GENDER AS A CORRELATE OF NEW MEDIA USAGE FOR ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES BY YOUTHS IN DELTA CENTRAL SENATORIAL DISTRICT

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Abstract
The mew media are the modern digital tools and processes used for communication content creation, production, storage and distribution. Communication in this sense cuts across the mass media, politics, social, cultural, economic, commerce, education, advocacy, among others. The new media are used prominently for economic purposes and a good number of youths have employed them for economic benefits. However, there has been argument as to gender being a significant correlate of new media usage for economic purpose among the youths. This study therefore, interrogated the correlation between new media usage for economic activities by youths in Delta Central Senatorial District metropolis. This study is hinged on the Technology Acceptance Model, which explains the user's intentions to use an information system/technology and subsequent usage behaviour. Survey and questionnaire were used as the method and instrument respectively. Stratified and random sampling techniques were adopted, while non-parametric and inferential statistics were used for the data analysis. The study found low level of new media usage by youths in Delta Central Senatorial District metropolis for economic activities. The study recommends that youths, irrespective of gender, should be encouraged to use the new media for economic benefits.

Keywords: Nigeria, New Media, Youth

Background

The term 'new media' generically describes the modern digital tools of media gathering, production/processing, distribution and reception as well as the process involved in the production distribution and reception of media messages and contents. The new media also refer to the portable and easy-to-use technological tools, which are digital and replacement of the hitherto analog tools and process.

Kearney (2005) explains that the new media have redefined the method and process of media production, industrial production, commercial activities, entertainment engagement and social interaction. Faux (2005) writes that the new media have tremendous advantages over the preceding analog tools because of cost effectiveness, ease-of-use, portability, accessibility and status conferral. The new media are available and cheaper.

The new media tools include newspapering, magazine publishing, radio, television, internet, photography, film/movie making, printing, advertising,

public relations, music, marketing online publishing, online music and movie distribution. These ordinarily would have been complicated processes but the new media have simplified tools.

The new media provide huge economic opportunities for individuals and the society. Arreymbi and Agbor (2008) point out that many youths across the world could produce short movies, upload them on Youtube and earn good amount of money from viewership through the online traffic hit system. Youtube is an online video sharing platform that allows user generated content. Users could upload videos, view and comment on them. It was created in 2005 by Chad Hurley, Jawed Karim and Steve Chen in the USA and was bought over by Google in 2006 for USD 1.6 billion.

Hilbert (2011) explains that many people, especially the youths, earn substantial amount of money by publishing their music online, blogging and engaging in the social media. Good example of earning from the new media is the South Korean pop star Park Jae-sang a.k.a. PSY, who released his single titled Gangnam Style in Youtube on July 15, 2012 and before the end of 2012 the video had surpassed one billion viewership and download, thereby beating the Youtube 1 billion meter limit. Within six months of release on youtube, PSY had earned over N700 million from online viewership through traffic hit system (Warner, 2012). Sinha (2009) asserts some youths make income from movie production, music production, online trading, photography, printing, graphics and marketing among others. However, authorities such as Hilbert (2011) and Rabayah (2009) have argued that the new media use for economic activities could be largely dependent on gender. Their view is that males are more likely to use the new media for economic purposes.

The study therefore seeks to interrogate the use of the new media for economic activities by youths in Delta Central Senatorial District, Delta State and the relationship between gender and the use of new media for economic activities by the youths in Delta Central Senatorial District, Delta State. Delta Central Senatorial District is the largest of the three senatorial districts in Delta State, Nigeria. It has eight local government areas with a total population of 1,575, 837 (National Population Census, 2016). Large crude oil deposit is found in all the eight local government areas.

Statement of the Problem

The new media are the modern digital tools which have virtually replaced the analog tools and process of media operations. They have several advantages which include ease of use, portability, cost effectiveness and accessibility. However, as good as the new media may be Langmai (2005) claims that though many youths use them but certainly not for economic activities. They rather use the new media for social activities and sometimes, activities that are not socially and legally acceptable such as online prostitution,

scam, online bullying, blackmail, fake identity, telling lies and invasion of personal privacy.

Rabayah (2009) also asserts that in places where youths use the new media for economic activities, gender usually becomes an inhibiting or a determining factor. In this case, the gender factor could deter some persons from using the new media for economic activities. If gender could be a determining factor of the new media usage for economic activities by the youths therefore, there is concern on how this could apply to the youths in Delta Central Senatorial District. Hence there is the need to determine the correlation between gender and economic activities in Delta Central Senatorial District.

Objectives of the Study

The study seeks to interrogate the followings:

The level of centre and new media usage for economic activities by youths in Delta Central Senatorial District, Delta State Nigeria; and

Hypothesis

The hypothesis below also guided the study:

Gender is not a significant correlate of new media usage for economic activities by youths in Delta Central Senatorial District, Delta State, Nigeria.

Literature Review

The new media revolution according to Caincross (2001) has ushered in new tools, methods and processes of media production, circulation and reception. It has also brought with it differently new digital technologies and new methods of wealth creation. According to her, the new media revolution has not only killed analog technology but has also killed distance. Distance between people has been bridged by the new media and this has enhanced social interaction, industrial production, business, education and wealth creation.

Arreymbi and Agbor (2008) explain that the new media are very popular among the youths who use them for different purpose. They use the new media mainly for entertainment and academic and sometimes for economic activities. Ghosh and Ghosh (2009) assert that many people use the new media for economic activities. For instance, the new media have virtually taken over commerce, banking, insurance, the stock market, entertainment and industry, among others. According to them the use of the media for economic activities is significantly determined by gender.

Farrokh (2010) explains that online marketing and shopping have become very popular and effective to the extent that many people, especially the female gender do shopping online through platforms such as Jumia, Konga, Jiji, Yudala, ebay, Amazon and many others. According to Farhadi, Ismail and Fooladi (2012), ICT which is a by-product of the new media has influenced economic activities significantly. They explain that many people, especially the male youths, use ICT tools such as mobile phones and

the internet for various profitable economic activities. Dedrick, Gurbaxani and Kraemer (2003) point out that modern digital broadcasting which includes radio and television are significant part of the new media and they are used profitably for economic purposes, adding that a good number of the users are youths and cuts across the males and females. They add that many youths, mainly the males; have deigned softwares and applications that have generated huge amount of money.

Hamilton (2005) points out that the new media play key role in industrial and economic development of any society, especially the male youths. They facilitate the creation of employment opportunities, income generation and a lot of other economic opportunities. Kearney (2005) explains that the new media is used extensively in the USA for economic purpose. He adds that the use of the new media in the US, apart from generating economic gains, has created millions of jobs. The new media thus has increased export earnings for the US.

Rahman, Abdullah, Haroon and Toohen (2013) assert that the new media play significant role in the micro and macro economy of Bangladesh. The new media are used in Bangladesh extensively for capacity building, rural economy, women empowerment, self-employment, wealth creation and job opportunities. Different people in different countries across different age categories and gender use the new media for economic empowerment. The new media have thus become catalyst of development and economic growth in different societies as many people depend on them for their economic earnings (Farrokh, 2010).

Langmai (2005) explains that a continent such as Africa that is hit with high level of poverty and disease and underdevelopment needs ICT for maximum economic development. He emphasizes that the use of ICT by many individuals and groups in several African countries has helped to mitigate the rate of poverty in the continent. Many people, especially the male youths, have adopted ICT extensively for profitable economic activities.

Langmia cites South Africa as a topical example in Africa where ICT has been deployed effectively for profitable economic engagement. The South African people, particularly the younger generation, have adopted the internet and several other categories of the new media for rapid economic development. They use the new media for job creation, economic empowerment and general national development.

De Beer (2001) states that the use of the new media in South has brought enormous development to the country. It has to a large extent reduced poverty and increase wealth creation. The youths have seized the opportunity to use the new media for economic development and they have derived significant economic benefits from using the new media.

Faux (2005) asserts that the new media technology has moved Africa forward economically. Many people in different African countries have availed

themselves the opportunity to adopt the new media technology for economic development. The different sectors of the various African nations' economies are benefiting one way or the other from the new media use. The good thing about the adoption of the new media in Africa, according to Faux, is that it is not gender restricted.

Arreymbi and Agbor (2008) assert that the new media have become very popular in Cameroon and they are widely deployed for socio-economic activities. The new media are used significantly in the small and medium enterprises in Cameroon. Individuals, corporate bodies and government institutions in Cameroon use the new media for socio-economic advancement.

Ghosh and Ghosh (2009) found ICT to be widely adopted in India for different purposes including economic activities. For instance, in India, many people organizations and companies use different types of ICT for different economic activities. These economic activities have contributed to the growth and development of the Indian economy.

Roy, Ahmed and Abonamah (2014) write that ICT has become increasingly adopted and deployed for economic uses in different societies across Middle East. Many people and societies have realized the economic benefits of ICT and have adopted for socioeconomic gains. The new media, according to Rabayah (2009) have empowered so many people in different countries. Women, especially have benefitted from the economic use of the new media. Women both in the rural and urban areas have been empowered economically through the use of the new media.

Gender could be a determining factor in the use of the new media for economic activities. For instance, Mottin-Sylla (2005) argues that women are less likely to benefit from the use of the new media for economic activities than men. Zainudeen, Iqbal, Samarajiva, Ratnadiwakara (2008) also conclude that gender is a significant determinant of the adoption of the new media for economic benefit especially in India and Pakistan. The males in these countries tend to be more engaged in the deployment of the new media for profitable economic activities.

Sinha (2009) also found gender as a significant determinant use for economic purpose. Females tend to be less interested in the use of the new media for economic activities. Broos (2005) found that females had more negative attitudes towards ICT than men did. This negative attitude also reflects in their use of ICT for economic activities. Hilbert (2011) notes that there is argument as to gender being a significant determinant of ICT use especially in the developing countries. The argument has been that women are technophobic and that men are much better user of digital tools. Hilbert however, confirms from a study on 12 Latin American and 13 African countries from 2005-2008 that women indeed are less prone to the usage of digital tools for economic activities. The foregoing review has espoused the use of new media for

economic activities. It also examined gender as a determinant of new media usage.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopts the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), an information system theory which explains how users come to accept and use a technology. The theory explains that there are several factors that influence the decisions about how and when people will use a technology. Some of the factors are: Perceived Usefulness (PU) and Perceived Ease-of-Use (PEOU). These are significant factors in determining the users' acceptance of technology. Perceived usefulness is the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance his job performance. On the other hand, perceived – ease-of-use deals with the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free from efforts. T A M postulates that the acceptance and use of a particular technology by an individual is largely a function of how the person perceives that the technology would be useful to him. Usefulness in this regard includes relative advantage, ease-of-use, attached prestige and cost effectiveness. The user of the system is likely to consider the above factors before fully accepting and using the technology. TAM which was developed by Fred Davis and Richard Bogozzi in 1989 strongly holds that the use of a particular technology could only be successful if only it is accepted and adopted by the user. Supporting the postulations of TAM, Bagozzi (2007) explains that people could be reluctant to accept new technologies because of the complexity of technology and the element of uncertainty which exists in the minds of decision makers with respect to the successful adoption of the technology. The theory postulates that people form attitude and intention toward trying to learn to use the new technology prior to initiating efforts directed at using them. Attitude towards usage and intention to use may be ill-formed or lacking in conviction or else may occur only after preliminary strivings to learn to use the technology. Thus, actual usage may not be a direct or immediate consequence of such attitudes and intentions. However, the most important factor here is the acceptance of the technology. This study deals with digital tools usage and before anybody could use digital tools the person has to first accept them as postulated by this theory. This theory has direct bearing with this study; it is therefore adopted for the study.

Method

Survey and questionnaire were used as method and instrument respectively. The study population consisted of the youths living in Delta Central Senatorial District Metropolis, Delta State, Nigeria. The approximate population of youths in Detral Central Senatorial District metropolis is 867,869 (National Population Census, 2006). A sample of 1,500 was chosen through stratified and random sampling techniques. The

headquarters of each of the eight local government areas in Delta Central Senatorial District were selected. They are namely Isiokolo – Ethiope East Local Government, Effurun – Uvwie Local Government, Oghara - Ethiope West Local Government, Orerokpe – Okpe Local Government, Otor – Udu – Udu Local Government, Otu – Jeremi - Ughelli South Local Government, Sapele – Sapele Local Government and Ughelli – Ughelli Local Government

From each of the above headquarters of the local government areas 75 were randomly sampled. Copies of the questionnaire were administered to the sampled youths. A total of 1421 copies of the questionnaire were returned accounting for 94.73 percent return rate. Pre-test of the instrument was done on 20 respondents at Abraka, which is outside the scope of this study to determine the validity of the instrument. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 was used to test the reliability of the instrument and Cronbach alpha of 0.87 was obtained, which indicated a high reliability index for the instrument.

Results and discussion

Table 1. Gender distribution

The table 1 above shows that 50.2% of the respondents were males while 49.8 were females. This shows an even distribution of gender among the respondents.

Table 2. Frequency of new media usage

The result indicates that 85.6% of the respondents use new media daily, 13.5% said they use new media between two and four days a week and 0.8% said they use the new media once a week. This finding agrees with those of Arreymbi and Agbor (2008), Ghosh and Ghosh (2009) and Farrokh (2010) which hold that most youths use the new media very frequently

Table 3. New media usage for economic activities by the youths

Out of the 18 parametres used to determine the level of new media usage, only one had up to 96.83% and the other had 50.04% of respondents who use the new media for economic activities. The highest percentage of respondents that use the new media for economic activities in the rest 16 parametres is 3.50%. The result suggests that there is low usage of new media for economic activities by the youths in Delta Central Senatorial District, Delta State, Nigeria. The finding deviates from findings and views of Dedrick et al (2003), Kearney (2005), Hamilton (2005) and Langmai (2005) which hold that youths use new media significantly for economic activities.

Table 4. Regression analysis of gender and new media usage for economic activities

The result in table 4 shows a correlation coefficient of .548 which indicates that there is a significant correlation between gender and new media use for economic activities among the youths in Delta Central Senatorial

District. The computed F 607.536 which is greater than the critical .000 level of significance also implies that there is a significant correlation between gender and new media use for economic activities. Therefore, the null hypothesis (Ho) which states that there is no significant correlation between gender and new media use for economic activities by youths in Delta Central Senatorial District metropolis was rejected, while the alternative hypothesis was accepted. The Beta weight for new media use for economic activities variable was found significant because t-calculated (64.100) is greater than t-critical at the .000% level of significance. This implies that male youths in Delta Senatorial District use the new media for economic activities more than their female counterparts do.

The findings are in tandem with those of Mottin-Sylla (2005), Broos (2005), Zainudeen et al (2008), Sinha (2009) and Hilbert (2011) which hold that gender is a significant correlate of new media use by youths for economic activities. The finding thus deviates from those of Rahman et al (2013) and Rabayah (2009) which hold contrary view.

Conclusion

The findings suggest a high level of new media usage among the youths resident in Delta Central Senatorial District metropolis. Despite the high level of new media usage by the youths in Delta Central Senatorial District metropolis, only an insignificant proportion of them use the new media for economic activities. Gender also plays significant role in the use of new media for economic activities among the youths in Delta Central Senatorial District metropolis.

Recommendations

The study recommends that:

(1) The study in Delta Central Senatorial District metropolis should be encouraged and educated to use the new media for profitable economic activities.

(2) The female youths in Delta Central Senatorial District metropolis should be encouraged to use the new media for profitable economic activities.

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APPENDIX

(Tables)

Table 1. Gender distribution

Gender	Response	Percentage
Male	713	50.2
Female	708	49.8
Total	1421	100.0

Table 2. Frequency of new media usage

Frequency of new media usage	Responses	Percent
Daily	1217	85.6
2-4 days a week	192	13.5
Once a week	12	.8
Total	1421	100.0

Table 3. New media usage for economic activities by the youths

S/N	Items	Gender	Response categories		SUB-TOTAL		TOTAL
			Yes	No	Yes	No	
1.	Digital Photography	Male	35	678	46(3.24%)	1375 (96.76%)	1421
		Female	11	697			
2.	Digital Videoing	Male	22	691	29(2.04%)	1392(97.96%)	1421
		Female	7	701			
3.	Desktop publishing	Male	17	696	23(1.61%)	1398(98.39%)	1421
		Female	6	702			
4.	Digital printing	Male	8	705	12(0.85%)	1409(99.15%)	1421
		Female	4	704			
5.	Online Marketing	Male	204	509	307(21.60%)	1114(78.40%)	1421
		Female	103	605			