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Leveraging Social Media for Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship in Enugu State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study explores the role of social media in job creation among youths in Enugu State, Nigeria. The objectives include identifying the types of jobs created through social media, assessing its economic impact on youth employment, examining challenges faced by young entrepreneurs leveraging social media, and providing recommendations for optimizing social media use for job creation. The study adopts a descriptive survey research design, sampling 400 respondents aged 18-35. The research is anchored on the Diffusion of Innovations Theory and the Uses and Gratifications Theory. Statistical analysis was conducted to test hypotheses and draw conclusions. The findings reveal that social media serves as a vital tool for employment generation, providing opportunities for networking, job-seeking, skill acquisition, and business promotion. Platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram facilitate job searches and networking, while YouTube and WhatsApp support digital learning and entrepreneurship. However, significant barriers—such as digital illiteracy, unstable internet connectivity, and limited financial resources—hinder the full realization of social media's potential in job creation. The study underscores the need for strategic interventions, including digital literacy programs, improved internet infrastructure, and access to financial support, to enhance youth employment prospects through social media. The findings provide practical insights for policymakers, educators, and digital platform developers in fostering sustainable employment solutions through digital innovation.

Keywords:

Social Media,

Job Creation,

Youth Employment,

Digital Economy,

Entrepreneurship

Introduction

The advent of social media has transformed various aspects of human life, including employment and entrepreneurship. Social media platforms have become crucial tools for business promotion, networking, skill acquisition, and job seeking, especially among young people.

According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), social media refers to a group of internet-based applications that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. In Nigeria, the youth population has increasingly leveraged these platforms to create employment opportunities, despite economic challenges (Nwabueze & Okonkwo, 2020).

Unemployment among youths remains a pressing issue in Nigeria, with many graduates struggling to find jobs in the formal sector (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022). However, social media platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp have emerged as viable alternatives for job creation.

These platforms provide opportunities for business startups, freelance work, digital marketing, and networking (Eze & Chinedu, 2021). Despite these advantages, challenges such as digital illiteracy, unstable internet connectivity, and financial constraints hinder the full utilization of social media for employment generation (Adebayo & Olanrewaju, 2019).

This study investigates the role of social media in job creation among youths in Enugu State, Nigeria. Specifically, it identifies the types of jobs created through social media, examines their economic impact, explores the challenges faced by young entrepreneurs, and offers recommendations for better utilization of these platforms.

Related Works

Several studies have examined the impact of social media on job creation and entrepreneurship. For instance, Olorunfemi and Adeyemi (2019) found that social media significantly contributes to business growth among young entrepreneurs in Nigeria by offering a cost-effective means of advertising and customer engagement.

Similarly, Afolabi and Ilesanmi (2020) highlighted that platforms such as LinkedIn are instrumental in professional networking and job search, increasing employment prospects for Nigerian youths.

Furthermore, research by Okeke et al. (2021) emphasized that social media enhances skill acquisition through online tutorials, webinars, and digital courses. The study revealed that platforms like YouTube and Instagram have enabled many Nigerian youths to develop skills in photography, digital marketing, and web development, leading to self-employment opportunities.

Despite the benefits, challenges remain. Oladipo and Adekunle (2022) pointed out that many young Nigerians face barriers such as poor internet access, lack of funding, and inadequate digital literacy, limiting their ability to leverage social media for job creation. Addressing these issues requires government intervention and private sector support to enhance digital infrastructure and training programs.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design to assess the role of social media in job creation among youths in Enugu State, Nigeria. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from 400 respondents aged 18-35, selected through stratified random sampling. The questionnaire covered aspects such as types of jobs created via social media, economic impact, challenges, and possible solutions.

Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods, including frequency distribution, percentages, and chi-square tests to test the research hypotheses. The study was anchored on the Diffusion of Innovations Theory (Rogers, 2003) and Uses and Gratifications Theory (Katz et al., 1973), which explain the adoption and usage of social media for job creation.

Results and Discussion

The findings indicate that social media plays a multifaceted role in job creation among youths in Enugu State. Platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram are primarily used for networking and job-seeking, while YouTube and WhatsApp are

increasingly used for informal learning and business promotion. Specifically, the study found that:

- **Types of Jobs Created:** Many youths engage in online businesses, digital marketing, content creation, freelancing, and e-commerce.
- **Economic Impact:** Social media-driven jobs have provided financial independence for many young people, contributing to poverty reduction and economic development in Enugu State.
- **Challenges:** Key barriers include digital illiteracy, high cost of internet access, unstable connectivity, and lack of capital for startups.

These results align with findings from previous studies (Eze & Chinedu, 2021; Oladipo & Adekunle, 2022), which also highlight the economic potential of social media in Nigeria. Addressing the challenges requires targeted interventions, such as improving digital literacy programs and expanding internet infrastructure.

Conclusion

This study underscores the significant role of social media in job creation among youths in Enugu State, Nigeria. Social media platforms offer various opportunities for employment, skill acquisition, and business promotion. However, barriers such as digital illiteracy, internet access issues, and financial constraints hinder their full potential. To harness the benefits of social media for job creation, stakeholders—including policymakers, educators, and private sector players—must implement strategic interventions aimed at digital inclusion and economic empowerment.

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