

Social Media Reportage of Road Infrastructure and Government Interventions in Road Construction and Maintenance in South-East Nigeria

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Citation: Njoku I U. and Orji-Egwu A. (2022) Social Media Reportage of Road Infrastructure and Government Interventions in Road Construction and Maintenance in South-East Nigeria, International Journal of Civil Engineering, Construction and Estate Management, Vol.10, No.2, pp.125-146

ABSTRACT: *The emergence of social media has ushered in a new era of information dissemination which allows everybody the opportunity to participate and contribute opinions and views on public issues. Social media is Internet-based software and interfaces that allow individuals to interact with one another, exchange details about their lives such as biographical data, professional information, personal photos and up-to-the minute thoughts. Just as the conventional traditional media like newspaper, radio and television are used to communicate development issues, social media has also become a tool for development communication. This study investigated role of social media in enhancing the development of road infrastructure in South East Nigeria. The study employed critical literature review method. It was anchored on Development Media Theory. Two research questions guided the investigation. Findings show that social media reportage makes the government aware of the state of roads in South East Nigeria, this makes the government to intervene in the repair of bad roads in South East Nigeria. The paper recommends that users of social media should intensify reports on the state of bad roads in South East Nigeria in order to draw more government attention; social media users should balance their reports of bad roads and good roads to encourage the government to do more.*

KEYWORDS: development, social media, infrastructure, road, digital media, perspective; communication.

INTRODUCTION

Communication is fundamental in engineering the spate of development in any society. Communication is a two-way process where messages flow both ways. Communication also refers to the use of different forms of media, such as print, electronic media (radio, television), new media etc. These media are used as an empowerment tool, i.e. they are used as tools to facilitate and encourage the participation of people in developmental activities (Choudhur, 2011). They are used for more than just passing on information from one person to another.

Social media are often used as tools to facilitate the participation of people in developmental activities (Choudhur, 2011). Such form of communication is known as development communication or Dev.Com for short, a term which refers to the uses to which communication are put in order to further development.

The media play important role in development communication through circulation of knowledge, providing forum for discussion of issues, teach ideas, skills for a better life and create a base of consensus for stability of the state, and social media is key in the present day development push. In this era of digital communication, social media are readily available for reporting issues of development and facilitating the processes of development from ideation to the completion of any development project. Social media comprise platforms to create and exchange user-generated content (Akashraj & Pushpa, 2014). Sometimes social media are called consumer-generated media (CGM). Social media are different from traditional media, such as newspaper, books and television, in that almost anyone can publish and access information inexpensively using social media. But social media and traditional media are not absolutely distinct. For example, major news channels have official accounts on Twitter and Facebook (Akashraj & Pushpa, 2014).

Social media are used to perform different forms of functions including creating identity, conversations, sharing, presence, relationships, reputation and groups. Different forms of social media have different points of focus. For example, social media platforms such as Facebook, MySpace, WhatsApp Twitter, etc. mostly care about sharing, comments and reputation. Social networking service (SNS) is a set of online sites and applications, which at least consist of three parts: users, social links, and interactive communications. In fact, SNS is a subset of social media, which include the social network. On SNS, communication is interactive. The user's major motivations could be recording one's daily life, providing commentary and opinions, expressing feeling and emotion, demonstrating ideas via text and keeping community.

In the era of digital media and information sharing that provides opportunity for every literate member of the community and even to some extent the illiterate class to say something, it is very important for the media to be a partner in national missions (Kalam, 2006). The media should highlight the positive aspects and provide solutions to difficult aspects through nationwide consultations.

Digital society started two thousand years ago and as it continued to develop, we are increasingly connected; geographical and temporal barriers are becoming smaller due to social media and Web 2.0 tools (Machado, 2022). Since its evolution, new technologies have been transforming communication into the context of the knowledge society (Onyejelem, Ude-Akpeh & Uduma, 2015). The use of social networks has been increasing over the years. The meaning of "internet 2.0", or "web 2.0" is linked not only to the internet as a system of publications and online database, but as a support for the structuring of social media networks (Machado, 2022). Social media enabled by the internet allows collaboration and collective construction by the people and groups.

Social media comprise platforms to create and exchange user-generated content. Sometimes social media are called consumer-generated media (CGM) (Akashraj & Pushpa, 2014). Social media are different from traditional media, such as newspaper, books and television, in that almost anyone can publish and access information inexpensively using social media (Akashraj & Pushpa, 2014). Social media permit interactive communication where the user's major motivations could be recording one's daily life, providing commentary and opinions, expressing feeling and emotion, demonstrating ideas via text and keeping community. In terms of social relations, they might reflect the social network of persons in real life, build new social connections based upon interests and activities or both. For user-generated contents, they provide an easy way to create, share, rank and exchange information (Akashraj & Pushpa, 2014). These features of social media have made it possible for the users to use the various platforms to generate and share information on the state of the nation ranging from insecurity to development issues. Social media networks are built to allow social interaction and information sharing in various formats: photos, messages, icons, and more (Machado, 2022).

The growth of any Nation is basically centred on its developmental strides and policies. Conversely, development cannot happen in isolation whether at a micro or macro level, so there is need for a strong tool to connect people instantly so that the knowledge transfer is never ending and instant (Akashraj & Pushpa, 2014). Social media conveys messages on issues of development such as good governance, health, poverty reduction, infrastructural development, socio-economic and cultural development, and environmental protection amongst others. Social Media is a democratic tool that enables the citizens to demand greater accountability and gradually changes the relationship between the government and its citizens. In support of this view, Kalam (2006) as cited in Akashraj and Pushpa (2014) opine that it is important for the media to be a partner in national missions. They should highlight the positive aspects and provide solutions to difficult aspects through nationwide consultations.

Nigeria and indeed the South Eastern region of the country is confronted with various developmental challenges and issues despite the abundant human and material resources that nature has endowed the country with and other significant global development assistance from known agencies and governments support that comes readily handy for the country from time to time. Yet the nation as well as the Eastern Region has failed to deliver development to its citizens as each of the states in these region is grappling with one developmental issue or the other in significant dimensions. Nigeria's infrastructure gap may increase with continued insecurity, corruption and all other issues bedeviling the country and the various regions in the country, South-East inclusive with its peculiar challenges.

Road infrastructure is one basic and critical factor that shapes the face of development in every economy as good road networks provides access to employment, social, health, and education services which are vital to any development agenda. A journey through the high way and major roads in Nigeria, particularly the South-East reveals that the road infrastructure is in great disrepair.

The excess attention by the media paid to authorities and the people in power makes infrastructural reportage difficult as most report only what their pay masters like, thereby flooding the social media with fake ad false news of infrastructural development. Social media is a major tool for social bonding in nation building and national integration as it offers great opportunities to the citizens to express their opinions on issues of national importance such as issues bordering on development and security.

Development does not happen in isolation, it is the use of concerted communication approaches and patterns consistent with developmental ideologies, needs and aspirations of the people especially the citizenry to actualise set objectives of development which communication is key and central for any meaningful development. Modern day communication has therefore metamorphosed from one stage to the other before the trending day social media, this continuous metamorphosis was what scholars named the communication stages that has brought us to the era of social media.

Social media is increasingly adopted by companies and studied by scholars as well. However, there is a dearth of research on social media in project management. The published studies combining social media and project management have focused on topics such as improved project learning through social media (Rosa, Chaves, Oliveira & Pedron, 2016; Winter & Chaves, 2017), better intra-project communication or collaboration through social media (Kanagarajoo, Fulford & Standing, 2019; Zhang, Fulford & Standing, 2018), and social media as a platform for branding (Ninan, Clegg & Mahalingam, 2019) or managing external stakeholders (Ninan, Mahalingam, Clegg, & Sankaran, 2020) in megaprojects. Although the number of studies is still low, the combined message of this early research seems to indicate several possibilities for utilising social media in project management (Hysa & Spalek, 2019). In contrast to project management, social media has received more scholarly attention in the fields of general management, especially in marketing and sales. This is illustrated by a few review articles published on the topic (Salo, 2017). Electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) has more reach and influence than traditional word of mouth (Salo, 2017). In other words, social media enables the general public to share opinions about products, firms and services quickly and easily. In a similar vein, customers use social media as a source for information when making purchasing decisions (Erkan and Evans, 2018) and, consequently, companies invest more and more on strategic marketing in social media (Salo, 2017).

The rationale behind this study is the broader application of social media in influencing government interventions in road projects management. Man must of necessity initiate, articulate and execute pragmatic moves to achieve sustainable, physical, infrastructural and human development (Nwosu, 2007). It is against this background that this study investigates social media and reportage of development roads infrastructure in South-East Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem.

The advent of the Social media occasioned by the revolution in information communication technology has made the generation and dissemination of information easier and faster than ever before. This facilitated the spread of information on every aspect of development across the globe, Nigeria and of course the South- East is not an exception.

Surprisingly, the rate at which social media reportage has focused on other issues such as elections, governance, security, religion, marriage, divorce, friendship, building of online relationships, economic performance, politics, celebrity entertainment and news, trolling and cyber stalking cyber bullying, sexting, gossip blogs, and all other trivial issues kept flooding the social media space without recourse to the reportage of infrastructure development.

More worrisome is the lack of interest by scholars in domiciling their researches in this area, despite the critical position which road networks occupy in the development agenda in the South- East. The researcher found out that other studies (e.g. Oji and Bebeninibo, 2021; Nsude and Onwe, 2017; Tolu and Abe, 2017; Ekeli &Enobakhare, 2013). From the avalanche of studies available there is no specific study on social media reportage of the state of roads infrastructure in South East Nigeria. The problem of this study, therefore, is to bridge this gap in knowledge.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of the study is to review the impact of social media reportage on the state of roads infrastructure in South-East Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

1. find out the role of social media in enhancing the development of roads infrastructure in South East Nigeria.
2. identify the impacts of social media reportage on the state of roads infrastructure in South East Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. What are the role of social media in enhancing the development of roads infrastructure in South East Nigeria?
2. What are the impacts of social media reportage on the development of roads infrastructure in South East Nigeria?

METHOD

The paper adopted critical literature review approach to examine studies on social media reportage of road infrastructure in South East Nigeria. This method provided an opportunity for the study to evaluate state of the art literature on the subject matter and from the insight gained, we drew conclusion on the actual attention social media users give to the reportage of the state of roads in South East Nigeria. It also allowed for critique of the studies reviewed and through such critique, we were able to suggest how best social media users could approach development communication issues in Nigeria.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Conceptual Review

Development

Development does not have a single consensus definition. This is a fact that has been attested to by a number of scholars. According to Abuiyada, (2018) as cited in Ono, Chiaghana and Okunna, 2020, p. 444), “a multitude of meaning is attached to the idea of development; the term is complex”. It has various meanings to different people and can be explained in different contexts (Matowanyka, 2018) cited in Ono, Chiaghana & Okunna, 2020). In support of this view, Okunna (2018) states that development is a concept that has defied a precise and consensus definition by development scholars. It can be deduced from all these assertions by different scholars that there is no single definition of development. The term is defined differently according to each scholar’s view point. This point is made by Sulemana (2010) who insists that for us to understand the whole rationale behind the desire for development, we should explain development, even though there is no consensus about the meaning of the term.

National development is the ability of a country or countries to improve the social welfare of the people e.g. by providing social needs like quality education, portable water, transportation infrastructure, medical care etc. It entails a development plan that adopts a framework of inclusive growth that is sustainable, generates employment, and reduces poverty. Good governance and anti-corruption is the bedrock for any meaningful development to take place as the people’s quality of life are also improved as social cohesion, transparency, accountability in governance, strengthening the macro economy, boosting the competitiveness of our industries, facilitating infrastructure development, strengthening the financial sector, enhancing peace and security development are provided.

It is an orderly transformation of a people’s way of life; beliefs, attitudes and old ways of attaining goals in favor of more dynamic and efficient methods that enable people to take full advantage of the benefits that such aids to communication such as technology, interpersonal contacts and travels afford.

For Sulemana (2010), development could be defined as the capacity of a state to increase its human resources with the aim the aim of achieving higher outcome of production for the satisfaction of basic needs of majority of its citizens and empowering them to make demands on the government. Rabie (2016) defines development from an economic perspective as an economic concept that has positive connotations; it involves the application of certain economic and technical measure to utilize available resources to investigate economic growth and improve people’s equality of life. This definition lends credence to the view that development has positive connotations. Its sole aim is to improve people’s living conditions (Ono, Chiaghana & Okunna, 2020). However, development is not just an economic concept; it is also a human, social and political concept. This view is corroborated by Shah’s (2017) definition of development as improvement in the economic and social conditions. More

specifically, it refers to improvement in way of managing an area's natural and human resources in order to create wealth and improve people's lives.

Israel (2018) defined development as a process a process that creates growth, progress, positive change or the addition of physical, economic, environmental, social and demographic components. Development is here seen as all round advancement in life (Ono, Chiaghana & Okunna, 2020).

In the context of developing countries, development refers to developing countries working their way up the ladder of economic performance, living standards, sustainability and equality that differentiates them from so called developed countries. Greif (2006). Defined development as a complex historical process whose factors relate economically, politically, socially and culturally to influence the welfare of concerned individuals. Development is the process of formation, change and development of political and economic markets including the way in which the process transpires, it is conveyed as remedies for the shortcomings and maladies of progress and serves as a mirror of changing economic and social capacities priorities and choices. It is regarded as an organized intervention in collective affairs according to a standard of improvement. (pie terse, 2010).

Odey et al, (2020). Posits that development is the use of resources to relieve poverty and raise living standards; the means by which a traditional, low-technology society is changed into a modern high technology, with corresponding increase in incomes. This can be done through mechanization, improvement in infrastructure and financial systems and the intensification of agriculture. Benyin, et al, (2015). posits development as a predictor that determines whether a country is progressing or not. The development of a country is measured with statistical indices such as per capita (per person), gross domestic product per capita, life expectancy, the rate of illiteracy, freedom index and others. Development is critical to the sustenance of any nation. A country is classified developed when it is able to provide qualitative life for her citizenry.

Development Communication

Development communication can thus be said to be an approach to communication which provides communities with information they can use in bettering their lives (Choudhur, 2011). The term Development Communication can be divided into two terms, i.e.— Communication and Development. Here communication refers to the use of different types and media in the context of development. It is also used to mean sharing of information and experience to accelerate development. Whereas development refers to the change of society for betterment. It can be both social and economic change for improvement or progress.

According Okunna (2020) as cited in Ono, Chiaghana & Okunna (2020, p.445), "Development communication, otherwise widely known as DevCom for short, is also known by these other names: communication for development, Development support communication, Communication in Development, Communication for social change, Behavioural communication, and Emancipation Communication." Development communication has been defined by various scholars. Ono, Chiaghana & Okunna (2020) state

that it is concerned with communicating the development messages to people who need development in order to enable them to develop.

DevCom plays significant role in explain the development process to ordinary people in such a way that it finds acceptance. As Baba (2015) has pointed out, Wilbur Schramm played a pioneering role in recognising that communication could play an important role in the national development of 'Third World' countries, and that communication for development is about seeking positive change at different levels for the poorest of the world. Schramm (1964) remains a seminal and fundamental contribution to the literature of the field of development communication. Thus when we refer to development communication, it is about such communication that can be used for development. It is about using communication to change or improve the way of living of the citizen of a country. Here we use difference types of messages to change the socio-economic condition of people. These messages are designed to transform the behaviour of people or for improving their quality of life. Therefore, development communication can be defined as the use of community to promote development. The art and science of human communication applied to the speedy transformation of a country and the mass of its people from poverty to a dynamic state of economic growth that makes possible greater social equality and the larger fulfilment of human potential (Quebral, 1985 cited in Ono, Chiaghana & Okunna, 2020, p.456).

According to the United Nations, communication for development stresses the need to support two-way communication systems that enable dialogue and that allow communities to speak out, express their aspirations and concerns and participate in decisions that relate to their development (UNDP, 2011 – United Nations Development Programme). This means that development communication involves the use of dialogue to elicit the participation of benefitting communities in the development that concerns them. It can also be called development journalism. Development communication as a concept was adopted by the developing countries when they influenced UNESCO to ratify their demand for a New World Information Order (NWIO), as a result of international economic, political and information imbalance promoted by the west, their multi-national corporation and news agencies. Thus development communication is a protest against western domination of the world information market. It is a new philosophy for the use of modern media of mass information in the developing countries. It is a brand of journalism introduced in which journalists are concerned with the developing news of developing nations. It aims at restoring hope and bringing about change in those societies where economic, political and social decline are paramount (Okpoko 2010).

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Development communication according to (Jimada 2006) is a modern philosophy for the use of modern mass media for mass information introduced to meet the development needs of developing countries which is aimed that all national resources including information must be directed towards development. Okpoko (2010) goes further to say that development communication consists of information plan about government's plan and efforts to improve the standard of living of the populace. It appeals to citizens to adopt new ideas and ways of doing things as it contains news and stories for betterment, or news of achievement that spur or inspire the citizenry. It contains appeal from government to citizens for cooperation and threats or force or punishment in the event of non-compliance. This new form of citizen journalism is corrective, integrative and revolutionary in nature. It is citizen journalism of hope and change. It proclaims exchange values of the society. It seeks to persuade citizens to accept that their happiness lies in and is enhanced by their adoption of innovation.

Social Media

Defining social media has been somewhat difficult as the term refers more to some form of functionality than any particular media platform (Navetta, 2011). The term social has various definitions (Kasturi and Vardhan, 2014). It has been defined in diverged ways by various social scientists. As of now, there is no single renowned definition of social media. However, of the many definitions that exist, it can be said that social media is the set of web-based broadcast technologies that enable the democratisation of content, giving people the ability to emerge from consumers of content to publishers. With the ability to achieve massive scalability in real time, the social media technologies allow people to connect with each other to produce or re-produce value through online conversation and collaboration (Scott & Jacka, 2011). More prominently it refers to a characteristic of living beings related to their interaction. It always refers to the interaction of one sort of living beings with other living beings for their combined co-existence, irrespective of whether the interaction is intentional or unintentional (Mathur, 2012).

The befitting definition that best suits the current topic is Internet-based software and interfaces that allow individuals to interact with one another, exchanging details about their lives such as biographical data, professional information, personal photos and up-to-the-minute thoughts. In the contemporary world, the social media has not only established its place in the field of mass communication, but also posed threat equally to the conventional mass media (Kasturi and Vardhan, 2014).

Social media has also been defined as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content" (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Institute for Prospective Technological Studies (2008, p.35) writes that social media or social networking sites are: those sites which, on a basic technological level, combine social networking, a list of contacts and a profile. They are distinct from other applications in the way they support people's presentation of themselves, externalisation of data, new ways of community formation, and bottom-up activities. They are also distinguished by their ease of use and their reorganisation of Internet geography.

In their perhaps more practical definition, Boyd and Ellison (2008, p.211) see social network sites as web-based services that allow users to do the following: i. construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system; ii. articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and iii. view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system.

A distinguishing feature of the social media is its interactivity and inclusiveness. It is interactive in that it represents a radical shift from the one-way communication flow of the traditional media to permit unlimited two-way exchange among users. It is inclusive in that it is open to everyone to participate in; in other words, it excludes the rigid centralised gatekeeping orientation of the traditional media (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010).

Web 2.0 comprises a set of tools that enable knowledge creation, interaction, collaboration, networking and sharing (Jackson, 2010). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) classified social media (SM) as a group of internet-based applications that create and exchange user-generated content (Kapoor et al., 2018) and is built on the foundation of Web 2.0. SM provides web-based services that allow individuals to construct public or non-public profiles and share them with a list of other users (Roshan, Warren & Carr, 2013).

Gershon (2018) posits that due to ease of use, speed and reach, internet penetration is a vital component and a driver for e-government, not only does it provide a platform for dialogue and engagement among citizens, government and businesses but also offers citizens an opportunity to engage in governance as well as make demands for accountability. Social media has some or all of these seven function blocks: identity, conversations, sharing, presence, relationships, reputation and groups.

Asur and Huberman (2010) further adds that, social media swiftly alter the public discourse in society and set trends and agenda on the topics such as environment and politics, infrastructure, health and host of others. Page, 2013 asserts that individual's hesitant to use these platforms eliminates the individual from cyberspace. It allows its users to generate and exchange information and has capacity to connect societies from the nook and corner of the world through a single platform which attracts more and more people towards it (Irshad and Soomro 2018).

To Ekeli and Enobahare (2013), social media technologies are social software, which mediate human communication. When the technologies are in place, social media are ubiquitously accessible, and are enabled by scalable communication technologies to support dialogue and "introduce substantial and pervasive changes to communication between organizations, communities, and individuals". They have become an integral part of how people communicate, stay in touch, keep on top of new developments and otherwise connect with the world around them. Social media have in the past year or two, become a mainstream online activity. Kaplan and Haelein (2010) define social media as group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological multi-faceted technological foundations of web 2.0, which allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. The term is often used

interchangeably with web 2.0 which more specifically, refers to the second generation of internet-based services.

In another development, social media are seen as tools supporting the old networks and contributing to the development of new digital networks. According to Ociepka (2012 p. 25) “social media (symmetrical media) are understood as new communication technologies allowing individuals to intensify social contacts while sharing contents, engaging in discussion, but also controlling content via networks they participate in”. Social media share most of all the following characteristics, namely – participation, openness, conversation, community and connectedness (Mayfield, 2008). Government agencies regularly rely on social media to engage with their customers for improved citizen services and it is cost effective.

In addition to these and their extreme mobility created by convergence and miniaturisation, the social media have the advantage of being beyond the control of individual actors like presidents, governors, politicians and bureaucrats (Etim, 2013). McQuail (2010) provides an alternative taxonomy for these characteristics namely: interactivity, social presence, media richness playfulness, privacy and personalisation. Some media have given people voices. It is impossible to imagine a world without Facebook.

Road Infrastructure

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2013, p.19) report explains road infrastructure to consist of the following items: Land, Road works prior to paving: cuttings, embankments, drainage works, etc.; support and back filling, Pavement and ancillary works: pavement courses, including waterproofing, verges, central reserve, gullies and other drainage facilities, hard shoulders and other emergency stopping areas, laybys and parking places on the open road (roads for access and parking and traffic signs), car parks in built-up areas on publicly owned land, planting and landscaping, safety installations, etc.; engineering structures: bridges, culverts, overpasses, tunnels, structures for protection against avalanches and falling stones, snow screens, etc.; level crossings; traffic signs and signalling and telecommunications installations; lighting installations; toll collection installations, parking meters; buildings used by the infrastructure department.

Infrastructure is the basic physical and organisational structures and facilities (e.g, buildings, roads, power supplies) needed for the operation of a society or enterprise. It includes the social and economic infrastructure of a country. Infrastructure is the set of fundamental facilities and systems that support the sustainable functionality of households and firms serving a country, city or other area including the services and facilities necessary for its economy to function. It comprises of public and private structures such as roads, railways, bridges, tunnels, water supply sewers, electrical grids and telecommunications (including internet connectivity and broadband access) it encompasses the physical components of interrelated systems providing commodities and services essential to enable, sustain, or enhance social living conditions and maintain the surrounding environment. Infrastructure is basically divided and viewed distinctly as hard infrastructure and soft infrastructure.

Hard infrastructure refers to the physical networks necessary for the functioning of a modern industry, this includes roads, bridges and railways. Soft infrastructure refers to all the institutions that maintain the economic, health, social, environmental and cultural standards of a country, it includes educational programs, official statistics, parks and recreational facilities, law enforcement agencies and emergency services. Oshikoya, et al (1999) sees hardcore infrastructure as physical structures like roads, power, water, telecommunication facilities which are characterized as wheels of economic activities.

Whereas the soft core infrastructure had to do with healthcare, governance, education and accountability as well as property rights, which are the driving forces of economic activities. It promotes environmental sustainability since there will be provision for better waste disposal, and clean water, proper sanitation etc. Developing infrastructure can decrease poverty in two significant ways: first is the link that resides between infrastructural development and economic development, and second is the link between infrastructural development and the poor growth process.

In Nigeria, socio-economic development goes as far as road infrastructure improvement can attain. This is simply because to connect means to grow (Federal Ministry of Works, 2021). In order to catalyze the present rate of growth and development of the economy, the requisite road infrastructure must be put in place. According to a report by Reforming Road Transport in Nigeria (2009), Nigeria ranks tops compared with other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa in terms of road network. The country has the largest road network in West Africa and the second largest, south of the Sahara with an estimated 200,000km of road network connecting villages to cities, the distant with the near and the inter-land with the urban market. Today, 95% of both passenger and freight movements are by road in Nigeria largely due to inadequacy of other forms of transportation in the country (Federal Ministry of Works, 2021). The federal roads account for only about 17% of the total national road network but accommodate more than 80% of national vehicular and freight traffic bearing in mind a 2.533% population growth rate per annum. In addition, new vehicle importation in the country increased by 45% in 2011, and the first half of 2012 recorded an increase by 15% compared with the same period in 2011. Apparently, Nigeria is getting more cars on the road making reformation and maintenance of the roads very essential (Federal Ministry of Works, 2021). All of these indices clearly justify the need to enhance road infrastructure delivery to support this expanding populace. However, the task is enormous and requires huge investment, for a country of its size, an assessment of the current state of road (Federal Ministry of Works, 2021).

Infrastructure is indicative of the fact that the country has fallen short of international benchmarks. Against this background, the Federal Government of Nigeria has recognized the challenges and opportunities inherent within the nation's road infrastructure sector (Federal Ministry of Works, 2021). More so, the government of Nigeria has also identified a workable approach to tackling the challenges facing the sector while harnessing the economic gains of an enhanced road network. As a proactive approach, the Federal Government has embarked on road sector reforms which basically seek to improve service delivery, enhance management capacity and create a conducive institutional, legal and regulatory framework

through joint participation with the private sector in financing and management of the road sector (Federal Ministry of Works, 2021).

In addition, the government has been able to secure concession loans from multilateral and bi-lateral agencies for road sector development. The RSDT programme is being funded by these types of concession loans. Furthermore, it is the view of the government that with the involvement of the private sector in the road sector, growth and development will be facilitated (Federal Ministry of Works Headquarters, 2021). Typically, good roads imply reduced travel time and vehicle operating costs and provide the necessary ingredient for development of other forms of transportation. In addition, economic, commercial and business activities will also thrive along these routes by virtue of increased traffic flow and hence profitability. This is evident by the visible effect of road infrastructure development on real estate property values.

Furthermore, the study also showed that road condition seems to be associated with economic development (Federal Ministry of Works, 2021). Indeed, good infrastructure raises productivity and lowers production costs. Thus, it is clear that infrastructural development is a function of economic development (Federal Ministry of Works, 2021). The Federal Government has therefore embarked on bold steps in the rehabilitation, re-construction, construction and expansion of major arterial highways in the country. Against this backdrop, there have been a number of challenges confronting efforts of the government in the delivery of improved road infrastructure. One of the major challenges is attributable to the funding gap in road infrastructure delivery (Federal Ministry of Works, 2021).

Hitherto, the finance of road projects has been through a meagre annual budgetary allocation which has proved inadequate to fund road infrastructural development. On the average, the annual funding requirement is estimated at NGN500bn over the next ten years against an average budgetary allocation of NGN120bn with a shortfall of NGN380bn (Federal Ministry of Works, 2021). The author states that in 2012 alone, out of the NGN133bn budgetary allocation for road infrastructure development only NGN102bn was released with a shortfall of NGN21bn unimplemented. These shortfalls have proven to have dire negative consequences on the development of road infrastructure. Furthermore, it has become imperative for the Federal Government to source for alternative means of funding in order to achieve its objective of keeping roads in good condition and plan for future growth.

The Federal Government through the Ministry of works is presently working to reduce dependence on Public finance by facilitating private sector participation as well as encouraging funding by multi-lateral Agencies on road development. The connection between good roads and economic development has been established, it is clear that infrastructure development plays a vital role in the economic well-being of any nation (Federal Ministry of Works, 2021). Putting the statistics under perspective, it has shown that Nigeria still has a huge task ahead. The total road network in Nigeria currently estimated at 200,000km remains to be improved in order to bring them to sync with road infrastructure development in other thriving economies such as USA, China, Brazil, Turkey, India and South-Africa (Federal Ministry of Works, 2021).

From the forgoing analysis, it is clear that there is enormity of the challenge facing economic development of the nation. It is against this background that this study aims to document the state of road Infrastructure in South East Nigeria and the investment potentials for investing in Nigeria's road infrastructure. While it is intended to be a veritable advocacy document that is envisaged to guide potential private sector investors in making appropriate informed investment decisions. It would also prove useful for relevant stakeholders involved in the development, construction, maintenance and management of road infrastructure in South East Nigeria.

Challenges of Social Media in Development Communication

Media Community expert Rostow, Lerner and Schramm discussed the importance of development communication in communication process. But how much effective have development communication been, is a question that arises in our mind (Choudhur, 2011). This is because, even after the omnipresence of media in our society; there is a vast difference between the rich and the poor in most developing countries. According to experts the main obstruction in the path to development is that the scope of information is not available to everybody and that the development brought through development communication should be equally shared by all section of the society (Choudhur, 2011). Opening up of different mass media is necessary so that common people have easy access to them. Availability of information will open up new avenues of development.

Development communication describes communicative, measures related to a specific development project; development communication is understood as the communication strategy related to an entire society, respectively a comprehensive national development plan. It is embedded in the context of a general management concept of the planning and implementation of development programs that are ascribed a quiet instrumental socio-technological character. The journalists working within these prescribed norms will become comparable in aspects of his profession with the on-site leader of development projects. Also, the most important component of development communication is credibility. This is more readily won by the media's adequately advocating the interest of the affected people, which means inter-alia articulating criticism of the government (Okpoko, 2010).

The emergence of social media has altered the process of communication. Today, citizen journalism is competing with the main stream media. This has posed a number of challenges for journalists who are the drivers/conveners of communication for development. (Onwe, 2018) uphold that the challenges include but not limited to unhealthy competition for who breaks the news first between journalist and non-journalists. Explaining further, Onwe (2018) opines that when news breaks, especially unforeseen events like earthquakes, accidents and fire incidence, both journalist and their potential audience who ordinarily details or information are busy taking and uploading videos of the incident.

Before journalists could gather and thoroughly process the information in line with ethical and professional precepts, the raw and unedited version of the incident is already in the public domain via social media platforms. Another challenge is the erosion of media fidelity and credibility, new communication technologies pose serious fidelity and credibility question

to a journalist's version of the story of the same event because the same events are usually interpreted differently by the trained journalist and untrained citizen journalists. While a seasoned trained journalist pays attention to ethical, responsible and responsive journalism, the untrained reporter of some event tends to be receiver and does not apply caution to his/her report because he/she does not care to know. The snag is that whereas trained journalists will report what happened without highlighting aspects of the story considered likely to offend public sensibilities and morals, the untrained reporter pours everything out hook, line and sinker without caring the damage the report may cause the individuals, community and institutions involved. The unsuspecting audience members, easily accord greater credibility to the later story than the former.

There is also the challenge of spreading of misinformation and disinformation. In this case, some lazy journalists do not pay attention to thorough investigations and facts verifications. They only reel out unverified information from the social media platforms, turn it upside down and serve their audience members as authentic information. Some mischief makers may display and share videos of events that happened in distant land as though it is happening now in their own environment, thus misleading the unsuspecting audience members. Threat to humanitarian services is also a challenge.

In order to be the first with the news, especially when it concerns accidents and natural disasters, emphasis is usually placed on taking several shots and unloading such in various social media platforms. By doing so reporters show passive care by dwelling on spreading information about the occurrence rather than providing prompt solution on saving lives (Onwe, 2018). This is evident in the after math of the June 2012 Dana Airline crash in Iju-Ishaga Lagos State, when thousands of young people residing in the area were using their phones to take images of dying plane crash victims. A similar thing occurred when almost hundred people were burnt to death after an oil tanker caught fire in Rivers State.

Odi (2013). hold that social media contents are not edited. Users are free to post what they want to post, without being subjected to the scrutiny of the editor. This creates room for spreading lies. Some people have taken "April fool" expensive jokes to the social media. But instead of the usual April 1st, they do it on daily basis. Some social media users accept such jokes as real information and act on them. Social media allow expressions that are not grammatically correct. The worst expressions are seen in the social media. Users just write what they think their friends and followers can understand, not minding if there are grammatically correct or not. Some users send their messages in internal shorthand mnemonics. These systems of writing in the social media have adversely affected the users' ability to express themselves correctly. This poses a serious threat to development communication.

Cyber bullying is another challenge. It is defined according to O' Keeffe & Clarke-person, 2011 P. 801) as "deliberately using digital media to communicate false, embarrassing or hostile information about another person". Some social media messages are defamatory. They are written to disparage individuals and organizations. The person who his character has been assassinated in the social media can take to the same social media to pay back. This cannot

be allowed in the mainstream media. Sexing is yet another challenge based on the social media. It is the “sending, receiving or forwarding sexually explicit messages, photographs, or images via cell phone, computer, or other digital devices (Bershire 2010, cited in O’Keefee s and Clarke Pearson 2011 p. 801). Sexing is a common practice in the social media were users post pornographic contents, including nude pictures. Some ladies even post their personal pictures, exposing sensitive parts of their bodies. The practice reduces the moral standards in the society. Sexual pervasion including rape that has assumed a very worrisome dimension in recent times can be linked to pornography in the social media.

Lastly, (Odi, 2013). concludes that some contents of the social media are capable of inciting people to violence. Many users of social media apply the platforms to cast aspersions on ethnic rationalities and religious groups. The more dangerous trend in Nigeria is that old men and women including serving and ex-political leaders now join the youths to abuse the social media in this direction.

Onwe (2018). holds that new media facilitate multi-media approach in news gathering, processing and dissemination. To this end, the technologies have created room for effective combination of audio, visual, textual, graphs, charts and colorful presentation of news and information in a single media explosive. Through the emergence of social media, mainstream media journalists are provided with the lead to investigate and enrich their output. Before the birth and wide use of digital communication technologies which have allowed greater participation of global citizen in news and information gathering and dissemination, certain events occur without notice. Today, many occurrences which would have ordinarily gone unnoticed no longer escape the eagle eyes of citizen journalists.

Empirical Review

Musaev, Jiang, Jones, Sheini, and Dzhumalie (2018) investigated “Detection of Damage and Failure Events of Road Infrastructure Using Social Media.” The study focused on the problem of estimating the state of road infrastructure, which is the backbone of transportation system. The authors argued that road infrastructure can suffer from various issues, including structural failures, such as potholes, and non-structural issues, such as broken traffic lights. Musaev, Jiang, Jones, Sheini, and Dzhumalie (2018) were of the view that it is infeasible to cover all roads with physical sensors for monitoring purposes. Hence, they propose to use social sensor big data to detect and estimate these issues based on the public’s activity. As a demonstration, the authors generate a map of detected road problems based on tweets. The map displayed the currently detected hotspots, where for each hotspot the authors computed the overall sentiment provided by the public. In addition, they identified the peak of public activity during the evaluation period and investigated the key drivers of that peak. Finally, Musaev, Jiang, Jones, Sheini, and Dzhumalie (2018) analyse the most influential users using an extension of PageRank. The approach added a novel perspective on the state of road infrastructure and could be used to help guide decisions related to road infrastructure funding. The researchers used Twitter’s Streaming API to collect public messages related to road infrastructure failures in near real-time. Data collected were content analysed. The study found that there was a spike of activity on July 21st. To understand the reasons for this peak, the researchers showed the text of the most retweeted tweets posted on July 21, 2018.

The study is related to the present study in that it investigated the state of road infrastructure which is the same as the focus of the present study. However, the context of the study was different as the investigation was about American roads. The study also failed to make any recommendations and the method used was content analysis which is different from the method employed by the current study. Hence, this study will close both methodological gap in knowledge and gap in context and scope since the previous study concentrated on Twitter alone.

Mathur, Ninan, Vuorinen, Ke, Sankaran. et al., (2021). Examined “An exploratory study of the use of social media to assess benefits realisation in transport infrastructure projects.” The focus of the study was on metro rails. The study notes that infrastructure projects such as metro rails are being increasingly built in busy cities mainly to improve mobility and reduce congestion. However, assessment of benefits realised from these projects is complex. One reason for this is that promoters of these projects often misrepresent the projects’ benefits to get them approved. Although some benefits from infrastructure projects can be measured using economic data, such data are insufficient for measuring social benefits. This article reports on an exploratory study on how social media could provide an opportunity to evaluate benefits qualitatively by analyzing tweets from metro rail projects in India and Australia. Although the analysis of tweets from these projects indicated that citizens who use these transport facilities report benefits, they do not seem to use the same terms as the project’s promoters to describe these benefits. The study notes that due to global trends such as urbanisation, there is an increasing need for the delivery and maintenance of transport infrastructure, such as roads, railways and metro rails. These kinds of endeavours are typically organised and managed as transport infrastructure projects (Volden and Samset, 2017). According to Mathur, Ninan, Vuorinen, Ke, Sankaran. et al., (2021), transport infrastructure projects have at least two characteristics that make them especially interesting. First, the scale of these types of projects tends to be very large and the delivered infrastructure is designed to be in use for several decades. The value created in these kinds of projects is realized over an extended period of time and, consequently, the overall project success is difficult to evaluate completely when the projects are completed but not yet fully used. Second, transport infrastructure projects are of interest not only to internal stakeholders such as the project supplier (e.g., contractors) and client (e.g., government agencies responsible for infrastructure delivery), but also to the people who use the delivered infrastructure. One important stakeholder group to be considered in evaluating benefits is citizens who are the future users of the transport infrastructure Mathur, Ninan, Vuorinen, Ke, Sankaran. et al., (2021). The article concludes with some suggestions on how social media can supplement current methods used in evaluating benefits from transport projects.

The forgoing study is related to the present study because it dealt on social media and the realization of transport infrastructure. However, its main focus was on railway project instead of road infrastructure which is the primary focus of this study. Thus, this present study will fill the knowledge gap which the previous study left in road project. The study also was narrowed down to metro-rails. This present study is wide in scope, hence the results obtained will be more generalisable.

Similarly, Khanani, Adugbila, Martinez, et al. (2021) examined “The Impact of Road Infrastructure Development Projects on Local Communities in Peri-Urban Areas: The Case of Kisumu, Kenya and Accra, Ghana”. According to the authors, large-scale spatial planning and urban development projects have gained popularity in cities of the Global South. Such projects are being used to improve connectivity, scale up cities’ competitiveness, and in return, attract investments (Khanani et al., 2021). However, while road development changes peri-urban environments in the Global South cities, little attention is given to the consequences of road infrastructure in those areas (Khanani et al., 2021). The objective of this study is to investigate how the implementation of road infrastructure projects is transforming the socio-spatial landscapes and economic development, and how they affect social groups within the peri-urban areas of Kisumu (Kenya) and Accra (Ghana) cities, focusing on effects at the community level. The research employed a case study approach, using qualitative, quantitative and spatial methods to examine these socio-spatial and economic development dynamics. The findings show that, on the one hand, road infrastructure projects scaled up residential development, both in Kisumu and Accra, as the roads contributed to housing rents and land prices to increase and rendered peri-urban communities along them as attractive zones for real estate developers. Furthermore, accessibility to facilities and services improved. Also, in both cities, the road improvements fuelled employment opportunities. Conversely, in both cities, the road infrastructure projects led to gentrification and therefore to the displacement of poor residents into the hinterlands, which changed the social fibre and integration to a certain degree. The road infrastructure projects benefitted the rich, who own land at the expense of the poor. The findings that the impacts of road infrastructure appear to differ in locational context and class of individuals within peri-urban areas make us suggest that place-based and people-based policies need to be combined to address the consequences of road infrastructure projects.

While the forgoing study examined road infrastructure as the present study, it did not investigate this through the lens of social media users. This gap in knowledge is what this present study seeks to fill.

Bhandari and Bansal, (2018) explored “Prospects and challenges of social media marketing: study of Indian Management Institutes. The research aimed to revealing real decisional behavioural of management institutes in India for social media marketing usage, and analyses of empirical elements of social media consumption pattern. The investigation was based around a research methodology using quantitative analysis with appropriate statistical techniques on random surveys of consumers, detailed exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses are applied to assess the empirical validity of the model and multiple regression employed using R studio edition to validate the reliability of the developed models. Findings show that the management institutions decision model, providing a tool for effective and more focused decision-making strategies for developing better utilisation techniques for social media. Management institutions have different requirements based upon objectives and resources available. The evidence suggests that the administrators need to be more aware of consumer indicators when targeting and designing social media marketing strategy. The research was based on samples and not the entire population of target consumers, providing limitations. As an inferential statistical method was chosen, the results might be susceptible

to inaccuracy. The model developed from different age users, thereby providing rich perspectives into social media usage pattern.

The study is related to the present study because it dealt on development issues. However, it did not mention anything about road infrastructure, hence the present study aims at bridging this gap in knowledge.

Kasturi and Vardhan (2014) examined “Social Media: Key issues and challenges – a study of Nalgonda District.” The authors opine that for any media to be interactive, it needs to co-exist with some sort of communication techniques, for which social media is not an exception. In order to twirl communication into an interactive dialogue, the social media turns to be one of the most successful applications of Satmass Media (Kasturi, 2013) (a word coined by Dr. Suman K Kasturi to indicate the mass media that work in conjunction with the satellite communications. Survey method used to collect the data that is quantitative in nature.

The study explains the challenges facing the use of social media to include among others to include lack of privacy, inability to provide access to those with disability such as the virtually and hearing impairment as provided by Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of the US which provides guidelines for making federal websites accessible to people with disabilities, including the visually and hearing impaired; failure of commercial advertising on social media to follow the formalities of censor; and porn content in advertisements should be avoided on the websites, intended for the very purpose of social networking, most of the social media sites allow the audience to create an account, after accepting terms of agreement, which are often vague. With respect to security concern, Social media sites pose an equal threat to the security of personal information and other concerned data. Hacking of the websites is the most common feature; with hacking there is an imminent threat to the audience of social media. Deception is another challenge. The identity of the individual who joins the social networking sites may either original or fake.

The study recommended that among other that web site operators should provide software to protect the privacy of users and guarantee security, etc.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on Development Media Theory as propounded by Dennis McQuail in (1983). It considers the media to have great influence on development because it sees the media as a pivot for national development in developing countries, the central thesis of the theory is that the mass media in developing nations should be used for the primacy of the national development task, economic, social, political and culturally it outlined six main principles of the theory :media should accept and carryout positive development task in line with nationally established policy, the media should be open to restriction according to economic priorities and development needs of society, media should give priority in their content to the to the national culture and language, media should give priority in news and information to links with other developing countries, which are close geographically, culturally and politically.

The study found that social media report the state of bad roads in South East Nigeria, but this is not the major concern of many social media users in Nigeria. However, the reports of the state of road infrastructure in the South East by social media users create awareness on how bad the roads in South East Nigeria are; and the residents of South East accept the social media reports to be true. The helps the people to put pressure on the government to intervene and save the residents from the challenges posed by bad roads in the area. It was noticed from the literature reviewed that Facebook is predominantly used to report on the condition of roads in the South East. However, the challenges of social media as a news platform seem to reduce the effectiveness of its social responsibility function in the reportage of road infrastructure in South East Nigeria. This challenge notwithstanding, we conclude that social media are veritable tool for enhancing socio-economic development of Nigeria.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of this study:

1. Social media users should intensify reports on the state of bad roads in South East Nigeria in order to draw more government attention.
2. Social media users should balance their reports of bad roads and good roads to encourage the government to do more.
3. Social media users should make use of all social media platforms in order to rich policy makers in that use different social media platforms.

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