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## SOCIAL MEDIA A CHANNEL FOR THE PROMOTION OF AFRICAN CULTURE, VALUES AND ETHICS

BY

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper posts to explore social media as a channel for sustaining and promoting African culture, ethics and values. The study which hinged on qualitative review of related literature with social relations and technological determinism theory of mass communication revealed among others that African culture and values are seriously eroding away with the presence of new technology. The main problem that necessitates this study is that the older generation and elderly who are the custodians and transmitters of African culture and values are not conversant with the use of today's social media technology. It is on this assumption that the study is to explore how culture can be transmitted, promoted and sustained by the present generation using their media, which is social media. It recommends an urgent need for review, reinvent and reinvigorate African culture and ethics into social media for sustainability. It also recommends digital elderly mobilization and infusion into online viral communities, Facebook pages, YouTube channels, TikTok and blogs to carry on African culture, ethics and values.*

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF STUDY

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Social media has greatly brought about a paradigm shift in our way of life especially in cultural values and societal ethics. The conventional media today of which social media is among in this period lacks in values which has caused bias and loss of trust on both the medium itself and the practioners. Obiagwu (2018). This is to say that irrelevant indigenous ethical and cultural values like integrity, truthfulness, morality humility bound with the essence of beauty, love and good associated with African culture is threatened. Culture to Arijeniwa A. F (2022.P.292) is usually when a group of people adapt some specific activities, habits, interests, religion, language, celebration, way of thinking and arguing in specific matters; different from segments and facets of the society that when interwoven makes a complex whole- Simply put culture is the summation of all human activities practiced or carried out in a definite and specific manner that makes up society. (Para 6: 1-5 P.292). Today the unregulated use of social media and obvious absence of digital African elders, has a way lowered African moral and cultural values to a very large extent. These cultural values invaded include human behavior, greetings, cuisine and morality. What used to be taboos have now gradually become the norms. These includes tattoos, homosexuals, cross-dressing, nude and impulsive videos with erotic moves. Africans are known for strict adherence to high moral standards, values, cultures and ethics. This is a contrast to the tenets of traditional African culture hence immorality is alien to our society. Morality is an embodiment of approved customs or habits of a society of which an individual is a member-Okorie (2020).Advanced communication have brought influences and impacts on cultures, brought forward by social media which has been a powerful tool that can affect and form human behaviours as well as culture. Due to borderless concepts, ubiquitousness and digitalization social media has crossed boundaries of culture. Facebook may have been a social media that connects people around the world with massive cultural background to meet at the platform Mui Chan (2020). Mui contended that cross-cultural communications is the reasons of culture being influenced by foreign countries through social media. Although there are relevant agencies and laws put in place to checkmate the menace of the media, The Guardian April 5, 2021 section 3(d)(j) and section 4 (e) of National Orientation Agency Act LFN 2003 mandates the agency to establish appropriate national framework for educating orientating and indoctrinating Nigerians towards developing socially desirable attitudes, values and culture Para 5 line 6.



### 1.1 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The digital incapacitation on the African elder today is the cause of the overwhelming sordid acts of the younger generation on social media which are capable of eradicating African indigenous values is what necessitates this study. Digitalization, migration and mobilization of African elders into social media platform is very important because it allows you to reach, nurture and engage with target audience irrespective of their location. Web Fox (2022). Therefore, by posting to users who are already fans of you coupled with “the fact that they follow you on Facebook, Twitter or other social media platform sites means that there is

something more they already want to know.” What this means is that followers respond more favourably to post they follow than if they had no prior relationship with you. This increases the likelihood that they will read your post or click your links which makes them more likely to take desired action.

### 1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- ✓ To ascertain that social media is a channel for promotion of African culture, ethics and values..
- ✓ To investigate the extent social media can act be a channel for promotion of African culture, ethics and values.
- ✓ To explore ways African culture can be transmitted, promoted and sustained by the African elders through the use of social media.
- ✓ To determine ways of elderly digital mobilization of African elders into social media for sustainability and promotion of African culture, ethics and values can be achieved

### 1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Does the use of social media act as a channel for promotion of African culture, ethics and values?
- To what extent can social media act as a channel for promotion of African culture, ethics and values?
- Does the use of social media by African elders has any significant effect on transmission, promotion and sustenance of African culture?
- In what ways can African elders be digitally mobilized in to social media to achieve the aim of promotion, transmission and sustainability of African culture, values and ethics?

### 1.5 SCOPE OF STUDY

The study is built around social media usage by Africans elders as well as African culture, ethics and values.

### 1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

It will serve as a research materials for researchers in these areas.

The study will add to existing body of knowledge.

It is also a clarion call to the promoters and relevant government agencies and operators to show concern for promotion of African culture and ethics through social media.

### 1.7 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

The study employed certain terms that were defined below as it is used in then study

**Elderly digital mobilization:** Introducing and sensitization of all custodian of African culture to social media usage.

**Digital migration:** having account on any of the social media platform by all individuals born in 1970s.

**African Culture:** Rich authentic social fabric plus traditional practices and rites associated with Africa

**Channel:** viable way, method options and contents. For communication and transferring of ideas, morals, values and culture.

**Social Media:** All sort of communication done through computer mediated technology.

**Promotion:** Activities and actions that supports or encourages cause, traditions adventures especially that of cultural diversity.

**African Elders** connotes all custodians and reservoirs of African culture to include the aged, traditional rulers, village heads, Ezes, Igwes, Nzes, women leaders etc.

## LITERATURE REVIEW.

### 2.0 INTRODUCTION.

In this chapter works done in relations to most topics as contained in the study were conceptually, theoretically and empirically reviewed.

### 2.1 CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

#### 2.1.i AFRICA, CULTURE, ETHICS AND VALUE3S

Africa, which represents 6% of the Earth's total surface and 20.4 percent of its total land area, encompasses about 1,500 – 2,000 African languages with 54 independent countries. It is said to be second largest continent in the whole world (Uwaoma U, Chidinma F.N and Vivian O., 2022). As at September 11, 2017 United Nations estimate of Africa is 1,252,051,129; that is 16.36% of the total world population. Even though according to African Union, African population is expected to increase by roughly 50% over the next 18 years, growing from 1.2 billion people today to over 1.8 billion in 2035.

In fact Africa will account for nearly half of the global population growth over the next two decades they concluded “As mother continent and first inhabited region on Earth, Africa is characterized by vast lands and one of the largest populations on Earth with which human heritage and cultural diversity.”

African Union (2022) Africa has vast number of ethnic cultures, diverse and varies

from country to country within the continent. In Africa, body language and action speak louder than words.

African culture which cuts across different regions, ethnics, and tribes of African countries relates to the beliefs, customs, traditions, practices and behaviors of different people in human groups or tribes within the African continent. It is a product of interactions of the diverse people that built Africa (past and present).” Solo-Anaeto (2015 Pg. 40, Para). (Pg. 40



par 5 lin. 1-4). In exploring the concept of culture, OS 2015 Pg. 40 in their study of culture posits that culture is the thick human web that binds a community or group of people as one. It is the little intrinsic things which are common, important and significant to a particular people. Culture they maintained also referred to behavior, values, shared ideas and attitudes of people who are bound together by environment, language and location. Culture is necessary and it is usually established from enlightenment and acquired through education, observation and exposure to environment.

Culture connotes beliefs, customs, traditions, practices and behaviors of different people in human groups or tribes within the African continent. It is a product of interactions of the diverse people that built Africa (past and present).” African Union (2021, Pg. 40 par 5 lin. 1-4). According to OS 2015 Pg. 40 explored in the concept of culture that in their study of culture is the thick human web that binds a community or group of people as one. It is the little intrinsic things which are common, important and significant to a particular people. Culture they maintained also referred to behavior, values, shared ideas and attitudes of people who are bound together by environment, language and location. Culture to Arijeniwa Nwaobi, Ajimokurola and Ugwuoruya (2022. P.292) is usually when a group of people adapt some specific activities, habits, interests, religion, language, celebration, way of thinking and arguing in specific matters; different from segments and facets of the society that when interwoven makes a complex whole- Simply put culture to them is the summation of all human activities practiced or carried out in a definite and specific manner that makes up society. (Para 6: 1-5 P.292). In recreation, African has a lot of indoor recreational activities to include ncho of which few of the new age today know or even download it for games, even though it might be lurking in one. Music is also a good example of African culture. There are various forms of music most of which have either originated from Africa or at least have been affected by African music in some level. Many modern instruments, rhythms, patterns, harmony and melody have evolved from ancient African forms. Today’s music and fashion industries undoubtedly owe an immense amount of gratitude to African’s culture and creativity reflected Solo-Anaeto (2015 Pg. 40, Para). African values are naturally practiced as youth serves as apprentices in the family businesses. Young people in typical African traditions do not need to worry about



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future jobs because the community creates vocational training for the younger generations. Family relationships in Africa are guided by hierarchy and seniority: a non-individualistic family system with older people respected and revered and a very decent dress pattern with no exposure of body parts are core values of African culture. Hard work, values connotes something of usefulness, importance and worthy i.e. language, extended family and African values are unwritten moral codes commonly identified by people living within the

geographical sphere of the continent. Values includes age, greeting, dressing etc. Africa has vast number of ethnic cultures, diverse and varies from country to country with the continent. African as well has norms like social behaviors. They include chastity among women, respect for elders, sense of hospitality, good relations, sanctity of life, dignity of labour, and patriotism to one's community, courage and self-reliance. There are also Social values among which is human dignity and respect for human life, arts music, literature, morals. Africa has some sets of ethics that make up aspects or practices in African culture which cuts across different regions, ethics, and tribes of African countries: from showing respect to elders, looking an elder in the eye, to greeting one another, receiving gifts with both hands, using left hand to collect gifts, handshake or eating is considered abominable, rendering services to one another, having self-control, not publicly showing anger, impatience and other negative vices, especially to elders.

Foremost African respect is for elders, they are the very foundation of Africa. Our ancestors and living elders are the connections to this foundation and must be respected said Odey G.O (2020) in an article on Respect is Africa. Elders are seen as a deity of some sort, more like a demigod for they are the custodian of truth, morality, manners, sincerity, guidance and good example as such instill this virtue to the young ones who respectfully obey and follow them he expanded.



### 2.1.ii SOCIAL MEDIA, A VIABLE CHANNEL

Social media is a potential viable channel for transmission, promotion and sustainability of an ideology. Examples include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Whatsapp, and YouTube. It is according to Kaplan and Henlien (2010 P.61) is a “group of internet based applications and websites that are built on ideological and technological foundation of web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated contents. Social media compromises of mobile and web-based applications and websites that allow users to interact in a virtual environment without the presence of a medicated gatekeeper as seen in traditional mass media, (Kaplan and Henlein, 2010). Social media is an internet based form of communication USF (2022); social media platforms allow users to have conversations, share information and create web content. There are many forms of social media including blogs, micro-blogs, wikis, social networking sites, photo sharing sites, instant messaging, video sharing sites, podcasts, widgets, virtual worlds and more- USF (2020).

Social media serves a more recent important purpose of teaching individuals what is socially acceptable. It gives people examples on how to act and present oneself as well as how not to act and not present oneself. Stanford (2016). Social media thus teaches individuals how they should act and carry themselves so that they will be affected by their peers and society. By communicating and socializing on social media, individuals challenge their own bases and force others to do the same which leads to a powerful change.” Stanford (2016). In the new age of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, social media plays a huge role in indoctrinating individuals into the society. According to Stanford (2016) An important thing to me is this:- Social media has the greatest impact on individuals who are in their secondary phase of socialization. This occurs in late childhood and adolescence and at this point in maturity individuals are incredibly

susceptible to outside”. The rise of social media has boosted and enhances the potentials of social media as platform that allows individual opinions, needs and values to be incorporated into a broader communication spectrum. Arinjinewa (2022 P.294). Mayer (2009. P.58) put it social media like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter offer a platform where “lone individuals and colossal powers interact” providing users with opportunity to interact and engage with other users around the world in a social dialogue by generating and sharing contents based on their beliefs, orientations, values and cultural inclination.

### 2.1. iii SOCIAL MEDIA, AFRICAN CULTURE, PROMOTION AND SUSTAINABILITY.

Social media are platforms where people from their countries upload materials relevant to their culture which include music, dance, poetry, local food recipes, national games and sports, local events, religious and national events and their celebrations and many other different activities that only exists in specific countries (Sawyer and Chen 2012) cited, Arijerinwa A.F, Nwaobi E.P, Ajimokurola P.O and Ugwuoruya I.D. 2022 (Para 2 1-6 – Pg. 291). Social media facilitates connectivity identifies connectedness among users of the same ethnic group, reinforces existing ethnic links and ties Users of social media are diverse and from all across the world thus social media has presented itself more than ever better channel for African countries to make their own socio-cultural statements Margaret (2015 Pg. 40). Thus in uploading contents of African cultures, values, lifestyle, dressing, arts, music, and food on social media; people around the world would see and appreciate the various aspects of African cultural values and ensure that it is conspicuously represented in the virtual world.



Africans elders who use social media can create pages, sites, and blogs to display African culture. It will serve Africans in diaspora as a window to identify, imbibe, fully appreciate and imitate African cultural values/heritage. Today many Facebook pages, YouTube channels, Twitter handles and TikTok videos has been displayed in African languages. This helps to strengthen the language and keep it alive; thereby sustaining and promoting African values and culture. Folklores can be told by the most aged in their native language through virtual reality in the form of YouTube video chats, conferencing etc. They can also forge online virtual community inclusive of the African elders to use idioms, proverbs and tales in expressing African culture. This builds a virtual African community and at the same time expressing African culture and values and ethics. Individuals can conspicuously project African culture by making posts and comments on Facebook wall news feeds since what we update on our online status to say has more of an effect on our audience than we think Christakis and Fowler (2020). If you can successfully create positive emotions in your status, the ripple effect can be more persuasive and influential than you may think Kastler (2010); like that of Amanda Chisom a facebook user who poked our sensibility with her post in a pan African facebook page *Igbo Di Uso* (on Sept 28<sup>th</sup> 2022). Social media’s multi-media nature

and interoperation can be used in promoting and sustaining African culture. It can be expressed in various forms i.e. written, graphic, pictorial and video elements to be uploaded and shared (Margaret (2015)). They can be played, listened or seen from different aspects.

This use of social media as channel has led to the infusion of African culture and society develop, enrich and sustain their cultural values. Social media can be a repository or archive for African cultural materials values and ethics being a transport medium, thereby making it available for viewing at any time, 24 hours, and 7 days a week. Videos, poems, literature, drama, music, images of African culture posted on the social media is kept as archive. Viewers can also view previous contents on social media sites any time. This means that social media sites, pages or accounts that are dedicated to African culture can be stored and viewed and accessed anytime even in many years to come In line with this Ohiagu(2010) suggested social media as a channel can be utilized for global display of African culture. He enjoined that an Instagram account solely dedicated to the display of Nigerian cultured traditional wedding attires made with Ankara, Aso-oke and different local fabrics have been trending online. This page he maintained has thousands of followers giving them opportunity to see various styles and appreciate the Nigerian culture and fabric. From sites and pages like these, people all over the world have opportunity of seeing various styles of African print and today are replicating them for their own use thereby making for promotion of African culture. Designers now use African materials to make fabulous attires that are displayed on runaways and sold around the globe.



## 2.2 EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Invariably in a study by Ukonu, Edogor and Ezegwu (2017) on application of social media in promotion of Nigerian's indigenous languages against the backdrop of UNESCO's prediction that many indigenous languages in Nigeria may be extinct by 2050. It recognized the virility of social media is promoting indigenous languages the scholars adopted weighted mean and the constant comparative technique in analyzing quantitative and qualitative data generated from focus groups discussion (FGD) in five selected universities in Nigeria anchored on social network theory. The study found out that the extent to which users applied social media in the promotion of indigenous languages was very low sited Arinjewa, Nwaobi, Ajimokurola and Ugwuoruya (2022 P.296).

Again 'social media can be used to save the dying culture of respect among Nigerians .revealed Ndubuisi, Ekwereike and Anene (2022) in Pg. 20 Para 3 line 1-10 of their study. On the same note in P.42 Last Para Lin 1-6, Solo-Aneto and Babafemi (2015) advised in their qualitative study on social media as channel for sustaining African culture:- "Africa's rich



cultural heritage is diverse, unique and should not be watered down and possibly fade into extinction. Thus social media which is seen as posing as a threat to African culture also holds much potential in projecting and sustaining African cultures with its high capacity of information storage, dissemination and interactive nature, users can become acquainted, understand and appreciate different aspects of the African culture thus making for its continuity.” In another study carried out by Mui (2020) using 150 respondents aged between 18-25 years old revealed that “There is a contradicting view that people will lose their own culture after viewing to much of online content “-Social media: Influences and impacts on culture”. The virility of social media as a channel tested in a study on online influence on female lifestyle in Chukwemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, posits that respondents exposed to online celebrities have high level of imitation of these online celebrities they are exposed to. They further opined that the lifestyle of the respondents is influenced in different areas by their exposure to them to include fashion, speaking amongst others and finally, concludes that the level of respondents’ lifestyle that have been influenced by online celebrities they are exposed to is high” (Nwedo-nzeribe, Ntomchukwu and Pius, 2020). Data from another study carried out on 100 sampled population of Ray field in Jos south Local Government Area of Plateau State using Questionnaire revealed that the internet definitely has the virility as a channel in changing Nigeria’s core values. They revealed that Nigerians especially the youths no longer have regards for their culture while it recommends that local language can be promoted via Facebook, Twitter etc.

## **2.3 THEORITICAL REVIEW**

This work is framed around two theories of Mass communication namely Social Relations and Technological Determinism; but anchored on the later.

### **2.3.1 TECHNOLOGICAL DETERMINISM THEORY**

This study is anchored on the technological determinism Theory of Mass Media. The term Technological determinism as noted by Asemah E.S, Nwammuo A.N and Nkwam-Uwaoma A.O.A (2017) was coined by an American sociologist and economist Thorstain Veblen (1857-1929) pointed out that technology has the ability to drive human interactions and leads to social change. The theory was further developed by Marshall McLuhan in 1964 standing on the premises that technology has a significant impact and role in communication amongst human in the society and the influence determines the socio-cultural perception, inclination, acceptability of such changes in cultural values by means of the society. The main thrust of the TDT according to Asemah, E.S, Nwammuo, A.N and Nkwam-Uwaoma, A.O.A (2017), Arijenwa (2022 Pg. 297) is that media technology shapes how individuals in a given society think, feel, act and how society operates as it moves away from one technological age to another. Therefore, it points to technology as being the force which shapes society as such presumes that society’s technology drives the development of its society structure and cultural values.” Asemah, E.S, Nwammuo, A.N and Nkwam-Uwaoma, A.O.A(2017) added.

The applicability of this theory to the study is evident in the fact that technology via social media has succeeded in sustaining and promoting cultural values and ethics by re-shaping, re-presenting and transmitting elements of the culture from direct source to end users of the culture in being digital natives. Therefore, with technology elderly digital immigration is made easy for the custodians of African culture, ethics and values to migrate at ease, speed and low cost. Social media contents directly or indirectly shape user’s perceptions and influence their views of reality Solo-Aneto (2015). Arijeniwa A.F, Nwaobi E.P, Ajomkurola P.O and Uwuoruya I.D (2022) in Para 5 line 1 concluded that the underlining heightened exposition of social media(technology) in that “There is no denying the fact that the social

media reaches farther than the cinematograph, television and videos which the law regulates. It is pertinent to say that publications on videos, television and even cinemas are flippant by nature, in the sense that if one was not present at the publication or airing of the content, it takes a repeat broadcast for one to view it while social media, any publication on it stays. Some individual accounts of the people corrupting the standard of morals are stronger and more influential than 10 television stations pulled together. Each publication sometimes reaches out to an average of one million people in one month. It is impossible to escape viewing these contents online” Para 5 line 3:4. Okorie S.E(2021)

### **2.3.2 SOCIAL RELATIONS THEORY**

Social relations theory propounded by Max Weber in (1978) is another theory that informs this study. It is according to Oxford reference (2022) a theory of mass communication that suggests that internal social relationships particularly with significant others have an important effect on an individual’s response to mass media. It is adjusting to life with boundaries set by our relations. It creates higher esteem, greater empathy and more trusting and co-operating relationship. Social relationship cannot exist without an individual intending to modify the existing attitudes of another. It is the behavior of a plurality of actors to transmit its meaningful contents. The action of each actor takes account of the others and is oriented in like terms. A social relationship is characterized by the action of each to that of others which could be geared towards friendship, loyalty, economic exchange. Social relations of Max Weber recognize the fact that in each community there is a tendency to involve ethnic, racial or community of which the most important aspect is individual not group. It thus entails individual reacting and communicating with groups or social system.

The relevance of this theory to the study is in that Social media thus teaches individuals how they should act and carry themselves said Stanford (2016). Thus when individuals interact with their elders on social media, the social contagion effect takes place – an effect which can lead to adopting certain behaviors, attitudes and beliefs from those within a social network which are distinctively different from theirs. Therefore in promoting African culture, values and ethics the major custodians of African culture the elderly’, the aged, royal fathers, chiefs’, Ezes’ and all other notable figures that connote African Culture must be given a space to perpetrate and to transmit the African culture since naturally. In the new age of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, social media plays a huge role in indoctrinating individuals into the society and this naturally; occurs in late childhood and adolescence and at this point in maturation. Interestingly the secondary phase of socialization is also when most individuals begin to participate in social media. No doubt, Christakis (2020) said that we like to think that we are largely in control of our day to day lives, yet most of what we do, from what we eat to, who we sleep with and even the way we feel is significantly influenced by those around us and those around them. The notion that one’s behaviour and actions can influence connections is pretty mind boggling to think about and to add to that our own behaviour, actions and habits are likely to be largely more influenced by social media than we could ever have imagined. Our actions can change the behaviours, the beliefs and even the basic health of people we’ve never met, added Uwaoma U., Chidinma F.N and Vivian O(2022). In a subtle fashion, social networks help spread contagious; create “epidemics of obesity, smoking and substance abuse, disseminate facts and more. An important thing to note is this is, individuals are incredibly susceptible to outside ideas, perceptions and concepts Stanford (2016).

### **3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study is a descriptive study that used qualitative analysis to analyse the significance of social media as a channel for promoting African culture, ethics and values. It also employed analysis and explanations from secondary data gotten through research materials both on and offline.

### **4.0 FINDINGS**

The study made the following findings that

- Social media is a channel for promotion of African culture, ethics and values..
- Social media can act to an extent for promotion of African culture, ethics and values.
- African culture can be transmitted, promoted and sustained by the younger generations through the use of social media.
- Elderly digital mobilization of African elders into social media will be for sustainability and promotion of African culture, ethics and values.

### **4.1 SUMMARY**

Social media is not just a platform for African culture, values and ethics to be promoted by younger generations but also sustained through social relations and digitally elder migration. African people indeed have utilized the platform to make global statements and promote African course all over the world.

### **4.2 CONCLUSION**

The study concludes that indeed social media is a vehicle to maim or promote African culture, values and ethics and this is the time to save and restore African values, ethics, moral and cultures which the younger generation and generations to come may inherit before they are totally discarded riding on the chariots of social media, declared Okorie a Columnist cited in The Guardian of April 5 2021.

### **4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study recommends

- Digitally elder migration. African elders maintain a presence on social media.
- NFVCB and NITDA Act may through the co-operate boards of (social media accounts) and business owners limit who and what the younger generation publish or promote that can maim the African culture, values and ethics.
- There should be constant workshops by government for business organizations, the younger generations, African elders and stakeholders on maximizing social media for promotion of African culture.
- Social media studies for promotion of African Culture should be integrated into education curriculum.

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