SOCIAL MEDIA AND WOMEN ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN NIGERIA: AN ASSESSMENT

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Abstract
The call for gender equality and women empowerment has taken the centre stage in recent times. Women now want to be seen as active players in the society, rather than hidden supporters in the ordering of events. As it stands, it has been 106 years after the first international women's conference in Copenhagen, Denmark, in 1910, touched the issue of women empowerment (Deniz, 2010). The question is; with the increase in social media usage, do we now have new answers on women empowerment or are new questions being raised? The analysis of data collected through survey method from 385 respondents reveals that social media produce new answers on women empowerment.

Keywords: Social Media, Usage and Women Empowerment

Introduction
In recent times, the social media which was ordinarily created to enhance a close form of communication between and among friends and families has been put to different use. The social media can be used for political, economic, health, religious and other purposes. Social media is the set of Web-based broadcast technologies that enable the democratization of content, giving people the ability to emerge from consumers of content to publishers'. It can also be explained as 'websites and applications used for social networking'. In turn, social networking means 'the use of

dedicated websites and applications to communicate with other users, or to find people with similar interests to one's own'. For many this will intuitively make sense, based on their personal experience, the experience of others around them, or what they have heard or seen in the media. However, social media have evolved to include other tools and practices that were not conceived of only a few years or even a few months ago (Jacka & Scott, 2011).

The ABC (2011) explained that social media encapsulates digital tools and activities that enable communication and sharing across the net ... Social media is used prolifically by all areas of society; business, politics, media, advertising, police and emergency services. It has also become a key tool for provoking thought, dialogue and action around particular social issues'.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) further argue that the development of a systematic classification scheme for social media can be difficult, as new sites appear every day. They rely on the field of media research and have decided that social media have two key elements that can be used to classify them to some extent: social presence / media richness on the one hand, and self-presentation / self-disclosure on the other.To demonstrate, they have combined the two classifications into a table that illustrates their arguments.

Kaplan and Haenlein's categorisation of social media is adopted here to enable discussion about the various types:

Collaborative projects enable the joint and simultaneous creation of content by many users. Examples include various 'wikis', such as Wikipedia. Some of these sites allow users to add, remove and change content; others area form of 'social bookmarking', in that they allow the group-based collection andrating of internet links or media content.

Blogs – the earliest form of social media – grew from personal web pages and usually display date-stamped entries in reverse chronological order. Text-based varieties are still very popular.

Content communitieshave as their main purpose the sharing of media content between users, including text (e.g. Bookcrossing), photographs (Flickr), videos (YouTube) and PowerPoint presentations (SlideShare). Users are not usually required to create a personal profile page.

Social networking sitesallow users to connect by creating personal information profiles and inviting friends and colleagues to have access to the profile and to send

emails and instant messages. Profiles usually include photographs, videos, audio files,blogs and so on. Facebook and Myspace are examples of social networking sites.

Virtual game world are platforms that replicate a three-dimensional environment in which users appear in the form of personalized avatars and interact according to the rules of the game. They have gained popularity with the support of devices such as Microsoft's Xbox and Sony's PlayStation. An example is World of Warcraft.

Virtual social worldsallow inhabitants to choose behavior more freely and to live (in the form of avatars) in a virtual world similar to their real life. An example is Second Life

According to Hendricks (2013), the roots of social media stretch far deeper than one might imagine. Although it seems like a new trend, sites like Facebook are the natural outcome of many centuries of social media development. Technology began to change very rapidly in the 20th Century. After the first super computers were created in the 1940s, scientists and engineers began to develop ways to create networks between those computers, and this would later lead to the birth of the Internet. The earliest forms of the Internet, such as CompuServe, were developed in the 1960s. Primitive forms of email were also developed during this time. By the 70s, networking technology had improved, and 1979's UseNet allowed users to communicate through a virtual newsletter. The first recognizable social media site, Six Degrees, was created in 1997. It enabled users to upload a profile and make friends with other users. In 1999, the first blogging sites became popular, creating a social media sensation that's still popular today.

After the invention of blogging, social media began to explode in popularity. Sites like MySpace and LinkedIn gained prominence in the early 2000s, and sites like Photobucket and Flickr facilitated online photo sharing. YouTube came out in 2005, creating an entirely new way for people to communicate and share with each other across great distances.By 2006, Facebook and Twitter both became available to users throughout the world. These sites remain some of the most popular social networks on the Internet. Other sites like Tumblr, Spotify, Foursquare and Pinterest began popping up to fill specific social networking niches.Today, there is a tremendous variety of social networking sites, and many of them can be linked to allow cross-posting. This creates an environment where users can reach the maximum number of people without sacrificing the intimacy of person-to-person communication.

Mayoux [2001]. Empowerment is also related to the process of internal change and to the capacity and right to makedecisions. It consists of change, choice and power. It is a process of change by which individuals or groups with little or no power gain the

ability to make choices that affect their lives. The structures of power (i.e. who has it, what its sources are, and how it is exercised) directly affect the choices that women are able to make in their lives. Malhotra, et.al (2002) view of women's empowerment argues that it needs to occur in multiple dimensions: economic, socio-cultural, familial/ interpersonal, legal, political and psychological. These dimensions cover a broad range of factors, and thus women may be empowered within one of these sub domains. For instance, the socio cultural dimension covers a range of empowerment sub domains, such as marriage systems, norms regarding women's physical mobility, non-familial social support systems and networks available to women.

The role of social media in the empowerment of women is a little explored phenomenon.Studies to date suggest that women are utilizing social media in a variety of ways and that entrepreneurs are using social media to grow their businesses. The goal here is to offer a conceptual framework for understanding key relationships that lead to the empowerment of women entrepreneurs in emerging economies. The proposed conceptual model is comprised of four major constructs: social media, self-efficacy, social capital, and empowerment. Social media impacts both a woman entrepreneur's social efficacy and her social capital, ultimately resulting in feelings of empowerment that enable productive gains in the entrepreneurial world. [Ajjan 2014]. Women all over the world is currently utilizing the social media to grow their business; thereby empowering women economically. Presently there are over 50 successful female bloggers and website owners like Linda Ikeji, ReeDrumond, Jenny Lawson, UcheEze to mention but a view. Therefore women have been economically empowered by the social media.

Statement of research problem
Empowerment is "the expansion in people's ability to make strategic life choices ina context where this ability was previously denied to them" (Kabeer, 1999, p. 437). Empowerment is both a process and an outcome for women and refers to the ability of women to make decisions and affect events around them, benefit from resources and opportunities, exercise control over their own lives and bodies, and have a voice in public life and decision-making which results in increased autonomy and improved well-being (Malhotra & Schuler, 2005).Increased access to information through social media can also improve a woman's capacity to envision alternative options to make meaningful choices (Alsop &Heinsohn, 2005).

Therefore this study seeks to find out the influence of social media in empowering women economically.

Objectives of the study
This study sought to:

1. To examine the knowledge of women on social media
2. To examine the extent social media is used by women for economic empowerment.
3. To examine the attitude of individuals towards women empowered by the social media
4. Find out the view of social media usage for economic empowerment among women.

Research Questions

1. To examine the level of knowledge level by women on social media
2. To what extent is social media used for women empowerment?
3. What is the attitude of individuals towards women empowered by social media
4. What is the prospect of social media usage for empowerment among women?

Literature Review

Ajjan [2014] in a study Empowering women entrepreneurs in Emerging economies stated that cyberfeminism is a woman-centered perspective that advocates women's use of new information and communications technologies for empowerment. The paper explored the role of information technologies, in particular the role of social media, in empowering women entrepreneurship in emerging economies via increased social capital and improved self-efficacy. A conceptual model is offered and propositions are explicated.The study concluded stating that having access to information through social media can improve a woman's capacity to envision and alternative and alternative options to making right choices.

In another related study by Sadaqat [2011]. The paper titled Gender equality and socio economic development through woman's empowerment in Pakistan made an effort to recognize and measure the set of main socio economic and political determinants of women's empowerment. It is based on a cross-sectional data, collected by the Applied Economics Research Centre (AERC) in four provinces ofPakistan. Four different indices were developed by using the magnitudes of woman's economic and household decision making, and physical mobility and political participation factors. A cumulative index of woman's empowerment has developed by summing up the scores of each index together. The empirical analysis of this showed that about 35.9% women have lower, 54.1% have moderate and only 10% women have a high level of empowerment. Age of woman, level of schooling, working status, monthly earnings, access to economic credit, bank accounts, assets, investments in different saving schemes, area of residence and access to social media are positive and statistically significant, and matrimonial position, number of children, household structure, ownership by husband, hijab(veil)observance and

time management have shown significantly negative impact on women's empowerment.

Large segments of the population have been empowered by the sweeping societal and political transformations in the Arab region, where women became the main drivers for regional change and more engaged in civic and political actions and took over a leading role in the historic changes sweeping over the region. However, at the regional and global levels reached a debate about the role of social media in these transformations, making it to the policy making circles.

From the data generated, it appears that the most popular use for social media as a tool of empowerment being communication and self expression is followed by civic participation and social change. It was found at that more men (65%) than women (62%) believed that social media can be used for the political empowerment of women (Dubai School of Government Report, 2011).

Initially, people thought that the advent of the new media will force the traditional mass media to fizzle out. Several years have passed only for people to come to the understanding that the new media have come to exist side-by-side with the traditional mass media. Chris (2013) noted that the year 1990 made the Internet a rallying point for most political activities. Unlike before, political parties and politicians, including advertising firms and individuals see the Internet as a fertile ground to advance political discourse, campaigns and to communicate to their publics at a lower cost than mainstream media without ownership interference, government hindrances, heavy monitoring and allocation for air space and time. The Pew Internet & American Life Project noted that the Obama campaign of 2008 experienced the highest patronage of the social media, for which over 55% of all Americans went online for information about the campaign. The fact that Obama rejected government fund for the sponsor of his campaign made the Internet more viable as an avenue for raising fund for his campaign. During this period, 45% saw an online video related to the campaign. These online videos were designed in such a way that the Internet based commercials are different from the mainstream media commercials (Chris, 2013).

A look at the advertisements in the mainstream media and social media, in Nigeria, will also reveal a significant difference in their design, length and placement. The social media content is not usually limited by time and space, but it is packaged to capture and retain the interest of the viewers. More information is usually given in the form of evidence provided. This is possible due to the extra pages that open when

a particular advertisement is click on.

The mainstream media, especially TV has been called a "push" medium, because the viewers are passive audience. The Internet, however, has been called a "pull" medium that entails the prompt participation of users in their choice of links to click or website to visit or commercials to view. Therefore, social media advertisements need to be more interesting, persuasive, convincing and entertaining in order to attract and retain attention (Owen, 2007: Brownstein, 2008: Smith, 2010).

A similar study in the area of political campaigns has indicted the changing trend in the area of political campaigns to include the use of the Internet for political purposes. The paper titled **"Trends in Political Communication in Hungary: A Postcommunist Experience Twenty Years after the Fall of Dictatorship" written by Gabriella Szabó and Balázs Kiss** highlights the trends of political communications (PC) that have arisen in Hungary after the collapse of communist regime (1989). The authors have identified four main trends in the field of political campaigns. First is called *fragmentation which has to do with* the multiplication of political campaign channels and means, Internet, Web 2.0, fragmentation of content, amateurism in political campaigns. This means that more channels have been opened for the running of political campaigns. The second is the *post-objectivity*, which is the end of the requirement of unbiased and balanced coverage, more emphasis on the rise of opinion, on media as community focal point rather than window to the objective reality. This aspect sees the gradual decline of objectivity in most reports on political issues. The third is the *performative, which* looks at the representation of self, a strong focus on act, dramaturgy, and aesthetics. The performance of the political player becomes the focus of political campaigns. Here, the achievements or past records are used as instrument of persuasion in the political message. The last point raised by the authors is the *popularization*, which is the convergence of popular culture and politics, fan democracy, entertaining politics, involvement of citizens and so on (Szabo& Kiss, 2012).

Janet Takens, Wouter van Atteveldt, Anita van Hoof and Jan Kleinnijenhuis carried out a study titled "Media logic in election campaign coverage", which noted   that "the content of political news is the product of news values and format requirements that media make use of to attract news consumers" (**Takens, Atteveldt, Hoof &Kleinnijenhuis, 2013, p. 277**). Their study tests whether three content characteristics – personalized, contest and negative coverage – manifest a single media logic by analysing whether they co-vary over time. It also tests the implicit assumption underlying the media logic thesis that media adhere to a single media logic as one institution. A semantic network analysis measured the degree to which television and newspaper coverage of five Dutch national election campaigns (1998–2010) contained the three content characteristics. The study shows that

"personalized, contest and negative coverage form three indicators of a single logic that is shared by different media. Since the turn of the century, Dutch political news has simultaneously become decreasingly personalized, less focused on the contest and less negative" (**Takens, Atteveldt, Hoof & Kleinnijenhuis, 2013, p. 277**).

The differences inherent in mainstream media and social media are made manifest in the study titled "A Functional Analysis Comparison of Web-Only Advertisements and Traditional Television Advertisements from the 2004 and 2008 Presidential Campaigns", which was carried out by Chris Roberts in 2013. It was found that there could be differences in the commercials placed on mainstream media and social media. The study first sought to find out, through content analysis, if there are differences in the commercials post on the Internet and television. This, the study aimed to achieve through the use of the functional theory of campaign discourse developed by Benoit in 2007. In the course of doing this, the researcher examined 75 web-only video ads and 742 television ads created by candidates and national parties during the 2004 and 2008 presidential campaigns. It was found that Internet based commercials were more likely to differ from television commercials on politics (Chris, 2013).

In a similar study carried out by Sid Bedingfield and DienAnshari in 2014 titled "Thinking about Romney: Frame Building in a Battleground State in the 2012 Presidential Election" which investigated the framing of Mitt Romney in a key battleground state during the 2012 presidential election, campaign officials and political journalists contend that attacks launched by President Obama in late spring defined Romney for the remainder of the campaign. This study again places more emphasis on the problem of attack during campaigns. The attack on Romney was so heavy that he lost the election. During this campaign, Obama made heavy use of the internet and mainstream media. The results of the study revealed that partial support for this claim by revealing increased use of negative media frames after the attacks began. Specifically, framing of Romney as a "vulture capitalist" increased significantly during the Obama frame-building effort (Bedingfield & Anshari, 2014).

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on technological determinism theory because according to Lievrouw and Livingstone (2006), technological determinism is "the belief that technologies have an overwhelming power to drive human actions" which leads to social change.

Technological determinism: The technological determinism theory is a member of the family of theories known as medium theories. These theories, according to Potts (2010) propose that the most significant cultural and social effects of media derive from the intrinsic properties of the media themselves. He, however, explains that the

impact of digital information and networking should provoke a reconsideration of medium theory, the oldest of which is technological determinism theory proposed by Marshal McLuhan in the 1960s. Its antecedents in western thought have been identified either in support or in criticism of its controversial claims.

The Basic Assumptions of the Theory are:
- The message of any medium is the change of scale or pace or pattern that it introduces into human affairs.
- That each new medium of communication alters the patterns of perception steadily and without any resistance (McLuhan 1974, p. 27).
- That this affects the individual engagement with the medium.
- That the technology of any medium will affect the cognitive functions of those who use it, thereby causing inevitable change in culture.
- That some media have hot properties while others have cool properties which help to affect the cognitive functions of the users.

The birth of the internet and its globalizing influence gave impetus to arguments in favour of technological determinism.

The assumption that each new medium of communication alters the patterns of perception and that this affects individuals engagement with the medium holds true for the internet whether accessed through a desk-top computer, laptop or a telephone handset. Individuals are now emphasizing mobility and portability as a new pattern of engagement due to the properties of new media. It is now possible to read one's book through a handheld computer, listen to the reading of the same book while taking a walk, or view and listen at the same time. These changes have also led to inevitable change in the way people consume media services. We now have cyber cafes, online forums, online learning communities and online book clubs made possible by new media. It is now possible to hold video conferences with people in 150 countries at the same time.

Methodology
The study used survey research design. Survey allow for the study of people's opinion on a given issue of public interest. According to Onwukwe (2011), survey research deals with the data gathering for the purpose of describing and interpreting a certain condition, practice, beliefs, attitudes, etc. It has to do with administering questionnaires personally to gather data, and collecting them back from the various respondents in other to analyze the data for a better result. The purpose is usually to describe systematically the facts, qualities or characteristics of a given population, events, or areas of interest concerning the problem under investigation.

The study was carried out in Enugu metropolis, Enugu State as the epicenter of the

Southeast, where people with certain level of literacy will be systematically sampled in other to get their answers and reactions to the extent social media have been used for women empowerment. Some of the important towns in the State are Enugu Urban, Oji, Udi and Nsukka Urban. According to Enete and Alabi (2012, p.77), Enugu Urban which is the study area is made up of Enugu East, Enugu North and Enugu South. Enugu Urban is the educational, commercial, industrial and administrative base of Enugu State. There are 17 prominent residential areas in Enugu Urban. These are: Enugu East: Abakpa, Trans-Ekulu, Nike and Emene; Enugu North: GRA, Ogui, Asata, New Heaven, Ogbete, Iva Valley and Independence Layout; Enugu South: Achara Layout, Ugwuaji, Maryland, Awkanaw, Uwani and Obiagu (Ogui New Layout).

The population of this study consisted of residents in Enugu Urban area.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA	POPULATION
Enugu East	279,089
Enugu North	244,852
Enugu South	198,723
Total	722,664

Source: National Population Commission (Census 2006)

Given Taro Yamani's formula, the sample size for this study was 392. To determine the copies of questionnaire to be administered to each of the 17 areas in Enugu Urban, the researchers used non-proportionate quota sampling technique, since the exact population of each of the areas are not known. This method is used when it is important to ensure that a number of sub-groups in the field of study are well covered, you specify the minimum number of sampled units you want in each category, by dividing the number of the sub-groups with the determined sample size of the study (Slide Share, 2016). The measuring instrument in gathering information for this study was questionnaire. The questionnaire had close-ended questions. The close-ended questions were used to make study easier for the researcher by making the responses measurable.

The researcher considered it best and appropriate to make use of frequency table presentation, charts and simple percentages, while simple descriptive analysis was used to infer meaning from data in the table for analysis for the results to be easily understood by both academicians and non-academicians.

Data Presentation and Analysis
Out of the 392copies of the questionnaires distributed, only 382 were returned usable. These were the copies analyzed and presented for the discussion of findings

Research question one: assessing the level of knowledge
The analyses of table one below indicates that majority of the women respondents have knowledgeable about the social media platform. This was made evident from the fact that 94.5% of the women Knowledge about social media is very high.

Data presentation showed that 361 (94.5%) respondents' said yes they are knowledgeable and that they have social media account; Whatsapp, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Internet etc, 16 (4.2%) respondents' said no, while 5(1.3%) respondents' Knowledge about social media was

Table 1: Assessing the level of knowledge

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Very high	361	94.5%
Moderate	16	4.2%
Low	5	1.3%
Total	**382**	**100%**

Research Question two: To what extent is social media used for women empowerment?
The findings of data revealed that 57.1% of women use the social media for empowerment purposes.
 The analysis of data in table two below revealed that 96 (25.1%) respondents said they use their social media account to access information relating to women's empowerment to a large extent, 218 (57.1%) respondents said moderate, 7 (1.8%) respondents said to a low extent, while 61(16%) respondents were indifferent as to whether they use their social media account to access information relating to women's empowerment.

Table 3: Analyzing the extent social media is used for women empowerment

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Large extent	96	25.1%
Moderate	218	57.1%
Low extent	7	1.8 %
Can't say	61	16%
Total	**382**	**100%**

Research question 3: What is the attitude of individuals towards women empowered by social media?
The findings revealed that attitude of individuals towards women empowered the social media is favorable. The data revealed that 73.2% was favorable, that means that people are quite supportive when women are economically empowered by the social media. 8.4% are unfavorable while 18.3% indifferent

Table 3: Analyzing the attitude

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Favourable	280	73.2%
Unfavourable	32	8.4%
Indifferent	70	18.3%
Total	**382**	**100%**

Research question 4: What is the view of social media usage for empowerment among women?
Individuals view the social media usage by women as necessary since 53.4% indicates that that social media usage by women are necessary while 2.1% feels that is it unnecessary and 44.5% cannot say their opinion about it.

Item	Frequency	percentage
Necessary	204	53.4%
Unnecessary	8	2.1%
Can't say	170	44.5%
Total	382	100%

Discussion of Findings

The analyses of table one below indicates that majority of the women respondents are knowledgeable about social media. This was made evident from the fact that 94.5% of the women said they have social media account. Data presentation showed that 361 (94.5%) respondents' said yes that they have social media account; Whatsapp, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Internet etc, 16 (4.2%) respondents' said no, while 5(1.3%) respondents' were indifferent as to whether they have a social media account.

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The findings of the research question three revealed that attitude of individuals towards women empowered by the social media is positive. 280 respondents has positive attitude while 70 respondents are indifferent; therefore they don't pay attention to social media empowering women economically.

The findings of the research question four revealed that social media usage by women is necessary because it empowers them and it is an avenue for the voices of women to be heard.

Conclusion

The findings of this study revealed 57.1% of women used social media to become entrepreneurs there by empowering themselves economically; therefore the voice of women are being heard with the influence of the social media.

Recommendations

It was recommended that women should continue to use the social media platform to pursue matters in their interest in order to have their voices heard. In this era where everyone is being advised to be entrepreneurs women should always use the platform provided for them to empower themselves economically.

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