towards minimizing the psychological and physical effects the conflicts may have on the stakeholders, thereby raising hope that all is not lost.

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APPENDIX
QUESTIONNAIRE

Faculty of Arts,
Department of Mass-Communication,
University of Benin,
Benin City,
Edo State.

Dear Sir/Ma,

APPEAL TO FILL QUESTIONNAIRE

I am a final year student from the above-named university carrying out a research on **THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS IN ENHANCING PEACE IN NIGERIAN HIGHER INSTITUTIONS**. This is an academic research for the award of Bachelor of Arts (B.A) degree in Mass-Communication and your sincere contribution is vital and your responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Thank you for your anticipated response.

Yours Faithfully,

Destiny Esosa Aigbedion

Researcher.

Please fill the questionnaire by ticking the option most preferred by you.

SECTION A: Demographic data

1. **Age:** 15-19 [] 20-29 [] 30-39 [] 40 and above []
2. **Sex:** Male [] Female []
3. **Marital Status:** Single [] Married [] Divorced []
4. **Religion:** Christianity [] Islam [] Others, Please specify.....
5. **Educational Level:** 100Level [] 200Level [] 300Level [] 251Level []

SECTION B: Psychographic data

6. Are you on any social media platform? (a) Strongly Agree () (b) Agree () (c) Strongly Disagree () (d) Disagree ()
7. If yes, how long have you been using the social media? (a) 1month to 4yeras () (b) 5years to 10 years () (c) 11 years to 15 years () (d) Above 15years ()
8. Do you think social media can be used to enhance peace in Nigerian higher institutions? (a) Strongly Agree () (b) Agree () (c) Strongly Disagree () (d) Disagree ()
9. How effective do you think the social media is in enhancing peace in Nigerian higher institutions? (a) Very Effective () (b) Effective () (c) Not Effective ()
10. Do you use the social media to enhance peace in Nigerian higher institutions?
(a) Strongly Agree () (b) Agree () (c) Strongly Disagree () (d) Disagree ()
11. Do you think the social media is underutilized in enhancing peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions? (a) Strongly Agree () (b) Agree () (c) Strongly Disagree () (d) Disagree ()
12. In what ways can social media platforms help enhance peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions? (a) By publishing unbiased stories and pictures of the conflicts () (b) By making objective judgments and recommendations to the conflicts () (c) By supporting peace keeping bodies in resolving the conflicts () (d) All of the above ()

13. To what extent has social media platforms enhanced peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions? (a) A great Extent () (b) A Little Extent () (c) No Extent ()
14. What are the significance of social media's peace enhancement to Nigerian tertiary institutions? (a) It leads to peace in Nigerian higher institutions () (b) It helps prevent waste of resources via higher institution's conflicts () (c) It helps protect the image of the higher institutions () (d) All of the above ()
15. What are the limitations of UNIBEN students in promoting peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions via social media? (a) Ignorance of the students on the need to promote peace in Nigerian higher institutions via social media () (b) Lack of interest of most students in the conflicts of Nigerian higher institutions () (c) Illiteracy and poverty () (d) All of the above ()
16. Do you think social media users sometimes escalate conflict in Nigerian tertiary institutions through their posts and tweets? (a) Strongly Agree () (b) Agree () (c) Strongly Disagree () (d) Disagree ()
17. Do you recommend peace keeping bodies and the Nigerian government sensitize social media users on the need to use the social media for peace enhancement? (a) Strongly Agree () (b) Agree () (c) Strongly Disagree () (d) Disagree ()