PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE, SOCIAL MEDIA, AND THE NIGERIAN BAPTIST PASTORS: CHALLENGES AND POSSIBLE WAYS OUT

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ABSTRACT

Any society that will be healthy and growing positively must embrace peaceful coexistence. The advent of the Internet has metamorphosed the modern world from an analogue world to a digital one where technological tools play significant roles, and especially the emergence of social media has greatly transformed how people communicate worldwide. Social media is changing the way faith-based organisations operate in this world, and stakeholders (especially church pastors) in the Nigerian Baptist Convention have been using the Internet generally and social media in their ministries, especially in promoting peaceful coexistence among their church members and other people in the society. However, pastors in particular and other stakeholders are facing many challenges using social media in their ministries and other endeavours in life, especially in promoting peaceful coexistence in their society. This paper aims to highlight some of these challenges discovered through semi-structured interviews of some pastors and, as corroborated by some scholars, suggest some possible ways out of these challenges. Among the recommendations of this paper is that pastors should be proactive in using social media despite the many challenges that accompany it in promoting peaceful coexistence not only among their church members in particular but also among people generally in the society.

KEYWORDS: *peaceful coexistence, social media, Nigerian Baptist pastors, challenges of social media*

INTRODUCTION

Peaceful coexistence is vital to any healthy and developing society (Galvanek & Planta 2017). It has been identified by Adegbami (2020) as "the most treasured and the greatest asset of a man." The advent of the Internet has metamorphosed the modern world from an analogue world to a digital one where digitalisation has influenced and continues to influence many old-style establishments (Lillard, 2010). In this digital world, technological tools play significant roles, and the emergence of social media has tremendously changed the ways people communicate globally (Tella & Ampofo, 2016). Social media has changed the way faith-based organisations operate in this world that is surrounded by information and technologies. Stakeholders (especially church pastors) in the Nigerian Baptist Convention have been using the Internet generally and social media in their ministries, especially in promoting peaceful coexistence among their church members and other people in the society. This is evident especially during the lockdown of COVID-19 in 2020 (Afolaranmi, 2020b). However, pastors in particular and other stakeholders are facing many challenges using social media in their ministries and other endeavours in life especially in promoting peaceful coexistence in their society. This paper aims to highlight some of these challenges discovered through semi-structured interviews of some pastors and, as corroborated by some scholars, suggest some possible ways out of these challenges.

METHODOLOGY

Sample surveys and semi-structured interviews were the two qualitative research methods used. Twenty pastors (fourteen males and six females) in the Ibadan metropolis were randomly and purposively selected among church pastors that have experience in the use of social media (especially WhatsApp Messenger). WhatsApp Messenger was selected because of its popularity amongst church pastors in this targeted population. This has been confirmed in a recent study by one of these researchers (see Afolaranmi, 2020b). All the respondents are using the instant messaging app because WhatsApp Messenger was purposively used to sample interviewed pastors. Earlier research has revealed that most respondents have Facebook

accounts. Many of the respondents are just migrating to Telegram Messenger. Even before the recent ban on Twitter in Nigeria on June 4, 2021, many interviewed pastors did not have Twitter accounts. Zoom video communications platform is another social media platform that pastors are now using in their ministries (Afolaranmi, 2020b). This paper is presented by analysing both the respondents' responses and reviewing previous views of other scholars. Against the backdrop that all the respondents are pastors, sometimes the word "pastor" or "pastors" is simply used to refer to them in this paper.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK
Peaceful Coexistence
Peace as a concept has been difficult to define or explained. Simply, peace is a concord, or harmony and tranquillity within oneself, among two or more people, or in the society at large. Identifying a "peaceful society" has become another debate among scholars. Arifeen & Semul (2019) broadly suggested that "peaceful societies can be defined in terms of traits and functions: economic affluence, effectiveness of the state apparatus, mechanisms for resolving internal conflicts and so forth." Ojo (2020) added a need for "mutual harmony among the citizenry that will engender peaceful coexistence and sustainable development."

Social Media
Social media are user-based online media (websites and applications) that focus on making online communities of people who share interests and activities or that have an interest in exploring the interests and activities of others. Afolaranmi (2020c) grouped social media into two major categories: online social network services (SNS) and instant messaging (IM) apps. Online social network sites (SNS) are defined simply as "a set of interconnected individuals who communicate with each other via computer-based technologies rather than interacting face-to-face" (Tuan, 2021). These are sorts of "quasi-websites" in form of forums, groups, blogs and the like (Afolaranmi, 2009a). They are online tools that have been created to engage people, motivate and encourage them to be better people and create better livelihoods for themselves as they communicate and share information. These services are used mostly interchangeably with the term social media. Instant messaging apps are forms of social media that have unique ways of sharing information in the form of text messages, pictures, audio and video clips that are used with smartphones and other technological tools that support them.

The Nigerian Baptist Pastors
A local Nigerian Baptist church pastor, according to the *Nigerian Baptist Convention Scheme of Service* (2021 edition), is a called, trained and possibly ordained person that is "called" by the local church to be the spiritual and administrative leader of the church. This contrasts with other pastors or ministers of the gospel who are denominational workers,

missionaries/evangelists and teachers/lecturers in Bible colleges and theological seminaries. In churches that practice full or partial multi-staff ministry (where there is more than one full-time or part-time pastor), the head pastor (or senior pastor) is simply referred to here as the pastor, while the other supporting pastors are referred to as associate pastors. These associate pastors may specifically be in charge of an aspect of the church like evangelism and missions, education, music, youth, children, and others.

THE CHALLENGES
It has been observed that younger pastors are discovering that the youth and teenagers prefer to interact more with their pastors on social media than any other means (Faramade E. Odunayo, personal communication, May 14, 2021). To be in the world of this younger generation that is moving from citizenship to "netizenship" (Amodu, 2017), and retaining the youth and teenagers in the church, pastors have to be in their world by being on social media. This may be why one of the respondents viewed social media as "more of an opportunity than a challenge" (Edward Alabi, personal communication, May 27, 2021). In support of this respondent and as reported by Agbawe (2018),

> Many scholars have argued that much as the social media have provided a plethora of opportunities for transforming societies and the advancement of humanity through interactive information exchange, it has also created catalogue of challenges that the society is presently contending with (Agbawe, 2018).

One of such scholars, in a recent study, presented the "…new challenges and opportunities" and how they are "…substantially affecting the world's dynamics…" (Ali, 2021). Åhman & Thorén (2021) opined that "some of the challenges that digitisation (i.e., converting an analogue technology or practice into a digital one) brings to [the church] are challenges that always have been at the very core of its practices." In his conclusion to a study, Thoms (2021) asserted, "…social media offers wonderful opportunities to make peacebuilding not only more dynamic, engaging and innovative but possibly also more enjoyable for all participants." However, the conclusion of Oludeyi (2020) about the advent and growing acceptance of social media is, "The fact that people now interact more online than physically brings more hiccups, ambiguities, misconceptions, misunderstanding, and doubts leading employment relationships to be more complex and conflict-prone than ever before."

Many pastors interviewed desire to make use of social media to resolve conflicts and promote peaceful coexistence among their church members and other people in the society. So, they identified some challenges they are facing or likely to face in making use of social media in their ministries generally and in resolving conflicts and promoting peaceful coexistence specifically. The Nigerian governmental agency that is responsible for monitoring the use of social media attested to

these challenges of the use of social media in a released document: "While social media tools have presented unparalleled opportunities for individuals, organisations and governments across the globe as part of corporate strategy for productivity and financial benefits, it also has huge challenges and security risks that have debilitating effects" (The Nigerian Communications Commission, 2019).

The challenges of social media as identified by the respondents are presented graphically in Figure 1. The respondents' responses here are similar to the responses of pastors in a study carried out by one of these researchers during the COVID-19 pandemic and resultant lockdown in 2020. So, the presentation and discussion of the challenges here are partly an adaptation of one of the papers written out of the study (Afolaranmi, 2020d).
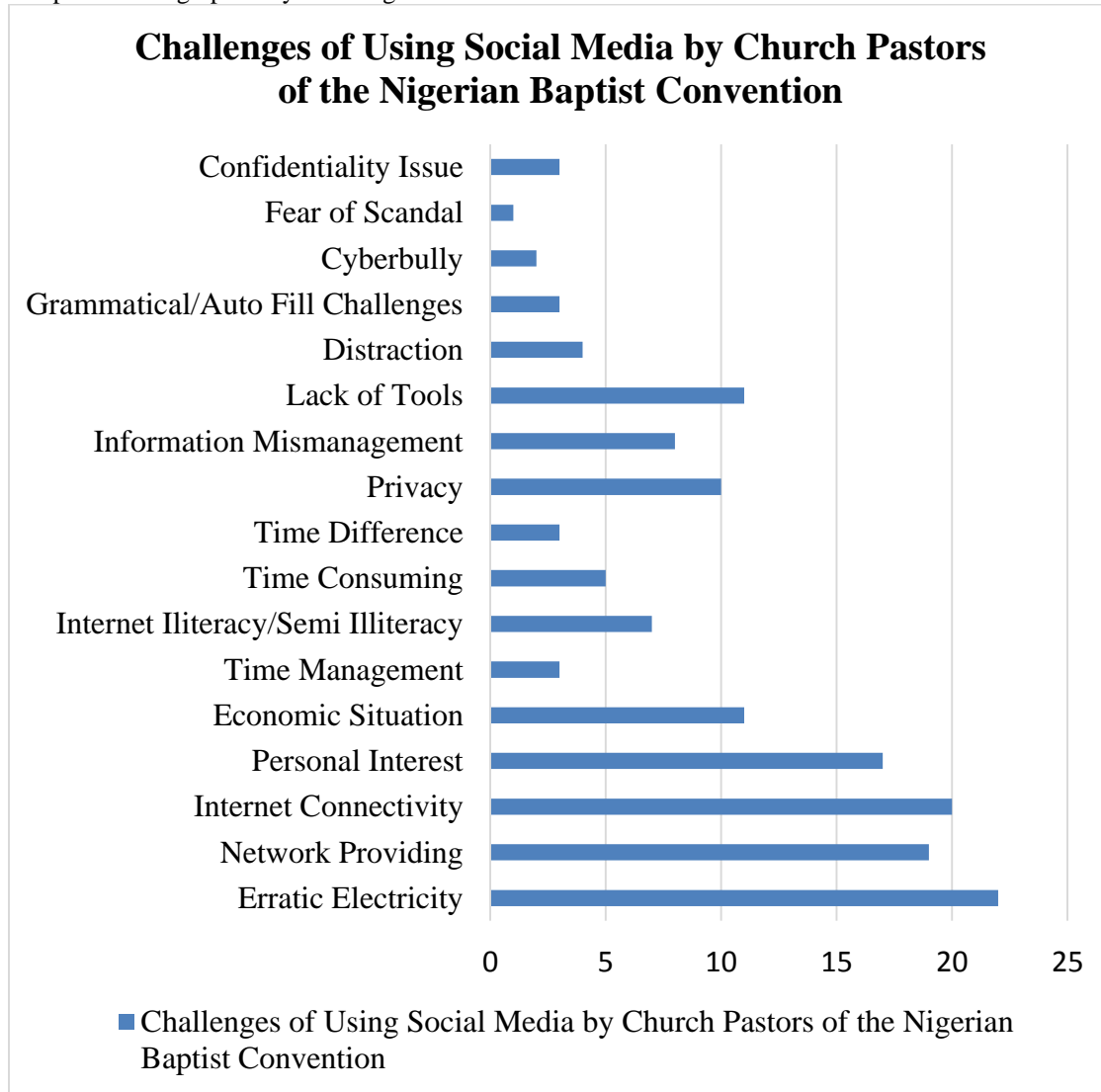

Figure 1: Challenges of Using Social Media by Church Pastors of the Nigerian Baptist Convention
Source: Researchers' Construct 2021

As indicated by almost all the respondents and shown in Figure 1, erratic electricity supply was seen as the foremost challenge pastors and church members are facing in Nigeria when it comes to the use of the Internet generally and particularly in resolving conflicts through social media. This is a significant problem in Nigeria as there has been an erratic power supply for years. The respondents argued that since they would like to use social media to resolve conflicts, this irritant of erratic power supply is a significant constraint to them and their church members. Fabiyi, Abdulmalik, & Tiamiu (2016) had earlier documented this challenge. It is disheartening that despite

this document and its suggested possible solutions over half a decade ago, the challenge is still persistent.

Having access to the Internet is ranked second among the main limitations of using social media to resolve conflicts among, as indicated by the respondents. As asserted in a report by Okunoye & Ilori (2016), Internet access has grown tremendously in recent years in Nigeria, and the country is considered to be the largest population of Internet users in Africa. Nonetheless, as asserted by Odusanya & Adetutu (2020), not everybody has access to the Internet as "the lack of internet access [in sub-Saharan Africa, Nigeria inclusive] is a recognised barrier to the adoption of information communication technologies (ICTs)." As a result, the respondents thought that promoting peaceful coexistence through social media could not apply to every church member. The fact that everyone does not have the needed technological tools like computers, Internet-enabled mobile phones and the likes, just as some of the respondents also specifically indicated, makes it impossible for many church members to access social media. Even many people with these devices find it difficult to access social media because of the high cost of Internet access in Nigeria. Tayo, Thompson & Thompson (2016) had earlier referred to what they called the "Nigerian digital divide", where there is a disparity among persons with Internet access and computers and those who do not have access because of the high cost of computers and high-priced Internet access. The World Bank Group has also published a comprehensive report on Nigeria's inequality in accessing the Internet (The World Bank Group, 2019).

Another shortcoming of the use of social media in conflict resolution is the issue of Internet network failure and interruption. To have access to the Internet is one issue in Nigeria; unbroken access to it is another issue. One may have access and still experience slow Internet speed. This issue of Internet network failure and interruption is considered by many of the respondents as bothersome as they at times feel frustrated with the failure or interruption of the Internet service when they are using it (especially when it has to do with video-related features of the social media) in resolving conflicts. In the words of Samuel O. Oladimeji (personal communication, June 1, 2021), "…issue of confidentiality is lost as one is shouting and moving from one place to the other in order to find better network service." These challenges had earlier been identified by Akporhonor & Akpojotor (2016) in a study on postgraduate library and information science students and the use of electronic resources in southern Nigeria.

Personal interest in using social media is another challenge identified by the respondents. Although social media, the Internet and other information and communication technologies have emerged in the world for almost five decades, and they are evolving every day as they are changing the ways people are doing things in this technology-driven age, some people have not yet embraced the new technologies and started making use of them. John O. Odejayi (personal communication, May 18, 2021) asserted that "many church members are not making use of social media." Some people view the Internet and other technological tools as evil and unspiritual. Most of the respondents wondered how to use social media to interact with such people through the Internet.

The nonchalant attitude that some people (especially the older generation) have towards social media has made some of them either Internet-illiterate or semi-literate. This opinion was echoed by Dickson Madoghwe (personal communication, July 27, 2021). These people can be referred to as "e-illiterate or "e-semi-literate" people. Some of these people cannot even read or write. It is difficult to interact with such people through social media since they do not know how to use social media and other technological tools due to their literacy level. Animante, Akussah & Darko-Adjei (2021) had reiterated the importance of computer literacy (and by extension Internet literacy) by asserting, "To properly and effectively use social media platforms, it is imperative for church members, leaders as well as pastors to possess at least some basic knowledge in computer literacy." This was corroborated by Nsereka & Nwanze (2021). The new "normality" that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought to the world has made Karagiannidou, Arvanitidou & Kiriakaki (2020) also advocate "digital literacy" not only for students but also for everyone.

Some respondents raised another issue of nonchalant attitude among social media users. This issue concerns how social media users use what Gabriel, Adebowale & Omotehinse (2021) referred to as "grammatically incorrect words, and spellings and emoticons." While this attitude has become "normal" among many social media users, as the scholars observed, the attitude is hindering

> … communication effectiveness in online interactions as the use of these signs and languages may not really convey the message to the receiver, and the receivers of the message sometimes may find it difficult to comprehend the meaning of the words as truly intended by the sender [and] may then have a negative influence on the effectiveness of communication" (Gabriel, Adebowale & Omotehinse, 2021).

Although Ibadan, that was used as a case study for this research, is a metropolitan city, some respondents argued that the rural setting of many parts of Nigeria is a challenge to using social media to resolve conflicts. These respondents might have been referring to the suburb parts of Ibadan city. Johnson & Ifeoma (2018) and Adojo, Abaode & Eugene (2020) assert that many rural areas in Nigeria lack basic social amenities, with "poverty…more obvious in [these] rural areas." Thus, having access to the Internet and other technological tools is difficult in these rural and suburban areas, and people in such areas are almost neglected in the Internet evolution of the world. Undoubtedly, this will affect using social media to promote peaceful coexistence among such neglected people.

The low standard of living among the average Nigerians is closely related to the lack of basic social amenities in Nigeria. This is another challenge for using social media to

promote peaceful coexistence. An online source confirms that with "seven in ten Nigerians live off no more than USD 1.25 per day .... poverty is probably the biggest challenge [in Nigeria]" ("A Practical Guide to the Way of Life in Nigeria"). This low living standard is having adverse effects on many people (even pastors, as confessed by some of the respondents) to the extent that they find it challenging to have a personal computer or Internet-enabled devices not to talk of buying Internet data to access social media.

As some respondents argued, the spread of fake and unverified (or unauthorised) news is another threat that is giving social media a bad image in Nigeria. This can be referred to also as information mismanagement. This was confirmed by Apuke & Omar (2020). It affects the use of social media in promoting peaceful coexistence among groups of people, especially when one of the contending groups divulges information prematurely to other parties in or out of the conflict situation. This may aggravate the conflict and impair the peace process. It is even worse when the culprit is the pastor serving as the peacemaker. Fake and unverified news can be the cause of conflicts as well. A good case is the example of a Baptist pastor who, in January 2021, revealed the decision of the Executive Committee of the Nigerian Baptist Convention on the approval of the nomination of a new Convention President through social media without following due process. If the Convention authorities had not managed the situation with maturity, the action would have caused a leadership crisis in the Convention (see Paul, 2021).

Related to, but slightly different from, information mismanagement is the abuse of information dissemination through social media. One of the respondents said that he is sometimes put off by using social media platforms with the way people circulate the same information on several platforms. This repetition of information dissemination may even be on the same platform. Coping with the enormity of this repeated information has become a challenge to many of the interviewed pastors.

Some respondents pointed out Internet addiction as a challenge in their responses. Internet addiction has been one of the issues that many people have been battling since the advent of the Internet (Wallace, 2014). Addiction to surfing the Internet is simply the overuse or excessive Internet use that interferes with daily life. Its symptoms include undue preoccupation with the Internet, loss of control of time spent on the Internet, inexplicable sadness or moodiness when not online, dishonesty regarding Internet use, creation of virtual intimate relationships with other Internet users, loss of a significant relationship due to Internet use, lack of sleep, and the likes (Afolaranmi, 2017). Specifically, Salihu, Yusuf & Lawal (2020) opined that "addiction to social media is a type of non-substance/behavioural addiction that affects millions of Internet users on the globe today, which necessitates, for many people, the adoption of certain psychotherapeutic methods to gain a regression from the compulsive behaviour." Addiction to the Internet that increases with the wave of COVID-19 and its

resultant lockdown and physical distancing have "…made people all the more dependent on varied forms of information and communication technologies" (Nazir & Thabassum, 2021). This made these scholars conclude that everyone has become "slaves to the internet and other information and communication technologies" (Nazir & Thabassum, 2021). In addressing this challenge, Salihu, Yusuf & Lawal (2020) recommended that stakeholders should enlighten people on the appropriate use of social media and the Internet so that they would not be addicted to these modern technologies.

Some organisations are now integrating social media into the workplace, as confirmed in a recent study by Zoonen, Verhoeven & Vliegenthart (2016), is making social media intrude into the private lives of many people. This was considered to by Rachel A. Lateju (personal communication, June 7, 2021) as having an adverse effect of social media. To curb this, Zoonen, Verhoeven & Vliegenthart (2016) suggested that "contemporary organisations should pragmatically intensify their efforts in mitigating the impact of social media use on workers' well-being."

Another dangerous effect of using the Internet is cyberbullying – "an act of being mean to others by using information and communication involving electronic technologies to facilitate deliberate and repeated harassment or threat to an individual or group which can be done by an individual or group" (Balogun, et al., 2017). While many respondents expected social media to promote peaceful coexistence, especially mediative dialogue, some mediatees started using it to cyberbully other conflicting parties and even the mediators, their pastors that were supposed to be revered servants and representatives of God. Benjamin Areo (personal communication, May 28, 2021) cited an instant when a mediatee started to use foul languages that she could not use if she were physically before him in his interaction on WhatsApp with her in an attempt to mediate in a conflict she had with one of her siblings.

Some respondents expressed fear in using social media because of Internet fraud or cyber crime that has become a menace in Nigerian society. The rate at which some people are getting involved in Internet frauds, and scams is alarming, as some scholars have attested to it (see Omodunbi, Bolaji, et al. [2016] and Osuntuyi, Pius M., Adenike O. Ireyomi & Oluwasegun P. Aluko [2021]). This makes many people sceptical of embracing anything that has to do with social media and the Internet. A pastor experienced this scepticism from many people when he started his Internet ministry almost two decades ago. The situation is not improving for many people who want to reach out to others through the Internet, especially pastors who want to use social media to resolve conflicts among their church members.

Apart from fear of Internet fraud, another fear expressed by some respondents is the fear of scandal and blackmail that may emanate from the mediative dialogue sessions through social media. Al Habsi, et al. (2021) supported

this in a recent study and concluded that "those who disclose more information online are at a greater risk of becoming a victim of blackmail on social media." The respondents that indicated this fear argued that pastors, especially church members, might be afraid of any scandal resulting from recorded audio or video clips or typed messages from the personal and group interactions during the mediative dialogue sessions. This fear was expressed in a situation where one of the parties with access to these sessions divulged the whole or part of the sessions to other parties or the public. Information that is considered private and secret but has been disclosed through social media in one of the mediative dialogue sessions may be used against any of the parties to tarnish the party's image or even in litigation if the conflict escalates to that level. These respondents believed that some mediatees will prefer unrecorded sessions that can be denied.

The issue of privacy or confidentiality is related to what was just discussed above. Waldman (2016) and Kumar, Saravanakumar & Deepa (2016) have discussed this issue in relation to social media extensively. Some respondents thought that many church members value their privacy so much that they find it challenging to reveal secrets to their pastors and talk less of revealing such secrets through social media. This made most of the respondents reluctant to reveal the details of some of the conflicting situations they have handled or are handling with this researcher during the interview sessions. Attempts by the researchers to be participant-observants in some of the mediative sessions were unsuccessful as the respondents declined the offer because of the privacy of their church members.

Also related is the issue of confidentiality on the pastor's part, which, according to Nabwire (2016), is "…to a pastoral counsellor must be absolute, unless it's part of the informed consent process." Some church members do not trust their pastors enough to reveal secrets to the pastors. Some pastors, out of carelessness, have betrayed their church members' confidence in them. This betrayal may be posting information about church members by pastors through social media. Such betrayal may impair the mediative dialogue process.

Time-consuming has been alluded to when discussing Internet addiction above. The fear of the use of the Internet generally and social media mainly being a waste of time has been expressed by some scholars in the past (see Al-Jubayer [2013]; Park, Im & Sung [2017] and Antiri [2017]). Nonetheless, some respondents did not see this as an addiction but a challenge that must be controlled. The relatively low cost of Internet telephoning compared to conventional phone calls has made many people relax and spend much time on social media as they mediate in a crisis. Time spent in this regard may not be a waste of time, but the fact is that the time used on social media might have eaten deep into other ministerial issues that ought to have been attended to.

Time management is another challenge some pastors face in using social media to resolve conflicts. According to Dickson Madoghwe (personal communication, July 27, 2021), a mediatee may go on speaking during a mediative dialogue session through social media without minding the time he spends. This may become a source of another conflict as such mediatee's lack of time management may become a nuisance to other conflicting parties and even the mediator.

As some respondents argued that social media had solved the problem of distance between the mediator and the mediatees, they also viewed the time differences in the different parts of the world as a challenge. For instance, Tunji Taiwo (personal communication, June 1, 2021) cited a situation where he had to deny himself of sleeping at night because that was the daytime in the other part of the world where the people he was mediating in their conflict reside.

David T. Hambolu (personal communication, June 3, 2021) expressed concern about the attitude of the Nigerian government towards the use of social media, especially the proposed regulation of social media in the country. Interestingly, the Nigerian government banned Twitter a day after this respondent expressed the concern as Nigeria's federal government issued a press release banning Twitter operations in Nigeria on June 4, 2021 (Obiaje, 2021). This action has become a great challenge to social media users, especially Twitter in Nigeria. A centre considered this action "an unlawful restriction on freedom of expression and other freedoms exercised online" and advised the Nigerian government to "revoke the directive in line with its international obligations and adopt measures to foster digital freedoms in consultation with all stakeholders" (International Center for Not-for-Profit Law). To Obiaje (2021), the ban is regarded as an "erosion of freedom of information", and "the current Nigerian government is bent on circumventing the right to free speech in the country." Nonetheless, regulation of social media is not peculiar to the Nigerian government as asserted by Mohammed (2021): "Despite the [positive impacts] of the social media, there have been several agitations for its regulation not just by individuals, but also by governments around the world."

As good as the auto-fill or suggested word features in mobile phones, computers and other devices is, it has become a challenge. A similar challenge is a grammatical error when typing a message. Some of the respondents pointed these out in their responses. An example of a word in an auto-fill feature that can cause or escalate conflicts is "wife" instead of "wifi". An unwitting omission of "not" in a sentence, for instance, may aggravate a conflict.

Recommendations

Despite all these challenges, a "general overview of vulnerability, threat and risk landscapes, and some countermeasures that can help mitigate against the risks" have been provided by The Nigerian Communications Commission (2019). These are shown in Table 1.

Table 4.1: Vulnerabilities & Threats, Risks and Countermeasures

Vulnerabilities and Threats	Mapped Risks	Countermeasures
Exposure to the public can lead to fraudulent use of corporate identity or brand	Provides source of information that can be hijacked or exploited by adversaries, targeted phishing attacks on staff, partners or customers or reputational damage.	Scrutinise information exposure, use experts to conduct risk assessment that gives holistic view of how an adversary can turn corporate information to its advantage. Create awareness and education across tiers of users appropriately.
Viruses and Malware distribution through the network	Disruption of services (or system downtime), data leak or theft, hijacking of network as zombies (botnets), cost of response and recovery.	Ensure cybersecurity defence in-depth strategy in the network, with constant updates on security patches and upgrades including antivirus and antimalware, content filtering and effective network monitoring of activities.
Undefined conversation and content rights	Unable to track, control contents leading to loss of legal rights.	Certify that user agreements of social media sites are reviewed by the legal and communications teams. Policy document should specify what information that can be posted. There should be mechanism to capture and log all conversations.
Use of individual user accounts to communicate official matters	Privacy breach, reputational damage, erosion of competitive advantage	Make a clear policy directive about use of personal social accounts. Ensure HR and Training create the necessary awareness that reinforces policy directive.
Staff postings of unauthorised images or information that link them to the legal entity.	Identity or brand diminishing, reputational damage	Policy directive should be clear how staff use organisation's images or resources/assets including IP in their personal social presence.
Unwarranted use of social media during office hours	Consumption of network resources, productivity loss, potential for increased exposure to malicious codes and viruses.	Policy directive should be clear on the engagement of social media. Technical department can use content filter or other security measures to limit access to social media sites, and only permit those who may have legitimate access to the sites.
Access to social media via organisation-supplied mobile devices (or smartphones)	Loss of mobile device, infection of mobile device, data theft/leakage, hijack of device control	Clear policy directive should be developed on the use of corporate devices. If within organisation's network, ensure that devices are routed through security controls, ensure constant update of devices including antiviruses and antimalware
The use of Social Media to spread fake news, misinformation, propaganda, rumours, hate speech, bullying, etc. has reached alarming	Recent events have shown that social network media can be used to spread or facilitate fake news, misinformation, propaganda,	Most users seem not to understand the consequences of their actions as many has argued that the whole idea is a matter of perception. The real

state. Certainly, the nuisance of these threats come in many flavours, implying that sensational news and social media campaigns are usually filled with mistruths.

rumours, hate speech, etc. All these threats to the society can sway social, economic or political opinions, polarise the society, propagate divisive and cruel hoax, and alter beliefs, leading to racism, tribalism, harassment, intimidation, and damage to reputations. It can affect international relations, irreparable harm or loss including death of an individual or persons.

issue is how to differentiate fake and real content because often users believe that the friends and the platform delivering the content are trustworthy. Currently, there is not acceptable standard or solution to curtail 'misleading content', however, some steps as follows can help mitigate the threats:

 i. Development of appropriate policy and law;
 ii. Early release of verifiable content;
 iii. Monitoring of social network media content;
 iv. Prompt issuance of counter content by constituted authority using the same media.

Source: The Nigerian Communications Commission (2019)

In conclusion and as additions to other recommendations that have been given by other scholars above, these researchers give these other recommendations:

1. Pastors should be strategic and proactive, not only reactive, in their approach to the use of social media. This will hinder the continuous innovations in this digital age from meeting them uninformed and unprepared. The proactiveness of the pastors can even make them join the league of discoverers of other innovations in the use of technological tools, not only in their pastoral ministries but also in the society at large.

2. Pastors should also be proactive in using social media to address issues that will prevent conflicts and promote peace. They can do this by posting teachings, short quotes, sermons (messages), Bible study outlines and other instructive messages through social media. This will imbibe the spirit of peaceful coexistence among their church members. It will also lessen the stress of resolving conflicts among church members and non-church members.

3. Pastors should facilitate the teaching and enlightenment of their church members on how to use social media. Pastors may organise seminars, workshops, and training for their church members by inviting trained professionals in information and communication technologies (ICTs) to handle the enlightenment. Such enlightenments will be of great help to the pastors and they will also learn new things. Such training will also make many members that are "e-illiterate or "e-semi-literate" people become "e-literate" people.

4. Pastors should be very careful in the ways they use social media. The carefulness has to do with many things. One of those things is what pastors post on social media. Pastors are representatives of God in society. They are like ambassadors or agents of peace who should use social media to promote peace without causing or escalating conflicts. Pastors should not be carriers of fake and unverified information. What they post on social media must be confirmed, accurate and edifying information.

5. Pastors should be mindful of using the auto-fill or suggested word feature in mobile phones, computers and other devices. This is necessary in order not to allow this auto-fill or suggested word feature to misrepresent their views as the auto-fill or suggested words may mean different things from what the pastors have in mind, thereby escalating the conflict the pastors are making efforts to resolve or even giving them the bad image in the eyes of the conflicting parties and other people that may come across their writing on social media.

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