

Influence of Media on Religio-Cultural Development and Academic Performance of Youths in Nigeria

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Abstract

Media plays a significant role in the religio-cultural development and academic performance of Nigerian youths. It connects them across religious and cultural boundaries, promoting the expression and preservation of religious and cultural activities. However, the proliferation of digital media has also led to challenges such as misinformation, religio-cultural erosion, and distractions that can hinder academic progress and undermine traditional beliefs. This paper analyses existing literature and empirical studies to provide insights into the complex interplay between media exposure, religio-cultural identity, and academic outcomes among Nigerian youth. The positive influence of media on the religio-cultural development and academic performance of Nigerian youth is significant, as exposure to diverse religious and cultural perspectives fosters tolerance, understanding, and appreciation for Nigeria's rich heritage. Educational content aids academic growth and skill development. Media serves as a tool for empowerment, inspiring youth to pursue their passions, educational goals, and a deeper connection with their religio-cultural roots. However, it emphasizes the need for media literacy and critical analysis to navigate potential challenges posed by media's influence on religio-cultural values and academic pursuits.

Keywords: Youth, Media, Religion, Culture, Development, Education.

INTRODUCTION

In the rapidly evolving digital age, media has become an indispensable part of the lives of the youth, wielding a profound influence on their religio-cultural identities and academic experience. The term media refers to communication channels that disseminate news, music, movies, education, promotional messages and other data. Media includes newspapers, magazines, television, radio, billboards, telephone, internet, fax and bulletin boards (Basil et al., 2020). Thus, the term represents the different ways people communicate in society. When a large number of people, it is called mass media, while local media refers to local newspapers and local/regional TV/radio channels. There is also social media, a collective term for websites and applications that focus on communication, community, input, interaction, content sharing and collaboration. People use social media to connect and communicate with friends, family and different communities (Christian, 2016). Nigeria, a nation rich in religio-cultural diversity and striving to nurture its youth's educational aspirations, finds itself at the intersection of this phenomenon.

According to Raja (2023), there was a time when there was no social media, rather, print media ruled the news. Afterwards, came television, which created a classic dichotomy between print and electronic media. Currently, online media and social media platforms such as YouTube, Yahoo, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and WhatsApp are identified as the most widely used by students. The expanding digital realm has reshaped the landscape of religio-cultural transmission and academic discourse. As a potent force in shaping narratives and disseminating information, media has emerged as a double-edged sword, simultaneously promoting cultural

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development and impacting academic performance. On one hand, it serves as a conduit for preserving and celebrating Nigeria's vibrant religio-cultural heritage, enabling the expression of faith, art, values, and traditions. On the other hand, it has revolutionized the way youths engage with knowledge, giving access to educational resources like never before. Regardless, of this however, media still pose as possible distractions and challenges.

In fact, there is no gainsaying that the proliferation of digital media has ushered in a paradigm shift, which obviously goes beyond geographical boundaries and granting Nigerian youths unparalleled access to a wealth of information and religio-cultural experiences. This exposure has the capacity to promote cross-cultural understanding, broaden perspectives, and ignite intellectual curiosity. However, the influx of diverse cultural influences also raises concerns about the erosion of traditional values and the dilution of religious and cultural authenticity. Amidst this complex interplay, the influence of media on academic performance also comes as a critical area of inquiry. As youth increasingly rely on digital platforms for educational resources, the lines between constructive engagement and detrimental distractions become blurred. The ability to harness the vast opportunities of media for academic enrichment while navigating its pitfalls is a delicate balance that demands careful examination.

This paper studies the impact of media on the religio-cultural development and academic performance of Nigerian youths, drawing insights from existing literature and empirical studies. It aims to unravel the dynamics at play, exploring both the opportunities and challenges posed by media's pervasive influence. Additionally, it seeks to shed light on strategies to leverage the positive aspects of media while mitigating its possible drawbacks, empowering Nigerian youths to embrace their religio-cultural heritage while pursuing academic excellence.

Cultural Development and Media In Nigeria

Cultural development entails the activation of cultural activities and arts for societal benefit (Jacques, 2024). It represents a populace's aspiration to culturally advance their future prospects, facilitated by a broad comprehension of diverse cultures that shapes their own identity. This process involves the exchange of attitudes, beliefs, and traditions across cultural boundaries. However, in Nigeria, cultural development has been significantly influenced by the forces of modernization, colonization, and the impact of Western religion and politics. The Nigerian music industry exemplifies this phenomenon, where traditional music once served as an integral component of events such as weddings, funerals, sports, entertainment, and agriculture, providing purposeful melodies for historians to recount narratives (Jacques, 2024). Wooden gongs, too, conveyed distinct narratives through their unique "languages" for various occasions and situations, though their contemporary usage in villages and communities remains uncertain. The transformation of the music industry has adversely impacted the traditional narrative conveyed through music, with traditional drumming rapidly diminishing and festivals and celebrations becoming increasingly rare, leaving mere vestiges in many villages and communities. This rapid shift from core values to material culture has led to Igwe & Umeobika (2023) to speak of "wealth syndrome" overtaking cultural development.

Media content, whether implicit or explicit, invariably contains cultural elements, as there is no such thing as media content devoid of cultural influences (Obong, 2019). These mediated cultural elements can either benefit or harm the recipient culture. This dichotomy lies at the heart of the debate surrounding whether media content is inherently beneficial or detrimental to a culture. This discourse has given rise to divergent schools of thought, with proponents of media and cultural imperialism arguing that media negatively impacts culture, posing a serious threat to cultural identity, independence, and homogeneity. Their concern stems from the belief that media imposes cultural colonization and leads to what Schaefer (2012) terms "cultural genocide" or cultural infantilisation.

Conversely, advocates of acculturation view media and its associated cultural content as reinforcing rather than lacking culture. In this perspective, the cultural products offered by media to these cultures are seen not as catastrophic, but as a form of cultural solidarity and integration between foreign and host cultures. Moderates, on the other hand, do not explicitly advocate for or against these positions, instead impartially evaluating the arguments from both sides and proposing a middle ground where the proposals and oppositions of both sides are deemed acceptable. Regardless of one's stance in this debate, it is essential to acknowledge that media serves as a conduit for cultural elements, even when such transmission is undesired (Obong, 2019). Societies that

remain open to foreign media content risk cultural transformation and, at worst, cultural marginalization and erosion, as foreign values, norms, beliefs, customs, and lifestyles infiltrate and potentially dominate indigenous cultural values, with significant social consequences (Ubong, 2019). While society cannot function properly without media, some of the content that media brings to public attention is considered culturally offensive and inappropriate (Ekeanyanwu & Usaini, 2017).

Among mass media, television has emerged as a powerful social force in transmitting socio-cultural values and norms in civilized society. Its ability to simultaneously blend sound, visual effects, moving images, color, music, animation, and sound effects into a single message enables it to package culture and depict the reality of a given moment (Ogbuoshi, 2005; Hasan, 2013; Ejem, 2016). Baran (2004) characterizes television as a “picture radio” and “moving magazine,” with its unique attributes rendering the message more attractive, interesting, and credible, which explains its global popularity (Nkana, 2004). While media serves functional purposes such as entertainment, information, education, and socialization, it has also been criticized for introducing harmful content into homes, promoting conflict, violence, crime, obscenity, immorality, materialism, cultural stereotypes, and verbal abuse, which many perceive as unnecessary and dysfunctional inputs into society.

The Impact of Media On Religio-Cultural Development In Nigeria

Obong (2019), opines that the influence of the media on Nigerian culture is ambivalent: positive (pro-social) and negative (anti-social). That this statement is true is seen in the following discourse:

The Positive Impact Of Media On Religio-Cultural Development In Nigeria

The media has a positive (pro-social) impact on cultural development in Nigeria in various ways. It serves as a main actor of socialization and a powerful tool of cultural transmission. By continuously reflecting Nigeria’s socio-cultural values, these values are preserved and transmitted from generation to generation (Gonzalez-Mena, 2010). Moreover, media content through news programs provides quality and timely information to ensure that members of Nigerian society are informed. Through its audiovisual appeal, the media has drawn the attention of the masses to socially important issues occurring around them, making the public feel as if they are physically present at the scene (Kanu 2024; Obong, 2019). The media also fulfills peace-building role when it seeks to investigate and resolve cultural conflicts to promote cultural homogeneity through its programs. In Nigeria, some TV programs are locally produced to counteract the (perceived) negative impact of foreign content on the socio-cultural development of the country, addressing moral, familial, and cultural issues plaguing the nation (Kanu et al, 2024; Obong, 2019).

Furthermore, media is a powerful medium for entertainment. Music, drama, reality shows, movies, documentaries, etc., provide viewers with an escape and a distraction from the harsh realities of everyday life. Media has changed the way people are entertained, offering convenience, affordability, and flexibility compared to traditional forms of entertainment (Schoolworkhelper, 2017). Additionally, media through television becomes a unifying force during family viewing, strengthening family bonds and promoting family cohesion. The gravitational effect of television on families is beneficial as it serves to bring members together on common ground (Schoolworkhelper, 2017). By and large, media content has greatly facilitated political development in Nigeria, serving as a mirror of Nigerian politics to the world. The media in its audiovisual aspect has had a dynamic impact on Nigerian politics and has become part of the political definition in Nigeria (Obong, 2019).

There is also the religious dimension of this cultural interaction with media. As Mbiti (1970) would say, Africans are notoriously religious. He further goes to say that the cultural and religious life of Africans are intertwined or better still, they are mutually inclusive. That is why it would not be justifiable to speak of media’s influence on culture while leaving out the religious aspect. In this regard, there is no gainsaying that the media has played a significant role in promoting religious development and awareness among youths in Nigeria. With its ability to reach vast audiences, media platforms have become powerful tools for spreading religious teachings, fostering interfaith understanding, and preserving religious traditions. One of the most notable positive impacts of media on religious development is the increased accessibility to religious content. Through television channels dedicated to religious programming, radio broadcasts, and online platforms, Nigerians can easily access sermons, lectures, and religious teachings from various denominations (Chiluwa, 2012). This exposure

has facilitated the dissemination of religious knowledge, enabling individuals to deepen their understanding and practice of their respective faiths.

In religion, the prospect of embracing the innovation of media enjoys acceptability. For instance, in Christianity, Matthew 9:17 portrays Jesus as arguing that there is need to embrace innovations and accommodate trending realities. This is understood by Leske (1998) to mean that a new beginning with the capacity for change should be welcomed ideas. Just as an old wine skin loses its flexibility and becomes brittle, some old customs and traditions of Israel naturally lost their ability to bring about necessary changes in the current religious and political situation of the nation (Leske, 1998). To Indeed, it suggests how humans tend to cling to old ways and resist new ideologies and progressive policies (Pilani, 2023; Barclay, 2003). However, individuals must look beyond their personal inclinations (Pilani, 2022) to allow better and more progressive approaches to operate, as the general good outweighs personal gain, and development beneficial to all requires letting go of the old. In Islam, “the relationship between Islam and media world is not a new and cannot be overemphasized in view of the fact that while former shapes the latter, the latter helps to propagate and better express the former” (Shehu et al, 2017). According to them, the social media has come with many good, citing for example an easier decimation of Islamic and Qur’anic tenets.

Negative Effects Of The Media On Religio-Cultural Development In Nigeria

From the negative point of view, the media has contributed to social disengagement, as Nigerians are gradually losing interest in social gatherings and maintaining physical contact due to the time spent in front of television screens, on the internet, and on social media platforms (Irish Times, 2001). This has led to a weakening of social connections and integration. Family disintegration is another negative effect, as the media instills unattainable family ideals in children and adolescents, reducing the time they spend with their families and contributing to conflicts when family members imitate television ideals that contradict established family norms and values (Schoolwork Helpers, 2017; Rodman, 2006).

Additionally, from the Nigeria cultural point of view, another significant negative impacts is the promotion of indecent dressing. Through entertainment content, the media not only showcases inappropriate clothing but also portrays it more attractively and acceptably, encouraging viewers to emulate it (Obong, 2019). Nigerian youth, who take most media personalities as role models, imitate the way they dress or even use them as costumes, leading to a dynamic style of dress that embraces foreign fashion trends, no matter how absurd or bizarre, over traditional attire. Another negative impact is language pollution and contamination (Etuk, 2002). Overexposure to media content, especially from western cultures, has led to a dramatic shift in language choice in Nigeria, with the use of vulgar, offensive, and violent language becoming prevalent (Cairncross, 2000). Words such as “nigger,” “fuck you,” and “bitch” have become popular, and some Nigerians rely on such expressions in formal and informal social communication. In Nigeria’s cultural convictions, these are obscene dictions that depict irresponsibility.

Moreover, the proliferation of obscenity and immorality is also a concern, as the media encourages and rewards immoral behavior through entertainment programs, exacerbating immorality in Nigerian society (Ezeh, 2009; Okpala et al., 2012; Ekeanyanwu & Odukomaiya, 2008). Behaviors such as premarital sex, extramarital sex, prostitution, and homosexuality are portrayed as cool, fun, and exciting, leading to changes in attitudes and values over time. Moreover, the media promotes violence and crime by idolizing deviant people and depicting survival of the fittest scenarios, increasing the likelihood of aggressive behavior (Baran, 2004; Lowery & DeFleur, 1995 cited in McQuail, 2007; Rodman, 2006). It also contributes to the proliferation of crimes such as drug trafficking, human trafficking, and armed robbery by portraying them as easy pathways to wealth.

In the Christianity, the religious development of youths can adversely be affected by media as in engenders erosion of religious values and the propagation of harmful ideologies and misinformation. One of the primary negative impacts of media on religious development is the spread of religious intolerance and extremism. Social media platforms, in particular, have been exploited by some individuals and groups to disseminate hate speech, incite violence, and promote radical ideologies (Chiluwa, 2015). The availability of pornographic content is inimical to the religious development of the youths as the Christian tenets prohibits exposure to them. A handy example is 1 Corinthians 6:18-20 which says “Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits

is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body's a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God?" Similar passages include Matthew 15:19-20; Galatians 5:19; Romans 13:12-14; Colossians 3:5-6

Within the Islamic faith, it is believed that the pervasive and dominant use of social media has given rise to numerous problems and challenges that threaten religious standards, social bonds, societal cohesion, and the overall conduct of life provisions in the Muslim world. These challenges include safeguarding Islam from blasphemous statements, publications that defame Islam and Muslims, the proliferation of societal ills and misdeeds, and the spread of other vices that contradict Islamic principles and values. The uncontrolled and unregulated nature of social media has made it a platform for the dissemination of content that undermines the teachings of Islam and poses a threat to the moral and ethical foundations of Muslim communities (Shehu et al, 2017). Furthermore, Shehu et al. (2017) have indicated the anxiety that in Islam, social media has facilitated the proliferation of pornographic content, public shaming and bullying behaviors, the dissemination of false information and misleading alarms, as well as the promotion of immoral acts and statements. It has led to a misuse of time and distraction from productive and religiously significant matters and deeds. Additionally, social media has contributed to sparking violence within society. Specific instances of blasphemous statements and publications directed against Islam and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) have been observed, alongside the propagation of obscenity, increased media violence, and intrusions into personal privacy through social media platforms. These developments pose significant challenges to upholding religious and moral standards, as well as maintaining societal cohesion and ethical conduct within the Muslim world.

From another viewpoint, the media encourages materialism and consumerism by bombarding audiences with manipulative and deceptive commercial messages about trivial goods, compelling purchase behavior even for products and services that are detrimental to personal and environmental health (Sharma & Singh, 2013). Lastly, the media instills cultural stereotypes among the ethnic groups in Nigeria, oversimplifying or minimizing the characteristics of each group and promoting prejudice against their cultural identities (Rodman, 2006).

The Nexus Between Media And Academic Performance Of Nigerian Students

According to Ward, Stoker, and Murray-Ward (1996) and Kimberly et al. (2009), academic achievement refers to the manner in which students engage in their studies and accomplish various tasks assigned by their teachers. In this regard, media networks often require accessing and acquiring information, and it has been reported that these networks affect students' academic achievement (Baldwin, Bedell, and Johnson 2007). It is in this sense that it is said that the media is one of the greatest educators of our time. Where formal education within the four walls of the classroom is not possible due to any sociological factor, the media acts as a school and a classroom for distance learning. Its power to remove geographical barriers allows educational content to be delivered easily, quickly, relatively cheaply, and to 'those who matter' at the convenience of students separated by physical boundaries (Ferdig, 2007). Research findings documented in Rodman (2006) show that children with higher intelligence quotients tend to watch more at an early age, while those with lower intelligence quotients show the opposite.

Meena, Scholar, and Jayoti (2020) state that in today's connected world, social media is becoming a driving force in education. As the world becomes smaller, the use of technologies like social media is changing the way education is accessed. Social media and education can complement each other when used effectively. Social media is constantly developing new educational opportunities for students, with both positive and negative effects. It has become an integral part of students' social lives and is seen by many schools as a learning platform that engages and empowers students. These platforms provide students with opportunities to connect, stay in touch, access information, and conduct research. West (2012) and Miah (2013) further suggest that social media has the capacity to reduce the physical distance between students and teachers and facilitate idea-sharing, regardless of distance. Therefore, the impact of social media on communication, learning, research, and education cannot be ignored (Gülbahar et al., 2008).

The Positive Impact Of Media On Nigerian Students' Academic Performance

Bilkisu (2023) emphasizes the positive effects of the media as follows Social media has the likelihood to positively impact Nigerian students' academic performance in various ways. In this regard, Meena, Scholar, and Jayoti (2020) argue that social media enhances students' creativity by enabling them to express their thoughts and opinions, fostering self-learning and allowing them to direct their own learning, which can provide much-needed confidence and help them determine the path they need to take. Additionally, social media has increased the speed and quality of student collaboration, facilitating communication and information-sharing, which increases productivity and helps students learn how to communicate better in groups (Meena et al., 2020). It also aids students in researching specific topics, making their studies much easier.

Furthermore, by spending more time with new technology, students become familiar with computers and other electronic devices, and focusing on technology in education can help students develop skills that will serve them throughout their lives (Meena et al., 2020). Social media teaches students the skills they need to survive in the world of work, as being able to connect with and support a large number of people in different places is an important part of career development and business building (Meena et al., 2020). Meena, Scholar, and Jayoti (2020) further argue that the use of social media platforms in schools motivates and nurtures students to learn. Educational videos on YouTube, easy access to e-books, online notes, and video calls are important elements that contribute to educational development. Distance learning, made possible by social media, is one of the best ways to learn from reputable organizations from any location. Social media helps boost students' creativity by enabling them to learn and perform independently, revealing hidden talents when they start taking photos and using online editing skills to make them aesthetically appealing (Meena et al., 2020).

Mansai (2019) found that through social media, students can connect with various educational groups related to their field of study and easily access important and reliable information shared by others. They can also share good information they find in such groups, boosting their confidence and helping the learning process. The ability to create groups on social media enables professors to connect with students and share important instructions for lectures as well as essential learning materials. Students can also share their perspectives, innovative ideas, or study questions with their classmates and professors in these groups, actively participating in group discussions and improving their knowledge. Professors can provide links to such study groups for students to upload their homework and assignments, saving time and effort that can then be used for their studies. Social media can facilitate collaborative work when students are working on group projects, enabling communication and information exchange for the project, saving energy and commuting time (Mansai, 2019).

Millions of educational videos available on social media platforms like YouTube can expand students' knowledge and help them develop a range of good skills and abilities, which can be shared with friends and classmates. Some students find it easier and more comfortable to participate in online learning discussions on social media than in face-to-face communication with classmates (Mansai, 2019). There are now many academic advisors on social media who can help students with their academic problems, and students can also use social media to get in touch with experts in different fields and refer to their blogs for information and knowledge related to their field of study, helping them gain real-world and practical knowledge and broadening their knowledge base. Students can use social media platforms like LinkedIn to find internships related to their field of study, helping them gain practical knowledge and improve their academic performance. Students can also enhance their knowledge by reading various educational blogs and using them in their studies (Mansai, 2019).

Deng and Tavares (2013) argue that social media can help students think clearly and make wise decisions in their daily lives. A study by Apeanti and Danso (2014) revealed that students are more likely to communicate openly with their professors through social media. Yunus and Salehi (2012) point out that the use of social media improves students' vocabulary and writing skills. Thus, it is clear that social media can have a positive impact on students' academic performance if used wisely for educational and constructive purposes (Apeanti & Danso, 2014; Deng & Tavares, 2013; Yunus & Salehi, 2012).

The Negative Impact of The Media on The Academic Performance of Nigerian Students

The media, particularly social media platforms, can have a negative impact on the academic performance of Nigerian students in various ways. One major concern is the lack of privacy, as most students do not regularly evaluate what they share online, which can have negative impacts months or years later in their lives (Obong, 2019). Additionally, students today rely heavily on access to information, especially on social media and the internet, to provide them with answers, leading to a reduction in their focus on learning and personal retention of information (Obong, 2019).

They may neglect their studies to keep up with trends and distractions like chatting, messaging, and gaming (Omachonu and Akanya, 2019). This is because social media platforms are a major source of distraction and inhibition, as students tend to lose focus while studying and enjoy scrolling through social media, resulting in wasted time without learning anything (Obong, 2019). Furthermore, inadvertent use of social media platforms can affect physical and mental health, with negative impacts on students' eyes due to constant screen time and lack of rest, as well as poor posture, eye strain, and physical and mental stress (Meena et al., 2020; Obong, 2019). Parents and schools should monitor what children are doing online to mitigate these health impacts. Meena, Scholar, and Jayoti (2020) point out that social media platforms are a major factor leading to boredom and mental deterioration, as students today enjoy looking at social media instead of focusing on their studies, wasting time without gaining anything. They fail to submit their work within deadlines because they are too focused on using social media platforms. The widespread use of social media has led students to rely on such platforms for knowledge and information instead of searching in books, magazines, and notebooks, resulting in a decline in their reading habits, learning, and research skills (Meena et al., 2020).

Social media can also reduce students' writing skills, with a tendency to use short words and phrases everywhere, which is inappropriate in exams and assignments and can negatively impact grades (Mensai, 2019). Many students only participate in online lectures or group discussions on social media and do not prefer face-to-face communication with classmates or professors, failing to develop good communication skills and losing confidence in interacting with others (Mensai, 2019). This can prevent them from sharing their ideas in class or group discussions, affecting their grades. Its addiction can cause various health problems, including back pain, irregular sleep patterns, mood swings, constant eye strain, and mental stress, which can affect work efficiency and lead to poor performance. Excessive use can also cause anxiety, depression, isolation from the real world, and psychological issues, which can prevent them from focusing on their studies and have serious consequences for their future (Mensai, 2019).

By and large, Paul, Baker, and Cochran (2012) avert that the time spent on social media depends on students' attention span, with a longer attention span leading to less time spent on social media. Junco (2011) found that time spent on Facebook has a very strong negative relationship with students' GPA, while Kirschner and Karpinski (2010) found that overindulgence in social media has a negative impact on students' academic performance. Mingle and Adams (2015) used a Likert scale to investigate the impact of social media on grades in a sample of 526 students, with the majority confirming that social media use had a negative impact on their grades (11.8% agreed, 11.8% strongly agreed, and 48.5% agreed that their grades suffered because of social media use).

Recommendations

Based on the foregoing discourse regarding the influence of media on religio-cultural development and academic performance of youth in Nigeria some recommendations are made:

All stake holders and policy makers should promote the production of local media content that reflects positive Nigerian religious and cultural values, norms, traditions, and the use of local languages, to preserve linguistic diversity and cultural identity. They should encourage partnerships between media organizations, educational institutions, cultural organizations, and religious bodies to achieve this.

There is need to implement strict regulations and guidelines for media content, particularly from foreign sources, to ensure religio-cultural sensitivity, alignment with Nigerian societal values, and adherence to religious principles. This should include measures to prevent the spread of blasphemous or obscene content.

Media literacy programs and education initiatives that empower individuals should be encouraged, especially for youth to critically analyse and evaluate media content from cultural and religious perspectives.

There is need to develop and implement policies and guidelines for the responsible use of social media and other media platforms in educational settings as well as promote moderation in media consumption and encourage a healthy balance between media use and academic activities.

Policy makers and stakeholders in care for youths should provide training and resources for educators on leveraging educational media and technology effectively in their teaching methods and lesson plans. Promote the development and use of educational media content to enhance learning and academic engagement.

Collaboration between educational institutions, parents, media organizations, and religious bodies should be ensured to create awareness about the likely negative impacts of excessive media consumption on academic performance, cultural identity, and religious values. Strategies should be proposed to mitigate these impacts.

Finally, regular assessments and research should be conducted to monitor the impact of media on academic performance, cultural and religious development.

These recommendations can help Nigerian youths harness the positive impacts of media while mitigating its negative influences, as well as promote cultural preservation and enhancing academic performance among the youth.

CONCLUSION

From the discussion of the impact of media on the cultural development and academic achievement of students in Nigeria, it can be said that media inputs are two-sided. It is therefore possible to balance positive and negative views on the impact of the media. Based on this premise, this paper concludes that the media is indeed beneficial, given the useful inputs required for education, religio-cultural development, information, entertainment, family unity and socialization.

These functional effects have enhanced Nigeria's local religio-cultural values and students' academic performance. In other words, when used wisely and intelligently, media can have a positive impact on Nigerian culture and students' academic performance, while when used carelessly and unconsciously, it can jeopardize their future by affecting Nigeria's cultural development and students' overall academic performance.

Students' use of social media should be in moderation and being regulated. They should be made fully aware of the difference between the real world they live in and the virtual world they create using social media. On the other hand, media can promote obscenity, immorality, language pollution, disruption of social life, family unrest and violence, poor self-learning, low grades and distraction. These dysfunctional inputs undermine Nigeria's cultural values and students' academic performance.

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