

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS IN THE ERA OF SOCIAL MEDIA: A DISCUSS

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Abstract

The environment consists of land, air and sea; which supports life and everything therein. As a result of man's unchecked exploitation of his natural resources for food, shelter, clothing etc., the environment has been negatively affected. In a bid to curb or reduce the pressure continuously exerted on the environment, several research, treaties, policies, laws, etc. have been made. However, as a result of poverty, ignorance, etc., environmental awareness is very low. Unlike other problems of man, environmental problems have no respect for boundaries; hence, solutions to these problems must enjoy global coverage. Social media is currently the trendy global platform for interaction, communication and content sharing. Every sector of life is embracing social media in the propagation of their goals. The aim of this paper is to review the benefits of using social media as a tool for the creation of environmental awareness. Despite the fact that social media has its problems, such as 'clicktivism', its advantages cannot be overemphasized. This paper is relevant to all government environmental parastatals, NGOs, researchers and individuals. We found that the use of social media as environmental awareness creation tool will bring environmental issues to the limelight. As exemplified in the social cognitive theory, accumulated

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environmental awareness created overtime, positively affects the behaviour and consumption pattern of people in favour of the environment. We therefore, recommended that Laws establishing environmental institutions should mandate those institutions to exploit social media in their environmental education, because, a problem known is a problem half solved.

Keywords: Environment, Environmental Awareness, Social Media, etc.

1. Introduction

The nagging problems of the environment have over the years, defied several solutions as evidence of environmental deterioration can be seen and felt globally.¹ This makes it an international problem and by implication, solutions to the problems of the environment must be efficient in remedying the issues of the environment and must enjoy global coverage for them to qualify as solution. This is because, several concepts referred to as solutions most times turn out to become serious environmental problems on their own. Unfortunately, due to ignorance, poverty, corruption, over population and so on, people still haven't quite understood the dangers awaiting man as a result of his reckless living. This therefore calls for a universal and accessible medium through which the globe can be sensitized until everyone understands the needs of the environment.

Social media is currently the trend for disseminating information. The era of hard copy documents and manual/analogue methods are speedily fizzling away. Barely every sphere, discipline or department is tech-driven. Muobuikwu is of the view that media is currently the most powerful entity on earth.² It will therefore, be out of place for the environment as crucial as it is, not to grab the media with both hands

¹ C A Onuoha et al, 'Environmental Challenges Awareness in Nigeria: A Review' *African Journal of Environment and Natural Science Research* [2022](5)(2) 1-14.

² C W Muobuikwu, 'Freedom of Press and the Digital Media in the Nigerian Democracy: The Need for a Legal Framework' *SSRM* < <https://ssrn.com> > accessed on 18/08/23.

and exploit all the platforms, to ensure that the issues of the environment are publicized as much as possible. In this paper, we shall be discussing the benefits of using social media to create environmental awareness and why our legislators should mandate the various environmental institutions, to employ social media platforms in creating awareness on environmental issues, by so doing, everyone gets involved in proffering solution to our numerous environmental problems.

2. Conceptual Framework

2.1 The Concept of Social Media

Social Media collectively refers to websites and applications which focus on communication, community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration.³ It is further defined as websites and programmes which enable interactions among people, share information and work together.⁴ Simply put in a lay-man language, social media is a platform that enables people to connect, communicate and share data with anyone, anywhere. It enhances information sharing through digital networks.⁵ Social media is a means of communication/interaction that aids in the creation, sharing, and/or exchanging of ideas in virtual communities and networks.⁶ It is the new trend and modern way of interaction with wider coverage, very flexible and affordable.

Some examples of Social Media Platforms include:

- a. Facebook - the biggest site for social networking with almost 3 billion persons making use of it every month.⁷

³B Lutkevich, 'What is Social Media?' <https://techtargget.com> accessed on 30/04/2023.

⁴B Ganguli, 'What is Social Media?' <https://economictimes.com> accessed on 30/04/2023.

⁵M Dollarhide, 'Social Media: Definition, Effects, and List of Top Apps' *Investopedia* accessed on 30/04/2023.

⁶Curled from <https://communications.tufts.edu> accessed on 16/8/2023.

⁷Curled from <https://buffer.com> accessed on 16/8/2023.

- b. TikTok - a fresh-faced social media app with significant demand for short-form video.⁸
- c. WhatsApp - the most popular social messaging app where one can share videos, photos and documents.⁹
- d. YouTube - a platform which enables users to share and watch videos every day.¹⁰

2.2 The Concept of Environment

Omaka defined 'environment' as everything that has to do with the physical, economic, cultural, aesthetic and social circumstances and factors, surrounding and affecting the natural quality of human life and property, these include the conditions or forces surrounding or affecting them, directly or indirectly.¹¹ One cannot talk about the existence of flora and fauna without talking about the environment. It is where we live and develop, which includes the air, land, water, vegetation, our surroundings, and the entire ecosystem.¹²

2.3 The Concept of Environmental Awareness

According to Tzimka, 'Environmental Awareness' means, understanding that our actions or inactions have a way of affecting the environment negatively or positively, which then influences our commitment to intentionally predetermine the probable effect of our actions on the environment, even before we take them.¹³ It is the knowledge of how the place that supports man's existence works, what to do and what not to do in order to sustain the said place, which at the long run, sustains the lives in it. It is a series of ecological concepts, existing relationship to nature, and the related policies and

⁸Curled from <https://makeuseof.com> accessed on 16/8/2023.

⁹Curled from <https://buffer.com> accessed on 16/8/2023.

¹⁰Curled from <https://buffer.com> accessed on 16/8/2023.

¹¹ C A Omaka, 'International Environmental Law' mimeograph (2012) 10.

¹²C A Omaka, *Nigerian Conservation Law and International Environmental Treaties* (Lions Unique Concepts 2018) 1.

¹³ M A Tzimka, 'Environmental Awareness' <http://www.delta-net.com> accessed on 18/08/23.

technologies of interaction with nature.¹⁴ Environmental awareness is all about a clearer comprehension of the fact that our ecosystem is fragile and the need to safeguard it for the benefit of man.¹⁵

3. Legal Framework for Environmental and Social Media Regulation in Nigeria

3.1 The 1999 Constitution (as amended)

The *1999 Constitution* is the written supreme law of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It provides that the ‘State shall protect and improve the environment and safeguard the water, air and land, forest and wild life of Nigeria’.¹⁶ The Nigerian Constitution as well as the *African Charter of 1979* and *1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights*, made provision for freedom of expression and press.¹⁷ Section 39 of the *Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended)*, provides that ‘Every person shall be entitled to freedom of expression, including freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference’.

3.2 Cybercrimes (Prohibition, Prevention, etc.) Act, 2015

This law provides, prevents, detects, responds, investigates and prosecutes cybercrimes and other related matters.

3.3 Freedom of Information Act, 2011

This law aims at protecting public office holders from punishment or prosecution for revealing some kinds of information without due permission from the appropriate quarters. Though this law has more to

¹⁴ VA Korotenko, ‘Ecological Awareness: Theory, Phenomenon and Interpretation’ *Juvenis Scientia* [2017] (3) <[file:///C:/Users/user/Desktop/ ACTS%20&%20PDF/ecological-awareness-theory-phenomenon-and-interpretation.pdf](file:///C:/Users/user/Desktop/ACTS%20&%20PDF/ecological-awareness-theory-phenomenon-and-interpretation.pdf)> accessed on 19/08/23.

¹⁵ C A Onuoha et al, ‘Environmental Challenges Awareness in Nigeria: A Review’ *African Journal of Environment and Natural Science Research* [2022] (5) (2) 1-14.

¹⁶ Section 20 of the 1999 Constitution of the FRN (as amended).

¹⁷ C W Muobuikwu, ‘Freedom of Press and the Digital Media in the Nigerian Democracy: The Need for a Legal Framework’ *SSRM* < <https://ssrn.com> > accessed on 18/08/23.

do with war against office gratification, its relevance is that it prevents government parastatals from hoarding information which ordinarily should be made public, in the guise that such information is confidential.

3.4 National Environmental (Food, Beverages and Tobacco Sector) Regulation

This Regulation aims at preventing and minimizing pollution emanating from food, beverages and tobacco sector to the Environment.¹⁸ Also, in a bid to encourage recycling of waste products, the Regulation provides that all materials which can be recycled, re-used or repurposed should be separated and recycled.¹⁹

3.5 National Environmental (Textile, Wearing Apparel, Leather and Footwear Industry) Regulations

This Regulation's core aim includes the prevention and reduction of waste emanating from the textile sector.²⁰ It leaves the burden of waste management on the shoulders of the waste generators, which must be managed in accordance with the specified standards and guidelines.²¹

3.6 National Environmental (Domestic and Industrial Plastic Rubber and Foam Sector) Regulations

This Regulation principally aims at preventing and reducing waste from the rubber and foam sector to the environment.²² Its stipulation is to implement a clean process of production and to employ measures that can prevent pollution in order to achieve the benefits associated with safe environment.

¹⁸Section 1 of *National Environmental (Food, Beverages and Tobacco Sector) Regulation* S I No 32 2009.

¹⁹Section 6(3).

²⁰Section 1 of *National Environmental (Textile Wearing Apparel Leather and Footwear Industry) Regulations*. S I No 34 2009.

²¹S. 5.

²²Section 2, *National Environmental (Domestic and Industrial Plastic Rubber and Foam Sector) Regulations* S I No 17 2011.

4. Institutional Framework for Environmental and Social Media Regulation in Nigeria

4.1 National Environmental Standards and Regulation Enforcement Agency (NESREA)

This is a department of the Federal Ministry of Environment whose mission is to arouse people's interest, individually and collectively, to join hands in creating environmental awareness in the society in order to achieve sustainable development in Nigeria.²³ This agency has the responsibility to protect and develop the environment.²⁴

4.2 National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA)

NEMA is a government establishment whose responsibility includes the management of disasters, public education and environmental awareness creation geared at reducing the impact of disasters on the environment. The mission of NEMA includes the co-ordination of resources to efficiently and effectively prevent, prepare for, mitigate and respond to disaster in Nigeria.²⁵

4.3 Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF)

This non-governmental organization known as the Nigerian Conservation Foundation aims at preserving the biodiversity and natural resources of Nigeria. The Foundation was founded in 1980 by Shafi Edu and has worked since then on a number of resource management and conservation projects across Nigeria.²⁶

4.4 Federal Ministry of Environment (FMOE)

Federal Ministry of Environment is a ministry of the Federal Republic of Nigeria whose mandate is to address environmental issues and to ensure the effective coordination of all environmental matters in the

²³ Public Health Nigeria, 'List of Environmental Agencies in Nigeria and their Functions' <https://www.publichealth.com.ng> accessed on 27/07/23.

²⁴ Section 2, *NESREA Act*, 2007.

²⁵ Public Health Nigeria, 'List of Environmental Agencies in Nigeria and their Functions' <https://www.publichealth.com.ng> accessed on 27/07/23.

²⁶ P Hansen, 'Best Climate Practice Nigeria: Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF)' <https://en.wikipedia.org> accessed on 27/07/23.

country. It also formulates policies and supervises activities for curbing desertification and deforestation; the management of flood, erosion and pollution, as well as climate change and clean energy.²⁷

4.5 Friends of the Environment, Nigeria (FEN)/Environmental Rights Action (ERA)

This is a non-governmental organization whose dedication is to defend the fundamental objectives of the State on safe and healthy environment, and to promote programmes that are intentional about the sustainability of the environment.²⁸

4.6 EHORECON

EHORECON is an Agency under the Federal Ministry of Environment Health Officers in Nigeria. The specific objectives of the Council include; determining what standards of knowledge and skill are to be attained by persons seeking to become members of the profession of Environmental Health and improving these standards from time to time as circumstances may permit.²⁹

4.8 National Biosafety Management Agency (NBMA)

This Agency was established by the *National Biosafety Management Agency Act, 2015*, whose responsibility includes the provision of regulatory framework for the adequate safeguarding of man's health and that of the environment from future negative effect of modern biotechnology and genetically modified organisms while harnessing the potentials of modern biotechnology and its derivatives for the benefits of Nigerians.³⁰

²⁷ O Quadri, 'List of 7 Agencies of Ministry of Environment in Nigeria' <https://www.infomediang.com> accessed on 27/07/23.

²⁸ FEN, 'Friends of the Earth Nigeria / Environmental Rights Action' <https://www.foei.org> accessed on 27/07/23

²⁹ Public Health Nigeria, 'List of Environmental Agencies in Nigeria and their Functions' <https://www.publichealth.com.ng> accessed on 27/07/23.

³⁰ Ibid.

4.9 Forestry Research Institute of Nigeria (FRIN)

FRIN's mission is to ensure sustainable forest resource management and production, food production/security; forest based industrial raw material provision, utilization, bio-diversity conservation, self-employment opportunities and poverty alleviations.

4.10 Nigeria Hydrological Services Agency (NIHSA)

This government Agency whose establishment falls under the Ministry of Water Resources is responsible for the creation of a hydrological service that are dynamic and advanced, which is able to facilitate and support the harnessing, controlling, preserving, development and management of Nigeria's valuable water resources in a sustainable manner.

4.11 River Basin Authority (Federal Ministry of Water Resources)

Federal Ministry of Water Resources render service portfolio in irrigation schemes, soil-erosion control and water development schemes. River Basin Development Authorities in Nigeria are government Agencies involved in the management of water resources for agriculture and other uses.

5. Theoretical Framework for Environmental and Social Media Awareness in

5.1 Social Cognitive Theory

This theory is in consideration of individual's peculiar method of acquisition and maintenance of behaviour in consonance with the individual's environment wherein this behaviour is to be manifested.³¹The theory is an explanation of individuals' multiple human processes, which include acquired and adopted knowledge and information.³² It also posits that what people can do, depends on their

³¹ L Jenkins et al, 'Applications and applicability of Social Cognitive Theory in Information Science Research' *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*<file:///C:/Users/user/Desktop/applications-and-applicability-of-social-cognitive-theory-in-information-science-research-2.pdf> accessed on 20/08/23.

³²*Ibid.*

perception and sense of judgement in addition to their thought of the probable outcome of such actions.³³ According to Bandura, an individual's sense of judgment, and his action, as well as the anticipated outcome of such actions are often differentially potent, whereas the individual's sense of judgement is a stronger influential determinant of his behaviour.³⁴ The theory expounds that learning takes place in a social context and that most times, we learn through observation.³⁵ By this theory, we believe that social media, if utilized in environmental awareness creation by the relevant environmental institutions, will go a long way in educating the general public to consume responsibly, in order to keep the environment sustained for us, and for other generations to come.

5.2 Threaded Cognition Theory

This theory posits that streams of thought can be represented as threads of processing coordinated by a serial procedural resource and executed across other available resources.³⁶ One of the striking features of human cognition system is that it enables the management and execution of multitasking.³⁷ Threaded cognition does not assume any task-specific supervisory or executive processes and can therefore combine arbitrary tasks.³⁸

³³Bandura in R W Lent et al 'Toward a Unifying Social Cognitive Theory of Career and Academic Interest, Choice, and Performance' *Journal of Vocational Behaviour* [1994] (45) 79-122.

³⁴ R W Lent et al 'Toward a Unifying Social Cognitive Theory of Career and Academic Interest, Choice, and Performance' *Journal of Vocational Behaviour* [1994] (45) 79-122.

³⁵ H Denle et al 'Social Cognitive Theory' *Classroom Learning* [2009] 1

³⁶D D Salvucci et al 'Threaded Cognition: An Integrated Theory of Concurrent Multitasking' *Psychol Review* [2008] <<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>> accessed on 20/08/23.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸ J P Borst 'Modelling Triple-Tasking without Customized Cognitive Control' <file:///C:/Users/user/Desktop/qt8hm966fn_noSplash_eb388d68fb7064c92fca4bd49c1d9ca3.pdf> accessed on 20/08/23.

6. Problems of the Environment

The degradation of the earth's environment has become more popular to discuss in the last decade.³⁹ Environmental issues are described by Onuoha as 'the negative impacts of human activity on the earth and its natural systems'.⁴⁰ Omaka opined that presently, the world is faced with multi-faceted humanitarian crisis endangered by natural ecological problems and other forms of disasters, which have brought some insurmountable challenges, especially with regards to the protection of the environment.⁴¹ Exploitation of the natural resources is always of great importance to the developing countries, whereas the consequent effect of such unchecked exploitation most times, doesn't concern them.⁴² Oke maintained that it is man's efforts to secure the basic needs of man, among several factors, that are responsible for committing waste or altering the natural state of his environment.⁴³ In the same vein, Okeke⁴⁴ is of the view that economic growth is responsible for the increase in environmental pollution, and of course, in Nigeria, economic development has always been prioritized by our institutions and courts over environmental development.

Environmental issues range from the street corner to the stratosphere⁴⁵ such as explosion of man's population, with its resultant exploitation of his environment. According to Dinakin,⁴⁶ many years of

³⁹E A Severo et al, 'The Influence of Social Networks on Environmental Awareness and the Social Responsibility of Generations' *Brazilian Business Review* <<file:///C:/Users/user/Desktop/ACTS%20&%20PDF/download.pdf>> accessed on 19/08/23.

⁴⁰ C A Onuoha et al 'Environmental Challenges Awareness in Nigeria: A Review' *African Journal of Environment and Natural Science Research* [2022] (5)(2) 1-14.

⁴¹ C. A. Omaka et al, 'Checkmating a Disaster Troubled World: The Challenge of Science and Law of Science' *Law Ebonyi State Law Journal* [2016] (7) 20.

⁴² O Oyewo, 'The Problem of Environmental Regulation in the Nigerian Federation' in J A Omotola, *Environmental Laws* (Faculty of Law UNILAG 1990) 98.

⁴³ GD Oke, 'Pesticides and the Environment: Criminal Law perspective' *Nigeria Current Law Review* [1992/1993] 120.

⁴⁴ A Okeke, 'Economic Growth in Nigeria: Does Institutional Quality Stand Sensibly?' <https://diva-portal.org> accessed on 16/8/2023.

⁴⁵ S Ball and S Bell, *Environmental Law* 3rd edn (Blackstone Press Ltd 1995) 1.

⁴⁶ Y Dinakin, 'Planning Law and Environmental Protection' in M.T Okorodudu-Fubara *Law of Environmental Protection* (Caltop Publications (Nig) Ltd 1998) 25.

uncontrolled human use and pollution of the environment in Nigeria have exerted cumulative pressures on the ecosystem. These pressures are increasing daily with population growth, leading to urbanization, deforestation, depletion of sea and land resources to produce food, increase in the use of machines, chemicals and other side effects of human activity and development.⁴⁷

Environmental Degradation caused by economic activities is often accompanied by & related to violation of civil & political rights. Ignorance, acute poverty and greed are fore-runners of environmental hazards.⁴⁸ It is also equally true that due to education and greater awareness of the problems, man could better manage the problems of pollution.⁴⁹ Okorodudu puts it this way; environmental uncertainties are inevitable, therefore, man must be very careful in order to protect the living resources of the earth.⁵⁰ The level of awareness created on the overwhelming environmental challenges goes a long way to determine the results to be achieved in that sector.⁵¹

7. Benefits of Social Media as Environmental Awareness Tool

The vital role played by the environment in the survival of man cannot be over emphasized.⁵² According to Atsegbua,⁵³ man is related to his environment in several ways, such that man is inextricably linked to the environment. Consequently, any activity that has a negative

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ E Aduayi, 'An Overview of the Impact of Biological Activities on the formulation of law and Policy of the Environment' in *Environmental Laws and Policy* (Lagos State University 2000) 64.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ MT Okorodudu, *Law of Environmental Protection 2nd ed* (Caltop Publications Nig Ltd 1994) 26.

⁵¹ C A Onuoha et al, 'Environmental Challenges Awareness in Nigeria: A Review' <https://researchgates.com> accessed on 16/8/2023.

⁵² U Uguru et al, 'The Effects of Environmental Law on Human Development in Nigeria' *Onueke Bar Journal* [2019] (2) 84.

⁵³ L Atsegbua et al *Environmental Law in Nigeria Theory and Practice* (Ambik Press 2010) 1.

consequence on the environment boomerangs on man and hampers his development.⁵⁴

In a never-ending search for improvement in quality of life, man has made great strides.⁵⁵ The entry of software into a technologically oriented world was heralded in various forms within the past decades.⁵⁶ The emergence of Internet Companies came with increased, demonstrable ability to influence what takes place in any particular field.⁵⁷ Technology not only makes possible more efficient and effective delivery of information.⁵⁸ There are examples when traditional elements were used, such as billboards.⁵⁹ Newspapers ideology tends to be a thing of the past, no longer relevant to serious discussions about the problems of man.⁶⁰ However, telecommunication, specifically, social media, has been of great importance to man's development.⁶¹ Atsegbua states that globalization seeks to enforce the concept of a borderless world where there are no barriers or boundaries and the complete integration of humanity into the global system,⁶² achievable through borderless

⁵⁴ U Uguru et al 'The Effects of Environmental Law on Human Development in Nigeria' *Onueke Bar Journal* [2019] (2) 84.

⁵⁵ A Ibidapo-Obe, 'Criminal Liability and Damage Caused by Oil Pollution' *Law of Environmental Protection* 2nd ed (Caltop Publications Nig. Ltd, 1994) 231.

⁵⁶ E Aluta & P Gasiokwu, 'Utility of Legal Software in Legal Practice & Research' *DELSU Law Review* [2021] (7) 447.

⁵⁷ O F Emiri and K A Omengala, 'Is it Time to Welcome the Online (or Hybrid) Classroom for Teaching Law?' *Edwin Clarke University Law Journal* [2020] (3) 7.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ M Nalewajek and R Macik, 'The Role of Social Media in Building Awareness of Responsible Consumption' *Make Learn* <<file:///C:/Users/user/Desktop/ACTS%20&%20PDF/ML13-330.pdf>> accessed on 19/08/23.

⁶⁰ S Chibnall *Law and Order News: An Analysis of Crime Reporting in the British Press* (Tavistock Publications 1977) 15.

⁶¹ A Akintunde Otubu, 'Mass Mast in Planning and Environmental Law Maze: Need for Stricter Regulation' *Nnamdi Azikiwe University Journal of Public & Private Law* [2013] (5)1.

⁶² L Atsegbua & S O Daudu, 'Globalization: Combating Transnational Environmental Crimes in Nigeria' *Ife Juris Review* [2024] (1) 12.

communication. According to Okonkwo,⁶³ social media is becoming the most influential ways of communication over the last decade. People can do things differently in the world today if social media is employed as a tool for environmental awareness creation. When it comes to the protection of the environment, social media has the potential to drum the needs of the environment into the ears of everyone.⁶⁴ Aduayi also agrees that with greater awareness, the issues of pollution could be better managed.⁶⁵

By virtue of Section 22 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended) which provides that the press, radio, television and other agencies of the mass media, shall at all times be free to uphold the fundamental objectives of the country, it invariably includes the use of social media as one of the mass media. It is also apparent to note that the safety of the environment is one of the Fundamental Objectives of the State.⁶⁶ Thus, it is axiomatic that the relevant institutions and NGOs have the responsibility to inform Nigerians of the state of affairs in Nigeria and the world at large.⁶⁷

According to Richards:⁶⁸ from the stand point of environmental sustainability, environmental awareness is of great importance to everyone, and the need to conserve our natural resources and imbibe practices that sustain the environment should be encouraged. Environmental education will go a long way to influence the activities

⁶³ T Okonkwo, *The Law of Environmental Liability* (Afrique Environmental Development & Education 2010)1082.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ E Aduayi, 'An Overview of the Impact of Biological Activities on the formulation of law and Policy of the Environment' in *Environmental Laws and Policy* (Lagos State University 2000) 64.

⁶⁶ Section 20 of the *1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*

⁶⁷ C W Muobuikwu, 'Freedom of Press and the Digital Media in the Nigerian Democracy: The Need for a Legal Framework' *SSRM* < <https://ssrn.com> > accessed on 18/08/23.

⁶⁸ R Richards, 'A New Aesthetic For Environmental Awareness: Chaos Theory, The Beauty Of Nature, And Our Broader Humanistic Identity' <[file:///C:/Users/user/Desktop/ACTS%20&%20PDF/A New Aesthetic for Environmental Awareness Chaos .pdf](file:///C:/Users/user/Desktop/ACTS%20&%20PDF/A%20New%20Aesthetic%20for%20Environmental%20Awareness%20Chaos.pdf)> accessed on 19/08/23.

of man in all ramifications and aid the achievement of safe and habitable environment. This is because; an individual's knowledge of the needs of the environment has a way of influencing his attitude in the environment.⁶⁹

In a nut-shell, social media can enhance environmental education in several ways:⁷⁰

- (a) It can reach a large and diverse audience, especially young people, who are often active and interested in social media.
- (b) It can foster interaction and dialogue among learners, educators, and experts, creating a sense of community and collaboration.
- (c) It can provide rich and diverse sources of information that promote safer environment, such as videos, images, podcasts, blogs, and stories, that can appeal to different learning styles and preferences.
- (d) It can inspire and motivate the target audience to take action on environmental issues, by showcasing positive examples, providing feedback, and linking to online resources and campaigns.

8. Problems Associated with Social Media

Social media is a two-edged sword which can be used to spread messages positively or negatively, even among rumour mongers.⁷¹ According to Mobuikwu,⁷² Nigeria is presently filled with all manners of 'bloggers and self-proclaimed internet aficionados' who adopt any strategy, legal or illegal in order to propagate their beliefs, missions or visions through the social media. Many of their posts are unimaginable, all in a bid to gain more 'likes', 'views', 'comments' and 'shares' in order to monetize their social media handles, or just to utilize their freedom of expression.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Environmental Education, 'What are some of the benefits and challenges of using social media for environmental education?' <<https://www.linkedin.com>> accessed on 19/08/23.

⁷¹ C W Muobuikwu, 'Freedom of Press and the Digital Media in the Nigerian Democracy: The Need for a Legal Framework' *SSRM* < <https://ssrn.com>> accessed on 18/08/23.

⁷²Ibid.

Social media has also created an issue called ‘clicktivism’, which happens when people see a post that they feel is appealing to their eyes, without reading through, without understanding what the post is all about in its entirety, they simply ‘like’ the page and scroll on. Well, if it is a monetized page, the click is all that the author needs, but for an educative post, merely ‘liking’ the post has not changed anything.⁷³ Another negative side of digital media is lack of regulation. Today, every Tom, Dick and Harry is a publisher. One can manufacture a lie in the secret of his bedroom, spread it in social media and people will buy into it.⁷⁴ While the *Nigerian Press Council Act* could be said to be targeted at the discipline of journalists operating in the print and electronic media, the same cannot be said of internet bloggers, and some online newspaper operators, because the internet media was not contemplated in the *Nigerian Press Council Act*.⁷⁵

Furthermore, the age of the users of social media portals - online communities thrive especially among young people,⁷⁶ unlike children and old people. Another problem of social media is that it can be hard to maintain the attention and interest of learners, as social media is often crowded with competing and distracting messages and stimuli. Finally, it can be challenging to measure the impact and outcomes of social media campaign, as it is not easy to track and assess the learning process and behaviour changes of the target audience.⁷⁷

⁷³ C Regan, ‘Social Media “Clicktivism” Creates more Apathy than Empathy’ *Development Education* <<https://www.developmenteducation.ie>>accessed on 20/08/23.

⁷⁴ C W Muobuikwu ‘Freedom of Press and the Digital Media in the Nigerian Democracy: The Need for a Legal Framework’ *SSRM* < <https://ssrn.com>>accessed on 18/08/23.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶ M Nalewajek and R Macik, ‘The Role of Social Media in Building Awareness of Responsible Consumption’ *Make Learn* <<file:///C:/Users/user/Desktop/ACTS%20&%20PDF/ML13-330.pdf>>accessed on 19/08/23.

⁷⁷Environmental Education, ‘What are some of the benefits and challenges of using social media for environmental education?’ ><https://www.linkedin.com>>accessed on 19/08/23.

9. Possible Solutions to the Problems of Social Media

Notwithstanding the few problems of social media, Nalewajek and Macik posit that it is a great tool for affecting the behaviour of people.⁷⁸ Individual members of various platforms access and share information through social media, while promoting interactions, communications and creating various forms of contents as regards environmental sustainability.⁷⁹ Mobuikwu insists that there is no need emphasizing that the internet has improved communication and development in Nigeria, because, it has boosted the level of efficient information in the society.⁸⁰

Here are possible solutions to the problem of social media:⁸¹ First, choose the appropriate platform and format for the target audience, tailor the content and style accordingly. Second, encourage interaction and participation among the target audience and provide feedback and support. Third, use multimedia and storytelling techniques to capture and sustain the interest and emotion of the audience. Fourth, follow up with the audience to evaluate and reflect on their comprehension.

10. Recommendations

According to Severo, the importance of environmental sustainability and the interest of individuals in the subject matter is growing, most importantly, as a result of the benefits that its achievement promises to

⁷⁸ M Nalewajek and R Macik, 'The Role of Social Media in Building Awareness of Responsible Consumption' *Make Learn* <<file:///C:/Users/user/Desktop/ACTS%20&%20PDF/ML13-330.pdf>> accessed on 19/08/23.

⁷⁹ R Richards, 'A New Aesthetic For Environmental Awareness: Chaos Theory, The Beauty Of Nature, And Our Broader Humanistic Identity' <[file:///C:/Users/user/Desktop/ACTS%20&%20PDF/A New Aesthetic for Environmental Awareness Chaos .pdf](file:///C:/Users/user/Desktop/ACTS%20&%20PDF/A%20New%20Aesthetic%20for%20Environmental%20Awareness%20Chaos.pdf)> accessed on 19/08/23.

⁸⁰ C W Muobuikwu, 'Freedom of Press and the Digital Media in the Nigerian Democracy: The Need for a Legal Framework' *SSRM* <<https://ssrn.com>> accessed on 18/08/23.

⁸¹ Environmental Education, 'What are some of the benefits and challenges of using social media for environmental education?' ><https://www.linkedin.com>> accessed on 18/08/23.

mankind.⁸² Richards concurs that the growth of environmental sustainability awareness is not in doubt,⁸³ however, in order to reach far and near, social media must be exploited. The media can help to raise public awareness of the environment and natural resources conservation.⁸⁴ Public involvement will affect the degree of compliance with international agreements on environmental sustainability which will go a long way to improve the implementation of environmental laws.⁸⁵ According to Onuoha, human activities have the potential to protect the earth, hence, the effort to preserve the environment can only yield fruits when proper global tool is employed to sensitize the masses on the issues of the environment.⁸⁶

We therefore recommend as follows:

1. Laws bothering on the environment should make environmental awareness a priority. In other words, laws establishing environmental institutions should mandate those institutions to exploit social media in creating awareness for the sustenance of the environment.
2. All relevant government institutions and NGOs should use social media to create awareness; educate and train personnel.
3. Posts or videos bothering on the environment should be brief, colourful and catchy, this will help the target audience to read or watch through to the end.

⁸²E A Severo et al, 'The Influence of Social Networks on Environmental Awareness and the Social Responsibility of Generations' *Brazilian Business Review* <<file:///C:/Users/user/Desktop/ACTS%20&%20PDF/download.pdf>> accessed on 19/08/23.

⁸³R Richards, 'A New Aesthetic For Environmental Awareness: Chaos Theory, The Beauty Of Nature, And Our Broader Humanistic Identity' <<file:///C:/Users/user/Desktop/ACTS%20&%20PDF/A New Aesthetic for Environmental Awareness Chaos .pdf>> accessed on 19/08/23.

⁸⁴C A Onuoha et al, 'Environmental Challenges Awareness in Nigeria: A Review' *African Journal of Environment and Natural Science Research* [2022] (5) (2) 1-14.

⁸⁵T Okonkwo, *The Law of Environmental Liability* Lagos: Afrique Environmental Development & Education 2010)1086.

⁸⁶C A Onuoha et al, 'Environmental Challenges Awareness in Nigeria: A Review' *African Journal of Environment and Natural Science Research* [2022] (5) (2) 1-14.

4. The government, organizations and individuals all have a part to play in maintaining a healthy ecosystem.⁸⁷ Hence, there's need for all hands to be on deck in saving the environment, and at the long run, save humanity, by sharing environmental contents to other platforms until they go viral.

11. Conclusion

Social media is widely exploited by individuals and businesses of different sectors,⁸⁸ therefore, it has an important role to play in the creation of environmental awareness.⁸⁹ Man needs to know that his sustenance and existence largely depends on his knowledge of his environment and its challenges.⁹⁰ It is often said that a problem known is half solved. Forming the attitudes of responsible consumption and sustainable development becomes more and more important nowadays.⁹¹ All hands must be on deck to ensure that environmental education is given a wider coverage, and whereas social media has proven to be the most fit platform, the time is now!

⁸⁷ C A Onuoha et al, 'Environmental Challenges Awareness in Nigeria: A Review' *African Journal of Environment and Natural Science Research* [2022] (5) (2) 1-14.

⁸⁸ R Richards, 'A New Aesthetic For Environmental Awareness: Chaos Theory, The Beauty Of Nature, And Our Broader Humanistic Identity' <[file:///C:/Users/user/Desktop/ACTS%20&%20PDF/A New Aesthetic for Environmental Awareness Chaos .pdf](file:///C:/Users/user/Desktop/ACTS%20&%20PDF/A%20New%20Aesthetic%20for%20Environmental%20Awareness%20Chaos.pdf)> accessed on 19/08/23.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ C A Onuoha et al, 'Environmental Challenges Awareness in Nigeria: A Review' *African Journal of Environment and Natural Science Research* 1-14.

⁹¹ M Nalewajek and R Macik, 'The Role of Social Media in Building Awareness of Responsible Consumption' *Make Learn* <<file:///C:/Users/user/Desktop/ACTS%20&%20PDF/ML13-330.pdf>> accessed on 19/08/23.