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MEDIA LITERACY COMPETENCE AND USE OF NEW MEDIA FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AMONG NIGERIAN YOUTHS

OBA ABDULKADIR LA’ARO

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
UNIVERSITI UTARA MALAYSIA
2016
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Abstrak


Kata kunci: literasi media, penglibatan sivik, media baharu, belia Nigeria
Abstract

There have been concerns about youths' exposure to risks in the new media environment in Nigeria. Alongside this is also the observation that the youths are not using the new media to engage important issues in society. These raise issues about the media literacy competence of the youths and their civic engagement obligations. Therefore this study investigated media literacy competence among youths and the use of new media in four types of online civic engagement. Cognitive theory of Media Literacy and the Model of Engaged Citizenship served as underpinning theories for the study. The study is a cross sectional survey with systematic sampling of 503 youths in rural and urban areas of Kwara State, Nigeria. Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling. The results indicated low level of critical understanding among youths which explains why the youths are exposed to risk in online environment. The study found significant use of new media for civic engagement across new media types. The results did not reveal significant differences in the use of new media for civic engagement on the basis of socio economic and geographical location of the youths. However, it showed that media education significantly moderated the relationship between communication abilities and use of new media for civic engagement. These findings specifically contribute to modeling the relationship between dimensions of media literacy competence and use of new media for civic engagement and the moderating role of media education in the relationship. It confirmed the theoretical notion of the relevance of media literacy to building active and engaged citizenship among the youths. This outcome will guide government policy on the role of media literacy competence in the use of new media such that user maximizes opportunities and minimizes risks in Nigeria's new media environment.

Keywords: media literacy, civic engagement, new media, Nigerian youths
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February, 2016.
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 An Overview

This research is focused on the relationship between media literacy competencies (access and usage skills, critical understanding and communication abilities) and use of new media for civic engagement among youths. This chapter introduces the background to the research and the problem statement. Following them are the research objectives and the research questions that guided the design of the study. The concluding parts of the chapter highlighted the rationale for the study; the significance of the study and definitions of the terms used in the study. The orientation of the study is to investigate the relevance of media literacy to use of new media in a way that avoid risks and help to cultivate active and inclusive participation of youths in socio-political process.

1.2 Background to the study

Media literacy has become a necessity and hardly a luxury if the society must produce active citizenship in the twenty first century (Kahnee, Ullman, & Middaugh, 2011). The advent of the new digital media environment has made it imperative for society across the world to reconsider the practice of citizenship and media relationship. This imperative is much more pronounced in the particular case of the youths. The youths not only need to be active and engaging but also act responsibly in the new media environment. The idea of active or engaging citizenship that is also responsible is encapsulated in the concept of civic engagement. In traditional term, civic engagement refer to the degree to which people become involved in their community, both actively and passively, including such activities as political participation, community
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