

Social Media Use Among Nigerian Students Abroad

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ABSTRACT

The study ‘Social Media Use among Nigerian Students Abroad’ was conducted to assess social media usefulness as a source of information among Nigerian students about events in their home country.

Using the quantitative methodology of research, a survey was conducted using a total sample size of 310 which represented 10% of the total population of the study. However, the analysis for this study was done using 299 respondents, because 11 questionnaires were not returned.

The findings of this study indicate that all respondents signed up on social media platforms and have user accounts on various social media platforms indicating 57.5% those for whose favourite is social networking sites. The predominant source of information is shared post and credibility is recorded as 59.9%. Based on the issues discussed, social media is affirmed by 71.8% for usefulness and most suitable source of information for students living abroad.

Keywords: social media, new media, communication.

ÖZ

Bu çalışma -“Yurtdışında eğitimini sürdüren Nijeryalı öğrenciler arasında sosyal medya kullanımı”- sosyal medyanın Nijeryalı öğrenciler için, kendi ülkelerinde gelişen olaylar hakkında bilgi kaynağı olarak yararlılığını ölçmek amacıyla yürütülmüştür.

Kantatif metodoloji kullanılarak 310 katılımcıyla gerçekleştirilen anket çalışması üniversitede eğitim gören Nijeryalı öğrenci popülasyonunun 10% una tekabül eder. Bununla birlikte, katılımcıların 11’inin anket sonuçlarına ulaşamamış; yalnızca 299’undan veri elde edilebilmiştir.

Çeşitli sosyal medya platformlarına üyelikleri bulunan katılımcıların 57.5% unun favori internet mecraları sosyal medya platformlarıdır. Paylaşılan bilgilerin kaynaklarının öğrenciler tarafından güvenilir bulunma oranı kimi zaman 59.9% a ulaşmıştır. Ele alınan meseleler doğrultusunda sosyal medyanın yararlılığı ve yurtdışında yaşayan öğrenciler için en uygun bilgi kaynağı olduğu 71.8% oranıyla doğrulanmıştır.

DEDICATION

To my dear late father, Alhaji Mohammed Danfulani.

And all the members of Danfulani's family.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Today, a lot of people have embarked upon movement away from their countries for reasons ranging from studies, leisure, business and different kinds of expeditions, either on a permanent or temporal basis. Of all the purposes of travel, a vast majority of the people have chosen their destinations to study abroad. This notion of traveling to acquire education according to Schiller and Salazar (2013) predates the nineteenth century and so is not a recent development. Ankomah and Larson (2004) assert that the estimated number of those who travel to study abroad doubled from 4.8 million as at 1985 to 8 million in year 1996. By this increase, the rate of travelers has risen to over 66% and it cuts across continents. Thus, this is a clear indication that the students find themselves in the need to study abroad.

Contemporary studies reveal that while away from their countries, students rely on their family, friends and acquaintances to get firsthand information about activities that occur in their home countries. However, the alternative sources of information are the various forms of media, particularly the social media, which complement the information derived from immediate relations with family and friends. According to Harper and Philo (2013), the role media plays is centered on ‘informing the public about what happens in the world’ (p.321) which is exactly how the social media serve its users. As soon as they travel out, there is dire need to get information and so the

only immediate alternative is seeking vicarious experience for which the cyberspace is the most suitable, preferably social media platforms.

Social media is widely believed to be the most effective and efficient form through which information about events can be obtained. Although traditional media is still patronized by wide range of audiences, the responsiveness to social media is gradually gaining more thriving grounds. The reason for this preference Schroeder, Minocha and Scheider (2010) corroborate is because through innovations in technology, social media can be accessed globally with ease. Also, it is not farfetched from the fact that social media is unique and of inestimable information-value for users.

For instance, students are able instantaneously access social networks via personal computers and/or smart mobile phones by simply signing up or subscribing to an desired cyber forums or groups. Through the social media, students gain access to content that is carefully directed and categorized in such a way that those reading and/or viewing have options to choose or discard same. As a result, there is possibility to get hold of information in real-time.

Preference of social media over traditional media has influenced students who sign up on social media platforms and those who create blogs to share information in form of photos and videos. It is the same way audiences depend on the traditional forms of mass media, that internet users are quick to search the web for web-content. Thus, the social media usurp of traditional mass media gives way for students to seek for ways through which the information need will be met.

The social media is flexible in stimulating and directing the students on events, and further persuade them to be able to freely utter views with those within their circles.

Through the ability to connect people, it is possible to share ideas in form of arguments on political, social and economic issues. When users express their predisposition to common social beliefs, this further informs others to share views on social media platforms through frequent occurrence of events and speedy spread of information across the cyberspace.

1.2 Motivation of the Study

The emergence of social media and subsequent trend of change in media consumption among people especially young people and students pushing majority of them to adopt social media as one of their reliable source of information and interaction generates interest of media researchers or students. Currently, the development of the internet and increased usage of mobile devices such as smart phones, tablets, and laptops have greatly increase among Nigeria students studying abroad these students greatly look up to various content online instead of content on the mainstream media outlets such as print media, radio and television that were once the main sources of information and entertainment to this folks. This in turn has resulted in a growing trend in online content consumption and collaboration among members of the online community (students) especially as it relates to issues back home. This is the root of my motivation for this study.

The researcher is motivated to conduct a study on social media use among Nigerians studying abroad and particular in Eastern Mediterranean University, North Cyprus because of the observed prevalent of social use of social media within this students where active online community exist as they participate in discussion of issues back home as well as relate with one another even without personal acquaintances, this is relationship surpasses what is obtainable back home among same people or students.

This may not be far from the fact that these students were not to privilege of using effective internet services as a result of poor network that is common in most developing nation like Nigeria, cost implication rooted in economy challenge which make them to depend more on traditional media than social media, however going abroad for studies afford these students the opportunity to utilize internet effective. Access to internet among Nigeria Students EMU makes such students to spent hours on social media such as facebook. It is evident Social media among Nigeria social is prevalent and is not just a means of interaction but information. From experience I desire to know what is going on in Nigeria; unfortunately, and so i resolve to the use of social media platforms where several information-savvy Nigerians are quick to update statuses and comment on elections and governance, security, human rights, cultural activities, international relations, trade, and conflicts any moment.

Secondly, there is increased preference of using social media to post, repost and/or read information about news events happening locally, nationally and internationally. To Nigeria students residing away home country, the social media stands as a medium through which immediate information needs are met.

There is no doubt that social media came with its own challenges, the issue of its credibility of its content and lack of gate-keeping, and situation where almost everybody is a sources, in this scenario how can these students decipher information since they seems to depend on this medium while heartedly. These and many other issues are things that motive study on study social media use.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Social media has become the most popular media environment for users all over the world. As a new platform, people are able to share experiences, pictures, opinions and information about their daily activities.

Several researches conducted on social media use and how it facilitates learning, media use and knowledge of world affairs, maximizing opinion on social networks, opinion formation on social media as well as impact the social media has on the performance of university students (Gionis, Terzi and Tsaparas, 2013; Eke, Omekwu and Odoh, 2014; Xion and Liu, 2014). Some strongly believe that internet is making it possible for social life to thrive, increasing awareness, strengthening associations and enabling cooperate collaborations. Yet, others hold that the cyberspace (social media inclusive) is casting walls pose as hindrances to real life commitment (Nie and Erbring, 2000).

This study is therefore concerned with social media use among Nigerians who are resident abroad, particularly how they utilize the social media to meet their information need about events in their home country.

1.4 Aim of the Study

The aim of this research is to look at social media use of Nigerian students who are currently enrolled at the Eastern Mediterranean University, North Cyprus. The study will assess how informal contact and discussion on popular social media platforms keep the students informed about issues in their home country.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

This study will address the following objectives.

1. To identify the various social media platforms through which students learn about issues in their home country.
2. To know the purpose for which Nigerians students use social media the most.
3. To explore the ways through which Nigerian students studying abroad access information on issues in their home country.
4. To ascertain the issues do Nigerian students relate more through social media.
5. To establish the usefulness and effectiveness of social media platforms in informing Nigerian students on current affairs in their home countries?

1.6 Research Questions

To explore the influence of social media on opinion formation of Nigerians studying abroad, this study seeks to answer the following research questions.

1. What are the various social media platforms through which Nigerian students learn about issues in their home country?
2. For what purpose do Nigerians students use social media the most?
3. How do Nigerian students studying abroad access information on issues in their home country?
4. What issues do Nigerian students relate more through social media?
5. How useful and effective are the social media platforms in informing Nigerian students on current affairs in their home countries?

1.7 Assumptions

The suppositions made are based on the most popularly used social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Yahoo and Google online groups among Nigerians within and those studying abroad.

This study assumes that through the new media, Nigerians studying abroad are able to gain access to information on issues in their country. What this implies is that students who left their home country to study abroad tend to rely on various views and updates shared on the social media platforms by other users with whom they connect with.

Thus, because these students are relying on vicarious experiences, people in their network stand out as the best sources through which information are derived about what has happened.

This study assumes that the discussion on social media helps Nigerian studying abroad to effectively take part in discourses about national issues in their country. The following are three basic assumptions of this study.

1. The social media is a source of news about Nigeria to many Nigerian students studying abroad.
2. Social media provides a forum where Nigerian students disseminate and express their views about issues in their country.
3. Social media play a significant role in discussion of topics of national importance among Nigerian students abroad.

1.8 Significance of Study

Since the latter years of the twentieth century, freedom of speech has been widely sought and enjoyed all over the globe. Users of social media platforms utilize them to freely exchange information and express themselves by relaying news events, personal experiences, opinions that either criticize or agree with others. This has made it possible for studies to be conducted on social media and public opinion. The proposed study is intended to add to this growing body of literature. The study will review literature on the topic and examine ways in which social media platforms may facilitate public opinion formation.

This study will enable the research gain more knowledge on social media use, opinion formation and the existing influence between the two themes. When successfully conducted, findings from the fieldwork will enable the researcher understand the reasons why some Nigerians studying abroad are willing to join discussion panels on issues and events in their home country, and why some choose not to do the same. As

a Nigerian studying abroad, it becomes imperative for the researcher to be able to understand and share findings with friends.

For prospective researchers, this study will make suggestions about possible topics unable to cover. This will benefit students, academics, and the general public. Several other studies have been carried out by many students using the same study population, however, the study on social media use and opinion formation is the first of its kind within the Eastern Mediterranean University. Thus, the originality of this research is guaranteed.

1.9 Scope and Limitations of the Study

This research work is limited to social media utilization among Nigeria students studying in Eastern Mediterranean University, Gazimağusa, North Cyprus within the year 2004-2015.

1.10 Operational Definition of Terms

The context of use for social media, public opinion, social media use, opinion formation and Nigerian student are defined below.

- i) New Media: is used in contrast to the traditional forms of mass media. New media is information and communication technologies, images and sound combined. It is interactive in nature and gives room for user-generated content.
- ii) Social Media: - The term social media is used to refer to online platforms, which make it possible for users to share content informed by their active participation and interaction with friends. This content which is user generated is in form of text, pictures and videos about people and news events.
- iii) Social Media Use: - To be able to access social media plat forms, an individual makes use of equipment, softwares, telephone line, discretionary income, etc. to

sign up using a desired username and password. Upon log in, users go on to connect with family and friends and have the liberty to express their views in form of comments, sharing and re-sharing of updates, photos, videos and so on.

iv) Nigerian Student: - Is used here to refer to a student who is of Nigerian nationality studying abroad. The context of use is as a student who has embarked upon travel to a foreign country for the sole purpose of acquiring education, be it for undergraduate, graduate or postgraduate studies. The Nigerian student is male or female, single or married, and cuts across all age groups. Nigerians are of different ethnicities and religion

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews literatures that are relevant to the topic of this work, it captures concept of communication, social media, characteristics of social media, differences between social media and traditional media and trends of social media in Nigeria. The second part of this chapter is the theoretical framework. The work is anchored on the uses and gratification theory. The essence of these reviews is to show the various opinions held by other scholars, acknowledge effort of others and see how current study make a contribution.

Boote and Beile (2005) affirm that a literature review enables the researcher to make a comprehensive review, description as well as simplification of other literatures related to current study. Therefore, this review is guided by the objectives outlined in the first chapter to incorporate various views so that the literature can be used to support arguments on social media use among students.

To generate literature, the researcher made use of secondary sources such as peer reviewed articles, books, and other relevant published resources online and offline this is necessary so as to familiarize with the issues, relate them to current study and eventually make recommendations for further research.

2.1 Conceptualizing Communication

Communication is not a new phenomenon; from time immemorial communication has been in place, historians of communication hold that communication can be traced before or from the myths of Adam and Eve. According to Orewere in Asemah (2011, p.1), human beings do not like to live alone, they like to live in a place where there are other human beings; they interact with one another in order to satisfy their wants, needs and goals. This interaction is initiated, promoted and achieved through communication. Communication is conceptualized by many scholars Hybels and Weaver in Asemah (2011, p.1) say, communication is a process in which people share information, ideas and feelings; it involves the spoken words and written words, body language, personal mannerism and styles. This insight goes beyond the earliest notion of communication which sees it as the passing of information from sender to receiver.

True communication is sharing of ideas, understanding is the strength of life or our existence. That is why, it is often said, communication is the life-wire of the society; it is very important and necessary in the existence of man. Nothing can be actualized without communication, no wonder MacBride (1980, p.3) notes that:

Communication maintains and animates life. It is also the motor and expression of social activity and civilization; it leads people and peoples from instinct to inspiration, through variegated processes and systems of enquiry, command and control; it creates a common pool of ideas, strengthens the feelings of togetherness, through exchange of messages and translates thoughts into action, reflecting every emotion and need from the humblest task of human survival, to supreme manifestation of creativity or destruction. Communication integrates knowledge, organization and power and runs as a thread, linking the earliest memory of man to his noblest aspirations, through constant striving for a better life...

This assertion shows how important communication is in the life of living beings especially human. Throughout history, man is in constant search on ways he can

communicated with himself, and his environment (other men), this desire pushed man to identify forms and types of communication. Basically and in this context, communication comes in different forms; it can be intra-communication, inter-communication or mass communication. In any form communication may be or occur the essence is to share idea and enhance understand. Therefore any model of communication that seems linear weakens the essence of communication.

As man strives to communicate with his fellow in different setting, several factors directly or indirectly affect his flow. These factors include politics, culture, economic and technology. However, the major player in communication process especially in the 21st century is the technology. The world is fast growing in knowledge manifesting itself in technology; this has go far in effecting communication as well as creating more desire for to communicate. Technology has increasingly introduces different communication aids which makes the whole process very fast, simple and less complex.

It is evident that communication like any other aspect of our lives is thriven on the shoulders of technology. Akinfeleye (2008, p.89) advises that development of any purposeful communication system must take due account of the giant strides that are daily being taken in the area of communication technology. Sobowale in Asemah and Yoroson concurs that without efficient technology, communication is perhaps a wishful thinking.

These assertions stress the importance of technology to communication especially at the mass communication level. Mass media rely heavily on communication gadgets such as computers, transmitters etc. The waves are harness for effective

communication process at the mass level by the aid of technology. The most visible breakthrough of technology in communication is the emergence of internet which subsequently confirmed the “prophecy” of Marshal McLuhan about the concept of global village. The world is now in the era of global convergence- technology has made the world one by breaking the distances between nations and making it possible for people across the globe to interact or communicate within seconds.

As matter of fact social media is the wonder in internet connectivity, many scholars hold that the explosion in popularity of Social media represents one of the fastest uptakes of a communication technology since the web was developed in the early 1990s (Stefanone, Lackaff and Rosen, 2010). Social media communication or interaction has become very popular, family, groups, institutions have sites and group chats that enable them to communicate on daily basis any time, any moment without restriction as long as they are all connected to the network. Comer (2004, p.252) explains that in social or new media communication, all parties involved in the communication process must agree on a set of rules to be used when exchanging messages. This rule or term is called network or communication protocol. Though social media communication has some debatable issues, there is no doubt that understanding its workings will make one appreciate the role it plays in communication process especially at the moment.

2.2 Social Media

As popular as social media is and despite the plethora of works on social media since its emergence to date, there has not been a very clear and generally accepted definition of social media among scholars or researchers. The reason may be the changing face of social media on constant basis and the series of controversies that social media attracts especially in communication studies. The term social media is used by different people in various contexts that are relative to their discourses. The Merriam - Webster dictionary defines social media as “forms of electronic communication (as Web sites for social networking and blogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (as videos).” Blackshaw and Nazzaro (2006) state that the general understanding of social media is that of an internet based platform through which information is made available by way of creating impressions, experience sharing, and easy accessibility for all users. Bedell (2010) explained that social media is simply a system, a communication channel; it is not a location that you visit. For Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), social media is made up of applications on the cyberspace, and used for content creation and sharing by users. Another definition of social media is proffered by Wise and Shorter (2014), in which the meaning is perceived as a convergence of channels of communication in which communal interaction is expressed using sharing of information and teamwork. Brain (2010, p.5), notes that Social media is much more than user generated content, it is driven by people or community where they communicate and congregate, therefore, social media is the melting pot of various cultures.

According to Solis (2007) social media is a shift in how people discover, read, and share news and information and content. Nekatibebe (2012) cited (Charlene, 2008) defined as “a social trend in which people use technologies to get information they need from one another, rather than from traditional institutions like corporations”. In a more clear terms Evans (2008) in Nekatibebe (2012), defines social media as the “democratization of information, transforming people from content readers into content publisher”. Evans added that social media goes beyond just reading and disseminating information but how one share and create content for others to participate. Such participation is a key in the ongoing process. That is why O’Reilly (2005) explains that social media has brought a shift from a broadcast mechanism to direct conversational format where the author and media consumers are one. Therefore, it is clear that in social media everyone is afforded the opportunity to create and share information as long as he or she is connected to an internet, this shows that social media alone cannot stand.

Social media does not exist as an independent entity, but is consisted of several processes and the use of other platforms. Braun (2012) opines that to conceptualize social media, there are two themes which must be clearly explained; the web 2.0 and the user generated content. While the former is the platform, the latter remains what people use the platform to achieve, pointing that social media can then be explained as the form of communication which takes places using both themes.

Another unique aspect of social media is the varieties, abound for users, Abubakar in ACCE (2012, p.102), says social media is broadly involve; blogs, networks (facebook, twitter etc), video sharing (YouTube), audio sharing (podcast), mobile sites (2go, etc), image/picture sharing (Flickr, etc). Understanding varieties of social media is

necessary in the study of social media because some of the platforms are not popular, some are globally use, hence they are popular in one nation and unknown in another nation, some are popular within a particular demographics. The conflicting issue in social media classification is that many of them share similar features, some died off after or lost popularity after some time. In Nigeria for instance, before the advent of whatsapp, 2go social site is very popular in fact compete with facebook, however currently the social site is not popular with most of its previous users adopting whatsapp platform. It is also important to understanding the varieties of social media sites because some of the sites harmonize other sites, for example through facebook a user can access site like whatsapp.

The diagram below depicts social media classification

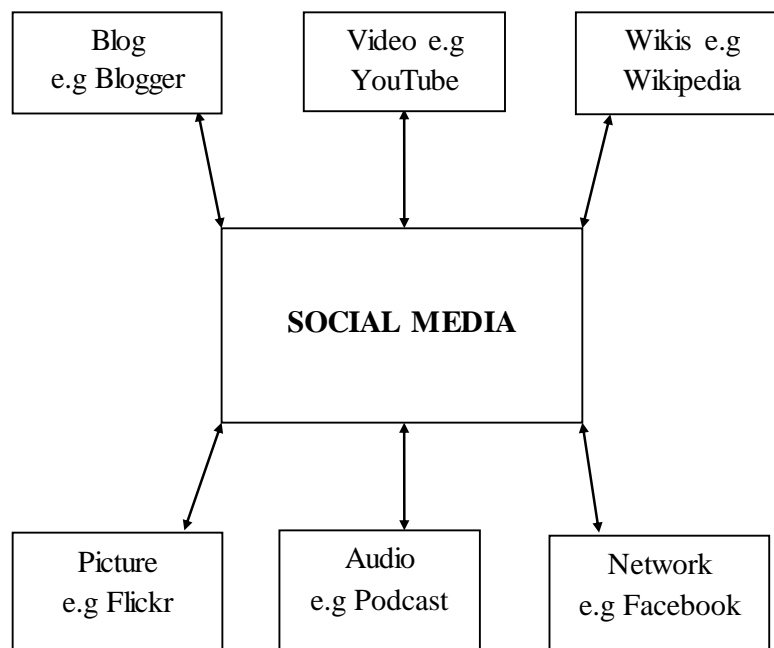


Figure 1: Social media classifications (Abubakar, 2012)

In the same vein, Anthony (2009:6) classified social media into six kinds these according to him include: Social networks (which include Facebook, Myspace, Bebo,

Whatsapp) these platforms allow people to people to build personal account or web pages that will enable them share ideas mostly pictures, text and videos and or news stories. The second type is Blogs (social media platforms of academic works such as online journals and articles). The third type is Wikis-this is best known as Wikipedia or online encyclopedia, wikis is a data base containing information of importance and allow people to add content or edit information. Podcasts is another type of social media that provide audio and video files that are available by subscription, through services like Apple iTunes. The fifth type of social media is the content communities which allow the user organizes particular content. The most popular content communities are form around photos both still and video i.e Flickr and Youtube respectively. The sixth type of social media is the Microblogging- this media combined with bite-sized blogging, where small amounts of contents are distributed online and through mobile network. The most popular Microblogging site is the twitter.

Some social media are popular while others are not, among Nigerians and particular Nigeria students abroad. The classification of social media is not as important as the function of the social media at a given time and need. Several studies have shown that among the plethora of social media across the globe, facebook, twitter and Youtube are most popular, though sites like instagram are coming up but they remain mostly in the hand of celebrities. Facebook, twitter and YouTube are been adopted across different class of people. Nigeria as a country and Nigerian student abroad also follow such trend they mostly use these sites (facebook, twitter and youtube) as such this researcher deems it necessary to give an overview of these sites.

2.2.1 Facebook

Facebook came into in February 2004, it was founded by Mark Zuckerberg, Dustin Moskovitz and Chris Hughes when they were studying in Harvard. At the beginning, the site was restricted to Harvard students. Even though unconfirmed myth says the site was first created and use among the group of friends led by Mark Zuckergberg but later the privilege was extended to all students in Harvard, then all high school student and later to everyone across the globe. According to comScore Inc. cited by Ogedebe and Musa (2012) facebook is one of the top rankings websites in the world. Facebook has more than 500 million active users and it was ranked as the most used social network worldwide; this number is surely in the increase. As of March 2012 Facebook has more than 900 million registered users (Nation Newspaper, 2012). Mitchell and Dana (2013, p.1) in their work “The role of News on Facebook” published by Pew Research Center noted that facebook is the largest social media platform for news and interaction across the globe.

The popularity of Facebook is growing on daily basis, this evident in several reports concerning high traffic on the site on a daily basis. The popularity of Facebook has attracted several ICTs conglomerate, Stone (2007) in Simeon et al (2010) report that “on October 24, 2007, Microsoft announced that it had purchased a 1.6% share of Facebook for \$240 million, giving Facebook a total implied value of around \$15 billion”.

Among Nigeria students abroad (EMU) the story is not otherwise, most of these students at least have facebook account where they create a profile, update information about themselves, share photos, comment on other posts, and send

messages, update status but few. As such other social sites serve like secondary purpose. Ogedebe and Musa (2012) capture that:

Facebook is at the forefront of the social media craze, with over 500 million active users on its website every month. University students are one of the primary demographics using facebook, with features such as photos, wall posts, and status updates becoming seemingly irresistible to those who want to connect with their friends. The University culture loves facebook, embraces and makes not just a hobby or a fun pastime thing but a lifestyle and a need.

The large followership enjoy by facebook is also as a result of its flexibility or uniqueness compare to other social networking sites. Simeon et al (2011) explain that, Facebook as a social media site create opportunities for users to create personal profile; add other users as friends, and exchange messages, including automatic notifications, photos and comments when they update their profile. Other users may join groups they interest in. Most of these groups are created base on certain affiliations which can be school, classmate, workplace etc. The site is also is a good information feed, where users can create personal and corporate pages. Business organization and personalities have pages to make announcement news and updates, which then drop into the feeds of other Facebook users that have chosen to receive them by liking their page. Facebook fan page has become an integral part of social media platform. These pages made it easy for any organization to promote its brand and gain direct access to customer or audience according to fan base principle common in facebook. However, facebook messages are limited to registered users.

2.2.2 YouTube

YouTube was created in the year 2005, the social site is video based. This means it is a platform of sharing and receiving video. Youtube is regarded as the most populous online video community, where millions of people can discover, watch and share originally-created videos (YouTube, 2005). According to YouTube (2011), the site was the first website dedicated to solely personal video uploading and sharing but it later surpasses that making public and organizational video available. The site report that over 3 billion videos are viewed each day on YouTube, reaching 700 billion playbacks in 2010. Users of Youtube can leave comments on videos the come across. This site is very active in providing users the opportunity to connect, inform, and inspire others across the globe via videos. For a user to be able to access the videos, he or she need Adobe Flash Video technology to his device. Nawa days, content including movie clips, sport clips, conference or worship clips or television programmes are all available to the user anywhere any time as long as the user is connected appropriately

YouTube like facebook also originated from US (it is based California) but has now grew far above US. The site grew rapidly, and in July 2006, the company announced that more than 65,000 new videos were being uploaded every day, and that the site was receiving 100 million video views per day (YouTube, 2005).

Nigerians home and abroad are conversant with Youtube, but their adoption rate differs, it use among Nigeria students especially abroad is higher compare to users back home who are often limited by knowledge of its uses as well as effective device and network to download such videos. Most Nigeria students abroad enjoy effective network and device that enables them to download videos on Youtube as much as

possible often download and share videos however they do not upload much videos as often as they download.

2.2.3 Twitter

Twitter came into being in 2006. Tweeter.net, (2010), it gained a lot of popularity first because it offered more different options such as micro blogging-micro blogging and networking web service that enables users to post to multiple social networks simultaneously (Hendrickson, 2008; Pirillo, 2010). Another factor that can be attributed to the success of twitter is its adoption among celebrities. Twitter is also a information feed, where users communicate through 140 - character “tweets” with their followers. Most professional services firms on Twitter use it to share knowledge, communicate best practices and network with others in the industry specific communities.

According to Bernie Borges (2009), Twitter is a combination of a microblogging and social networking it gives users an opportunity to involve in real time sharing of so - called tweets. According to Twitter’s official statistic (Twitter, 2012) the website handles more than 340 million active tweets a day. According to Nielsen Online, Twitter experienced an unbelievable 1,382 % growth between February 2008 and 2009 (Nielsen Online, 2010) and until now has consistently enjoyed high growth rates. Twitter can be used both by individuals and companies for personal and corporate purposes respectively.

2.3 History of Social Media

Hendricks in his post on May 8, 2013 titled “Complete History of Social Media: Then and Now” elaborated that the origin of social media is far deeper than one can think or imagine. According to him, social media may seem like a new trend but they are

product of discoveries that started many centuries ago. Carton (2009) cited in Simeon et al (2011) say, “Throughout much of human history, we have developed technologies that make it easier for us to communicate with each other. Sociological school of thought believe that, Emile Durkheim, and Ferdinand Tonnies, are pioneers of social media (networks) which started emanating in the late 1800s. They assert that social groups could exist because members shared values and beliefs or because shared conflict just as in modern social media which is motivated by shared values among users. The thought is total rooted away from technology but physical contact and relationship as in the days of old. However it is not out of place to say that social media started from personal interaction, to telephone then computers and specifically the internet.

The internet was not available to the public until 1991 even though Borders (2010) posits that the public saw the advent of email in the 1960s. Neustadt et al (2002:199) say, “the growth of the internet as a communication medium has increased the opportunities for data collection of social network data”. The earliest forms of the Internet, such as CompuServe, were developed in the 1960s. Primitive forms of email were also developed during this time. By the 70s, networking technology had improved, and 1979’s UseNet allowed users to communicate through a virtual newsletter. All these inventions path way for the emergence of what we have as social media today.

According to Hendricks, the first recognizable social media site is called Six Degrees, it was created in 1997; it enabled users to upload a profile and make friends with other users. He further said that, in 1999, the first blogging sites became popular, creating a social media sensation that’s still popular today. After the invention of blogging,

social media began to explode in popularity. Sites like MySpace and LinkedIn gained prominence in the early 2000s, and sites like Photobucket and Flickr facilitated online photo sharing.

He added that between 2005 and 2006 sites like YouTube, facebook, and twitter emerged, creating an entirely new level of social media and creating a new way for people to communicate and share ideas, opinions with each other across great distances. That is why PCmag, (2010) also pin point that “The year 2005 marks the beginning of many social networks such as Yahoo 360 and YouTube, and Facebook Since then, these sites remain some of the most popular social networks on the Internet.

Justice may not be done in any discussion on social media that fails to decipher the term network as it relate to social media. Though many people may look at network as synonym with social media, technically the two are different and understanding their difference will help us comprehend the workings of social media better. Gane and Beer (2008, p.15) cited Knox (2006) and Scott (2007) puts that “network” has a long and complex history that may be traced back through a number of different academic discipline. Therefore the concept of network is applicable to plethora of subject hence network come in different forms. Shay (1999, p.8) posits that computer network connects devices in a single building or group of buildings which can cover large or small area, local, national or international area depending on the devices or computer that are connected to them. Therefore networks as be seen as links between persons, devices for the purpose of communication or interaction. This may lead us to the idea of social networks and social media. Social Media can be called a strategy and an outlet for broadcasting, while Social Network is a tool and a util*ity for connecting

with others (Cohen, 2009; Stelzner, 2009). Cohen (2009) adds the difference between the two concepts is not just semantically but in their features and functions as designed by their creators which dictate the way they are to be used.

2.4 Characteristics of Social Media

The characteristics of social media are widely discussed by different people. This is bearing in mind that there are several other categories that can be characterize as social media platform.

Anthony (2009, p.5) notes Social media is best understood as a group of new kinds of online media, which share most or all of the following characteristics:

- **Participation:** Social media encourages contributions and feedback from everyone who is interested. It blurs the line between media and audience.
- **Openness:** Most social services are open to feedback and participation. They encourage voting, comments and sharing of information. There are rarely any barriers to accessing and making use of content –password-protect content is frowned on.
- **Conversation:** Whereas traditional media is about “broadcast” (content transmitted or distributed to an audience) social media is better seen as a two-way conversation.
- **Community:** Social media allows communities to form quickly and communication effectively. Communities share common interest, such as a love of photography, a political issue or a favourite TV show.
- **Connectedness:** Most kind’s social media thrive on their connectors, making use of links to other sites.

Before an individual is able to use any social media platform, it is compulsory to create a profile, and also choose a desired username and password. Using these details, the user is able to log into the platform to enjoy the various activities as well as participation. With the ability to log into social media platforms, the user can connect with friends, family and mutual friends for different reasons, either by way of contributing or receiving information in different forms.

Since these social media platforms vary from one to another, they also serve for different purposes using distinctive tools and jargons. In this study therefore, particular effort is to discuss these characteristics into social networking, blogging, micro-blogging, photo-sharing, video-sharing, professional networking, social news, social bookmarking, social curation and social networking project.

The social network or networking sites are believed to be the very popular platform on social media. Otherwise known as SNSs allows individual users connect easily with other users. According to Boyd and Ellison (2008), SNSs are known for their opportunity it offers users to grow their circle of friends for diverse purpose, which can be social or business purposes. In all of these, individuals use social networking sites to consolidate on their relationship with friends they have in real life and provide an avenue for them enjoy profile sharing which was generated based on sign up details (Haythornthwaite, 2005; Sunden, 2003).

Social media are also characterised with the use of few words. Example Micro-blogging. This class of social media makes the user has the leverage to share information using restricted number of words. It is referred to as micro because a user

is only able to share very short updates either in text form, links to other social media content, photos. A very good example of a microblog is Twitter.

2.5 Difference between Social Media and Traditional Media

Even though they two means of communication share some similarities, their dissimilarities are evident and are rooted in the passing of time or growth of Information Technology. The sudden emergence of social media and the power it is enjoying at the expense of mainstream media make many people to see this mainstream media as “traditional” they society easily forgot that what is tagged traditional or crude means of communication is the breakthrough of some decades ago. The question is what is so special about social media that made the world consider mainstream media as traditional media. A vivid comparison of the media will help us have answer or good insight to this phenomenon.

Firstly, mainstream media basically encompasses Television, radio, Newspapers and magazines which have been around for more than century ago and have become mainstays in mass communication to date. In the other hand social media are by-product of the Internet which in itself emerged in the late 20th century these media among others are: Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and YouTube. One unique thing about social media is that it is springing constantly unlike like the traditional media which is static in nature or form. However, mainstream media have structure and form to stay for greater time, for example what we have as radio or television at the same even though their performance and service differs or improves but social media has higher chances to go out of existence.

Gane and Beer (2008:6) note that an initial distinction between social media or new media may be drawn between digital communications media and analogue

technologies. They further states that such distinction is a topic of debate within the discipline of media studies Manovich cited in Gane and Beer says, if there is difference between new media (social media) and old media (traditional media) is that the former operate through processes of “numerical representation” while the latter do not.

In trying to streamline the two media, Rob (2009) asserts, Social media is interactive in nature and is therefore known as consumer-generated media, new media or citizen media. While the traditional media also called conventional media is company-generated and information flows in one direction. Unlike social media messages, messages in traditional media are broadcast from company to target audience.

In Social media, the concept of audience is not popular, but friends, community and group but traditional media does deal with mediated community but live community or social. As a result of this scenario social media flow of information takes the form of active communication among members of online community and happens in multiple directions.

Angela Hausman (2012) in her post titled “6 Differences Between Traditional Media and Social Networking” explained that social media is two-way conversation, traditional media is one way conversation, social media is user generated content while traditional media is professional generated content, social media is “transparent” while traditional media is “opaque”, social media is free content while traditional media is paid content, social media content is authentic, original or real while content of traditional media are polished to suite the dictates of a class, government or a particular segment. She further stressed that social media is user-influencer-with that

common paid can influence direction of information or set agenda while traditional media is celebrity-influencer-where only actors, sport, politicians and top persons enjoy coverage. Also social media has unstructured communication but traditional media is well structured making gate-keeping necessary-hence communication in traditional media is highly controlled. Another important variation between the two is that the user or “audience” of social media are active people while audience of traditional media are passive staying at the mercy of the media, as such we can say social media adopts down to top communication style while traditional media is top to down communication style.

2.6 Social Media Use: The Nigeria Experience

Social media buzz is very high in Nigeria from its inception or introduction. Nigerians by nature are trendy persons who always want to catch with global trends and make their mark. Despite challenges of governance which cause economy hardship and poor social amenities like internet facility to the people of the country, the people are very active in the adoption and use of social media. Many people even though cannot afford to visit cyber cafes, or enjoy better internet connection from government as obtainable in many developed nations of the world, the people of Nigeria actively subscribe to social media trends through their small phones and courtesy of free or bonus data (megabets) courtesy of telecommunication such as Glo, Etisalat, Airtel and MTN, Nigeria who often reward their subscribers with weekly or daily data plan that enable them to surf social media sites and other internet facility.

In Nigeria, use of facebook for instance has no boundary or age limit. Even though the limit age for any user according to facebook is thirteen years, users of lesser age gap are common, this is possible because the site (facebook) cannot dictate the age of such

people but respond to any data intending user may input during registration or creating and account. No wonder most Nigerians do not actualized input their actual year of birth.

It was 2go social site that was the common among locals or lower class in Nigeria while facebook was seen as social site for “higher class” well enlighten citizens but development in facebook and in facility in most phones in the country’s GSM market has brought about the proliferation of facebook even to the people in the rural turf in Nigeria. Another factor that support that is the ability of the telecommunication companies in the country to connect the nooks and crannies of the nation with internet facility which is soly user-financed via his or her Sim card or subscription. Statistics showed that majority of Facebook users in Nigeria used mobile devices to access the site. Though this statistic may take a twist because of fast adoption process of Nigerians to other device, but for now the story is at it is.

Politicians, business organization, activists, top government officials even previous president(s) and governors in the country are active users of social media especially facebook, they daily make comments or their opinion through these media as a matter of fact this has made many journalists in the country to look onto facebook pages or other social media platform of these personalities for news. In line to this citizens do not just engaged in social media for chat but for many reasons. In times of electioneering in Nigeria, social media is a “war” floor for different parties and their supporters.

Nigerian is not just the most populous nation in Africa but also the nation with the largest social media followership. Several researchers have found that Nigeria is in the

high pedestal of social media use. Business Day (2013) in a research about Internet and mobile users in Nigeria found that:

“Of the 115 million mobile telephone subscribers in the country, 35 million use their handheld devices to access internet data services. With a large youth population (one-third of the population is between the 10-24 years age bracket) and a growing middle class (appx. 39 million), Nigeria has a fast-growing number of the two classes which traditionally drive internet usage around the world.”

Reuters reports that Facebook’s first official statistics from Nigeria show the site has close to 20 million active monthly users making it the biggest in the continent. As per the other global social networks – according to web sources – Nigeria counts 1.8 million Twitter users, and in early 2013 LinkedIn announced it reached a million accounts in the country (Naija Tech Guide). Applications like WhatsApp and BlackBerry Messenger count several million users in Nigeria, still leaving space to more local players like 2go.

The motivation behind the use of social media in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized, it count across the desire to chat, get information, make comment, propaganda, fanaticism and many more. Social media in the country is highly or mostly accepted by high school students locally and internally, it looks outdated for an average Nigerian especially students not to have socially media accounts. The trend of social media in the country did not only limit Short Message Services (SMS) but also level of calls, with many people prefers to discuss either as individual of two or group via social media chat.

Recently, Whatsapp group chat among different strata of the people of Nigeria is in the increase, students, family members Alumnites, religious organizations, work colleagues etc are opening group chat where they discuss and drop messages relating

to them, meetings are being held on such platforms. This trend is conversant among Nigerians abroad especially students, most of this students create an online community where they make discussion. One aspect of social media that has continue to posed problem for the people of Nigeria is the crime that is prevalent through, many people relate intimately with others that they have not seen or known in any way that has led many people into trouble in the country.

Another thing is the verbal abuse on social platforms “commeters” or social media users in Nigeria often express their biases through verbal terror or insults. Most of the people abuse the privilege on these platforms and knowingly or unknowingly misbehave in the name of freedom of speech.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

There are several theories in communication studies which applicable to this study. However, the researcher has considered the uses and gratification theory.

2.7.1 Uses and Gratifications

Several theories can be use in social media studies, theories like on social media Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986, 2001, 2002) is one of the most frequently cited theories in the field of mass communication research (Bryant & Miron, 2004). However, this study is based on the Uses and Gratification Theory. The uses and gratification theory can be call utility theory. This theory seeks to explain what people i.e. audience do with the media content not what the media does to the people.

The idea of uses and gratifications theory was first made in 1959 by Elihu Katz. Ruggiero (2000) states that several research at that time were concerned with the manner in which messages were created to make communication easy. Most of the

researches conducted before Katz was only searching for the reasons people choose particular media. However, it was Lazarsfeld who first coined the 'four-functional interpretation of the media' using the approach of a sociologist. According to West and Turner (2010) Katz' uses and gratification helped unravel the reasons audiences choose particular forms of media for consumption and how it satisfied their needs.

According to Ruggiero (2000), the uses and gratifications theory has four assumptions, namely:

- Active audience with a goal-oriented media use.
- Direct line between the gratification of needs and choice of media channel.
- Media competition for satisfaction of audience needs.
- Audience well aware of their needs so they match it with that which interests them.
- Audience assess how valuable a medium is to them.

It is clear that the audiences select the medium and even what content is most suitable to personal desires that need urgent satisfaction. When this theory was propounded, it was used to study audiences for traditional media but today, it is relevant in the study of issues relating to social media forms.

The uses and gratifications theory emphasizes the active audiences because of their alertness and careful selection of media messages and the channel. Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch affirm that the audience is actively exercising their authority when they select that which has more relevance for them. This notion is directly linked with the practice of media content producers who compete highly for audiences, thereby, creating content that will of great influence to the audiences becomes a priority.

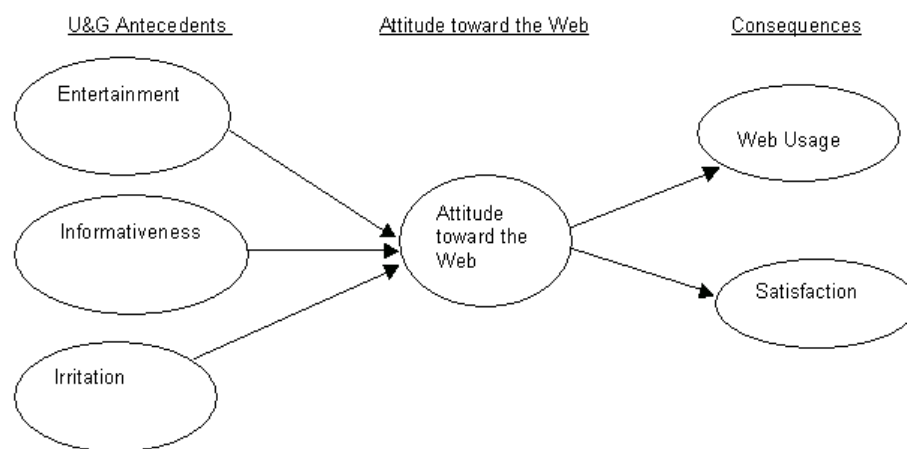


Figure 2: Uses and gratifications (Luo, 2002).

The uses and gratifications finds strength in its ability to describe how the media audiences seek out information and make use of same to satisfy their personal goals. Also, for the focus on knowing what reasons the audience apply their attitude in search for satisfaction. Thus, for Baran and Davis (2009), this theory takes care to acknowledge the intellectuality of the audience and their ability to consume only what is needful for them.

This theory has encountered criticisms for failing to absolutely stand out. Also, because the audiences exercise ultimate selectiveness, it gives room for criticism (Ruggiero, 2000). It is against this background that weaknesses are observed in Baran

and Davis (2009), for its overdependence on media functions. Also, the uses and gratification idea is challenged on the ground that it is unable to provide clear cut statement acknowledging where there are actual media effects after audiences have carefully selected messages.

2.7.2 Relevance of the Theoretical Framework

The uses and gratifications theory is relevant to current study despite the existing differences between new media and traditional media, this theory finds relevance because of its interactive processes. This can be further buttressed that the new wave in researches on communication and media studies focuses on how audiences interact with and tend to be influenced by the type of media they choose.

Through the social media, users do have the liberty to self-expression, participate in debates, seek information, motivation, entertainment, news and several other forms of information as they so desire. They tend to generate content and share with other users who are connected with them on the cyberspace base on their need. That is why Wimmer and Dornick in Asemah (2011, p.170), posits that uses and gratification shows how people utilized the media, social media is a tool in the hands of the user not necessary a medium of communication, there the uses and gratification will best explain such scenario. In this study, it used to explain why Nigeria students abroad use social media: their thrieves and the benefit therein.

Chapter 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study primarily aims to explore social media use of Nigerian students studying abroad about events that occur in their country in their absence. Using the case study of Eastern Mediterranean University, North Cyprus, the research questions outlined to guide data collection are as follows:

1. What are the various social media platforms through which Nigerian students learn about issues in their home country?
2. For what purpose do Nigerians students use social media the most?
3. How do Nigerian students studying abroad access information on issues in their home country?
4. What issues do Nigerian students relate more through social media?
5. How useful and effective are the social media platforms in informing Nigerian students on current affairs in their home countries?

For this reason, this chapter contains a description on the research design, study population, sample size, sampling technique applied in order to conduct, collect and eventually analyze same.

3.1 Research Design

To solicit primary data from respondents, quantitative method was most preferred. The quantitative method was adopted because soliciting responses by field survey is prompt and can be easily quantified. Also, since the larger population cannot be

successfully covered, it gives room for a sampled size to be decided, as well as makes it possible for results to be generalized. According to Levine (2009), quantifying research responses makes it possible for the researcher to easily make assessment of the issue under review.

3.2 Population and Sample Size

The population for this study was identified as the Nigerians studying at the Eastern Mediterranean University, North Cyprus. At the time of this research, those who meet this criteria according to statistics derived from the university are a total of three thousand and ninety-six (3096) students.

In this study, the homogeneous purposive sampling technique was applied to arrive at the sample size. This is because; the purposive sampling technique is widely used to derive a workable number of respondents who will participate in the data collection. The reason for using this technique is not unconnected with the fact that demographic variables were not used to define the desired number of respondents to participate. Also, all the students in the entire study population reside away from Nigeria, therefore, likely use of one social network site or another to keep up with events happening back home.

Using homogeneous purposive sampling technique, the researcher decided on a total of three hundred and ten (310) students, from whom responses were solicited. This sample size considered represents an approximated ten percent (10%) of the total population of the study. This comprised of male and female across all ages, currently enrolled in the various departments for undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate studies. The researcher's preference to abide by a homogeneous sample was because

the students do not have a unified schedule, as such, will conduct research with respondents based on their availability.

3.3 Data Collection Method

The study made use of survey research and the instrument used for data collection is the questionnaire.

Survey research was considered because of its ability to describe the characteristics of the respondents as well as enhance their attitudes. According to Gunter (2002) it is impossible to make changes to already conducted surveys in a quantitative-based study because it is targeted towards obtaining information from respondents alone. In this case, the survey conducted is analytical because the researcher sought to examine the use of social media by Nigerians studying abroad to determine how it helps them keep in touch with local, national and international issues while they reside in a foreign country.

Therefore, the questionnaire proved to be the most reliable tool, through which primary data can be collected for this research.

3.3.1 Instrument of primary data collection

The researcher used the questionnaire clearly prepared in English language to solicit data from respondents. The questionnaire was self-administered, as the sampled population is well aware of the basic understanding of the language.

Using closed-ended questions, the questionnaire was structured in a manner that it is in tandem with the outlined research questions for this study. The survey questions number one to eight are demographic questions using multiple choice style. This was followed by questions nine up to twenty six, which sought to know the amount of time

spent, purpose of usage, source of information, the role of social media in opinion as well as the extent of effect social media has on the opinion of respondents. Two types of five point Likert scale were used (namely strongly agree to strongly disagree and never to always respectively). This was to derive responses for questions twenty-seven to fifty eight, which sought to assess the action of respondents based on use of social media, credibility of the sources and how social media has influenced their views on events and issues in the country.

3.3.2 Secondary data

This study reviewed literature on communication, traditional and new media, social media as well as uses and gratifications theory considered relevant to the topic of discourse. The major sources of secondary data were textbooks, peer-reviewed articles, internet materials and previous research projects.

3.4 Reliability of Instrument

First of all, a pilot study was carried out using a sampled number of twenty students to ensure that the questions were clearly understood. After the pilot study, the researcher had to restructure some questions based on the clarifications participants sought to ensure a clear and concise pattern. Using the observations in the pilot study also, the research was able identify questions that were duplicated in one way or the other, thereby reducing the questions which were originally more than necessary.

The researcher did not simply administer the questionnaire. A letter addressed to the Vice Rector (Academic Affairs) through the Dean Faculty of Communication and Media Studies. After this notification and approval, the research proceeded with administering questionnaires. To ensure that the respondents do not misunderstand the intended meaning, the use of very simple questions and words was ensured by the

researcher. The supervisor of thesis as a specialist in research matters scrutinized the questions to ensure they conform to set study objectives.

The researcher considered the use of English which is the language of instruction and not any vernacular. This is bearing in mind that though Nigeria is a multilingual nation, the respondents are likely not of the same lingua.

With the result from the pilot study, the reliability of this study was calculated using Cronbach Coefficient alpha method (Neuendorf, 2002). It is defined by the formula:

$$X = \frac{k}{K-1} \frac{(1 - \sum S_1^2)}{S_t^2}$$

Where:

X = Coefficient alpha reliability estimate.

K = Number of test items

S_1^2 = Variance of individual test

S_t^2 = Variance of the whole test

Statistically, the result is as follows:

$$X = \frac{20}{20-1} \frac{(1 - \frac{274.80}{979.41})}{1}$$

$$\frac{20(1 - 0.2806)}{19}$$

$$1.0526 \times 0.7194$$

$$X = 0.76$$

Interpretation: When the reliability coefficient is approximately 1, the instruments and the result are valid and reliable. From the calculation, it is statistically proved that the instrument is valid.

Chapter 4

DATA ANALYSIS

In this chapter, the data solicited using the questionnaire is analyzed. It is important to elucidate that the researcher administered questionnaires to three hundred and ten (310) Nigerian students, with the aim to know the role social media plays in informing about issues in their home country. This sampled size represented 10% of the entire study population; however, those questionnaires that returned are a total of two hundred and ninety-nine (299) only. Therefore, since this number is also an agreed percentage, the analysis will be done using the number of questionnaires returned.

The research employed the help of two assistants to administer questionnaires to respondents. This process of administering questionnaires was not calculated, rather, all respondents were approached and requested to respond based on their availability. The questionnaire was self-administered.

Apart from interpretation of data, using frequency distributions tables, the researcher will also do the analysis of data and further provide answers to the study's research questions as outlined at the beginning of this study. It is based on the data interpretation, analysis and answering of research questions that the summary and conclusion will be drawn while proffering recommendations for other possible areas of study.

4.1 Findings of Respondent's Demographics

The respondents were asked about their demographics such as faculty of study, enrollment status, age, sex, marital status, ethnicity, religion and number of years lived abroad. The following will be the frequency distribution tables and their analysis; all the tables were generated from Field Survey (2015).

The responses collected through the sample population indicate that the highest number of respondents was the School of Business and Economics with 81 respondents representing 27.1%. The Engineering students with 57 respondents representing 19.1% while those in the Faculty Communication and Media with 46 respondents representing 15.4% and Arts/Sciences with 31 respondents representing 10.4%. Also, there were 25 respondents representing 8.4% from School of Computing and Technology, 24 respondents representing 8% from Architecture, while there were 18 respondents representing 6% from Pharmacy and 17 respondents representing 5.7% from the faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management.

Table 1: Frequency distribution of enrollment status of respondent

	Frequency	Percent
Bachelor	214	71.6
Master	78	26.1
Doctorate	7	2.3
Total	299	100.0

Table 1 shows that there were higher number of responses from students who are enrolled in the Bachelor program with 214 respondents representing 71.6% followed by those in the Master programme with 78 respondents representing 26.1% while only 7 respondents representing 2.3% were doctorate students. It is very clear that there is a

wide margin between the percentage of Bachelor and the others, which do not in any way have any significant impact that will affect the intended outcome of the study findings.

Table 2: Frequency distribution of age of respondent

	Frequency	Percent
16-25 years	198	66.2
26-35 years	95	31.8
36-45 years	5	1.7
46 years and above	1	0.3
Total	299	100.0

In Table 2 above, the highest number were 16-25 years old with 198 respondents representing 66.2% of the entire sample, followed by 26-35 years who were 95 respondents representing 31.8%, 36-45 years with 5 respondents representing 1.7% and only 1 respondent representing 0.3% was 46 years and above. This indicates that there were more students in the age group of 16-25 years with the highest percent out of the total. Based on several research conducted in the past, it is appropriate to assume that since there is high usage of social media among the younger students, this will add to the quality of responses generated in this survey.

Table 3: Frequency distribution of sex of respondent

	Frequency	Percent
Male	202	67.6
Female	97	32.4
Total	299	100.0

The data on the sex of respondents in Table 3 above shows that 202 respondents representing 67.6% were male, while 97 respondents representing 32.4% were female.

There is a clear indication of a higher percentage of male respondents over their female counterpart. This disparity was not done on purpose, but can be justified by the fact that there are 60% males and 40% female Nigerians students registered for various courses at the Eastern Mediterranean University at the time of this study. It is important to reiterate that questionnaires were administered to students based on their availability.

The majority of the respondents were single with 282 representing 94.3%, followed by 13 respondents represented as 4.3% while only 4 respondents represented as 1.3% were of other statuses such as divorced, separated, partnership.

Table 4: Language of respondent

	Frequency	Percent
Benin	2	.7
Efik	4	1.3
Ishan	1	.3
Ron	1	.3
Ibibio	5	1.7
Igede	2	.7
Ejagham	1	.3
Biom	1	.3
Koro	1	.3
Yoruba	98	32.8
Edo	6	2.0
Ijaw	1	.3
Kalabari	1	.3
Ngas	2	.7
Hausa	63	21.1
Fulani	13	4.3
Tiv	6	2.0
Delta	3	1.0
Idoma	3	1.0
Kanuri	1	.3
Ebira	2	.7
Total	299	100.0

Table 4 above shows the distribution of respondents according to the native language. It is very clear that the highest number of respondents is Yoruba speaking with 98 respondents representing 32.8% followed by Igbo with 81 respondents representing 27.1% while Hausa has 63 respondents representing 21.1% and Fulani with 13 respondents representing 4.3%. Also, Edo and Tiv recorded 6 respondents represented by 2% respectively, while Ibibio had 5 respondents represented by 1.7% and Efik with 4 respondents represented by 1.3%. Delta and Idoma recorded the same number of respondents with 3 represented by 1%, as Benin, Igede, Ngas and Ebira had 2 respondents represented by .7%. Lastly, there were only 1 respondent represented by .3% each for Isoko, Ishan, Ron, Ejagham, Birom, Koro, Ijaw, Kalabari and Kanuri languages. Going by this presentation, it is important to affirm the multiethnic nature of Nigeria, as seen in this table. However, this is not in any way categorized as a total representation of the ethnicity of registered students at the Eastern Mediterranean University because respondents were administered questionnaire based on their availability.

Table 5: Religion of respondent

	Frequency	Percent
Muslim	94	31.4
Christian	200	66.9
Traditional	5	1.7
Total	299	100.0

In Table 5, there was a majority Christians with 200 respondents represented by 66.9% followed by Muslims with 94 respondents represented by 31.4% and Traditional with 5 respondents represented by 1.7%. Again this does not in any way represent the accurate composition of Nigerian students at the Eastern Mediterranean

University, because the exact percentage of registered students by religion is not known by the researcher.

Table 6: How many years have you lived abroad?

	Frequency	Percent
Less than 1 year	43	14.4
1-2 years	141	47.2
3-4 years	77	25.8
over 4 years	38	12.7
Total	299	100.0

Table 6 reveals that the respondents who have lived abroad for 1-2 years were 141 represented by 47.2%, followed by those for 3-4 years with 25.8%, while less than 1 year had 43 respondents represented by 14.4% and over 4 years had 38 respondents represented by 12.7%. This implies that the students who responded to this survey had lived abroad for up to 2 years. This is a very reasonable percentage to ascertain their use of social media.

Table 7: Do you have user account(s) on any social media?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	299	100.0
No	-	-
Total	299	100.0

In Table 7, all respondents agreed when asked if they had user accounts on social media. This is seen with all 299 respondents represented by 100%. This indicates that since all the students who responded to this survey have user accounts on social media, there is the possibility that a majority of students who reside abroad do sign up on social media.

4.2 Analysis for Social Media Use

The researcher asked respondents whether they had use social media, the number of hours spent, what medium they use, what issues interests them most and their predominant source of information on social media. The analysis presented below is based on data generated from the field survey conducted; and will be presented using frequency distribution tables and simple percentages.

Table 8: How many user accounts do you have?

	Frequency	Percent
One	42	14.0
Two	58	19.4
Three	54	18.1
Four	52	17.4
Five and above	93	31.1
Total	299	100.0

Table 8 shows that 93 respondents represented by 31.1% had five and above user accounts on social media platforms. This is followed by 58 respondents representing 19.4% who have two user accounts, 54 respondents representing 18.1% have three, 52 respondents representing 17.4% have four, while 42 respondents representing 14% have only one user account. This shows that several of the students have many user accounts which go to show in all of the frequencies. Though the highest number of accounts is five indicated as 31.1%, those with two to four stands at a total of 54.8%. For this reason, they do have access to several kinds of information from more sources too. This percentage is significant in this study because the higher the sources the students have the more their usage will be ascertained.

Table 9: Which of the accounts is your favourite?

	Frequency	Percent
Facebook	172	57.5
Twitter	22	7.4
You Tube	46	15.4
LinkedIn	7	2.3
Instagram	48	16.1
None	3	1.0
All	1	.3
Total	299	100.0

In Table 9, there were Facebook had 172 responses represented by 57.5% which was followed by Instagram with 48 responses represented by 16.1% and You Tube has 46 responses represented by 15.4%. It is clear that though the students use the various platforms on social media, social networking site still remains their favourite. This implies that majority of the respondents highly prefer social networking sites as is evident with the 57.5% followed by Instagram with 16.1% and Youtube with 15.4%. Therefore, findings indicate that majority of the population uses more of social network sites.

Table 10: What device do you use?

	Frequency	Percent
Mobile phone	140	46.8
Laptop	76	25.4
iPad	15	5.0
Mobile/ Laptop	50	16.7
All of the above	18	6.0
Total	299	100.0

Mobile phone is used by 140 respondents represented by 46.8%, followed by Laptop with 76 respondents represented by 25.4%. Mobile and Laptop is used by 50

respondents represented by 16.7%, Mobile phone, laptop and iPad is used by 18 respondents represented by 6% while only 15 respondents represented by 5% use iPad to access information. The indication is that of all the devices mobile phones stand out with 46.8% as the mostly used to access social media among the students, with a relatively wide margin followed by laptop with 25.4%.

Table 11: How many hours do you spend on social media daily?

	Frequency	Percent
Less than 1 hour	33	11.0
1-2 hours	106	35.5
3-4 hours	82	27.4
5-6 hours	46	15.4
7 hours and above	32	10.7
Total	299	100.0

The researcher sought to know the number of hours the students spend daily on social media. Responses in table 11 show that majority of the students 106 represented by 35.5% spend 1-2 hours, closely followed by 82 respondents represented by 27.4% spend 3-4 hours and 46 respondents represented by 15.4% spend 5-6 hours daily on social media. Therefore, the total number of hours the students spend on social media can be said to be above average with a total of 78.3% of between one to 6 hours the students agreed to have spent on social media.

Table 12: What is the main reason that you signed up on social media?

	Frequency	Percent
To seek information	54	18.1
To keep up with current affairs	59	19.7
For leisure	31	10.4
For social interaction	74	24.7
To debate on issues with friends	5	1.7
For connection	28	9.4
To share information	22	7.4
To seek motivation	4	1.3
All the above reasons	22	7.4
Total	299	100.0

Table 12 shows responses for reasons why respondents signed up on social media. For social interaction, there were 74 respondents represented as 24.7%, to keep up with current affairs has 59 respondents represented as 19.7% and to seek information has 54 respondents represented as 18.1%. It is clear that the students have several reasons for which they signed up on social media, but the major reasons are to establish and maintain social interaction, keep up to date with current events and seek information. Though there is not much difference in the responses apart, the students who reside abroad sign up on social media for social interaction, current affairs and information. This indicates that 62.5% of the population use social media for the purpose of connectivity.

Table 13: In what type of issues are you interested the most?

	Frequency	Percent
News	81	27.1
Entertainment	111	37.1
Sports	36	12.0
Religion	21	7.0
Politics	31	10.4
Technology	5	1.7
Academic	3	1.0
All of the above	11	3.7
Total	299	100.0

In Table 13, a total of 111 respondents represented by 37.1% were interested in entertainment, followed by 81 respondents represented by 27.1% for news and 36 respondents represented by 12% said sports. The percentage of the top three highest responses is 76.3% of the total population is supported by the main reasons for signing up on social media which is influenced by entertainment, news and sporting activities. This indicates that the students get entertained through information, social interaction and also tend to keep up mostly with entertainment and sports.

Table 14: What is the predominant source through which you obtain information on social media platforms?

	Frequency	Percent
Blogs	66	22.1
Individual updates	46	15.4
Shared posts	108	36.1
Social groups	37	12.4
Videos	26	8.7
Photos	8	2.7
Articles	2	.7
All	6	2.0
Total	299	100.0

Table 14 shows that shared posts have 108 responses represented as 36.1% followed by blogs with 66 responses represented as 22.1% and individual updates with 46

responses represented as 15.4%. Findings indicate that there are several other different sources through which the students get informed and entertained, but those that dominate are shared posts, blogs and individual updates. This is also a confirmation that social interaction with other users on social media makes it possible for them to have access to several shared posts, blogs and individual updates.

Table 15: What in your opinion is the credibility of the information you get from social media?

	Frequency	Percent
Never credible	9	3.0
Rarely credible	35	11.7
Sometimes credible	179	59.9
Often credible	63	21.1
Always credible	13	4.3
Total	299	100.0

In Table 15 above, responses show 179 respondents represented by 59.9% say they sometimes find information on social media credible, 63 respondents represented by 21.1% for often times and 35 respondents represented by 11.7% said rarely. The finding clearly shows that the top percentage of those who sometimes, often and always find information on social media credible constitute 85% of the total population. Therefore, the information accessed on social media by the students has above average credibility.

4.3 Analysis on Attitude based on usage of Social Media

In the field study, the researcher sought to assess the action of respondents based on how they used social media. The attitude of respondents in questions 27-35 of the survey instrument is presented below.

Table 16: I share what other users express because they match my interest

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	104	34.8
Agree	118	39.5
Undecided	40	13.4
Disagree	26	8.7
Strongly disagree	11	3.7
Total	299	100.0

In table 16, the statement sought to know whether respondents share views of others if they match their interest. There were 118 responses represented as 39.5% for agree, 104 responses represented as 34.8% for strongly agree and 40 responses represented as 13.4% were undecided. From all indication, there is high percentage of students who strongly agree and agree that when they find information on social media very useful and interests them, what they do is share. Findings show that the students tend to get information and further share them when they have similar interests with the wide responses indicated by 74.3%. It is possible therefore that such information enables them to stay informed entertained and keep them up-to-date. This explains also, how shared post is one of the predominant sources of information for the students (see table 14). Therefore, sharing of information on social media enables other students to also get information they need about events that are of great interests to them.

Table 17: I like what others share to show my approval

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	75	25.1
Agree	139	46.5
Undecided	44	14.7
Disagree	25	8.4
Strongly disagree	16	5.4
Total	299	100.0

Table 17 shows that 139 respondents represented as 46.5% agreed that they like what other users of social media share to show approval. This is followed by 75 respondents represented as 25.1% who strongly agreed and 44 respondents represented as 14.7% were undecided. This implies that the students do not only share what they find interesting, they also like it, to show their interest by 71.6% responses. This goes further to mean that such information may be shared posts, status updates, blog and so on.

Table 18: I make comments on what others share to agree with them

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	65	21.7
Agree	117	39.1
Undecided	61	20.4
Disagree	44	14.7
Strongly disagree	12	4.0
Total	299	100.0

Based on responses generated from survey, table 18 shows 117 respondents represented as 39.1% agreed that they comment on the updates of other users of social media to show their approval. Also, 65 respondents represented as 21.7% strongly agreed and 61 respondents represented as 20.4% were undecided. Findings clearly

indicate that 60.8% of the responses agree about commenting on the information shared by the users in their network. This means that apart from sharing and liking, writing a comment also means they share the same interests as the information that is shared on social media platforms.

Table 19: I set new trends by countering the views of other users

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	45	15.1
Agree	97	32.4
Undecided	90	30.1
Disagree	39	13.0
Strongly disagree	28	9.4
Total	299	100.0

Table 19 shows that 97 respondents represented as 32.4% agreed they tend to set new trends when they counter the views of other users. This is followed by 90 respondents represented as 30.1% who were undecided and 45 respondents represented as 15.1% strongly agree. 39 respondents represented as 13% disagree and 28 respondents represented as 9.4% strongly disagree. Those who set trends by countering the views of other students on social media are 47.5% over the 30.1% who are undecided. There is higher frequency of responses from those who agree and strongly agree over those who do not. This implies that the students are able to reintroduce different trends to issues on social media.

Table 20: When I share my views, I get a lot of likes

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	86	28.8
Agree	108	36.1
Undecided	82	27.4
Disagree	12	4.0
Strongly disagree	11	3.7
Total	299	100.0

Table 20 is a distribution of 108 respondents represented as 36.1% who strongly agreed that when they share their views they get a lot of likes, followed by 86 respondents represented as 28.8% who strongly agreed and 82 respondents represented as 27.4% were undecided. Findings show that when the students share their views, those within their network also like them. This supports the findings in table 17, that they tend to like information and views shared by users on social media to show approval of interests.

Table 21: If others comment, I get more details about the same issue

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	72	24.1
Agree	147	49.2
Undecided	62	20.7
Disagree	12	4.0
Strongly disagree	6	2.0
Total	299	100.0

Table 21 shows that 147 respondents represented as 49.2% agreed that whenever they share their views and other users make comments, they tend to get more details. This is followed by 72 respondents represented as 24.1% who strongly agreed and 62 respondents represented as 20.7.7% were undecided. The findings in this distribution imply that the students who responded to this survey are able to get other users of

social media to make comments about issues. The comments they get enable them to also uncover other details the hitherto did not know. This table supports the responses in tables 19 and 20, that apart from set new trends, those in their circle of friends also tend to share similar views and respond to updates based on shared interests. This implies that because there is detailed information on social media, the students will tend to derive more when they source information from the various platforms they log onto.

4.4 Credibility of Information Sources on Social Media

The survey fed questions to know the extent they perceive information sources as credible. The following are frequency distribution and data interpretation of the responses generated from the field work.

Table 22: I get credible information on social media platforms

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	54	18.1
Agree	141	47.2
Undecided	73	24.4
Disagree	21	7.0
Strongly disagree	10	3.3
Total	299	100.0

In table 22, 141 respondents representing 47.2% agreed that they get credible information on social media platforms. Those who were undecided were 73 respondents representing 24.4% and strongly agree with 54 respondents representing 18.1%. It is clear in this distribution that more students agreed the information they get on social media is credible. This goes to uphold the findings for the main reasons they sign up on social media for social interaction, current affairs and seek information (see table 12).

Table 23: I search the social media to verify information I am not sure about

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	80	26.8
Agree	124	41.5
Undecided	64	21.4
Disagree	19	6.4
Strongly disagree	12	4.0
Total	299	100.0

In table 23, there are 148 respondents represented as 49.5% who agreed, followed by 76 respondents represented as 25.4% strongly agreed and 57 respondents represented as 19.1% undecided. Findings show that the students have several social media platforms and at such, many sources through which they get information. This indicates that 68.3% of the total population searches the social media to be sure about information which is not very clear to them.

4.5 Descriptive Data of Interests in National Events

In this section, responses for the role of social media in providing information on issues of national interests for students studying abroad are presented. These issues among others include the Boko Haram insurgency, Ebola outbreak, devaluation of the Naira, general elections and fraud activities of some Nigerians abroad.

The research sought to know how useful the social media served the students on issues of national interest (see Appendix 3). Using a five point Likert scale of Never to Always, the findings on the selected issues will be analyzed as follows. The responses generated from students show that students who have lived abroad for upward of two to four years (see table 6) are well aware of how these issues have played out in the duration of their stay abroad.

4.5.1 The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) Strike

The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) is the current umbrella body of academic Staff of Nigeria Universities. ASUU was founded in 1978; it originated from the then Nigerian Association of University Teachers formed in 1965 which was the then umbrella body of all academic staff of Nigerian Universities (Okah, 2013; Odiagbe, Sylvester Azamosa, 2012).

To a typical Nigeria especially university student or aspiring student, ASUU is synonymous to strike actions. This is because the history of ASUU is filled with struggles using the tool of strike actions that often last for several months. ASUU and the Federal government of Nigeria have continue to engaged in a prolonged industrial conflict over several issues of importance to the union, which are often, poor wages and service conditions of academic staff members in government owned universities across the country, the problem of underfunding and infrastructural neglect as well as the lack of autonomy and academic freedom which union members claim to be limiting the quality of teaching, research, scholarship and innovation. According to the Union, the government of Nigeria at all level is not fair to them and willing to support education especially at the university level to the point that it will compete with universities in other nations. That is why Okah (2013), opined that, “ASUU, with a background of a recurring history of militancy since its formation, would have been irrelevant in Nigeria today if governments at both the Federal and State levels did enough to promote, fund and sustain high quality tertiary education in Nigeria”.

Okah further reports that, from 1999 to 2015, the Union has recorded one form of strike or the other in each year. The most devastating strike action within this period took place in 2013 and lasted for six months, in which students from all public

universities were forced to stay at home for this long period. This scenario was not just agenda in both social and mainstream media; it has entered into the annals of history that cannot be forgotten.

The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) strike is an industrial action embarked upon by university lecturers in Nigeria, expressing displeasure over government's inactions towards the welfare of members. The members of this body comprises of universities owned by the federal and state governments respectively, who tend to exercise similar authority as the national body. The member institutions when displeased also embark on various protests if their State governments fall short of providing for the upkeep of their institutions. In the last eight years, the striking actions heightened as a result of the disagreement between the officials of the union and government over lack of funding and decline in the university education system.

It is not a surprised that the issue of ASUU strike of 2013 forms one of the talking point of Nigerian students abroad (EMU) most of this ones are either victims of previous actions or have siblings that are victims of the strike. Nigeria students' abroad keenly follow this conflict till it was resolve even though all has not been resolve in the system. It is seems impossible for a student in public university in Nigeria to graduate without experiencing one form of strike action or the other that is why the issue of ASUU on social media receive mass followership or attention wherever it comes. Many "commenters" on social media and other public analyst condemned the tactics of ASUU which is mostly based on strike actions instead of dialogue and other strategies however Dr. Nasir Fagge National president of ASUU reacted, that the Union is not political motivated by any party and vow to continue the struggle with all honesty and dedication. This statement by the president of ASUU

attracted heavy backlash in the social media, home and abroad. When asked on the usefulness of social media in providing information about ASUU, a total of 58.2% of the respondents found social media useful.

4.5.2 Boko Haram Insurgence

The activities of Boko Haram are a threat to security predominantly in the North East region of Nigeria. This goes to say that the security is equally not lenient on the rest of the country as is evident in the incessant assassinations, bombings and abductions, to mention but few. This is widely believed to be an Islamic extremist group, which became publicly known about six years ago.

The issue enjoys heavy followership on social media among Nigeria students abroad is the issue of Boko Haram insurgency. According to Ugochukwu (2013), Boko Haram is a derivation of Hausa language word “Boko” meaning western education while “Haram” is a word with Arabic origin that means “forbidden”. In other words, Boko Haram means western education is forbidden but DCCN, (2009, p.2) asserts that the origin of the name “Boko Haram” can be traced to Media and Public/Community coinage.

Boko Haram is very controversial Nigeria militant Islamic group that seeks for the imposition of sharia law in the entire northern states of Nigeria. The official name of the group is jama‘atu Alis-sunna Lidda‘awth wal jihad, which in Arabic translated to people committed to the propagation of the teaching of prophet and jihad. According Fawole (2013), Boko Haram began to terrorize Nigeria since 2009, although its origin can be traced to the formation of a group called Sahaba in 1995 headed by Abubakar Lawan. By 2009 however, it had grown to establish functioning branches in some northern states.

To achieve their aims, Boko Haram bombs Churches, Mosques, Police Stations, Schools and other Government owned Properties. As well as privately owned property such as houses and media organization that is critical of the in their reportage. They engage the machinery of suicide bombers as well as slaughtering and kidnapping people. The most populous kidnap in their books is the case of Chibok girls in which more than 200 school girls were kidnapped by the sect, up till now they were about is not properly ascertain talk more of rescuing them.

The devastation cause by this sect is so much on the nation of Nigeria, those social media platforms and the mainstream media cannot contain all the discussion on it.

Emmanuel Oladesu (The Nation Newspaper, 2013, p.4) stated thus:

Since the end of the civil war no calamity of enormous proportion has befallen Nigeria like the dreadful sect – Boko Haram. Many lives have been lost property worth billions of naira have been destroyed. Nobody is insulated from the attack. Government officials and buildings, traditional rulers, police and military formations and church worshippers are targets. On daily basis, there is panic. The fear of the invincible agitators has become the beginning of wisdom.

To Nigerian students abroad, the desire to know the safety of their love ones back home in the midst of Boko Haram carnage is a thing of concern. Many of these students rush to social media to check stories about bomb blast, kidnaps, etc. carried out by the sect. Social media in Nigeria is the fastest media that breaks such stories to the world, pictures of damaged buildings, dead victims and other casualty are often rush to the social media platforms, this has continue to make the students abroad have a glance of the event back home. On the usefulness of social media on Boko Haram insurgency is indicated by 79.3% of the total population in the affirmative.

4.5.3 Politics

Nigerians have never shown interest on politics or election like what was seen in the last general election. The election shows that Nigerians are fast growing in political education. This is not far from social media buzz. Like never before, the populace engaged in political discussion that will shapes the future of the country. Social media among Nigerians within the time frame of this study were bombarded with all kinds' contents in supports and against policies and political candidates.

The general election in the country generated tense debate among the people due to the sentiments attach to it by the citizens of the country. Nigeria political arena is divided into religious, geographical and tribal lines causing a lot of challenges and distrust among the people. There were propaganda, blackmail and verbal conflict on social media platforms. Services such as Facebook, and Twitter took center stage, during the election in the life of Nigerian students in EMU, most of the students keenly follow results of the elections on these platforms, even though many of them were deceive by fake result release on social media.

The aftermath of the presidential election declaring opposition party candidate Muhammadu Buhari as the winner and the subsequent call made by the then president Goodluck Ebele Jonathan to Buhari congratulating him attracted social media attention more than the election. The incident brought about the surprised peace and calmness the nation is enjoying.

Even after election to now, discussion about political events in Nigeria is an ongoing thing in social media and among Nigeria students abroad, however, unlike their

counterparts back home their sentiments or biases, and other negative trend feasible on social media are very minimal.

In the last eight years, three different general elections have taken place, that is, the 2007, 2011 and most recently the 2015. In Nigeria, there is a federal system of government and during the general elections; a head of states is elected alongside members of the national assembly, governors of the various states, members of the state houses of assembly and local government chairmen. The general elections do not always take place but only once in four years but in the recent dispensation, there was tremendous searchlight by the international community concern. Thus, for 80% of Nigerians who reside and study abroad, social media was useful in dissemination of information about the elections for the duration of time spend abroad.

4.5.4 Ebola Outbreak

The outbreak of Ebola virus in Nigeria in particular attracted attention in social media across the nation and also among the nation's students studying abroad. The Ebola virus was introduced into Nigeria on 20 July 2014 when an infected Liberian man arrived by aeroplane into Lagos, Africa's most populous city. The man, who died in hospital 5 days later, set off a chain of transmission that infected a total of 19 people, of whom 7 died and fear continues to grip the people like never before (WHO, 2015).

One incident about Ebola that attracted social media buzz is the rumored medication about the virus. On the early hours of 8th August, 2014 a social media message claiming that salt water can cure or prevent Ebola went viral causing many people to wake up late hours to take their baths but such led to illness and deaths cases. The message read thus 'please ensure that you and your family and all your neighbors bath with hot water and salt before daybreak today because of Ebola virus which is

spreading through the air,' the text said in part. The message also urged people to drink as much salt water as possible as protection against catching the deadly virus.” As humorous as it may be Nigeria students abroad were also alarmed and also published the advice on their walls on social media.

Ebola outbreak in West Africa is yet another issue that in 2014 threatened the lives of citizens in Africa and beyond. In Nigeria, few cases of Ebola were reported and caused a lot of concern on citizens home and abroad. For those who traveled to Nigeria at the time, there was scare for the possibility of contacting the virus and transmitting it to other countries because a worldwide concern. The social media served as one of the avenues through information on symptoms of the virus were shared for people to take caution. The other kind of information shared across the social media was the devastating nature and how the affected communities suffered. Through various social media platforms also, relief services were sought, volunteers signed up to help the victims and to also contribute to prevention of further spread of the virus. As time went by, the Ebola virus has gradually been contained and the threat of further spread also curtailed. Out of the total population, 73% of the respondents agreed that social media was useful in providing information about the Ebola outbreak.

4.5.5 Summary of Multiple Response on Issues of National Interest

The responses generated for usefulness of social media to respondents on issues of national interests are presented using a frequency distribution (see Appendix 3). The responses show that social media is always useful for Nigerian students living abroad on Ebola by 28.8% while for Boko Haram is 37.5%. Other frequencies are corruption by 31.1% and general elections with 35.1%. However, for rest of the listed issues

frequencies indicated that social media is sometimes useful (see Appendix 3). These frequencies are summarily presented as a multiple response table below.

Table 24: Usefulness of social media on issues of national interests

	Responses	
	N	Percent
Never	448	9.4%
Rarely	901	18.8%
Sometimes	1375	28.7%
Often	897	18.8%
Always	1163	24.3%
Total	4784	100.0%

Overall findings on the usefulness social media in informing students about events in their home country indicate that sometimes useful has 28.7%. This is followed by always useful with 24.3% while often useful and rarely useful share the same percentage of 18.8%. The findings indicate that 71.8% of the total population affirms the usefulness of social media in disseminating information on national issues for students who live abroad. This is a strong indication that the credibility of sources on social media is gradually gaining ground as an alternative means of information; and for students who live far away from their country, a predominant source of information.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

In this concluding chapter, particular concern is on answering research questions outlined in the introductory chapter of this study. The summary of the study will be drawn based on the data analysis, discussion of results and the research questions, while taking into consideration the assumptions of the study. It is based on these issues that the conclusion will be drawn, and also recommendations for possible areas of further research are made.

5.1 Answering Research Questions

In the introductory chapter, there were a total of five research questions drawn using the outlined research objectives, to guide the entire study. The answers for these questions are provided below.

Research question one: What are the various social media platforms through which Nigerian students learn about issues in their home country?

Based on the findings, students who responded to this study recorded 100% have user accounts on social media. The various social media platforms commonly used today were used as options for students to indicate which where their favorite. Out of all the listed social media platforms, Facebook which is a social networking site was the most common with 57.5% students. This goes a long way to suggest that there are other social media platforms such as video sharing, blogging, microblogging, curation and others, but social media is the most preferred.

Research question two: For what purpose do Nigerians students use social media the most?

To answer this question, the students gave reasons for signing up on social media and the reason was for social interaction with 24.7%. More reasons for which students responded to were information seeking, keep updated on current issues, information sharing among others. The students most desired shared posts with 108% as the predominant source through which spreads across the social media the more. By sharing the views of other users, the students believe it is a way of approving such information because it corresponds with their personal interests and views as presented by 39.5%. This is an indication that while abroad, the students view social media as an avenue through which they keep informed about the issues that take place in their home country.

Research question three: How do Nigerian students studying abroad access information on issues in their home country?

A total of 66.6% of students have upward of three accounts on various social media platforms. The most use device is mobile phone, and they do spend between one to four hours daily indicated by 63%. The information accessed on various social media platforms is mostly individual updates, shared posts and blogs, although videos, social groups, photos and articles are also other forms through which they get information. Through social interaction, the students tend to like, share and comment on the views shared by those in their circle of friends to show approval on issues that interests them.

Research question four: What issues do Nigerian students relate more through social media?

The students relate more with entertainment, news and sports as indicated by 76.2%. This clearly reveals that the students related more with issues which entertain them, followed by news worthy events then sports. However, 23.8% indicate more interest in issues such as politics, religion, technology and academics.

Research question five: How useful and effective are the social media platforms in informing Nigerian students on current affairs in their home countries?

The credibility of information sources on social media is affirmed by 65.3% responses. The clearly shows that social media plays a vital role providing information for students. The students find social media useful based on responses that they are able to form positives views when they read about issues in their home country on social media platforms. Also, they tend to search the social media to get clarity of information with other sources. Using these presentations, it is evident that social media platforms are useful and effective for students who are away from their home country.

5.2 Conclusion

In this study, a large number of Nigerian students here in Eastern Mediterranean University, North Cyprus source most of their information about their country through social media platforms reference to the participants agreed that they have user account(s) and mostly use social networking sites. The main thrust of this research study was to see if the discussion on social media is utilized as a source of information for students on events taking place in Nigeria.

From the findings, it is clear that most of the students are able to get information about events happening in their country on the various social media platforms and a reasonable percentage of the participants agreed that social media sources are credible for information. This is an indication that social media is useful for them to source information they need about events.

The findings also indicated that many students are interested in entertainment more than the other issues while their major source of getting information on social networking sites is shared post.

5.3 Suggestions for Further Research

This study focused on social media use among Nigeria students in EMU, it is limited to their motivation behind the obsession for social media as a tool for information regarding their country as well as platform for their interaction. Since its inception, social media has opened a big gap that needs several researches. Having undergone this research and identified the limitations, the researcher deems in necessary for future researches on the effect of social media on the academic performance of

Nigerian students in EMU. Also a comparative study, to assess social media use among Nigeria students at home and abroad.

The use of social media to achieve personal gains among students has continued to thrive due largely to its highly interactive nature. It is against the background of this growing popularity that this study sought to conduct a study to assess the influence social media has on opinion of Nigerian Students at the Eastern Mediterranean University, North Cyprus.

For possible areas of future research endeavour, the researcher has strong belief that though Nigeria has the highest population of students in the current case study, a study which compares the opinion of students from different nationalities will be researchable. The prospective researcher might wish to consider a different methodology, say mixed methods or qualitative to be able to achieve divergent findings on this discourse.

Another suggested area of research is the influence social networking sites have on opinion formation among university students. It is important to mention that the findings for current study show a high number of students prefer social networking sites among all the social media platforms. Therefore, such study can be conducted using all students rather than restricting to only one nationality. If this is done, it is possible to generalize results as the selected number of students was not an adequate representation of the total population of Nigerian students.

Rather that limit the study to the Eastern Mediterranean University, it is possible for other prospective researchers to consider sampling students in the different

universities in this country. These research suggestions will go a long way in providing the bedrock for other possible areas of research based on what the findings will provide for prospective researchers.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Letter of Authorization

Faculty of Communication and Media Studies

Eastern Mediterranean University

Famagusta

July 2, 2015

The Vice-Rector (Academic Affairs)

Eastern Mediterranean University

Famagusta

North Cyprus

Through:

The Dean

Faculty of Communication and Media Studies

Eastern Mediterranean University

Dear Sir

APPLICATION FOR AUTHORIZATION TO CONDUCT SURVEY AMONG EMU STUDENTS

I am a graduate student pursuing MA studies in the Faculty of Communication and Media Studies here at EMU (student number 145459). To enable me fulfill the

requirement for the award of a Master of Art degree. I am schedule to carry out a survey for my thesis on ‘Social Media Use among Nigerian Students Abroad’.

The purpose for my writing is to seek authorization to enable me conduct the survey among three hundred and ten (310) Nigerian Students currently registered at Eastern Mediterranean University.

I will be most grateful if my request would be favorably considered.

Yours faithfully,

Adamu Mohammed

145459

Appendix 2: Questionnaire

Dear Respondent,

I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, conducting a field survey for a study on the topic; ‘Social Media Use among Nigerian Students Abroad’. This study is to fulfill the requirement for the award of a Master of Arts degree.

I request your help and participation by responding to the questions in this questionnaire. Be assured that your views will be used for the purpose of this research only, and treated as confidential. Kindly read the instructions and select the answers that most accurately apply to you.

Thanks so much for you cooperation and assistance.

Adamu Mohammed
145459

Survey Questions

(Please tick or circle your answer)

1. What is your Faculty? _____
2. Enrollment status: **a.** Bachelor **b.** Masters **c.** Doctorate
3. Age: **a.** 16-25 **b.** 26-35 **c.** 36-45 **d.** 46 and above
4. Sex: **a.** Male **b.** Female

5. Marital status:
a. Single **b.** Married **c.** Other; please specify_____
6. Language:
a. Igbo **b.** Yoruba **c.** Hausa **d.** Fulani **e.** Other, please specify_____
7. What is your Religion:
a. Muslim **b.** Christian **c.** Other, please specify_____
8. How many years have you lived abroad?
a. Less than a year **b.** 1-2 years **c.** 3-4 years **d.** Over 4 years
- (Please tick the applicable responses)*
9. Do you have user account(s) on any social media? **a.** Yes **b.** No
10. How many user accounts do you have? **a.** 1 **b.** 2 **c.** 3 **d.** 4 **e.** 5 and above
11. Which of the accounts is your favourite?
a. Facebook **b.** Twitter **c.** You tube **d.** LinkedIn **e.** Instagram
f. Other, specify_____
12. What device do you use? *(choose all that apply to you)*
a. mobile phone **b.** laptop **c.** iPad **d.** Other, please specify_____
13. How many hours do you spend on social media?
a. less than one hour **b.** 1-2 hours **c.** 3-4 hours **d.** 5-6 hours **e.** over 7 hours
14. What is the main reason that you signed up on social media?
a. to seek information **b.** to keep up with current affairs **c.** for leisure
d. for social interaction **e.** to debate on issues with friends **f.** for connection
g. to share information **h.** to seek motivation **i.** Other,
specify_____
15. In what issues are you interested the most? **a.** News **b.** Entertainment **c.** Sports **d.**
Religion **e.** Politics **f.** Other, please specify_____

16. What is the predominant source through which you obtain information on social media platforms? **a.** Blog **b.** Individual update **c.** Shared post **d.** Social groups **e.** Videos **f.** Photos **g.** Other, please specify_____
17. What in your opinion is the credibility of the information you get from social media?
a. Never credible **b.** Rarely credible **c.** Sometimes credible **d.** Often credible **e.** Always credible.
18. Do you form opinion about issues based on the information you get on social media? **a.** Never **b.** Rarely **c.** Sometimes **d.** Often **e.** Always
19. How often do you develop positive view(s) about issues when you read about them on social media?
a. Never **b.** Rarely **c.** Sometimes **d.** Often **e.** Always
20. (If your response in 19 above is positive), what do you believe is the contributing factor?
a. shared interest
b. information is consistence with other sources
c. previous experiences
d. convincing details
e. Other, please specify_____
21. How often do you develop negative views about issues when you read about them on social media? **a.** Never **b.** Rarely **c.** Sometimes **d.** Often **e.** Always
22. If your answer is in the affirmative (in 21 above), what would you say are the contributing factors?
a. conflict of interest
b. information is inconsistence with other sources

- c. previous experiences
- d. lack of sufficient details
- e. Other, please specify _____

23. Generally, do you tend to seek information that only agrees with your views?

- a. Never b. Rarely c. Sometimes d. Often e. Always

24. To what extent do you find the information you get from social media convincing?

- a. Never b. Rarely c. Sometimes d. Often e. Always

25. Would you say the information you get on social media makes you form opinions that are different from what you held before?

- a. Never b. Rarely c. Sometimes d. Often e. Always

26. To what degree does information you get from the social media affect your views?

- a. Not at all b. Minor effect c. Neutral d. Moderate effect e. Major effect

(Please tick the applicable responses SA-1-strongly agree; A-2- Agree; U-3- undecided; D-4-Disagree; SD-5-strongly disagree

S/N	Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
		1	2	3	4	5
Assessing Action Based on Usage						
27.	I share what other users express because they match my interest					
28.	I like what others share to show my approval					
29.	I make comments on what others share to agree with them					
30.	I do not share views of others if they do not match with my interest					
31.	I get comments when I counter the views of					

	other users					
32.	I set new trends by countering the views of other users					
33.	When I share my views, I get a lot of likes					
34.	If others comment, I get more details about the same issue					
35.	The comments from other social media users provide detailed information					
Credibility of Sources on social media						
36.	I get credible information on social media platforms					
37.	I feel the sources are credible because so many users make comments					
38.	I feel the sources are credible because so many users share these updates					
39.	I feel the sources are credible because so many users like these updates					
40.	I feel the sources are credible because there are several other similar views					
41.	I get to learn more from the comments of other users					
42.	I search the social media to verify information I am not sure about					

*On a scale of 1-5, kindly tick the applicable responses, with 1=Never; 2=Rarely;
3=Sometimes; 4=Often; 5=Always*

How has social media influenced your view on the following issues?						
S/N	Statement	N	R	S	O	A
		1	2	3	4	5
43.	Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) strike					
44.	Non-payment of Civil servant salaries					
45.	Ebola outbreak					
46.	Minimum capital base, merger and acquisition of Commercial banks					
47.	Hike in oil prices/ fuel scarcity					
48.	Fuel subsidy removal					
49.	Hike in prices of food stuff					
50.	Devaluation of the naira					
51.	Embezzlement of public funds/ other corrupt practices					
52.	Boko haram insurgence					
53.	Kidnappings/assassination/armed robbery					
54.	Intra- and inter-party crises					
55.	General elections					
56.	Tribal/ ethnic sentiments in politics					
57.	Fraud activities by some citizens abroad					
58.	Homophobic attacks in South Africa					

Appendix 3: Frequency Distribution of Interest on National Issues

Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) strike	Frequency	Percent
Never	52	17.4
Rarely	73	24.4
Sometimes	86	28.8
Often	36	12.0
Always	52	17.4
Total	299	100.0
Non-payment of Civil servant salaries	Frequency	Percent
Never	30	10.0
Rarely	67	22.4
Sometimes	99	33.1
Often	57	19.1
Always	46	15.4
Total	299	100.0
Ebola outbreak	Frequency	Percent
Never	32	10.7
Rarely	49	16.4
Sometimes	84	28.1
Often	48	16.1
Always	86	28.8
Total	299	100.0
Minimum capital base, merger and acquisition of Commercial banks	Frequency	Percent
Never	34	11.4

Rarely	79	26.4
Sometimes	108	36.1
Often	40	13.4
Always	38	12.7
Total	299	100.0
Hike in oil prices/ fuel scarcity	Frequency	Percent
Never	28	9.4
Rarely	54	18.1
Sometimes	82	27.4
Often	65	21.7
Always	70	23.4
Total	299	100.0
Fuel subsidy removal	Frequency	Percent
Never	25	8.4
Rarely	50	16.7
Sometimes	83	27.8
Often	70	23.4
Always	71	23.7
Total	299	100.0
Hike in prices of food stuff	Frequency	Percent
Never	23	7.7
Rarely	67	22.4
Sometimes	90	30.1
Often	67	22.4
Always	52	17.4
Total	299	100.0
Devaluation of the Naira	Frequency	Percent
Never	26	8.7
Rarely	56	18.7
Sometimes	89	29.8
Often	63	21.1
Always	65	21.7

Total	299	100.0
Embezzlement of public funds/ other corrupt practices	Frequency	Percent
Never	19	6.4
Rarely	53	17.7
Sometimes	75	25.1
Often	59	19.7
Always	93	31.1
Total	299	100.0
Boko haram insurgency	Frequency	Percent
Never	21	7.0
Rarely	41	13.7
Sometimes	67	22.4
Often	58	19.4
Always	112	37.5
Total	299	100.0
Kidnappings/assassination/armed robbery	Frequency	Percent
Never	21	7.0
Rarely	54	18.1
Sometimes	88	29.4
Often	59	19.7
Always	77	25.8
Total	299	100.0
Intra- and inter-party crises	Frequency	Percent
Never	36	12.0
Rarely	54	18.1
Sometimes	85	28.4
Often	57	19.1
Always	67	22.4
Total	299	100.0
General elections	Frequency	Percent
Never	27	9.0

Rarely	34	11.4
Sometimes	78	26.1
Often	55	18.4
Always	105	35.1
Total	299	100.0
Tribal/ ethnic sentiments in politics	Frequency	Percent
Never	23	7.7
Rarely	61	20.4
Sometimes	97	32.4
Often	57	19.1
Always	61	20.4
Total	299	100.0
Fraud activities by some citizens abroad	Frequency	Percent
Never	27	9.0
Rarely	62	20.7
Sometimes	86	28.8
Often	52	17.4
Always	72	24.1
Total	299	100.0
Homophobic attacks in South Africa	Frequency	Percent
Never	24	8.0
Rarely	47	15.7
Sometimes	78	26.1
Often	54	18.1
Always	96	32.1
Total	299	100.0