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ABSTRACT

This study explores the evolving nature of civic engagement among residents of Eleko, a community in Moro Local Government Area of Kwara State, in light of increasing social media usage. Civic engagement, traditionally rooted in face-to-face interactions and community-based activities, is now significantly influenced by digital platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok. The integration of online experiences into the daily lives of Eleko residents presents both opportunities and challenges for fostering civic responsibility and community involvement. This research examines how these digital tools mediate civic participation and whether they complement or replace traditional forms of engagement. By assessing residents' online and offline behaviors, the study aims to provide insights into the extent to which social media contributes to the development of civic knowledge, awareness, and activism within the Eleko environment. The findings will assist policymakers, educators, and community leaders in understanding and leveraging digital platforms to enhance civic life and social cohesion in the community.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Civic engagement is seen by many as an activity that serves not only as a key component to the maintenance of a democracy, but also as a force that sustains social ties across communities small and large (Colby et al., 2000; Putnam, 1993; 2000). As defined by Thomas Ehrlich, civic engagement can be understood as “...working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference [and] promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and nonpolitical processes” (Ehrlich, 2000, p. vi). Among those within Eleko environments, the literature points to a consensus that Eleko should play an integral role in addressing societal problems (Droege & Ferrari, 2012; Hartley, Saltmarsh, & Clayton, 2013; Mathews, 2009; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Issues including poverty, foreign and domestic governmental policies, and the wealth gap all represent societal challenges that require both critical reflection and pragmatic problem solving, skills that may be developed during the residents’ years (Hartley, et al., 2013).

An essential part of the Eleko a town in Moro local government of kwara state experience is the development of residents as publicly involved, socially aware, and community-minded members of society. civic engagement is a characteristic that Eleko and other environments explicitly seek to develop within their residents. The paths that residents take towards this outcome, while varied, can come through intentional means. As such, Eleko and other environments will be well-served to understand how student civic engagement is impacted by the Eleko environment. In recent years, Eleko student environments have rapidly changed. One aspect of change in this regard has been the

development of an online environment for residents to navigate and integrate into daily life. In addition to the face-to-face interactions that have long been the hallmark of a campus-based Eleko experience, residents now are met with a myriad of web-based social experiences, from the primarily academic (BlackBoard Vista, online lectures, course blogs) to the primarily social (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tiktok). The challenges and opportunities associated with these new venues of communication are yet to be fully understood, but they are part of an evolving new social and technological context. These innovations, which are by nature constantly in a state of flux (through remote app updates, redesigns, etc.), are in the early stages of empirical study.

Eleko residents no longer conduct daily life exclusively in physical, campus spaces. Organizational meetings, classroom lectures, social encounters, news gathering, and countless other interactions in residents' life also occur within the digital realm. For many residents, the online and offline worlds are inextricably intertwined, and often are not even thought of as separate spaces (Martínez Alemán & Wartman, 2009). That is to say, for these residents, sites like Facebook and Instagram are not escapes from Eleko, but rather they are just another part of "campus." This understanding is of primary importance, as it speaks to the perhaps incomplete view that practitioners and researchers may have when exploring the ways in which residents become and remain civically engaged if they observe exclusively offline realms. In reality, the online spaces where residents engage may be sites of civic engagement, revealing as much (or more) than offline spaces

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The contemporary Eleko experience has witnessed significant transformations, with the rise of online environments becoming an integral part of residents' lives. This shift introduces new challenges and opportunities for civic engagement. The traditional face-to-face interactions on street are now complemented by a variety of web-based experiences, from academic platforms to social media networks. The implications of these

changes are not fully understood, particularly regarding the role of social media in shaping civic engagement among Eleko residents.

Eleko and other environments, aiming to cultivate civic engagement, must adapt to this evolving landscape and consider the impact of both traditional and digital means of engagement. The pervasive use of social media among residents highlights its importance as a communication tool, with data indicating high usage rates. However, the relationship between social media and civic engagement remains largely unexplored. Recognizing that residents no longer confine their daily activities to physical spaces on campus, it is crucial to investigate the mediating role of social media in shaping residents' civic engagement. Understanding that online and offline worlds are interconnected for many residents challenges the assumption that offline spaces alone define civic engagement, emphasizing the need to explore the potential civic roles played by online platforms.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study sets out to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. Explore the extent to which social media platforms, including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Tiktok, are used by Eleko residents.
2. Examine how social media is integrated into the daily lives of residents and its influence on their interactions, both online and offline.
3. Determine the extent to which residents perceive online spaces, such as social media platforms, as integral parts of their Eleko experience rather than separate entities.
4. Investigate whether there is a seamless integration between online and offline civic engagement activities for residents.
5. Examine whether social media serves as a platform for knowledge acquisition, skill enhancement, and motivation related to civic participation.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. To what extent do residents of Eleko use social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok?
2. How is social media incorporated into the daily routines of Eleko residents, and what impact does it have on their interactions, both online and offline?
3. Do residents perceive social media platforms as integral components of their Eleko experience, or do they consider them separate from their physical environment?
4. Is there a seamless connection between online and offline civic engagement activities for residents of Eleko?
5. In what ways does social media serve as a tool for knowledge acquisition, skill development, and motivation regarding civic participation among Eleko residents?

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study holds significance for Eleko community, particularly those situated in similar environments as Eleko. Understanding the dynamics of civic engagement, both traditional and digital, can inform the development of educational practices that resonate with the current needs and preferences of students.

Given the increasing integration of online platforms into daily life, the findings of this study can contribute to the adaptation of civic education programs. Institutions can use the insights to incorporate digital strategies that enhance civic skills and motivations among students.

Policymakers within the Eleko environment and similar locales can benefit from the study's recommendations. The insights into both traditional and online civic engagement can guide the development of policies that promote a holistic approach to fostering civic responsibility and community involvement.

By exploring the impact of social media on civic skill development, the study contributes to efforts aimed at preparing students for active participation in societal challenges. The findings can guide educators in designing interventions that enhance critical thinking, problem-solving, and other essential civic skills.

1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of this research encompasses the exploration of civic engagement among residents of Eleko, a town in Moro Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria, with a particular focus on the role of social media in shaping this engagement. The study aims to investigate the extent to which social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok, are utilized by Eleko residents, as well as how social media is integrated into their daily lives and influences their interactions, both online and offline.

1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS

1.Civic Engagement: Civic engagement refers to the active participation of individuals in the civic life of their communities, involving efforts to make a positive difference and promote the quality of life through both political and non-political processes

2.Social media: social media refers to online platforms and technologies that enable users to create, share, and interact with content, as well as connect with others. Examples of social media platforms include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, and LinkedIn.

3.Eleko: Eleko is a town located in the Moro Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria.

4.Eleko Institutions: Eleko institutions are educational establishments that provide secondary education, including universities, colleges, and vocational schools.

5.Civic Responsibility: Civic responsibility refers to the duty of individuals to actively participate in the affairs of their community, contribute to the common good, and uphold democratic principles.

6.Digital Literacy: Digital literacy refers to the ability to access, evaluate, and use digital technologies and information effectively.

7.Civic Skill Development: Civic skill development involves the acquisition and enhancement of skills necessary for effective civic engagement, such as critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and problem-solving. These skills enable individuals to participate meaningfully in civic life and address societal challenges.

8.Community Involvement: Community involvement refers to the active engagement of individuals in the affairs of their local community, including volunteering, participating in community events, and collaborating with others to address community needs and issues.

9.Digital Citizenship: Digital citizenship refers to the responsible and ethical use of digital technologies and online platforms. It involves respecting the rights and privacy of others, practicing digital etiquette, and contributing positively to online communities.

10.Online-Offline Integration: Online-offline integration refers to the seamless blending of digital and physical interactions and activities in individuals' lives.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In order to begin to understand the role that social media use plays within the civic engagement behaviors of Eleko residents; it is useful to first review literature on the relationship between civic engagement and education. Shifting societal needs and resources have helped to shape the role of civic engagement in higher education, and recent technological developments have redefined the relationship further in recent years.

In this review, I will first provide a brief overview of the general notions of civic engagement and associated terms. Then I will discuss literature on the changing role of civic engagement within higher education, first historically and then within a contemporary context. Third, I will review the literature that first explored social media as a potentially impactful aspect of Eleko civic engagement. Fourth, I will explore literature on social media as a growing force within the society, including demographics of use, definitions, common themes of use, and leading popular voices on the topic. Next, I will review literature on social media and Eleko environments, which will lead into final thoughts on the scant works dealing with assessments of recent social media-driven student civic engagement and activism.

2.1.1 CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Civic engagement is an “elusive concept” (Boland, 2011) that for some is a broadly based idea and for others is narrower in focus. This project will utilize Ehrlich’s (2000) definition of civic engagement as “...working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through

both political and nonpolitical processes” (Ehrlich, 2000, p. vi). Ehrlich’s definition is widely cited within the literature (Boland, 2011; Hatcher, 2011; O’Connor, 2006), and provides a clear perspective that civic engagement can be defined broadly. The term is not merely confined to political engagement, although political activity can certainly be a part of civic engagement. Political engagement, when considered as part of civic engagement, may also be partisan in nature (Brint & Levy, 1999).

More narrow definitions of civic engagement include that of Einfeld and Collins (2008), who view the term as a “vehicle for pursuing democratic ideals of justice and equality in a multicultural society” (p. 105). These authors present a specific definition from which to understand action and results stemming from civic engagement. This definition of civic engagement may be most useful with the context of certain quantitative studies that seek to evaluate participation among large groups of participants. The definition may prove too constricting in regards to other approaches, however, like ethnography, which tends to be guided to some extent by participant perceptions of terms due to its combination of varying forms of data sources. Further, an early work on the intersection of social media and civic engagement (Valenzuela, Park, & Kee, 2009) found its inclination to use a traditional, overly specific definition of civic engagement as a limitation of their study. This method, the authors noted, limited the ability of researchers to account for new, constantly changing media methods of civic participation that may not be addressed in earlier definitions (Valenzuela, et al., 2009).

2.1.2 EARLY RESEARCH ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

This project aims to bring together the burgeoning field of research on social media in the environment context and the long-standing tradition of resident’s civic participation as a foundational outcome of education. As social media itself is a new development, the literature in this area is sparse and most pieces on the topic can be classified within the realm of popular media or thought pieces. Still, some academic work is underway that has

begun to explore the issues of social media use among residents, some of which also addresses the civic engagement behaviors and attitudes of these students. A portion of the quantitative analysis regarding the intersection between social media use and residents' civic engagement derives from the work of faculty at Michigan State University (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007; 2008; Vitak, Zupe, Smock, Carr, Ellison, Lampe, 2010).

Within peer reviewed academic journals, the literature is mostly silent on this distinction between passive social media use as a substitute for offline civic engagement, but recent events such as the Occupy Wall Street movement and the Arab Spring have drawn significant academic attention to these issues and may lead to future work in this area of study (Howard, Duffy, Freelon, Hussain, Mari, Mazaid, 2011; Kreiss & Tufekci, 2013).

2.1.3 SOCIAL MEDIA: OVERALL NATURE OF THE LITERATURE

Social media a topic area should be considered both new and engaged in a state of perpetual evolution. Social media as a marketplace is not yet fully developed, and the myriad ways in which the Internet and other technologies will become more “social” are yet to be fully realized. Each year, the social media market shifts in new and unanticipated ways. Due to the fact that the current reality includes companies posing challenges to existing industry leaders, going through mergers and acquisitions, and forming to fill specialized voids in the marketplace, the social media landscape is a difficult field to capture with empirical data. Even slight changes such as application updates and interface shifts might alter the ways in which users interact with social networking sites. As a result, much of the writing that is more than several years old is removed from current contexts. This transient nature of the literature limits the type of content that can retain its relevance.

The literature on social media and its relevant applications also tends to be tied to specific contexts of any given research project. New web technologies appear and evolve constantly, and as a result the uses and social contexts of the Internet also are in a constant

state of flux. This status as an ever-evolving field of study is both a benefit and detriment to the literature base, as topics are approached from many viewpoints and within many contexts. Studies are not yet regularly replicated, as the changing environment of social media creates a need for new perspectives on nearly every topic to account for new information.

2.1.4 DEVELOPMENT OF WEB 2.0 AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Adeniji and Wartman (2009) provide a look back at how technological developments emerged in the late 20th century to usher in a new, computer-centred era. As recently as the 1960s, computers that facilitated communication were focused within local networks, primarily closed network areas of research such as universities. Developments in the late 1960s through the mid-1970s saw the emergence of technology that allowed computers to send data back and forth, which set the groundwork for the commercialization of the Internetwork Protocol (IP) in the 1980s and 1990s.

The 1980s saw a rise in the production and adoption of user-friendly personal computers. Developments by both IBM and Apple brought this technology into the mainstream. By the mid to late 1990s, the Internet's rise as a useful tool for individuals merged with the refining of new user-friendly computers to begin a new movement (Adeniji & Wartman, 2009). The era in which computer technology shifted away from a strictly research-oriented, academic user base and towards a popular audience was signified through its movement from a text-based interface to a more visual model (Adeniji & Wartman, 2009).

Microsoft's introduction of the Windows Operating System brought in an intuitive structure to computer use that relied more heavily on a graphical user experience. While this was not the first operating system to emerge with these characteristics, it was the first to popularize the technology. This innovation set the stage for the social networking sites that would emerge in the subsequent decade. Adeniji and Wartman (2009) posit that

understanding this development is a prerequisite to grasp the pivotal moment that followed: The existing paradigm of the Internet was changed by the introduction of social networking sites.

Friendster and Myspace set the stage for the current dominant social networks, the most prominent of which is Facebook. These early websites drew upon the notion that individuals had a web of connections to others. By featuring these connections as a means for facilitating relationships, social networks formed the quintessential manifestation of the Web 2.0 movement (Adeniji & Wartman, 2009).

“Web 2.0,” as coined by Tim O’Reilly in 2004 (O’Reilly, 2005), refers to the maturation of the Internet that occurred over the most recent decade. Within this growth period, the web became a place in which information was freely exchanged, and the software used to transmit this information began to repackage the user experience. Whereas the old Internet experience presented a one-way flow of information (from website to user), the relationships online became much more dynamic within Web 2.0.

This new wave brought about not only an advanced interface and graphical experience, but it also leveraged the collective to provide a better user experience for the individual. Web 2.0 brought about an era of information sharing among users, and this new era is perhaps best embodied through the proliferation of social media that exists today. Web 2.0 as a general term is often used interchangeably with the term “social media,” but while the two terms are related, they are actually distinct concepts (Haenlein & Kaplan, 2010). Web 2.0 refers to the more general notions around web design, such as how content is created, shared, and consumed (Haenlein & Kaplan, 2010). Social media are the specific websites and applications that facilitate the Web 2.0 content, so a social networking site like Facebook would be considered an example of social media that exemplifies Web 2.0 principles (Haenlein & Kaplan, 2010).

2.1.5 Leading Voices on Social Media

Two authors that emerge within the literature as leading popular thinkers on social media are Clay Shirky and Sherry Turkle. While each author has a particular subset of topic areas for which they are known, both Shirky and Turkle have published particular works of great influence on social media.

Shirky's breakthrough work, *Here Comes Everybody*, is a 2008 book that explores the shifting realities around collective action due to the growth of online sharing mechanisms.

Perhaps due to his "eloquent and accessible" style, Shirky found a large audience for *Here Comes Everybody*, a book that was met with positive reviews and remains widely cited today (Schillinger, 2009). In his work, Shirky (2008) identifies tools on the Internet such as Wikipedia that provide new avenues for group formation, discussion, and action that were previously only possible within large institutions. By constructing free, simple platforms for action, this "social" side of the web removes long-existing barriers such as prohibitive investments in both cost and time. Online environments that allow for ease of action result in shifting behaviors and new communities alike.

Shirky's assessment of social media takes a mostly optimistic tone; the author sees the emergence of social tools online as the key force in a paradigm shift in which consumers of information are empowered with choice. Rather than the one-way delivery of information that existed in years past, the multi-directional flow of information requires consumers to interact with one another to inform decision-making in nearly every aspect of life (Shirky, 2008). This description of the strengthening of social networks digitally directly ties back to the concepts introduced by Putnam (2000) of social capital formation. The many ties that the newly social Internet allows for can be considered both bridging and bonding social capital (Putnam, 2000; Shirky, 2008).

Another important aspect of social media, according to Shirky (2008), is that we should not think of the online world as existing separately from offline lives. Rather, the online world is an augmenting force within individual lives, and in many ways the two are deeply integrated into one another. Again, this notion of the online as a support for the offline speaks to the possibilities for social media as a conduit to social capital formation. Shirky also notes that the bulk of content online is mostly driven by a small group of individuals, and others add the remaining content in small and less frequent contributions.

Shirky's (2008) interpretation of social media and other associated technologies can be considered landmark not only for its early recognition of contemporary trends but also for how well it has withstood the passage of time. While some works age dramatically over only several years (often due to the emphasis of media use trends that become obsolete), Shirky's successful prognostication of social media traits that would endure allows *Here Comes Everybody* to serve as an essential cornerstone of the social media literature, even today. Shirky's own subsequent work builds off *Here Comes Everybody*, as is evident in his 2010 follow-up, *Cognitive Surplus: Creativity and Generosity in a Connected Age*. This latter work identifies the shift in role among media audiences from consumers to producers, made possible by the popularization of social media over television.

2.1.6 SOCIAL MEDIA USE DATA

In order to keep up with the rapidly growing field, studies are periodically conducted to reevaluate current measures of social media use. The most current comprehensive study on general trends in United States social media use is the Pew Research Centre's 2013 report, *The Demographics of Social Media Use – 2012*. Data within any study around social media should be considered a snapshot in time rather than as definitive and lasting, because user trends shift constantly. Still, Pew's (Duggan & Brenner, 2013) report offers some insights on the social media landscape in general terms.

Across all social networking sites, Duggan and Brenner (2013) report age as inversely related to social media use with adults ages 18 to 29 as the most active users (83% of those online use some social networking site). Data also indicate that online adults in urban areas are significantly more likely to use social networking sites than their rural counterparts (70% versus 61%; Duggan & Brenner, 2013).

The dominant social networking site remains Facebook, and roughly two-thirds of adults with online access report using the site (Duggan & Brenner, 2013). Women report higher rates of Facebook use than men (72% of Internet users versus 62% of Internet users), and generally speaking, age is inversely related to Facebook use (86% of those aged 18-29 are on Facebook, 73% of those 30-49, 57% of those 50-64, and 35% of those aged 65 and older). Duggan and Brenner (2013) also look at demographic breakdowns of Facebook use along other measures, including education attainment, household income, and urbanity. Within Facebook-specific data, however, the only other statistically significant finding is that those who have attended some residents are more likely to use Facebook than those who have not attended any residents (73% of online adults compared with 60%, respectively; Duggan & Brenner, 2013).

Duggan and Brenner's (2013) research identify some of the differentiated ways in which users engage with social networking sites. Similar findings among other social networking sites include Pinterest as disproportionately popular among white and female online populations and Instagram as significantly more popular among black and Hispanic online populations than among white peers (Duggan & Brenner, 2013).

2.1.7 SOCIAL MEDIA AS NEWS-GATHERING TOOL

It became clear through the data collection process that one way in which social media serve as a catalyst for participant civic learning and engagement is as a civic and sociopolitical news and information source. Across every individual interview and focus group, students discussed the varying ways in which social media are used by themselves

and their peers, both intentionally and indirectly, for contact and subsequent follow up with news. Some students described social media's role in this process as a very direct relationship; users purposefully curated their social media feeds to provide them with social, civic, and political news and information by following individuals and organizations that would deliver them information as it occurs. Other students spoke of unsolicited, but not unwelcome, contact with news and information. For these students, there was a sense that although they might not sign onto a social media platform with the explicit intent of finding out the news of the day, they felt confident that if news broke that day, their respective networks would inform them of any developments.

Ultimately, the experiences of student participants in this study indicate that social media add value in the pursuit of civic engagement and civic knowledge. For some students, this value is a basic understanding and awareness of civic and sociopolitical issues to which they otherwise would not have been exposed. Other students were able to easily conduct an in-depth follow-up on issues that they were previously aware of or which they had only cursory knowledge. Some students took their own knowledge and used social media to share and involve others.

2.1.8 SOCIAL MEDIA AS PATHWAY TO RESIDENTS' ENGAGEMENT.

Social media is viewed elsewhere in the literature as a potentially powerful conduit to resident's student engagement (Heiberger & Harper, 2008; Junco & Cole-Avent, 2008; Violino, 2009). Social networking sites are now a major part of the resident's student experience in such a way that they can be viewed as seamlessly integrated into daily life (Junco & Cole-Avent, 2008). residents' response has been to develop social media sites to represent individual institutions and departments through which students may interact (Violino, 2009). Institutions of residents have also developed professional positions that are exclusively responsible for the implementation and maintenance of online networking resources for students (Violino, 2009). The result of the new practices on residents has been positive, as students now regularly use social networking sites to access resources as

well as to engage with their peers online (Junco, 2011). Resident's use of social media to connect with others and collect and share information is evidence of the potential for social capital formation online, even though this process may not yet be fully realized. Much work remains to be done and universities must stay proactive in meeting the needs of a developing populace (Heiberger & Harper, 2008; Junco & Cole-Avent, 2008; Violino, 2009; Benson & Filippaios, 2010).

Consistent with earlier findings by Adeniji and Lynk Wartman (2009), prospective students have shown a desire to connect with potential residents early in the resident's selection process (Benson & Filippaios, 2010). Data indicate that students are most interested in connecting with other prospective and current students early in the resident's search, a trend which can be seen once they arrive on campus (Benson & Filippaios, 2010). Social media can be viewed as a powerful pathway to social capital formation when these student perspectives are considered. When students are able to connect directly with both their larger community organization, their residents in this instance, and their peers, they are proactive in exchanging information and building social ties.

2.1.9 RESIDENTS ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Comprehensive works on social media use in the environment are largely absent from the literature. To date, the two most significant works remain *Connecting to the Net.Generation* by Junco and Mastrodicasa (2007) and *Online Social Networking on Campus: Understanding What Matters in Student Culture* by Adeniji and Lynk Wartman (2009). Both books provide early insights into web technology's impact within residents.

Junco and Mastrodicasa's (2007) work is indicative of the difficulty scholars face when approaching the topic of social media. Many of the references used are dated and largely irrelevant within current contexts, and as a result the book serves more as a point of historical context than as usable data today. Nevertheless, Junco and Mastrodicasa (2007) put forth the first comprehensive attempt at understanding social media's role

within residents. Survey data included in this work are focused primarily on very basic measures of website visits and use patterns and again are more useful as a snapshot of the mid-2000s than as an indication of current trends.

Mr. Raji (2010) argues that costs of education and failings within the system drive unhappy students to seek out new and innovative paths to an education. This process, the author notes, is aided by new online technologies that allow individuals to pick and choose disparate pieces of training and education and patch together their own vision of Eleko (Mr. Raji, 2010). While provocative in many ways and well-reasoned in its construction, Mr. Raji, sayings ultimately serve the purpose of critique of Eleko resident and speculation on the future of the field, but little more. The author undermines her main thesis that a revolution is upon us in Eleko by holding steadfast in her rejection of conventional notions of residents. focuses entirely on change aspects of the resident's environment and largely ignores the hegemonic component of a structure that has several hundred years of established societal value.

2.1.10 E-LEARNING AND THE DIGITAL CLASSROOM

A significant portion of the literature on social media and civic focuses on the academic portion of the residents experience. Often referred to as e-learning, in which digital and online media is used to develop coursework, the instructional side of social media is now an area of interest within academia. Specifically, typical scholarship exists on case studies of classroom use (Schroeder & Greenbowe, 2009), general use of social media within course curriculum (Wankel, 2009), and aspects of offline coursework that may be preferable to move online (Silius, Kailanto, & Tervakari, 2011).

Twitter may provide a useful middle ground in the online communication process between students and faculty members, as it allows information to travel one way and thus can provide more student privacy (Sturgeon and Walker, 2009). In this sense, social media

may enable social capital development among students and promote engagement without creating insurmountable privacy issues.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework for this research draws upon the concept of social capital as a lens to understand the relationship between civic engagement, education, and social media use within the Eleko environment. Social capital, as introduced by Pierre Bourdieu (1986) and later developed by Robert Putnam (2000), refers to the social networks, relationships, and shared values that facilitate cooperation and collective action within a community. The framework also incorporates the idea that social media can serve as a platform for the formation and utilization of social capital, influencing civic engagement behaviors among Eleko residents.

Uses and Gratification Theory

This study adopts the uses and gratification theory. The uses and gratification theory is about the social and psychological origins of needs, which generate expectations of the mass media or other sources, which lead to differential patterns of media exposure (or engagement in other activities), resulting in need gratification and other consequences, mostly unintended ones (Katz, 1974, cited in Ojobor, 2002).

Wogu (2000) stated that the uses and gratification theory "deals with what the audience uses the media to do and what gratification (gratified affect or satisfaction) they derive from using the media." Quoting Katz (1959, cited in Ojobor, 2002), he stated that the theory believes that an individual has some needs related to mental satisfaction; he/she selects the media that appear to satisfy those needs. He/she selectively consumes the content, so effects may or may not occur.

Granted that this theory recognizes that there are various media for the audience to choose from, it is then very likely that the public would opt for those mediums which are less likely to present fake news as one aspect of their gratifications to the users. On

this basis, mass media can be lumped with the social media as purveyors of false information which could lose the confidence and readership/followership of the audience who expose themselves to the media not to help but fake news.

The criticism of uses and gratifications theory lies in the fact that it is said to be parsimonious by nature—this means that one's use is motivated by a need (i.e., gratification) and if this effect is not derived, then there will not be media use in the first place. Ruggerio (2000) finds the uses and gratifications theory's straightforward nature appealing.

There are complications at various stages. Wimmer and Dominick (1992, cited in Kombol and Kombol, 2015) wrote that there are complications in:

- a. Media selection initiated by the individual.
- b. Expectations formed prior to use that are produced from individual predispositions, social interaction, and environmental factors.
- c. Active audiences with goal-directed media behavior.

Secondly, Elliot (1974, cited in Kombol and Kombol, 2015) wrote that the uses and gratifications theory is too individualistic because it focuses on audience consumption. Since the theory is individualistic, it makes it restrict the studies to the sample population.

2.3 EMPIRICAL REVIEW

The empirical review of this research seeks to explore existing studies and research findings related to civic engagement, particularly in the context of Eleko, online environments, and the integration of social media. This review aims to provide a foundation for understanding the current state of knowledge in the field and identifying gaps that the present study aims to address.

Numerous studies emphasize the importance of civic engagement in higher institutions. Droege and Ferrari (2012) argue that universities play a vital role in addressing societal challenges, such as poverty and governmental policies. Eleko residents are seen

as environments that should foster critical reflection and pragmatic problem-solving skills (Hartley et al., 2013). This aligns with the perspective that civic engagement contributes to the development of socially aware and community-minded individuals (Colby et al., 2000; Putnam, 1993; 2000).

The interconnectedness of online and offline worlds is a critical aspect of contemporary student experiences. For many students, online platforms like Facebook and Instagram are not viewed as escapes from their physical environment but as integral parts of their overall campus experience (Martínez Alemán & Wartman, 2009). This challenges the conventional notion that civic engagement is solely defined by offline activities, emphasizing the need to explore the potential civic roles played by online platforms.

The theoretical framework of social capital provides a lens through which to understand the relationship between social media use and civic engagement. Early research suggests that social networking site use contributes to social capital formation (Ellison et al., 2007; 2011). Social capital, in turn, is associated with civic engagement (Putnam, 2000). This theoretical perspective underscores the need to explore how online interactions among students contribute to social capital and, subsequently, civic engagement.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the total construction plan of research and the process of data collection that will assist in achieving the desired objectives of the study. It contains research design, area of study, sources of data, population of the study, sample size determination, description of the research instruments and validity of the research instruments, reliability of the research instruments and method of data analysis.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

The study will adopt a quantitative research design to examine the influence of social media on civic participation among Eleko residents. This approach allows for the collection and analysis of numerical data, providing measurable insights into the reach, effectiveness, and impact of social media on residents' civic knowledge, engagement, and behavior. Structured questionnaires will be used to gather data from a representative sample, enabling statistical analysis to identify trends, patterns, and relationships relevant to the study objectives.

3.2 RESEARCH METHOD

This study will employ secondary source of data collection by secondary source. It literally means a second-hand analysis, it is the analysis of data information that was either gathered by other researchers institution and NGOs etc or making critical reinterpretation of the available text drawn from existing document sources of secondary data are transcripts from focus, groups published texts, literatures review and observation records. Records written and kept by individuals and accessed by other people are also regarded as secondary sources.

3.3 POPULATION OF THE STUDY

Pritha (2021) Defines a population as the entire group about which you intend to draw conclusions. This perspective aligns with the general understanding of a population in research, where it serves as the total set of elements or entities being studied to derive insights.

According to Daramola (2005), Population of a study is described as the yardstick that stipulates the boundary of people to be involve in a given study. Hence, the population of this study

In this study, the population comprises youths residing in the Eleko community. These individuals represent diverse ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds, reflecting the community's rich social composition. The selected population is actively engaged with various social media platforms, making them relevant for examining how social media influences their level of civic participation. Their inclusion helps capture a broad understanding of how digital platforms are shaping civic awareness, engagement, and involvement among Eleko youths.

This shows the number of people studied in a group the study population considered here represents different ethnic and religious groups of the areas.

3.4 SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

Sample size refers to a selected portion of the population that is studied to gain insights and make generalizations about the entire group. Sampling techniques are adopted in research because they allow for accurate measurement and analysis of variables within a manageable subset of the population, ensuring that the findings remain valid and reliable.

In this study, the sample comprises indigenes and undergraduate students within the Eleko community. These individuals were chosen based on their active use of social media and their relevance to the topic of civic participation. The final sample size was not predetermined but was determined during the data collection process. Once data saturation

was achieved meaning no new information was being gathered the sample size was finalized.

The total sample size for this research was limited to 100 respondents. These participants were drawn from various ventures and social groups within Eleko to ensure a balanced representation of different backgrounds and perspectives.

sampling technique adopted for this study is the purposive sampling method, a non-probability sampling approach that allows the researcher to deliberately select participants based on specific characteristics relevant to the study. In this case, individuals were selected based on their age group (youths), active engagement with social media, and potential involvement in civic activities. This method ensures that the data collected is rich and relevant to the research objectives, especially when studying a focused subject like the influence of social media on civic participation.

3.5 INSTRUMENTATION

Instrumentation refers to the process of selecting or developing appropriate measurement tools for collecting the necessary data in a research study. To ensure the collection of reliable and valid data, it is essential to use a suitable instrument aligned with the objectives of the study.

For the purpose of this research, the primary instrument used for data collection is the questionnaire. The questionnaire was carefully designed to gather relevant information from respondents in a structured and systematic manner, ensuring consistency and accuracy in the data collected

3.6 VALIDITY OF THE INSTRUMENT

The research consists of two main variables, which are the dependent and independent variables. As in any given research, receives or consumers of media message and their perceptions of media in conflict managements and reconciliation the media has

power, serious effect and influence on our attitude, behavior and perception of the world around us.

RELIABILITY OF THE INSTRUMENT

This is by administering the instrument to a subgroup of participants at two different time points. Calculate the correlation between the responses to ensure consistency over time. Measuring internal consistency using techniques with multiple items measuring the same construct. High internal consistency indicates that the items within the instrument are measuring the concept reliably.

3.7 METHOD OF ADMINISTRATION OF THE INSTRUMENT

The research instruments for this research consist of questionnaire which served virtually as the primary instruments as in most survey researches, the instruments questionnaire is a series of relevant questions sometimes statements which are usually used to elicit information from the target population of a given study. The questionnaire selected for this study contains both structured and unstructured items and then followed by in-depth. Interview with some selected group of persons for data collections has always been questionnaire. Questionnaire is a series of relevant questions which gives full detailed information.

3.8 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis of data was based on structured research questions. Responses to the questionnaire were analyzed using simple percentage scores to identify trends and patterns. The use of a questionnaire provided a consistent and standardized method of data collection, ensuring that all respondents were presented with the same set of questions for objective comparison and analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is based on the response obtained and interpretation of the analysis is from the field. The outcome of results is presented with the use of simple percentage in a tabular form to illustrate some key variable contained in the questionnaire the respondents were one hundred (100) with the questionnaires distributed and they are grouped as followed.

4.1 DATA PRESENTATION

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Respondents	Frequently	Percentage %
Male	53	53%
Female	47	47%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025

From the above table, it indicated that 53 (53%) respondents are male while 47 (47%) respondents are females.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Age

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage %
15-25	45	45%
26-35	37	37%
36-45	12	12%
Above	6	6%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025

From the above table, it indicated that 45 (45%) respondents are of age “15 – 25”, 37 (37%) respondents are of age “26 – 35”, 12 (12%) respondents are of age “36 – 45” and 6 (6%) respondents are of age above 6.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Qualification

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
SSCE	23	23%
ND/ NCE	42	42%
HND/BSC	35	35%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025

From the above table, it indicated that 23 (23%) respondents are “SSCE”, 42 (42%) respondents are “ND/ NCE”, and 35 (35%) respondents are “HND/ B. SC”.

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents by Marital Status

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Single	61	61%
Married	33	33%
Divorce	6	6%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field work, 2025

From the above table, it indicated that 61 (61%) respondents are “Single”, 33 (33%) respondents are “Married” and 6 (6%) respondents are “Divorce”.

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents by Occupation

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Students	45	45%
Business	42	42%
Civil Servant	6	6%
Others	7	7%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025

. From the above table, it indicated that 45 (45%) respondents are “Students”, 42 (42%) respondents are into “Business”, 6 (6%) respondents are “Civil Servants” and 7 (7%) respondents are into “Other” occupations.

Table 6: how frequency do you use social media platform

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Multiple time a day	37	37%
Once a day	24	24%
Few times a week	22	22%
Once a week	10	10%
Rarely	7	7%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025

From the above table, it indicated that 37 (37%) respondents are of “MULTIPLE” and 24 (24%) respondents are of “ONCE A DAY”. And 22 (22%) respondents are of FEW TIMES A WEEK and 10(10%) respondents are of ONCE A WEEK and 7(7%) respondents are of rarely Therefore; majority of the respondents are aware of SOCIAL MEDIA.

Table 7: which social media platform do you use regularly

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Twitter	10	10%
Instagram	17	17%
TikTok	29	29%
Facebook	22	22%
Other	14	14%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025

The table above indicated that 10 (10%) respondents got to know through “twitter”, 17 (17%) respondents knew through “Instagram”, and 29 (29%) respondents knew from the “TikTok” and 22 (22%) respondents knew through Facebook 14(14%) respondents knew through Other

Table 8: do you believe online civic engagement is an important as office civic engagement

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
YES	57	57%
NO	25	25%
NOT SURE	18	18%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025

From the above table, it indicated that 57 (57%) respondents are of “YES” and 25(25%) respondents are of “NO “and 18(18%) respondents are of. NOT SURE Therefore, majority of the respondents are aware of civic engagement existence.

Table 9: How often do you engage in civic activities or discussion on social media platform

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Multiple time a day	31	31%
Once a day	25	25%
Few times a week	22	22%
once a week	5	5%
Rarely	17	17%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025

From the above table, it indicated that 31(31%) respondents are of “MULTIPLE” and 25 (25%) respondents are of “ONCE A DAY”.AND 22 (22%) respondent are of “FEW TIMES A WEEK”. and 5(5%) respondents are of ONCE A WEEK and 17(17%) respondents are of “RARELY”.

Table 10: you feel that your online interaction on social media contribute to building social connection or network?

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Strongly Agree	55	55%
Agree	32	32%
Neutral	7	7%
Disagree	6	6%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025

From the above table, it indicated that 55 (55%) respondents are of “Strongly Agree”, 32 (32%) are of “Agree”, 7 (7%) are of “Neutral”, 6 (6%) are of “Disagree” and 0 (0%) respondents are of “Strongly Disagree” respectively.

Table 11: social media use positively influence my sense of community belonging or civic responsibility?

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Strongly Agree	38	38%
Agree	45	45%
Neutral	11	11%
Disagree	6	6%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025

From the above table, it indicated that 38 (38%) respondents are of “Strongly Agree”, 45 (45%) are of “Agree”, 11 (11%) are of “Neutral”, 6 (6%) are of “Disagree” and 0 (0%) respondents are of “Strongly Disagree” respectively.

Table 12: Online civic engagement is as important as offline civic engagement?

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Strongly Agree	28	28%
Agree	33	33%
Neutral	25	25%
Disagree	10	10%
Strongly Disagree	4	4%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025

From the above table, it indicated that 28 (28%) respondents are of “Strongly Agree”, 33 (33%) are of “Agree”, 25 (25%) are of “Neutral”, 10 (10%) are of “Disagree” and 4 (4%) respondents are of “Strongly Disagree” respectively.

Table 13: Social media platforms are an important way for me to stay connected with friends and family.?

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Strongly Agree	53	53%
Agree	24	24%
Neutral	12	12%
Disagree	5	5%
Strongly Disagree	6	6%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025

From the above table, it indicated that 53 (53%) respondents are of “Strongly Agree”, 24 (24%) are of “Agree”, 12 (12%) are of “Neutral”, 5 (5%) are of “Disagree” and 6 (6%) respondents are of “Strongly Disagree” respectively.

Table 14: Engaging in traditional civic activities makes me feel more connected to the community?

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Strongly Agree	26	26%
Agree	40	40%
Neutral	19	19%
Disagree	4	4%
Strongly Disagree	11	11%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025

From the above table, it indicated that 26 (26%) respondents are of “Strongly Agree”, 40 (40%) are of “Agree”, 19 (19%) are of “Neutral”, 4 (4%) are of “Disagree” and 11 (11%) respondents are of “Strongly Disagree” respectively.

Table 15: I actively participate in traditional civic activities on campus?

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Strongly Agree	18	18%
Agree	25	35%
Neutral	27	72%
Disagree	17	17%
Strongly Disagree	12	12%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025

From the above table, it indicated that 18 (18%) respondents are of “Strongly Agree”, 25 (25%) are of “Agree”, 27 (27%) are of “Neutral”, 18 (18%) are of “Disagree” and 12 (12%) respondents are of “Strongly Disagree” respectively.

Table 16: Social media platforms are an integral part of my experience.?

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Strongly Agree	39	39%
Agree	47	47%
Neutral	8	8%
Disagree	3	3%
Strongly Disagree	3	3%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025

From the above table, it indicated that 39 (39%) respondents are of “Strongly Agree”, 47 (47%) are of “Agree”, 8 (8%) are of “Neutral”, 3 (3%) are of “Disagree” and 3 (3%) respondents are of “Strongly Disagree” respectively

Table 17: Social media has made me more likely to participate in online activism?

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Strongly Agree	40	40%
Agree	34	34%
Neutral	15	15%
Disagree	8	8%
Strongly Disagree	3	3%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025

From the above table, it indicated that 40 (40%) respondents are of “Strongly Agree”, 34 (34%) are of “Agree”, 15 (15%) are of “Neutral”, 8 (8%) are of “Disagree” and 3 (3%) respondents are of “Strongly Disagree” respectively

Table 18: Social media has provided me with a safe space to discuss civic issues?

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Strongly Agree	20	20%
Agree	34	34%
Neutral	30	30%
Disagree	11	11%
Strongly Disagree	5	5%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025

From the above table, it indicated that 20 (20%) respondents are of “Strongly Agree”, 34 (34%) are of “Agree”, 30 (30%) are of “Neutral”, 11 (11%) are of “Disagree” and 5 (5%) respondents are of “Strongly Disagree” respectively

Table 19: Social media has helped me to stay informed about current events.?

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Strongly Agree	46	46%
Agree	33	33%
Neutral	10	10%
Disagree	7	7%
Strongly Disagree	4	4%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025

From the above table, it indicated that 46 (46%) respondents are of “Strongly Agree”, 33 (33%) are of “Agree”, 10 (10%) are of “Neutral”, 7 (7%) are of “Disagree” and 4 (4%) respondents are of “Strongly Disagree” respectively

Table 20: social media has enabled me to connect with political leaders and representatives?

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Strongly Agree	19	19%
Agree	29	29%
Neutral	11	11%
Disagree	12	12%
Strongly Disagree	29	29%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025

From the above table, it indicated that 19 (19%) respondents are of “Strongly Agree”, 29 (29%) are of “Agree”, 11 (11%) are of “Neutral”, 12 (12%) are of “Disagree” and 29 (29%) respondents are of “Strongly Disagree” respectively.

4.2 ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. To what extent do residents of Eleko use social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok?

Table 7 indicates that 10% of respondents use Twitter, 17% use Instagram, 29% use TikTok, and 22% use Facebook. This suggests that social media is a significant part of their daily lives.

2. How is social media incorporated into the daily routines of Eleko residents, and what impact does it have on their interactions, both online and offline?

Table 9 shows that 31% of respondents engage in civic activities or discussions on social media multiple times a day, and 25% do so once a day. This indicates that social media is a significant platform for civic engagement and interaction. The impact of social media on interactions is also evident in Table 10, where 55% of respondents strongly agree that their online interactions on social media contribute to building social connections or networks.

3. Do residents perceive social media platforms as integral components of their Eleko experience, or do they consider them separate from their physical environment?

Table 16 shows that 39% of respondents strongly agree and 47% agree that social media platforms are an integral part of their experience. This suggests that social media is seen as an essential component of their daily lives, not separate from their physical environment.

4. Is there a seamless connection between online and offline civic engagement activities for residents of Eleko?

Table 8 shows that 57% of respondents believe online civic engagement is as important as offline civic engagement. This suggests that there is a seamless connection between the two, with online engagement complementing offline activities.

5. In what ways does social media serve as a tool for knowledge acquisition, skill development, and motivation regarding civic participation among Eleko residents?

Table 19 shows that 46% of respondents strongly agree that social media has helped them stay informed about current events. This suggests that social media is a significant source of information and knowledge acquisition. Additionally, Table 17 indicates that 40% of respondents strongly agree that social media has made them more likely to participate in online activism, indicating that social media motivates civic participation.

4.3 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The sources highlight the significant role of social media in civic engagement and community development. The studies suggest that social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are widely used by residents in Eleko, and that these platforms play a crucial role in facilitating civic engagement and community participation.

The studies also indicate that social media usage is positively correlated with civic participation. Individuals who use social media more frequently are more likely to participate in civic activities such as volunteering, attending community events, and engaging in political discourse. This suggests that social media can serve as an effective tool for mobilizing individuals and fostering active citizenship.

Furthermore, the studies suggest that social media can help overcome traditional barriers to engagement, such as geographical limitations or lack of information. This is particularly important in Eleko, where social media can provide a platform for residents to connect with each other and engage in civic activities despite physical distances.

The studies also highlight the importance of incorporating social media into community development strategies. By leveraging social media, community leaders and organizations can reach a wider audience, mobilize support for social causes, and foster a sense of community identity.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 SUMMARY

chapter 1 presents a concise summary of the research findings, integrating the insights gained from the investigation into civic engagement among Eleko residents, with a focus on the role of social media. The study explored various dimensions of social media use and its impact on civic engagement activities, both online and offline.

Chapter 2 of this study explored the role of social media in civic engagement among Eleko residents, focusing on how digital platforms influence their civic behaviors and attitudes. The study concludes that social media plays a significant role in shaping civic engagement among Eleko residents. The integration of online and offline activities suggests that digital platforms are essential for fostering civic skills and participation. Understanding the evolving nature of social media and its impact on civic behaviors is crucial for developing effective civic engagement strategies.

Chapter 3 of this research work however contain research methodology research design population of the study, sample size and sample technique, method of data gathering.

Chapter 4 of this research explained how the data gathering was analyzed for proper understanding it also contains how data were presented.

Chapter 5 of this research work study clearly summarized the whole chapter from chapter one to five also contained the conclusion and recommendation.

5.2 CONCLUSION

The findings suggest that social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are widely used and effective tools for civic engagement, information sharing, and community building.

The study highlights the importance of incorporating social media into community development strategies, leveraging its features to mobilize support for social causes, and fostering a sense of community identity. The findings also emphasize the need for organizations and individuals to adapt their communication strategies to the unique features and user demographics of different social media platforms.

social media plays a significant role in civic engagement and community development in Eleko, and its effective use can enhance civic participation, community building, and social change.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study on social media usage and civic engagement among residents in Eleko, the following recommendations are proposed

1. Educational institutions and community organizations should integrate social media literacy into their civic education curricula.
2. Community leaders and organizations should utilize social media platforms to mobilize support for community initiatives, raise awareness about local issues, and encourage civic participation.
3. Enhance digital literacy among residents by providing training on how to critically evaluate online content, identify misinformation, and use social media responsibly. This will empower residents to make informed decisions and participate more effectively in civic activities.
4. Encourage residents to use social media as a tool for activism and advocacy. Provide guidance on how to organize online campaigns, connect with political leaders, and

participate in policy discussions. This can amplify their voices and increase their impact on social issues.

5. Motivate residents to actively participate in both online and offline civic activities. Highlight the benefits of civic engagement, provide incentives for participation, and recognize contributions to community development.

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