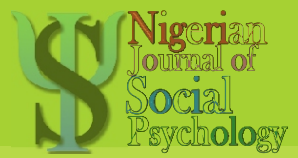


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THE ROLE OF DIGITAL TOOLS IN ENHANCING PEACE EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY CONFLICTS MANAGEMENT IN SOUTH EASTERN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the role of digital tools in enhancing peace education and community conflict management in South East Nigeria. Specifically the study is designed to; ascertain the effect of facebook in enhancing communication among individuals from various communities in South East Nigeria, investigate the effect of online newspaper in enlightening individuals on conflict resolution strategies in different communities in South East Nigeria. Survey research design was adopted for the study while purposive random sampling was used to choose Enugu Metropolis as the study area. The population for the study comprised 795,000 residents in Enugu Metropolis; while a sample of 400 respondents were sampled using Taro Yamane sampling techniques. A questionnaire designed by the researchers served as the instrument for data collection. The data gathered from the respondents were analyzed using simple percentage while Chi-square was employed as the statistical tool for testing of the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that facebook has significant positive effect in enhancing communication among individuals from different communities in South East Nigeria; online newspaper has significant positive effect in conflict resolutions in different communities in South East Nigeria. Based on the findings; the following recommendations were made; government and all stakeholders should ensure the citizens have access to internet, the government and all stakeholders should also ensure the provision of adequate infrastructure that will encourage digitalization nationwide.

Keywords: Community, Community Conflict, Peace Education, Digital Tools

INTRODUCTION

A community is a group of individuals who share common values, goals, and interests, and who interact and support one another within a specific geographic area or location (Agheyisi, 2019). It can be defined by factors such as proximity, culture, religion, or ethnicity. Communities can vary greatly in size, from small, tight-knit groups to large, diverse populations. They often have a sense of identity and belonging, and may organize social events, share resources, and provide mutual support to their members (Ifechuwude & Gibson 2021).

According to Radil et al. (2022) the role of community in national development cannot be overstated. Communities play a crucial part in shaping the future of nations, fostering growth,

and promoting unity. Communities serve as the backbone of any nation, providing a sense of belonging and identity to its citizens (Tade & Yikwabs 2020). They act as a support system, offering emotional and practical assistance to individuals in need. This sense of community fosters a sense of responsibility and empathy among its members, creating a positive and inclusive environment. By strengthening community bonds, nations can build a strong and resilient society, capable of overcoming challenges and adversity (Tade & Yikwabs 2020).

However, the incidence of community conflict had hampered the development of community and their indispensable role in national development. Communal conflicts constitute one of the major recurring problems bedeviling communities in Africa. Community conflict is not a new phenomenon particularly in Nigeria with socio cultural complex societies defined by a high number of ethnic nationalities and language groups (Christense, 2011). Many contemporary Nigeria communities have experienced several cases of communal conflicts. Some of the notable examples are listed in below in the table below (Otite, et al, 1999; Imobighe et al, 2002; Ubi, 2001; Omatayo, 2005; Best 2007). One of the common features of these conflicts has to do with their confrontational and violent dimension which led to the loss of lives and property of people who hitherto lived together in relative harmony.

Geopolitical zone	Communal conflicts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Central (also known as Middle Belt): 	Yelwa-Shendam conflict, Plateau state (2003- 2005), Mangu-Bokoss crisis Plateau State (1988-1999)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North East: 	Tiv-Jukun Wukari conflict in Taraba State(1999-2001);
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North West: 	Zango-Kataf conflict in Kaduna State (1999-2001);
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South East: 	Ezza and Ezillo of Ebonyi state, Aguleri-Umuleri of Anambra states, Oruku-Umuode communities of Enugu state
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South South (also known as Niger Delta region) 	Itsekiri-Urhobo Warri crisis, (1999-2000)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South West: 	Ife-Modakeke crisis (1999-2000)

(Ifechuwude & Gibson 2021)

From all ramifications it could be seen that the entire geopolitical zones in Nigeria had suffered one community conflict or the other. As noted by Andrews and Seetharaman (20016) community conflict had in most cases led to break down of law, resulting to economic lost to the host communities involved and the nation at large with its negative implication on food security shortage of labour supply, loss of lives, destruction of crops livestock and other valuable properties (Brown, & Livingston, 2018).

Anzalone (2013) asserts that community conflicts can arise from a variety of factors, including: Resource competition: When there are limited resources available in a community, such as water, land, or food, different groups may compete for access to these resources, leading to conflicts. Ethnic or religious tensions: Diverse communities may experience conflicts due to differences in ethnicity, religion, or cultural practices. These differences can lead to

misunderstandings, stereotypes, and animosity (Berman, et al.,2018). Political or ideological differences: Communities may experience conflicts when there are differing political or ideological views, such as disagreements over governance, social issues, or economic policies. Historical grievances: Conflicts may arise from historical events or injustices, such as colonization, slavery, or past conflicts, which can leave lasting scars and fuel resentment. While there are numerous factors that contribute to community conflicts, one often overlooked aspect is the lack of peace education.

Peace education is a curriculum-based approach that aims to teach students the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values necessary to prevent and resolve conflicts peacefully. By incorporating peace education into school curricula, students can develop a deeper understanding of different cultures, religions, and perspectives, fostering empathy and tolerance. This, in turn, can help reduce prejudice and discrimination, which are major contributors to community conflicts. Furthermore, peace education equips students with practical skills such as communication, negotiation, and problem-solving. These skills are essential for resolving conflicts in a peaceful manner and can be applied not only in the classroom but also in their personal and professional lives. By teaching students how to manage conflicts effectively, peace education helps to break the cycle of violence and promote a culture of understanding and cooperation. In addition to its benefits in preventing community conflicts, peace education also has a positive impact on individual well-being. Studies have shown that students who receive peace education training exhibit lower levels of stress, anxiety, and depression. By teaching students how to manage their emotions and respond to challenging situations in a calm and constructive manner, peace education helps to promote mental health and overall well-being

Notwithstanding several strategies had been adopted in community conflict management in Nigeria. These include mediation, adjudication, reconciliation, negotiation and education (Shah and Brown, 2014). Mediation is an old method of conflict management surrounded by secrecy. It involves the non-coercive intervention of the mediators(s), called the third party either to reduce or ... go beyond or brings the conflict to a peaceful settlement. Duursma, & Karlsrud,, (2019) described mediation as a method of conflict resolution that had been so critical to traditional society. The mediators usually endeavored that peace and harmony reigned supreme in the society at whatever level of mediation. This is also usually couched with the dictum of no victor no vanquished as buttressed by the maxim ((Duursma, & Karlsrud, 2019). Adjudication involves bringing all disputants in the conflict to a meeting usually in the chambers or compounds of family heads, quarter heads, and palace court as the case may be. The dialogue was linked with the ad judicatory processes in traditional setting (Shah and Brown, 2014). Conflict resolution it is the end product of adjudication. After the disputants have been persuaded to end the dispute, peace was restored. This restoration of peace and harmony was always anchored on the principle of giving a little and getting a little. This idea buttresses the idea of the disputing parties giving concessions. A feast was usually organized to confirm the readiness of the conflicting parties toward reaching points of compromise. At least, as characteristic of African traditional society, the conflict resolution method is the use of arbitration (Tellidis & Kappler,2016). The reconciliation function is practiced by an authority figure that mediates between conflicting parties but is empowered to make binding judgments. The purpose is not to render a judgment in law but to reconcile the conflicting parties and their norms. The relationship between the authority and the community is cushioned by community representatives who advise the authority (Shah and Brown, 2014). In negotiation, the secret is to harmonize the interests of the parties concerned. Thus, even when the conflict involves a member against his or her society, there is an emphasis on recuperation

and reinsertion of errant members back into their place in society. The recovery of a dissident member can just as well be seen as the restoration of the harmony and integrity of the community.

Yet these strategies have not yielded the expected result as community conflict seems to be on the increase. In today's world of global village drive by advancement in technology, it become imminent to explore the impact of digital tools in community conflict management and computer technology had recorded remarkable success in all human endeavor. It is based on the foregoing that the interest of the researcher was aroused to conduct an empirical study on the role of digital tools in enhancing peace education and community conflict management. Specifically the study is designed to; ascertain the effect of facebook in enhancing communication skills among individuals from various communities in South East Nigeria, investigate the effect of online newspaper in enlightening individuals on conflict resolution strategies in different communities in South East Nigeria

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Review

Community

A community is a group of individuals who share common values, goals, and interests, and who interact and support one another within a specific geographic area or location (Agheyisi, 2019). It can be defined by factors such as proximity, culture, religion, or ethnicity. Communities can vary greatly in size, from small, tight-knit groups to large, diverse populations. They often have a sense of identity and belonging, and may organize social events, share resources, and provide mutual support to their members (Ifechuwude & Gibson 2021).

According to Radil et al. (2022) the role of community in national development cannot be overstated. Communities play a crucial part in shaping the future of nations, fostering growth, and promoting unity. Communities serve as the backbone of any nation, providing a sense of belonging and identity to its citizens (Tade & Yikwabs 2020). They act as a support system, offering emotional and practical assistance to individuals in need. This sense of community fosters a sense of responsibility and empathy among its members, creating a positive and inclusive environment. By strengthening community bonds, nations can build a strong and resilient society, capable of overcoming challenges and adversity (Tade & Yikwabs 2020).

In the opinion of Fienitz & Siebert (2021) communities play a vital role in promoting economic growth and development. By coming together, individuals can pool their resources, skills, and knowledge to create innovative solutions and businesses. This collaborative approach not only stimulates entrepreneurship but also creates job opportunities, reducing unemployment rates and poverty. By supporting local businesses and initiatives, communities can contribute to the overall economic development of a nation, creating a sustainable and thriving economy.

In addition, communities also play a crucial role in preserving and promoting cultural heritage and traditions. By passing down stories, customs, and traditions from one generation to another, communities help maintain a sense of identity and cultural pride (Brosché, 2022). This sense of heritage and tradition not only enriches the cultural landscape of a nation but also acts as a unifying force, bringing people together regardless of their differences. By celebrating and embracing their unique cultural identities, communities can contribute to the rich tapestry of national culture, fostering national pride and unity.

In conclusion, the role of community in national development is multifaceted and profound. By fostering a sense of belonging, promoting economic growth, and preserving cultural heritage, communities have the power to shape the future of nations. By investing in and strengthening community bonds, nations can create a strong and resilient society, capable of overcoming challenges and achieving lasting success (Pierskalla, & Hollenbach, 2016).

Conflict

Conflict is defined as friction, disagreement, or discord that arises inside or between groups when one or more members of the group's beliefs or behaviors are either opposed or unacceptable by one or more group members or another group (Muggah, & Diniz, 2013; Okafor et al., 2023). During a conflict, the atmosphere is frequently tense, with a breach of peace or agreement between groups with opposing interests. Conflict arises when people are unsatisfied with issues that affect them, which can eventually lead to a struggle for control, dominance, or possession. Conflict management has been described using a variety of views, opinions, and domains. According to Mateeva (2013) conflict resolution is a skill that can be learned. The technique of limiting the negative parts of conflict while strengthening the beneficial aspects, according to Mutahi, & Kimari, (2017), is called conflict mediation. The methods for resolving a conflict are as varied as the dispute's origins and reasons. The goal of conflict resolution, whether done by the parties to the conflict or by an outside or neutral party, is to affect the entire structure of a conflict situation in order to prevent any potentially disastrous or destructive outcome; thus assisting the conflicting parties in finding a long-term, satisfactory, and agreeable solution.

Conflict management entails learning conflict resolution skills, self-awareness of conflict modes, conflict communication skills, and building a system for managing conflict in a specific setting. It is based on the idea that not all disputes can be resolved, and that understanding how to manage conflicts can greatly reduce the risk of unjustified escalation (Perera, 2017). Conflict management is the application of specific skills, approaches, and tactics to analyze, prevent, and manage a conflict scenario before, during, and after a conflict in order to prevent the situation from escalating to a detrimental, destructive, or disastrous end. During and after a conflict, a good conflict management method and technique are essential for restoring peace and tranquility (Shapiro, & Siegel, 2015).

Community conflict

Community conflict can either intra or inter-community conflict (Mbah & Salehyan et al. 2019; Tade & Yikwabs 2020; Edigin 2010; Dorff, Gallop, & Minhas 2020; Ifechuwude & Gibson 2021) community conflict is usually as a result of divergence of interests, values, and aspirations in the competition for resources to meet demands on social life in a defined socio-physical environment (Kwaja & Ademola-Adelehin 2017).

Given the situation of inequality in urban and rural communities, there are tendencies for potential conflicts to occur due to bitterness, anger, frustration, or hopelessness incubating between communities, social relations and individuals' conflicting interests and goals. Therefore, conflict is conditional on conflicting goals between competing and opposing groups or individuals in a rural or urban community. Thus the narratives of urban and rural conflict literature (Ann et al. 2014; Fienitz & Siebert 2021) draw to mind the open invitation to conflict because groups or individuals attempted to attain conflicting goals. Nevertheless, the recent morphology of conflicts indicates more rural conflict (Radil et al. 2022) than urban conflicts in

North and West Africa, with a 2018 study showing a record high of violent communal conflicts re-occurring each year in rural African communities between groups often organized along identity lines (Elfverson 2019). On that note, communal conflicts are between non-state groups organized along a shared community identity (Brosché, 2022), notably at the rural level.

In Nigeria, with over 250 opposing groups divided along ethnic lines, Nigeria is trapped in more complexities of a rural and communal complex conflict. Arguably, one can envision complex conflicts in a society of more groups or identities. To be sure, in a 173 active communal conflicts study, Nigeria was at the top of the six worst-hit countries after Ethiopia and Somalia. In the study, Nigeria experienced 37 unique communal conflicts during 1989-2010 (Brosche & Elfverson, 2012). In the southeast states of Nigeria comprising Anambra, Abia, Enugu, Ebonyi, and Imo states, most violent communal conflicts along identity lines take the forms of intra-ethnic or sub-ethnic conflicts, thus creating sub-ethnic conflicts in most Igboland communities. Reflecting on this, Oji, Eme and Nwoba (2015) identified the participants in these intra-ethnic conflicts as communal groups whose primary identity prevails and whose membership is not attained but ascribed. Thus, conflicts predicted in a communal context with relatively small group sizes assume the character of sub-ethnic conflicts, with 90% of all communal conflict relating to diverse claims to land rights and unclear legal clarity in Nigeria (Agheyisi 2019)

Conflict management

Conflict according to Abbas (2018) is considered as an overall socio-economic development of any society, obstacle to progress, economic prosperity and political stability. Hence, conflict must be managed properly so it does not escalate into war. Conflict can be categorized into religions, ethnic, economy, religious and political conflict among others. Galtung (2011) sees conflict as a phenomenon that is built in human societies according to deep rooted structural dysfunction such as injustice, poverty, over population, inflation, unemployment, illiteracy, endemic corruption among others. Elfverson, (2019) argues that whenever economic and political discrimination and lack of tolerance are embedded in human relationships, conflicts are bound to occur. Conflict can be defined in this paper as escalation of disagreement which is brought about by a clash of interest.

Conflict management is a process of resolving conflict through diverse approaches aimed at terminating conflict which is expected to address deep rooted sources of conflict, resolve the behavior of violence and hostility and change the structure of the conflict (Elfverson, 2019). Some of the approaches to conflict resolution are negotiation which is a discussion between two or more persons with the goal of reaching an agreement; mediation which involves a neutral third-party facilitator that negotiates an agreement; arbitration usually used in commercial and labor/management disputes, in a process of involving a third party neutral who reviews and listens to both parties and issues a decision to settle the case. All these approaches can be channeled through social media (Agheyisi, 2019). Other approaches are peer mediation among young people, community conferencing, collaborative law and negotiated rule making.

Community Peace Education

Community peace education is an approach to teaching and learning that focuses on promoting understanding, tolerance, and cooperation among individuals and groups within a community. It aims to prevent and resolve conflicts by fostering a culture of peace and non-violence (Brosché, 2022)

The goals of community peace education include:

1. Empowering individuals to become active and responsible members of their communities.
2. Promoting understanding, respect, and empathy towards others who may have different backgrounds, beliefs, or values.
3. Encouraging open and honest communication, and providing opportunities for individuals to express their concerns and ideas.
4. Teaching conflict resolution skills, such as negotiation, mediation, and problem-solving.
5. Fostering a sense of community and belonging among residents.

Community peace education can take many forms, including workshops, seminars, and community-based programs. It can be delivered in schools, community centers, places of worship, and other public spaces. The curriculum typically covers topics such as diversity and inclusion, human rights, and non-violent conflict resolution (Ajayi,2022). By promoting understanding, empathy, and cooperation, community peace education can help to create more peaceful and inclusive communities. It can also help to reduce violence, improve relationships, and enhance overall community well-being. Community peace education plays a crucial role in conflict management within communities. It is a proactive approach that focuses on promoting understanding, empathy, and cooperation among community members. By implementing peace education programs, communities can learn how to manage conflicts effectively, reducing the likelihood of violence and promoting sustainable peace.

Brosché, and Elfversson (2012) postulated that one of the key benefits of community peace education is its ability to foster understanding and empathy among community members. Through interactive workshops and discussions, participants learn about different perspectives and cultures, helping to break down barriers and reduce prejudice. By understanding and respecting each other's differences, communities can work together to find common ground and avoid misunderstandings that can lead to conflicts.

Another important aspect of community peace education is its focus on promoting non-violent conflict resolution skills (Nzube, 2023). Participants learn how to communicate effectively, listen actively, and negotiate peacefully. These skills are essential for managing conflicts in a constructive manner, preventing escalation and promoting reconciliation. By teaching these skills, community peace education helps to empower individuals and communities to manage conflicts in a positive and sustainable way (Njoku, 2021). In addition to promoting understanding and non-violent conflict resolution skills, community peace education also plays a vital role in building trust and strengthening community bonds. By bringing people together to learn and discuss peace education programs help to create a sense of community and belonging. This sense of unity and shared purpose is essential for managing conflicts and promoting sustainable peace (Oji, 2015).

In conclusion, community peace education is a powerful tool for managing conflicts and promoting sustainable peace. By fostering understanding, empathy, and non-violent conflict resolution skills, communities can learn how to manage conflicts effectively, reducing the likelihood of violence and promoting reconciliation. By investing in community peace education, communities can build a brighter future based on cooperation, understanding, and mutual respect.

Digital Tools

Digital tools also known as computer tools or software tools, or programs that assist users in performing various tasks, such as word processing, spreadsheet analysis, graphic design, and data management (Muggah, & Diniz, 2013).. These tools are designed to work on digital devices, such as computers, smartphones, and tablets, and are typically used to facilitate communication, collaboration, and information management in various contexts, including personal, educational, and professional settings (Tellidis, & Kappler, 2016). Social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, are examples of digital tools that enable users to create, share, and interact with content, including text, images, videos, and other multimedia. These platforms provide a range of features, such as messaging, commenting, liking, and sharing, which allow users to connect with others, exchange information, and engage in various forms of online collaboration

Digital tools, such as social media platforms, have transformed the way people communicate and interact with each other (Anikeze, et al, 2023, Anikeze et al, 2024), and they have become an integral part of modern life. They have made it easier for people to stay connected with friends and family, collaborate with colleagues and partners, and access news, entertainment, and other forms of information. However, they have also raised concerns about privacy, security, and the potential for negative impacts on mental health and well-being.

Digital tools and community conflict management

Digital tools are increasingly prevalent across the developing world and as such are being used in a variety of ways to prevent, prevent or address violence conflict. ICTs can be defined as ‘electronic equipment and applications that are used to find, analyse, create, communicate, disseminate and use information’ (HD, 2019). Digital tools according to Berman, et al., (2018) include mobile phones, the internet, social media platforms such as Whatsapp, Facebook and Twitter, satellites, and GIS mapping applications, and the crowdsourcing of information through these platforms. A large number of applications have been developed to gather, map and disseminate data on peace and conflict.

Duursman et al., (2019) asserts that digital tools can help gather a large volumes of information on peace and conflict that can be used to track violence and its causes. ICTs are seen to be less useful in gathering in-depth interview-style information. ICTs also have applications in preventing conflict through information or positive messaging. A number of initiatives have been undertaken by NGOs, but there are few comprehensive evaluations.

Broadly speaking, ICTs can be used in ‘vertical’ and ‘horizontal’ configurations. In the former, ICTs are used by governments to gather and analyse data from populations, or to disseminate messages. In the latter, ICTs such as mobile phones and social media are used by citizens and civil society groups to spread information between citizens, or to the government (Herbet, et al., 2019). The use to which ICTs are put also depends on models of conflict prevention and peacebuilding, which range from tracking and halting insurgent groups by force, to surveying risks and seeking to empower ordinary citizens.

Researchers have shown that ICT has a number of applications in data gathering and data presentation that can aid the management and prevention of conflict. Mobile phones and internet platforms are being used to survey risk in areas undergoing conflict or at risk of

conflict. Military peacekeeping missions have used satellite mapping on their missions to see the movements of troops or peoples (Heinzelmann et al, 2011; Larrauri, 2013; Mancini, 2013; Mutahi and Kimari, 2017; Tellidis, and Kappler, 2016).

Satellite and drone mapping technology can provide images of difficult-to-reach conflict-affected areas. While limited by factors such as cloud cover, this method can provide information otherwise unattainable. The information gathered through such mapping can take time to process. Satellite mapping also needs to be analysed, as ‘geospatial information without a corresponding political narrative can be unhelpful or even misleading, misrepresenting the timeline of events and skewing causal explanations for conflicts’ (Convergne & Snyder, 2015).

ICTs can be used to gather data on, and map, potential triggers for conflict such as resource shortages or movements of people. Data on violence is being analysed to understand patterns and causes of violence. Predictive peacekeeping is defined as ‘a range of analytic tools and peacekeeping practices that serve to forecast where and when armed violence will take place, combined with changes in peacekeeping leadership decision making — in particular deployment of peacekeeping staff — based on those forecasts’. The UN’s Situational Awareness Geospatial Enterprise (SAGE) database of events is designed to facilitate machine learning to detect patterns and predict conflict. Machine learning can analyse patterns, rarely than following pre-set rules, and can therefore help to show how ‘events and developments combine to affect outcomes’. For predictive peacekeeping to be successful, both informed theories on the likely risk factors, and meaningful data are required. In the case of Darfur, highly local data such as livestock thefts or splits in rebel groups are good predictors and are well- covered by the Joint Mission Analysis Centre (JMAC) database (Duursma & Karlsrud, 2019).

Social media produces large volumes of data on a population’s views, which can be used to predict instability and conflict, hence ICT or digital tools can provide a viable means of conflict management. Digitalization has also proven an efficient means of combating crime and insurgence as ICTs can be used by military peacekeepers or security forces to gather intelligence on rebel groups or criminal groups (Berman, Felter, & Shapiro, 2018; Muggah & Diniz, 2013).

Consequently, ICTs can be used to counter false rumours, disseminate peaceful messages, and provide a platform for peace-promoting initiatives. They work on the basis of the Ceasefire programme in Chicago that violence is a transmittable disease (Larrauri & Kahl, 2013). There are examples of ICTs being used successfully to counter hate speech and false rumours. However, these platforms may also be reliant on pre-existing networks of trust or reliable institutions.

Although ICTs can be used to trace hate speech, it is hard to define hate speech in law and governments often struggle to prosecute sites registered abroad. Moreover, the prosecution of hate speech can have the unintended consequence of making it more rather than less visible (Mutahi & Kimari, 2017)

The impact of facebook in enhancing communication among individual from different communities

In today’s digital age, social media platforms have become an integral part of our lives, and Facebook is one of the most widely used platforms. It has revolutionized the way we communicate, connect, and interact with people from various communities. This article aims to explore the impact of Facebook in enhancing communication among individuals from

different backgrounds (Dorff, Gallop, & Minhas 2020; Agheyisi 2019; Brosché, 2022; Fienitz & Siebert 2021) Facebook has made it easier for people to stay connected with friends and family members, regardless of their geographical location (Fienitz & Siebert 2021). Dorff, et al., (2020) observed that with features like messaging, calling, and video sharing, Facebook has bridged the communication gap between individuals from different parts of the world. This has not only strengthened personal relationships but has also helped in maintaining emotional connections.

Ifechuwude & Gibson (2021) noted that Facebook has played a significant role in fostering community building and networking. It has created platforms for people to come together, share ideas, and collaborate on projects. By joining Facebook groups related to their interests or hobbies, individuals can connect with like-minded people, form new relationships, and expand their social circles (Elfverson 2019). Moreover, Facebook has also become a powerful tool for disseminating information and raising awareness about social, environmental, and political issues. By sharing news articles, videos, and personal stories, individuals can educate themselves and others about important topics. This has not only increased awareness but has also inspired people to take action and make a positive impact in their communities.

In conclusion, Facebook has had a profound impact in enhancing communication among individuals from various communities. By connecting people, fostering community building, and raising awareness about important issues, Facebook has enhanced communication among individuals from different communities, this in no small way would help reduce misunderstanding and conflict among communities.

The impact of online newspaper in enlightening individuals on the possible strategies of conflict resolution

Online newspapers have become a significant source of information for individuals seeking to understand and navigate conflicts (Shapiro, & Siegel, 2015). By providing access to diverse perspectives and real-time updates, online newspapers play a crucial role in enlightening individuals on effective strategies for conflict resolution. Aday et al., (2012) noted that one of the key benefits of online newspapers is their ability to offer a wide range of viewpoints on any given issue. This diversity of opinions allows individuals to gain a more comprehensive understanding of conflicts, enabling them to approach resolution with a well-rounded perspective. On the same vein Anzalone (20-13) asserts that online news platform exposed readers to different viewpoints, online newspapers foster critical thinking skills and encourage individuals to consider multiple angles when addressing conflicts.

Furthermore, online newspapers offer real-time updates on conflicts, allowing individuals to stay informed and proactive in their approach to resolution. By providing timely information, online newspapers empower individuals to make informed decisions and take appropriate actions to address conflicts effectively. This immediacy of information is particularly crucial in situations where time is of paramount importance, such as in political or social conflicts (Brown and Livingston, 2018; Convergne and Snyder, 2015; Andrew and Seetharaman 2016). According to Berman et al., (2018) online newspapers have a significant impact on enlightening individuals on strategies for conflict resolution. By offering a diverse range of viewpoints, real-time updates, and reliable information, online newspapers empower individuals to approach conflicts with a well-informed and proactive mindset. Whether it's political, social, or environmental conflicts, online newspapers provide individuals with the knowledge and tools they need to navigate complex situations and work towards resolution.

Theoretical framework

Diffusion of Innovations Theory by Rogers 1995

This study is anchored on the diffusion of innovations theory. Through technological advancements diffusion of innovations theory strives to give an explanation on why, how and the rate at which new concepts can spread among and within the various social systems. Rogers (1995) describes diffusion of innovations as the process which invention is communicated using certain networks over a specific time period among social system members. There has been an attempt through diffusion innovation theory to give explanation of the variables that impact why and how users embrace new information medium like the internet and cell phones. The implication of this theory to this study is that it explore why the community will embrace digital tools for conflict management.

The reason why the community must embrace digital tools for conflict management is not farfetched. The conventional means of community conflict management had not yielded the expected result, and this is evidence in the upsurge of community conflict across the globe most especially in developing nations of the world. This had hindered development in the areas and also poses as a serious threat to food security.

Empirical review

Zachary (2014) examined the role played by the media in conflicts. The aim of this study was to analyze the role of media in conflict management, with reference to 2007/08 Post Election Violence in Kenya and Uasin Gishu County as a case area. The specific objectives were to establish the media accessibility level and the various types of media coverage; to establish the extent to which media escalated and/or deescalated violence during the 2007/2008 Post Election Violence; to determine how media could influence selected human factors towards conflict in the County. Both the libertarian and social responsibility theories of media reporting were analyzed to explain media roles and to develop the conceptual framework. A descriptive research design and random stratified sampling method with a sample size of 373 respondents was used. Primary data was obtained via questionnaires and in-depth interviews analyzed with Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software version 14.0 and presented in tables, charts and graphs with a brief description thereafter. The study found out that media played both conflict escalation and de-escalation roles during 2007/08 Post Election Violence. Some of the negative media roles include encouraging hate speech, running parallel tallying centers, misrepresentation of information, and incitement. Some positive roles include conducting civic education, preaching peace, fair coverage of political campaigns, and fair coverage of contentious issues during peace negotiations. The study found that media significantly influenced people based on age factor; highly influenced people based on gender factor; and moderately influenced people based on status and residence factors. However, media has low influence on people based on religious factor. The study recommends stringent measures for negative journalism while highlighting the merits of peace journalism. Some of the stringent measures recommended by the study include the adoption of a common approach in conflict reporting, the designing and enforcement of stringent regulations towards the control of vernacular FM stations, training of journalists on conflict reporting, the development of a standard conflict reporting procedure, media to be encouraged to report accurate and verified official electoral body results, and conflict reports to cut across all listeners without targeting particular groups.

In a study by Dr. Jacob et al., (2022) on the Effect of Identified Social ICT Platforms on Prevalence of Conflicts in Kenya. The study employed a descriptive survey and correlational research designs that involve collecting data from a sample of the population about people's attitudes, opinions or habits. The study was carried out in Kenya, across the counties from different respondents. Kenya is a peaceful country except with small conflicts in some areas and during political seasons. It has a population of approximately 47 million people according to KBNS (2019) census results. The sample size calculation was carried out using Fox, Hunn and

Nzube (2023) investigated communal conflicts in Southeast Nigeria: Explaining the Elites' Character in the Oruku and Umuode Sub ethnic conflict of Enugu State. The study analyses how the Igbo elite of Oruku-Umuode extraction recreated sub-ethnic conflicts in the two communities. With the help of Elite theory, the study used documentary methods to generate data and inductive analytical techniques and historical methods to analyze the data. Findings reveal that Oruku-Umuode sub-ethnic conflicts are micro conflicts of the rural community's macro trajectories, primarily exacerbated by the dominant political and economic power of Oruku and Umuode elites. Thus, the study recommends that state governments abrogate autonomous communities' land claims in Igboland.

Ajayi et al., (2022) investigated Traditional methods of conflict management And resolutions: the case of the old oyo empire. The study used an exploratory research approach, focusing on the history and Yoruba literature, academic journals on the internet, blogs, government publications and records, a variety of research reports, and individual research. The Western world regards these methods as superior for promoting peaceful coexistence. The traditional method of conflict management and resolution is thus recommended because it is less expensive and friendlier, and further national research into the causes of the 16-year-long inter-border war Ekiti-Parapo, popularly known as the Kiriji War, is also recommended for further finding.

Mathers (2009) formula, whereby 384 responds were selected. Simple random sampling was used to get the respondents from across the counties. Proportionate calculations were done to ensure that samples were selected from all the counties. The data was collected using structured and unstructured questionnaires which were formulated and sent online through open data kids and social media. Using SPSS, data was downloaded and cleaned, managed and analyzed. Reliability of the instruments was ensured using Cronbach's reliability technique while validity was checked using content validity methods. The reliability coefficient was 0.83, implying that the instrument was reliable. Data analysis was carried out using Pearson product moment correlation as regression methods to establish associations among the variables and the causal effect of social media on conflict prevalence. According to the findings, all the identified platforms significantly contribute to the prevalence of Conflicts in Kenya as concluded in the subsequent paragraphs. From the study's first objective, Facebook, apart from promoting social norms, businesses and the economy, its impacts are negative. It highly contributes to heighten conflict in conflict prevalence areas. WhatsApp is another ICT platform that has rapidly grown, gaining momentum due to its ability to bring different groups together. Its effect on the society is both positive and negative depending on its usage. This paper has emerged that WhatsApp is widely used and negatively contributes to the conflicts by increasing. Thus, WhatsApp has increased the prevalence of conflicts in Kenya.

Gap in literature

Previous literature had centered on the impact of social media in conflict resolution most especially in foreign countries, they had so neglected to investigate the impact of social media in conflict management in Nigeria most especially in Enugu State. It was as a result of scarcity of literature on the impact of social media on community conflict management especially in Enugu State that the researcher intend to carry out this empirical studies to fill in the gap in literature on impact of social media on community conflict management in Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

Survey research design was adopted for the study while purposive random sampling was used to choose Enugu Metropolis as the study area. The population for the study comprised 795,000 residents in Enugu Metropolis; while a sample of 400 respondents were sampled using Taro Yamane sampling techniques. A questionnaire designed by the researchers served as the instrument for data collection. The data gathered from the respondents were analyzed using simple percentage while Chi-square was employed as the statistical tool for testing of the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance

Data Presentation and Analysis

This is the statistical presentation of the respondents' view to the research question.

Research Question 1: What is the effect of facebook in enhancing communication among individuals from various communities in South East Nigeria?

Table 1.1: effect of facebook in enhancing communication among individuals from various communities in South East Nigeria

Effect of Facebook in enhancing communication among individuals from various communities in South East Nigeria	Frequency	Percent
Facebook has made it easier for people to stay in touch with friends and family, regardless of their geographical location which enhance peace and harmony among individuals	87	21.75
With features like messaging, calling and videos, Facebook has helped to bridge the communication gap and maintain relationship that would have been difficult to sustain	78	19.50
Facebook has provide a platform for people to share their thoughts, ideas, and opinions with a global audience enhancing effective communication and speedy transfer of information	71	17.75
Through posts, comments, and groups users can engaged in peace talk to iron out their difference	102	25.50

Facebook has conquered barrier distance in communication among individuals from different communities.	62	15.50
Total	400	100

Source: Researcher’s field survey, 2024

From the finding of table 1.1, 21.75% of the respondents were of the opinion that facebook has made it easier for people to stay in touch with friends and family regardless of their geographical location which enhance peace and harmony among individuals, 19.50% of the respondents were of the view that with features like messaging, calling, and videos, facebook has helped to bridge the communication gap and maintain peaceful relationship that would have been difficult to sustain, 17.75% of the respondents concurred that facebook has provide a platform for people to share their thoughts, ideas, and opinions with a global audience enhancing effective communication and speedy transfer of information, while 25.5% of the respondents believed that through posts, comments and groups users can engaged in peace talk to iron out their difference, finally 15.50% of the respondents asserts that facebook has conquered barrier distance in communication among individual from different communities. The findings of the table therefore revealed that Fulani Herdsmen activities had significant effect on food production in the study areas.

Research Question 2: What are the effects of online newspaper in enlightening individual on conflict resolution in different communities in South East?

Table 1.2: effect on online newspaper in conflict resolution in different communities in South East

effect on online newspaper in conflict resolution in different communities in South East	Frequency	Percent
Online newspaper provides a platform for different perspectives to be heard, allowing for a more informed and nuanced understanding of conflict.	98	24.50
Online newspaper facilitate dialogue and encourage people to engage in constructive discussion which can helps to reduce tension and promote understanding	83	20.75
Online newspaper provides a platform for individuals and groups to express their opinions and concerns regarding a conflict. This can create public pressure on conflicting parties to address the issues at hand.	56	14
Online newspaper with features like comment sections or forums where readers can engage in discussions about the conflict covered foster dialogue between individuals from different backgrounds, promoting understanding and empathy	98	24.50
Online newspaper promotes constructive dialogue which can contribute to conflict resolution by	65	16.25

encouraging the exchange of ideas and facilitating negotiations between conflicting parties.

Total 400 100

Source: Researcher’s Field Survey, 2024

From the findings of table 1.2, 24.50% of the respondents agreed that online newspaper provides a platform for different perspective to be heard, allowing for a more informed and nuanced understanding of conflict, 20.75% of the respondents were of the opinion that online newspaper facilitate dialogue and encourage people to engage in constructive discussion which can help to reduce tension and promote understanding, 14% believed that online newspaper provide a platform for individuals and groups to express their opinions and concerns regarding a conflict. This can create public pressure on conflicting parties to address the issues at hand, 24.40% still believe that online newspaper with features like comments sections or forum where readers can engage in discussion about the conflict covered, foster dialogue between individuals from different backgrounds, promoting understanding and empathy, and finally, 16.25% of the respondents asserts that online newspaper promotes constructive dialogue which can contribute to conflict resolution by encouraging the exchange of ideas and facilitating negotiations between conflict parties. From the findings of the table above, it could be inferred that online newspaper has positive effect in enhancing communication among individuals from various communities in South East Nigeria.

Test of Hypotheses

The hypotheses were tested using the chi-square statistical tool

Hypothesis I

H0₁: facebook has no significant positive effect in enhancing communication among individuals from various communities in South East Nigeria

Table 1.1 was used for testing hypothesis I

Effect of Facebook in enhancing communication among individuals from various communities in South East Nigeria	Frequency	Percent
Facebook has made it easier for people to stay in touch with friends and family, regardless of their geographical location which enhance peace and harmony among individuals	87	21.75
With features like messaging, calling and videos, Facebook has helped to bridge the communication gap and maintain relationship that would have been difficult to sustain	78	19.50
Facebook has provide a platform for people to share their thoughts, ideas, and opinions with a global audience enhancing effective communication and speedy transfer of information	71	17.75
Through posts, comments, and groups users can engaged in peace talk to iron out their difference	102	25.50
Facebook has conquered barrier distance in communication among individuals from different communities.	62	15.50

Total	400	100
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Source: Researchers' field survey 2024

Table 1.3: Chi Square table for testing Hypothesis I

O	E	(O-e)	(O-e) ²	(O-e) ² E
87	80	7	49	0.51
78	80	-2	4	0.05
71	80	-9	81	1.01
102	80	22	484	6.05
62	80	18	324	4.05
400				11.67

Table value = 5.991, calculated value = 11.67

Decision: Since the calculated value (11.67) is greater than the table value (5.99), the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that facebook has significant positive effect in enhancing communication among individuals from various communities in South East Nigeria.

Hypothesis II

H0: Online newspaper has no significant positive effect on conflict resolution in different communities in South East

Table 1.2 was used for testing hypothesis II

effect on online newspaper in conflict resolution in different communities in South East	Frequency	Percent
Online newspaper provides a platform for different perspectives to be heard, allowing for a more informed and nuanced understanding of conflict.	98	24.50
Online newspaper facilitate dialogue and encourage people to engage in constructive discussion which can helps to reduce tension and promote understanding	83	20.75
Online newspaper provides a platform for individuals and groups to express their opinions and concerns regarding a conflict. This can create public pressure on conflicting parties to address the issues at hand.	56	14
Online newspaper with features like comment sections or forums where readers can engage in discussions about the conflict covered foster dialogue between individuals from	98	24.50

different backgrounds, promoting understanding and empathy		
Online newspaper promotes constructive dialogue which can contribute to conflict resolution by encouraging the exchange of ideas and facilitating negotiations between conflicting parties.	65	16.25
Total	400	100

Source: Researchers' Field Survey, 2024.

Table 1.4: Chi Square table for testing Hypothesis II

O	E	(O-e)	(O-e) ²	(O-e) ² E
98	80	18	324	4.05
83	80	3	9	0.11
56	80	-24	576	7.2
98	80	18	324	4.05
65	80	-15	225	2.81
400				18.22

Table value = 5.991, calculated value = 18.22

Decision: Since the calculated value (18.22) is greater than the table value (5.99), the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that online newspaper has significant positive effect on conflict resolution in different communities in South East

Summary of the findings

The findings of this study could be summarized as follows

1. facebook has significant positive effect in enhancing communication among individuals from various communities in South East Nigeria.
2. online newspaper has significant positive effect on conflict resolution in different communities in South East

Conclusion

Though social media has the propensity of escalating conflict by propagating false information and hate speech, it can invariable offer an indispensable tool in community conflict management by providing platform for virtual peace talk, dispute resolution and inclusive community discussion. Digital technology can provide a viable means of monitoring and detecting the early signal of conflict thereby nipping the conflict at the bud. This will help prevent the wastage of resource geared towards cushioning the after effect of conflict.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made;

1. community should utilize social media platform for virtual community meeting for peaceful talk, deliberation of vital issues and spreading of important information
2. online newspaper and website site that propagate false information and hate speech should be fished out and punished accordingly to serve as a deterrent to others who may indulge in online publication of false information, or seditious contents capable of instigating conflict.

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