

An Assessment of the Impact of New Media Technologies on Skill Acquisition and Development Among Youths in Delta State

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Abstract

With the internet within the reach of all, any aspiring youth can easily gather valuable skills and knowledge from various existing digital sources. New media platforms offer a wealth of information on business strategies, market trends and industry innovations, allowing youths to improve on knowledge and skills needed in a world largely driven by computer technology. This study showed that new media technologies have exposed youths to digital based interactive learning applications and other online media platforms. These tools provide accessible alternatives to youth to learn new skills, helping them to develop themselves. The study discovered that new media provide cost-effective digital tools that engender skills acquisition and personal development among youths. Results showed that youths are gradually leveraging on these new media technologies to empower themselves by way of skills acquisition and personal development. Online/internet content creation, online marketing, crypto currency/forex trading, AI application, etc, are some aspects youths can explore for personal development.. Notwithstanding the massive opportunities new media technologies offers, study equally found out that a large section of the youth population only use new media platforms for mainly entertainment and socializing. The study concluded that as youths navigate through the complexities of modern society, digital tools made possible by new media technologies have proven efficient for youths in accessing new opportunities, thereby enhancing their quality lives. It is therefore recommended that youths should fully embrace these new opportunities while the government and other critical stakeholders in development should design deliberate policies and programmes that will make new media technologies available to all youths.

Keywords: New media, new media technologies, skills, development, youths.

Introduction

Technology is evolving every day due to the increase in knowledge impacted by the rise in the digital revolution and new media technologies. With the advent of rapid economic and technology development across the globe, new media technologies has become an integral part of our lives, transforming the way we communicate, work and even resolve conflicts. Since the conception of new media in the world, there have been quite remarkable innovations in communication. To say that the world is currently driven by new media technology is no longer a wishful comment. Infact, almost all aspects of human endeavour come under the influence of new media technology. What are new media communication technologies? As Akpoveta (2014,p.62) asserts, “New media communication technologies are simply communication gadgets, hardwares, equipments, or facilities that have modernized, improved and eased the exchange of information and ideas of different kind between and among different categories of people from different geographical locations”. The information age theory and the concept of information-driven society have brought about massive changes in societal ways of life, transforming how people live, work, socialise and interact with one another. The emergence of the new media has greatly increased the volume of communication among people, irrespective of space location and time. This development has made a huge impact on the modern world. As Ukonu (2022:109) puts it, “A great deal of attention has been focused on the impacts of technology on the human society due to the far reaching consequences of technology use”.

The information age as a media concept refers to the present era in human history where information and

communication technologies (ICTs) have transformed the way people live, work and interact. This age is largely characterized by widespread use of computers, internet, and mobile devices; rapid growth of digital information and data and increased reliance on technology for communication, commerce and innovation. On the other hand, the information society phenomena, is the new societal framework, where information and knowledge are the primary drivers of economic, social and cultural development. In an Information-driven society, information and knowledge are valued and managed as valuable resources, ICTs are used to create, disseminate and utilise information for the betterment of society; while education, innovation and entrepreneurship are enhanced through technologies to promote knowledge-based society. Wogu, (2009,p.89) clearly posited that “It has been argued that there is an ongoing revolutionary social transition as a result of new communication technology. Information communication revolution and information society has become part of our lexicon as testimony of the type of society in which we live”.

Statement of Problem

The new media technologies no doubt have changed, if not disrupted in significant ways, the way people interact, work and live. Wogu (2009) citing Van Dijk (1999) believes that “modern society is in a process is in a process of becoming a network society, a form of society increasingly organising relationship in media networks which are gradually replacing or complementing the social networks of face to face communication”. This development even though with the disruptions that came with it has equally necessitated a basket of opportunities for enterprising and innovative young people all

over the world, with Nigeria not being an exception.

This study was necessitated by the need of youths in Nigeria to harness the opportunities presented by new media technology for skills acquisition and personal development. It has been said years ago that youths are the engine that drives the wheels of societal development. Therefore, the Nigerian youth must fully embrace the opportunities provided by the new digital age. Obviously, youths are the future hope of a nation. It has been argued in several fora that any development plan without the full participation of youths is like building castles in the air. The input of youths in any society cannot be ruled out in propelling and fostering national and economic development, the To give credence to this position, Tertsegba (2010:123) noted that “the old generation passes on the baton to the waiting new team – the youths. The young ones have dreams, passions and hopes. They are impatient and dynamic. Their bubbling enthusiasm has to be utilised”. As it is, “there is an urgent need to bring back professionals to create a knowledgeable work force with practical skills demanded by modern employers of labour. “(Onu,2007).

The study will look at the steadily evolving concepts of new media technologies, the level of awareness of its existence among the youths, to what extent the Delta State youths have adopted and applied them in improving personal growth efforts, the challenges that may have hindered the widespread utilisation of these immense opportunities brought about by these technologies and of course, proffering possible solutions to these perceived problems.

Objectives of Study.

In today’s world, technology is seen as the *in thing*. “In essence, society is technology-pushed, not demand-pushed. Technology determines the development of social structures and cultural values. Technology patterns social organisation”. (Ukonu, 2022,p.109). The focus of study is to determine and assess the impact of new media technologies on skill acquisition and development among Nigeria youths with emphasis on Delta state youths.

Therefore, the objectives of the study shall include:

- a. To clarify what new media technologies means.
- b. To make youths understand the concept new media technologies.
- c. To highlight the place of technologies in both youth development.
- d. To encourage the youths to fully explore the massive opportunities offered by new media technologies.
- e. To encourage youths to acquire practical life changing skills and knowledge through new media platforms.
- f. To illuminate current and future projection of opportunities inherent in new media technologies utilisation by youths.

Research Questions

This study will be anchored on the following research questions:

1. Have you ever heard about the term ‘new media technologies’?
2. What does new media technologies mean to you?
3. Can new media technologies contribute to youth skill acquisition and personal development?

4. Have you explored the new media for opportunities to learn new skills and acquire new knowledge?
5. What skills/knowledge have you acquired through exposure to new media platforms?
6. What challenges are associated with acquisition of skills via new media platforms?

Scope of Study

. This study focuses on how the youths can leverage on new media technologies for skills acquisition and personal development, with focus on Asaba urban area in Delta State. Due to limitation of time and resources, the study was limited to Delta State, with focus on Asaba urban area and environs. It is the believe of this researcher that further studies will widen the scope.

Conceptualisation of Terms

For clarification purposes, it is important that terms and concepts that form the core of this paper are defined and explained in the context they will be used.

New media. New media refers to open media platforms or channels that readily available and accessible to all. Another name for new media is *social media*. As Ukonu (2022,p.144) noted, “Social media as a mass communication platform has come to stay and has become relevant today’s society due to many affordances that come with it...Social media principally allow people to easily and simply create their own online page or profile as well as to construct and display an online network of contacts”.

New media technologies. New media technologies are those digital media platforms that are powered and sustained by technologies. Ukonu (2022) asserted that new media technologies include satellite services, internet including its multimedia

capabilities, media convergence, fiber optics, mobile telephony, social media, among others”.

Skills. Skills are acquired knowledge, usually learnt through a learning process that equips an individual to earn a living. Encarta World English Dictionary defined skill as “The ability to do something well, usually gained through experience and training”.

Development. Development simply means improvement and advancement in all aspects of human life, including advancement in the society, environment and the economy. For this paper we will adopt the definition of Walter Rodney (1972,p.9). He viewed development from the prism of the human-person development. To him, development at the level of the individual implies “increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self discipline, responsibility and natural well-being.”

Youths. According to Otagburuagu, Unaegbu and Omenma (2010,p.1), the term youths “denotes the period from the beginning of puberty to maturity”. They went further to define the youthful period as “the time when individuals begin to function independently of their parents”. (Otagburuagu et al, 2010:1).

Literature Overview

The Rise of New Media Technologies

When Canadian sociologist and media scholar, Marshal McLuhan, stated more than 65 years ago, that the world would soon become a *global village*, he didn’t take the computer into cognisance. He probably had television and of course, radio in mind, when he made the assertion. But today, if McLuhan were to be still alive, he will be genuinely surprised that it was neither the television nor the radio

that eventually turned the world into a global village but the internet, powered by the computer. By global village, we mean a situation where the whole world will be reduced to a single entity to the extent that you can have access to the whole world and be informed of events all over the world as they happen while in the comfort of your office, bedroom or sitting room. (Akaeze, 2022:130).

The history of Information Communication Technology otherwise referred to as ICT is tied to the emergence of computer technology. In the same vein, massive development of computer technology is connected to the arrival of the internet while the internet derived its momentum from the development of orbital satellites. In August 1960, the first satellite called ECHO was launched into space by Americans. Two years later, another satellite codenamed *Telstar* was launched. *Telstar* was the first satellite to transmit black and white TV signals. (Agba, 2001, p.36). Since then, satellites have become part of the earth's outer space architecture. The development of the internet came about at the height of the Cold war. In combat readiness, the United States Department of Defense set up the Advanced Research Project Agency (ARPA Project). The task before the project is to carry out an experiment in computer networking. "The Machines were to be connected in a way that should a part of the network be damaged, say in a nuclear strike, the surviving parts would still remain linked so that data would continue travelling toward the intended destination....The idea caught the attention of American universities' professors who needed to communicate with colleagues in other universities, a software was developed that made it possible for

different computer's systems and small networks to connect with each other. Boom! The Internet has begun (Agba, 2001,p.58). The internet has had a drastic impact on global culture and commerce. These include the rise of instant messaging like *e-mail* and emergence of global *e-commerce* platforms.

To say that we are living in a world being powered by the information communication technology phenomenon is saying the obvious. Every day, the influence of computers on nearly all aspects of human endeavour keeps expanding at an alarming rate. To some people, the world is gradually becoming digitalised. (Akaeze, 2022,p.130). As Agba (2001,p.47) noted, "the marriage of computers and telecommunication is the material force in the new technology of communication".

It is ICT that enabled the emergence of new media or rather, social media. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010,p.61) defines social media as "A group of internet based application that build on the ideological and technological foundation Web 2.0 and allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content". Web 2.0. provides the wheels upon which the social media rotates. In an article titled *Social Media*, Odii (2013, p.162) highlighted that "social media are simply internet based interactive platforms through which people can create and exchange information in a participatory manner on a real time basis. He added that "social media are online democratic and participatory communication channels that allow uninhibited exchange of information and documents among connected persons".

The new media technology was necessitated by Web 2.0. This Internet application gained prominence through Tim O'Reilly in 2024. (Odii, 2013). The concept behind the technology enabled software developers and Internet users to start utilising the World Wide Web in a ways that allowed content and applications to be continuously modified by all users in participatory and collaborative manner. While giving credence to the enormous potentials of the social media, Kanu (2024,p.3) asserted that "Social media has revolutionized global connectivity and information sharing. It has revolutionized how people interact and share information, bringing people from all over the world closer together " . Social media has revolutionized global connectivity and information sharing. It has revolutionized how people interact and share information, bringing people from all over the world closer together".

Some of the most popular social media platforms powered by new media technologies include the following:

1. *Linkedin*. This platform was created by in 2003 by Reid Hoffman, Allen Blue, Jean-Luc Vaillant and others. In its' mission statement, Linkedin stated that its goal is to "Connect the world professionals to make them more productive and successful" It has 930 million users in 2023. Bill Gate 's Microsoft acquired Linkedin in 2016 for \$26.2 million. ((Linkedin, 2012).
2. *MySpace*. This social network was founded by Tom Anderson in 2003. It allows users to build profiles for themselves, for their brands and connecting with fans and users. Viant Technologies LLC took over MySpace in 2019 from

Meredith Corporation in an undisclosed amount.

3. *Facebook*. This is arguably the most popular and used new media platform in the world. It was started by Mark Zuckerberg, Eduardo Saverin, Andrew McCollum and others in 2004 while they were students at Harvard University. It is open to every member of the public above 13 years of age. In 2024, Facebook has more than 3 billion monthly users and more than 2 billion daily users. It is available in over 700 world languages. Facebook mission is to make the world more open and connected. People use Facebook to find, make and reconnect with old friends; and to share information ideas and images with friends and relatives. Facebook is currently owned by Meta Platforms, owned by Zuckerberg and his associates. Meta is currently worth \$1.27 trillion.

4. *X*. Formally Twitter. This social media platform was founded by Jack Dorsey, Evan Williams and Biz Stone in 2006. It is a real time communication network for shearing instant messages. X messages must not be more 140 characters. This shortness of message made it is popular among high profile personalities and global celebrities. Technology billionaire Elon Musk, acquired Twitter in March 2025 in a deal worth \$113 billion and renamed it X.
5. *WhatsApp*. This social media platform was founded in 2009 by Brian Action and Jan Koum. WhatsApp is a widely used messaging application. It is used to share texts, pictures and video. Its mission is to provide a simple, secure and reliable messaging service that allows people to communicate with friends and families regardless of location. Mark Zuckerbefg Technology Group – Meta, in 2014 bought over WhatsApp for \$19 billion.

6. *YouTube*. This is social media platform that allows users to create and share videos. Users can also create their own YouTube channels, encourage people to subscribe to their channels and engage them with contents. YouTube was founded in 2005 by Chad Hurley, Steve Chen and Jawed Karim. In November 2006, Google Parent Company-Alphabet Incorporated, acquired YouTube for \$1.65 billion.
7. *Instagram*. Instagram is social media platform that allow users to share videos, pictures and stories. It allows users to connect with people, discover new friends, engage and share ideas. It was founded in 2010 by Kevin System and Mike Krieger. Meta took over Instagram in 2012 in a deal worth \$1billion. Its mission statement is capture and share the world ' s moments.

(Source: With additional information from the websites of the social media platforms).

Technology and National Development

Information and Communication Technology, simply referred to as ICT, is the new common global language. ICT is the common currency of the new age. For a nation and its citizens not to be in tune with the rapid developments in ICT, is like living in a cave in a remote jungle without knowing that the rest of the world has moved to space. For this reason government all over the world has enacted national policies for the development of technologies for the national development. In 2001, the Federal government of Nigeria rolled out the Nigerian Information Communication Policy. The goal of the policy is the development of innovative policies that will fast-track the development of ICT based resources in the country. Youths' development and enhanced national security

were at the heart policy. In 2007 and in a bold effort to give substance to the policy, the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) was established, while the policy framework under which it was established was changed from *Nigeria Information Communication Policy* to National Information and Communication Technology Policy.

The national ICT policy main thrust is to "Create a conducive environment for the rapid expansion of ICT networks and services that are accessible to all at reasonable costs and for the transformation of Nigeria into a knowledge based economy". (National ICT Policy Draft, 2012). For a developing country like Nigeria, ICT development is vital in its drive towards industrialisation and technological advancement. As Anie (2011) pointed out, ICT is the backbone of business activity. Productivity, trade and social development. Effective implementation of ICT policies is a precondition to the emergence of a strong market economy"

The policy recognised the private sector, driven by youthful Nigerians as the major factor in the development of country's IT sector. Olatokun (2006) cited by Ukonu (2022) outlined the 15 critical areas of national development that the policy will address. They include human resources development especially the youths, infrastructure development, improved public governance, agriculture development, health improvement, development of trade and commerce, improvement of arts, culture and tourism, private sector partnership, improved national security among other items.

New Media Technology and Youths Development in Nigeria

Youths are the most active segment of any given population. In most African

countries including Nigeria, youths constitutes the highest segment of the population. Youthful age is that period between adolescence and adulthood. Youths are the drivers of any society. Social innovation and change starts with the youths. Ekwueme (2013) quoting Jega (2012) defined youths as “A special group of people with strong stamina and passion for realizing certain set goals and objectives”. Youths are overwhelmingly the largest segment of Nigerian population. Going by population dynamics, youths constitute the largest percentage of the population. They represent more than 60% of the population. Out of this number, more than 70% are said to be underemployed and unemployed. As Ibrahim (2002) noted, “Nigeria has a youthful population of about 70% which means 117 million out 170 million people. Out of this figure, more than seventy percent of youths are said to be unemployed or underemployed. The danger of unemployment and idleness are very prominent as majority of youths are roaming the streets in search of jobs in order to survive and where there are no jobs, some of youths out of frustration, take to social vices and life of crime. The place of youths in any society cannot be undermined. However, despite the potential of youths in propelling and fostering social and economic innovation in societies, they remain mostly despised, neglected and underutilized in Nigeria.

Being fully conscious of the place of youths in national development, the framers of the National ICT Policy had youths the mind when they were drafting the policy. As Ekwueme (2013) pointed out as part of the national ICT policy framework in recognizing the peculiar roles of the youths in sustainable national development, “appropriate measures should be put in place to empower and engage them through initiatives that facilitates access to affordable

ICT”. Parts of the ICT policy as Omanwa (2013) further noted, reads” 1. To leverage ICT in addressing youth specific development and orientation issues. 2. To ensure the youths use ICT responsibly and for specific purposes.

Youths are the main drivers of the ICT revolution all over the world. They are the greatest consumers of ICT contents and creators of ICT based-businesses. (Ekwueme, 2013). Since national development is about the general sustainable improvement of the lives of citizens and their environments, youths therefore becomes critical stakeholders in national development schemes and policies. “Given its size, energy, passion and creativity, this demographic group should be a critical resource for economic growth, sustainable development and national transformation Nigeria. Therefore, the role of youths in national development is sacrosanct in the whole development aspiration of any society”. (Jega, 2012) & (Ministry of Youths Development, 2011).

In its efforts to promote youths’ development through ICT skills acquisition, the Delta State government in February 2025 launched **Techpreneurship**. Techpreneurship is an ICT based programme targeted at youth’s development. The project is managed by Delta State’s Special Adviser to the governor on Entrepreneurship Development, Dr. Donald Peterson. Parts of the programme objectives read that “In a generation where education is regarded as a *scam*, young individuals require a way of learning that resonates with their psyche, a combination of digital and personal development that harnesses their energy positively and qualifies them for global export”. (Techpreneurship Policy Document, 2025). The programme provides an alternative to the extremely inquisitive young generation seeking to study the

internet and capitalize on worldwide potential for personal development and wealth creation. Courses taught under the programme include UI/UX DESIGN, Data analytics, Block chain Development, Digital marketing and Artificial intelligence. However, the major challenge remains that youth access to this technology is still far in between. Chukwurah (2016,p.112) citing a World Economic Forum Report published in 2016, noted that "Nigeria must continue to upgrade its infrastructures as well as improve its' health and primary education. Nigeria is not harnessing the latest technologies for productivity enhancements as demonstrated by its low rates of ICT penetration". There is an urgent national need for this situation to be fully addressed. Our youths must be integrated into the mainstream of the technological highway if they are to be relevant in contributing to modern state building.

Prospects of Leveraging on Technology for Youths Development

The new media has evolved a brand new world of learning built on technology. In their study, Anikeze and Okpalaibekwe (2024) asserted that "Indeed, there has been an increased emphasis on the use of digital technology to promote skills development through use of video technology across social media platforms and smart phone Apps". They went further to add that "Videoed demonstrations have tended to visually illustrate the full process, step by step, and often with some spoken information of a particular task". It therefore means that with new media, barriers to digital access are being gradually broken. Boundaries have disappeared and the world is merging into one single global community. New media technologies

provide cost effective platforms for youth skills acquisition. Opportunities presented by new media are endless and they keep evolving at a frightening pace.

Aspects of Leveraging on New Media for Youths Development.

1. *The rise digital economy.* The new endless space created by new media has engendered an innovative business space called digital economy, meaning doing business without any form of physical contact, no matter the distance between dealing parties. Ukonu 2022: 151 sees digital economy as the "Aggregate of the influences of digital adoption on the social, cultural, political and economic realities of the adopting individuals and the human society in general". Digital economy had accelerated the process of globalization and making the world a single global economy. Youths all over the world has leverage on the immense opportunities presented by new media to launch successful businesses with a global patronage..
2. *E-commerce:* Most global business, especially shopping and financial services are mostly done through the digital media. Online shopping has transformed the retail industry, offering convenience, accessibility, and new business models. *Amazon* by Jeff Bezos and *Ali baba* by Jack Ma, for instance are businesses that leveraged on new media technologies to build a global brand. Ukonu (2022,p.153) has it that "1.92 billion shopped online in 2019. Online shopping spending in Nigeria has grown from 7billion dollars 2012 to 13billion dollars by 2018. Nigeria has 126 million active internet

users”. Ahmed and Sathish (2015) and Chow (2020) in their studies as cited by Ukonu (2022) asserted that “Paypal, a Nigerian online payment channel has it that Nigeria ranked third worldwide in smart phone purchased online, after China and India. The implication is that global online shops like Amazon and Alibaba are the most visited online shops in Nigeria”. It therefore means that Nigerian youths that are innovative can build and nurture online based global brands. *Konga, Jumia, Jiji*, etc, are online market places promoted by Nigerians in their youth.

3. *Digital Entrepreneurship*: IT has enabled youth entrepreneurs to start, nurture and grow businesses online. This has helped in the creation of creating new income streams and job opportunities.
4. *Music and video streaming and shearing*. Digital video and audio has almost sent CD Plates into oblivion. New media has enabled new forms of artistic expression, such as digital art, music, and film. Creative Artistes are making good income through online streaming and viewing of their works by entertainment audience and fans. Video and audio streaming on Tiktok, Youtube, etc is fast becoming a gold mine for musicians. Gaming and entertainment shearing is popular among youths on the social media and it is a source of legitimate income. Also, Preservation of Cultural Heritage: Digital technologies have enabled the preservation and dissemination of cultural heritage, such as historical documents, images, and artifact.

5. *Connecting with business networks*. New media has redefined social relationships, enabling people to connect, share and interact globally.
6. *Digital Activism*. Social media has enabled citizens to mobilise, organise and participate in social movements, promoting social change and deepening of democracy.
7. *Citizen journalism*. Access to Information: The internet has democratized access to information, enabling people to learn, educate themselves, and make informed decisions. Virtual Communities: Online communities have formed around shared interests, creating new social networks and support systems.
8. E-Governance: IT has enabled governments and organisation to provide online services, increasing transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement.
9. *Cultural Exchange*. IT has facilitated cultural exchange, enabling people to experience and learn from different cultures worldwide.
10. *Digital skills*. Cyber security for instance, is a whole new emerging area in the ICT sector. The increased reliance on ICT has created new cyber security risks, requiring governments and organizations to develop strategies to protect its 'resources against cyber threats. Online publishing, graphics/designs, web designing, app designs, networks connectivity, digital editing, podcasting, blogging, etc, are among numerous areas youths can explore for personal skills development.

Overall, the revolutionary consequences of IT and new media on both society and youths development are

multifaceted, far-reaching, innovative and with both positive and negative impacts on various aspects of youth development.

Possible Challenges and Limitations of Accessing New Media by Youths

Despite the enormous opportunities new media platforms hold for youths, the presence of certain factors has adversely affected the effective wide spread access and utilisation of opportunities offered by new media technologies.

1. *Absence of critical infrastructures.* Infrastructural challenge is one of the major factors militating against the national development in Nigeria. Since most of the population lives in the rural areas, social amenities are non-existent in these locations. When they tend to exist, they grossly inadequate in catering to the needs of a fast growing population. Ukonu (2022) citing Olatokun (2006) noted that “The rural areas dominate the country’s population and a lot of the dwellers have little or no access to quality education facilities much less access to information communication technologies...”
2. *Low computer literacy level.* Literacy level is still very low in Nigeria. Most people live in the rural areas and they are in most cases, cut out from the mainstream of digital activities as a result of poor access to learning and training in ICTs. Low computer literacy remains a major challenge in fully harnessing the digital resources by Nigerian youths. A survey carried out in 2020 has it that only 18% of households in Nigeria have a computer. It is believed the statistics has improved

over the years. However it was also discovered that the ownership of smart phones has affected the ownership of computers. yet, low level literacy remains a national challenge. For an instance, an International Telephone Union survey revealed that Nigeria ranked 31st in the African continent with poor scores in opportunity, infrastructure and utilisation quotients.

3. *Poverty.* One of the greatest issues third world countries is elimination o poverty. Most of the population, including g the youth are financially challenged thereby limiting their access, exposure and use of new media technology resources
4. *Digital divide syndrome.* This is an imaginary line that separates technologically advanced societies from societies that low in technological development. It can be international or national. European countries are well ahead of African countries in access to media technologies while within African counties, urban dwellers who have access to digital network facilities are more advantaged than rural dwellers who may be cut off from access to media technologies
5. *The prevalence of crime and other social vices on new media.* The new media space is a fertile ground for any evil imagination to flourish and gain followership. Easy and unrestricted access to psychedelic drugs, early sex indulgence, violence, involvement in cultism and deviant bevaviours are all part of the new media culture. Some youths have met with violent death as a result to exposure to social media.

Empirical Review

According to Khalid and Muhammada (2012), skills acquisition is the ability to gain knowledge or be prepared on a particular task or work and become expert in it. Many scholars have carried out researches in youths acquiring skills in ICT and new media mastery.

Akintayo, et al., (2021) investigated *The Influence of YouTube Videos on Skills Acquisition Among Youths in Ogun State*. Results revealed that participants were highly exposed to YouTube contents through their mobile phones and other devices, and were highly aware of YouTube skills acquisition videos ($x=3.88$). However, the study found out that awareness and exposure to YouTube videos had no positive influence on skills acquisition among youths in the study. It was recommended that youths should take advantage of the opportunities available on YouTube to acquire needed skills as they download and view videos rather than spending most resources on entertainment.

Maujid and Yusif (2024), in their study titled *The influence of YouTube Videos on Learning English Language*, examined A quantitative questionnaire was distributed among 118 college students using an online Google Form. The results show that majority of participants found YouTube to be both beneficial and pleasant, indicating a positive assessment of its usefulness in learning a language. Additionally, while the students conveyed differing preferences and encounters, YouTube was universally acknowledged as an advantageous extra source to improve language skills. The findings of this study suggest that teachers can use YouTube videos to enhance their teaching strategies and promote improved language proficiency.

Nwabueze, (2023), carried a research titled *Perception of the Broadcast Media in*

Promotion of Skill Acquisition in Edo state. The study concluded that the broadcast media promotes skill acquisition among youths. Respondents acknowledge this fact. The study concluded with the suggestion that the broadcast media should improve on the presentation of programmes that encourages skills acquisition among youths

Sushma et al., (2019) conducted a study on *Impact of Social Media on Youth*. Results revealed that 20% of the respondents said that they have benefited from social media and another 20% of the respondents got benefits of staying connected with friends through social media, 28% of the respondents get benefits like entertainment and fun, 18% of the respondents got benefits like in quest of job opportunities.

Nkem and Ifeoma (2020) conducted a study on *Social Media and Youth Empowerment: An Empirical Inquiry*. The result revealed that youths' awareness on the empowerment potential of social media is high, while indicating that majority (65.7%) of the youths are attracted by social media by its leisure appeal and they use it for mainly chatting, connecting friends and leisure compared to 34.3% of youths who use it for learning, empowerment and opportunities. It is recommended that youths be mentored on the empowerment potentials of social media by the successful leaders in the industry.

Literature Gap. Several literatures available focused on youth empowerment schemes by either government or organisations. Thus, an important goal of this study was to investigate in detail and give clearer picture on how youths on their own can improve their own personal development by leveraging on the wide ranging opportunities made available by new media technologies. The study is therefore determined to fill in the gap in the available

literature on youth development through skills acquisition on new media by exploring the immense potential new media as a catalyst for youth development in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

Since this work is based on the impact new media technology on youth skills acquisition and personal development, it becomes imperative that a technology-themed theory becomes ideal for the work. In this regard, this paper will be anchored on Technological Determinism Theory. This media theory was developed from the works of Harold Innis (1950); Marshall McLuhan (1962) and other media scholars. Further works by Schement and Curtis (1995) and Heyer (2003) as cited by Wogu (2009) contributed to the theory of media determinism. When Marshall McLuhan coined the famous statement, “the medium is the message”, he startled the world by implying that the message carrier is the real message not the content. This postulation gave rise to media determinism theory, which will give birth to technological determinism theory. McLuhan augured his position when he stated that “That the effects of technology do not occur at the level of opinions or concepts, but alters sense ratios and patterns of perceptions steadily and without resistance”. (Severin and Tankard, 1988:315).

Technological determinism theory holds that technological advancements drive social, economic and cultural change. This perspective argues that technology is the primary force behind social, economic and cultural evolution; and that it further shapes our relationships, institutions and values. Technological determinism holds that technology is the primary driver of social change. Thus the level of change and development within a given society is determined by the quantity and quality of

technology at its disposal. Wogu (2009,p.79) in appraising technology determinism theory averred that “That the dominant media technology of any age is linked with key features of society..”. Key assumptions of technology determinism as a theory include the following:

1. Technology as the primary driver of social change: Technological determinism assumes that technological advancements are the main force behind social and cultural Revolution.
2. Technology shapes society: This perspective argues that technology has a direct impact on social structures, institutions, and human behavior.

Typical examples of Technological Determinism include the printing press, the computer revolution, the internet, the rise of Artificial Intelligence. The invention of the printing press for instance is often cited as an example of technological determinism, as it revolutionized communication and knowledge dissemination. The internet on its own has facilitated the widespread, fast and easy shearing of information, has had a profound impact on modern societies, transforming the way we communicate, work and access information.

Methodology

The study focused on the impact of new media technology on skill acquisition and development among youths resident in Delta State. Three LGAs were selected, one each from the three senatorial districts of the state. Oshimili South, Isoko North and Warri South LGAs. The LGA headquarters of the selected LGAs were chosen. They are Asaba, Ozoro and Warri. These three communities have a huge youth-based population. A quantitative survey method was adopted. This includes literature and empirical reviews, administering of

questionnaires on youths and critical stake holders, interviews and discussions with relevant members of the population. Validity of research instruments were put to test in a pre-study among students of Dennis Osadebay University, Asaba. The questionnaire contained open and close ended questions. Chi-square and correlation were used in the analysis of findings.

Table 1. Estimated population of selected towns

Communi ty	LGA	Stat e	Populati on
Asaba	Oshimi li South LGA	Delt a Stat e	500,000
Ozoro	Isoko North LGA	Delt a Stat e	350,000
Warri	Warri South LGA	Delt a Stat e	450,000

(Source: Population estimates from National Bureau of Statistics, 2024).

In arriving at the population of study, a combination of quota and judgmental sampling techniques were adopted. In quota sampling method, the population will be drawn from the youth segment of the population. In judgmental sampling technique, a researcher selects the population based on their suitability to the research. (Oguonu & Anugwom, 2023,p.69). Asaba and two other towns - Ozoro and Warri. 40 were taken as respondents for each town. That is a total of 120 respondents. Only youths between the ages of 18 and 45 years were sampled in the study. Also, the population was narrowed down to youths to youths who are exposed

to new media technologies. All respondents were resident in the communities studied.

Table 2. Distribution of respondents.

S/N	Town	Sample size	Percentage %
1.	Asaba	40	33%
2.	Ozoro	40	33%
3.	Warri	40	33%
	Total	120	100%

(Source, field work by the researcher, 2005).

Bio Data of Respondents

Sex: Male – 97(80.84%); Female – 23 (19.16%). Ages: 18-25 - 28; 26 to 35-62 ; 36 to 45 – 30.

Education: Graduates/HND - 20; OND/NCE-25; School certificate-20 ; Undergraduates-45 ; Senior secondary school students – 10. Marital status. Married - 20; Single-100.

Return rate of questionnaire. Out of the 120 total questionnaires shared, all were filled and returned on the spot of administering. That is a 100% return rate. That shows the topicality and engaging nature of the research subject.

Data Presentation and Analysis

From the research questions, the following data were generated.

Q1. Have you ever heard about the term 'new media technologies'?

All the respondents (120; 100%) answered in the affirmative to the question. It means all of the respondents are well aware of new media technologies.

Q2 and Table 3. What does new media technologies mean to you?

Variables	Responses	Percentage
Medium for entertainment	22	18.3%
A place to connect with family and friends	28	23.3%
A place for updates on social news trending events	25	20.8%
A place for new business contacts and new ideas	45	37.5%
Total	120	100%

(Source, field work by the researcher, 2005).

From Table 3 above 22 (18.3%) of the respondents answered that social media is place where they entertain themselves. 28 (23.33%) of the respondents said that they connect with friends and families on social media. 25 (20.8%) are of the opinion that social media is where they get updates on trending issues and news. However, 45 (37.5%) of the respondents are of the opinion that new media is a place to explore for innovative business ideas and new contacts who are most likely to facilitate new ideas.

Q3 and Table 4. Can new media technologies contribute to youth skill acquisition and personal development?

Variables	Responses	Percentage
Yes	102	85%
No	10	8.3%
Don't know	8	6.6%
Total	120	100%

(Source, field work by the researcher, 2005).

As Table 4 showed, 102 (85%) agreed that new media technologies can contribute to youth skill acquisition and personal development. 10 (8.3%) answered in the negative while 8 (6.6%) were undecided on the social media being a place to learn new skills.

Q4 and Table 5. Have you explored the new media for opportunities to learn new skills and acquire new knowledge?

Variables	Responses	Percentage
Yes	86	71.6%
No	34	28.3%
Total	120	100%

(Source, field work by the researcher, 2005).

From Table 5, it can easily be deduced that 86 (71.6%) of the respondents agreed that they have explored the new media technologies to acquire in order to acquire new skills while 34 (28.3%) replied that they have not bothered to explore the social media to learn new skills nor to gain new knowledge.

Q5 and Table 6. What skills/knowledge have you acquired through exposure to new media platforms?

Variables	Responses	Percentage
Creating a YouTube channel	29	24.1%%
Online marketing	16	13.3%
Graphics and CAD designs	15	12.5%
Forex and crypto currency trading	14	11.6%
Catering and confectionaries	12	10%

Others (learning a new foreign language, on education, skit making, video editing, etc.	8	6.6%
No skill learnt	26	21.6%
Total	120	100%

(Source, field work by the researcher, 2005).

As the Table 6 indicated, 29 (24.1%) of the respondents are youtubers with followers on their channels. A whopping 26 (21.6%) has learnt no skill and are not interested to learn any. 16 (13.3%) of the respondents are into online marketing. 14 (11.6%) learnt forex and crypto currency trading. 12 (10%) have learnt catering and baking of confectioneries while 8 (6.6%) have learnt second language, registered for online education, make skits and digital video editing.

Q6 and Table 7. *What challenges are associated with the skills acquisition via new media platforms?*

Variables	No of responses	Percentage
Lack of funding to pay for training	23	19.1%
Need for higher grade of gadgets. (laptops and mobile devices).	32	26.6%
Busy with other things	22	18.3%
Lack of time	18	15%
Don't need any	5	4.1%

training		
Power outages	20	16.6
Total	120	100%

(Source, field work by the researcher, 2005).

From Table 7 above addressed the possible challenges faced by youths in their quest to harness opportunities presented by new media technologies. 32 (26.6%) of the respondents cited the need for improved technological devices like high grade mobile phones and laptops. Most of the respondents don't have a laptop. They rely mostly on mobile phones in accessing the internet. 23 (19.1% and 22 (18.3%) of the respondents respectively cited lack of funding to pay training fees and *busy with other things* as their limitations in exploring new media for personal development. 20 (16.6%) said their challenge is constant power outages. 18 (15%) sated that lack of time is their major challenge. 5 (4.1%) of the respondents said they don't need any training.

Discussion of Findings

From Table 3 above 22 (18.3%) of the respondents answered that social media is place where they entertain themselves. 28 (23.33%) of the respondents said that they connect with friends and families on social media. 25 (20.8%) are of the opinion that social media is where they get updates on trending issues and news. However, 45 (37.5%) of the respondents are of the opinion that new media is a place to explore for innovative business ideas and new contacts who are most likely to facilitate new ideas. This shows that a high percentage of youths are willing to explore the new media for business ideas and personal development. This is an interesting an finding.

As Table 4 showed, 102 (85%) of the respondents agreed that new media technologies can contribute to youth skill acquisition and personal development. 10 (8.3%) answered in the negative while 8 (6.6%) were undecided on the social media being a place to learn new skills. Findings showed the larger segment of the respondents-102 (85%) agreed that new media technologies have the potentials to contribute to youth development yet they are making use of it. This is an interesting finding.

Findings also showed that 86 (71.6%) of the respondents agreed that they have tried explored the new media technologies to acquire in order to acquire new skills while 34 (28.3%) replied that they have not bothered to explore the social media to learn new skills no to gain new knowledge.

On the actual practical utilisation of new media for skill acquisition and personal development, 29 (24.1%) of the respondents are youtubers with followers on their respective channels. 16 (13.3%) of the respondents are into online marketing. 14 (11.6%) learnt forex and crypto currency trading. 12 (10%) have learnt catering and baking of confectioneries. 8 (6.6%) have learnt second language, registered for online education, make skits and into digital video editing. Findings showed that 26 (21.6%) of the respondents have learnt no skill whatsoever and are not interested to learn any. This segment of the respondents from all intent are fully engaged in online fraudulent activities because they are active on new media.

On the possible challenges faced by youths in their quest to harness opportunities presented by new media technologies. 32 (26.6%) of the respondents cited the need for improved technological devices like high

grade mobile phones and laptops. Most of the respondents don't have a laptop, they rely mostly on mobile phones in accessing the internet. 23 (19.1%) and 22 (18.3%) of the respondents respectively cited lack of funding to pay training fees and *busy with other things* as their limitations in exploring new media for personal development. 20 (16.6%) said their challenge is constant power outages. 18 (15%) stated that lack of time is their major challenge. 5 (4.1%) of the respondents said they don't need any training.

Conclusion

Based on the study, it can be safely concluded that technology is the driver of the new age while youths are the wheels on which modern society revolves. It therefore means that a pragmatic fusion of youths and technology skills will bring about sustainable capacity development, wealth creation and expanded opportunities for youths. The study strongly recommends that as modern-day youths navigate through the complexities of an ICT-based society, digital skills are vital for developing new ideas, generating new opportunities, thereby equipping youths for lives in digitally-driven world.

To this end, there is the need to enlighten the youths on the usefulness of new media in skills acquisition and personal development. This will in effect trigger a sustainable youths development initiative, which will help curtail the problem of youth unemployment and the issue of social vices associated with youth unemployment. As the study found out, YouTube and Facebook had significant impact on youths accessing of credit facilities for innovative business startup.

Recommendations

Based on extent findings, this study will recommend the following:

- a. ICT development to be part of national education policy.
- b. ICT and new media technologies should be included in youths targeted development policies
- c. Private organisation and government should highlight the immense importance of technologies in youth development programmes.
- d. Youths at all levels should be encouraged to fully embrace innovative training opportunities offered by new media technologies
- e. Government to open ICT parks and technology incubation centers in both urban and rural communities.

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