

Influence Of Nigerians Living Standards On The Use Of Social Networks For Teaching And Learning Purposes

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Abstract: *This study researched into issues that influence Nigerians living standards on the use of social networks for teaching and learning purposes. A social network is a dedicated website or application which enables learners to communicate with one another by posting information, comments, messages, images and so on. But will learners be able to use it effectively on hungry stomach? In view of this, the meaning and concept of living standards as a factor relating to income, quality and availability of employment, poverty rate, quality and affordability of housing, hours of work required to purchase necessities, gross domestic product (GDP), inflation rate, number of holidays per year, affordable or free quality healthcare, quality and availability of education, life expectancy, incidence of disease, cost of goods and services, infrastructure, national economic growth, economic and political stability, political and religious freedom, environmental quality, climate and safety was revisited. Since these factors have to be adequate to the best of standards in the Country to encourage use of social networks in schools. Based on these relevant conclusion and recommendations were made regarding the issues on this study.*

Keywords: *Nigerians, Living, Standards, Social, Networks*

I. Introduction

Influence is the capacity to have an effect on the character, development, or behaviour of someone or something, or the effect itself (Google.com, 2015). Living standards connotes the degree of wealthiness, healthiness, fairness and wellbeing of an average citizen of a country. It also refers to the level of comfort, resources and necessities available to a certain socioeconomic class in a certain geographic area. The country witnessed a slight increase in the Gross Domestic Product in 2010, which did not actually impacted on the improvement of Nigerians living standards due to inflation. This had made the naira weaker compared to some foreign currencies like dollars and pounds (Kazeem, 2013). The computer centers that suppose to support the use of social networks for teaching and learning are inconsistent in their operations in most schools. These schools range from primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. Some few institutions that have a functional computer centers run on power generators most of the time which makes maintenance cost very high and ridiculous.

The internet service providers charge huge sums of money to get an institution connected to their network for teaching and learning purposes. If Nigerians teaching and learning processes in schools is to be ranked among the best in the world, then it is high time challenges militating against the use of social networks is addressed. How long shall the four walls of the classroom dominate teaching and learning processes in Nigeria? This is a better story in developed countries where learners learn in an individualised form at their own pace and convenience. The social networks websites like wikispaces, facebook, instagram, wordpress, blogs and so on have liberated teachers and learners by breaking across boundaries and barriers to educate in developed countries.

Nigerian teachers have tried their best at appealing to the Federal Government (FG) and sometimes embark on industrial actions which did almost led to total decadence and rot in the educational sector. Only partial benefits was usually derived from these industrial actions. But when will Nigerians living standards improve to empower individuals more effective teaching and learning processes on social networks? This question is a hard knot to crack, but time will tell because impossibility is nothing.

II. Meaning and Concept of Living Standards.

A standard is something utilised as measure, norm, or model in comparative evaluation (Google.com, 2015). Therefore standard of living include factors such as income, quality and availability of employment, class disparity, poverty rate, quality and affordability of housing, hours of work required to purchase necessities, gross domestic product (GDP), inflation rate, number of holidays per year, affordable or free quality healthcare, quality and availability of education, life expectancy, incidence of disease, cost of goods and services, infrastructure, national economic growth, economic and political stability, political and religious freedom, environmental quality, climate and safety. Standard of living is that entity which is measurable in terms of real income per person, poverty rate, income growth inequality, disposable energy use, and educational

standards. Standard of living may be misconstrued with the quality of life which takes into account not only the material standard of living, but intangible aspects that make up human life, such as leisure, safety, cultural resources, social life, physical health, environmental quality issues and so on.

III. Meaning and Concept of Social Network

A social network is a dedicated website or application which enables learners to communicate with one another by posting information, comments, messages, images and so on. Social network involve the grouping of individuals into specific groups like small rural communities or a neighbourhood subdivision. Social network is possible in face-to-face contact, especially in the workplace, Universities, and high schools, but it is most popular online. This is because unlike most high schools, colleges or workplaces the internet, the internet is filled with millions of individuals who are looking to meet other people, to gather and share first-hand information and experiences about education, cooking, golfing, gardening, developing friendships, professional alliances, finding employment, business, marketing, baking and so on.

Social network entails the use of internet. The internet enable the hosting of websites that are called social sites. Social network websites function like an online community for internet learners. On the website, many of these online community learners share common interests in hobbies, religion, politics and lifestyles. Once access is granted to learners on a social network website, the learner begins to socialise. This socialisation include reading profile pages of other members and even contacting them. The benefit of social network range from meeting, interacting and making friends that are in far geographical regions for teaching and learning purposes. This is diversity, because the internet gives learners from all around the world access to social network sites, which enable learners from the United States to develop online interaction with learners in Denmark or Nigeria. Not only will friendship be made, but one can also get educated about new cultures, languages, problem solving techniques and teaching skills.

Social network, consist of learners that are grouped together. The social network website without a main focus are often referred to as traditional social network websites and usually have open learning membership. This infer that anyone can become a learner on such social network, no matter what their hobbies, beliefs or views are. However, once a learner is inside this social network community, he or she can begin to create his or her own network of learning friends and eliminate learning members that do not share common interests or goals.

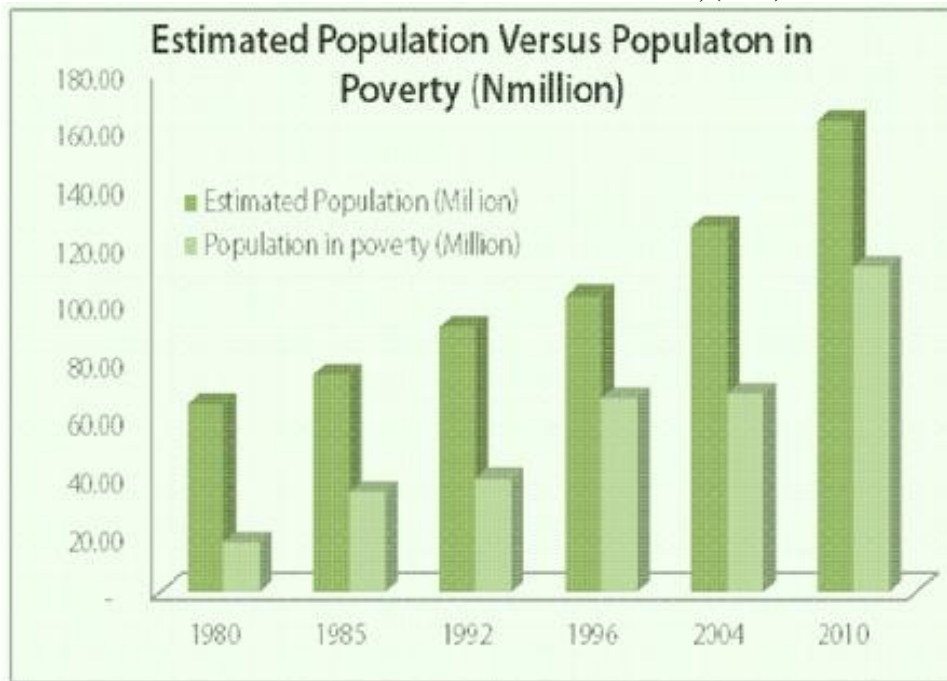
There are dangers associated with social network which include, data theft and viruses, online learners predators who claim to be whom they are not. Although dangers exist with social network, it also exist in the real world. Therefore learners are advised to proceed with caution online when using social networks just as they would in a club, bars, school, work or when they meet strangers. By being aware of learners cyber-surroundings and identity of whom they converse with, it is sure learners will enjoy safe social networking use.

Social networks need to be comfortable and informing to learners for effective use. This can be done by performing a standard internet search which gives result of social networks like Myspace, Friendwise, Friendfinder, Yahoo!360, Facebook, Orkut, Classmates and so on. Learners in this study is teaching and learning specific and it refers to group of members, individuals, friends or users on social networks website that comes together to interact and share ideas in order to learn and get educated. The teaching and learning processes could also be under the supervision of a teacher especially on Wikispaces.

IV. Analysis of Nigerians Living Standards

This is the break down of estimated population versus population in poverty in millions between 1980 to 2010 in Nigeria which is represented on the chart that follows:

Chart 1. Source: National Bureau of Statistics, (2010)



This chart indicates that in 1980 sixty eight point seven million (68.7million) population was recorded versus twenty million (20.0million) population in poverty. In 1985, an estimated population of eighty million (80.0million) was recorded versus forty million (40.0million) population in poverty. Also, 1992 recorded ninety eight point six million (98.6million) estimated population versus forty five point two million (45.2million) population in poverty. In the year 1996 one hundred and twelve point five million (112.5million) estimated population was recorded versus sixty eight point seven million (68.7million) population in poverty. In 2004, estimated population recorded was one hundred and thirty nine point two million (139.2million) versus sixty eight point nine million (68.9million) population in poverty. Year 2010, recorded one hundred and seventy eight point five million (178.5million) estimated population versus one hundred and twelve point five million population in poverty.

This chart reveals that the population living in poverty in Nigeria worsened every year especially between years 2004 and 2010. The incidence of poverty in Nigeria became alarming in 2010 when the Millenium Development Goal (MDG) reported that more than fifty percent (50%) of Nigerians lived in chronic poverty.

This is evident in the chart that follows:

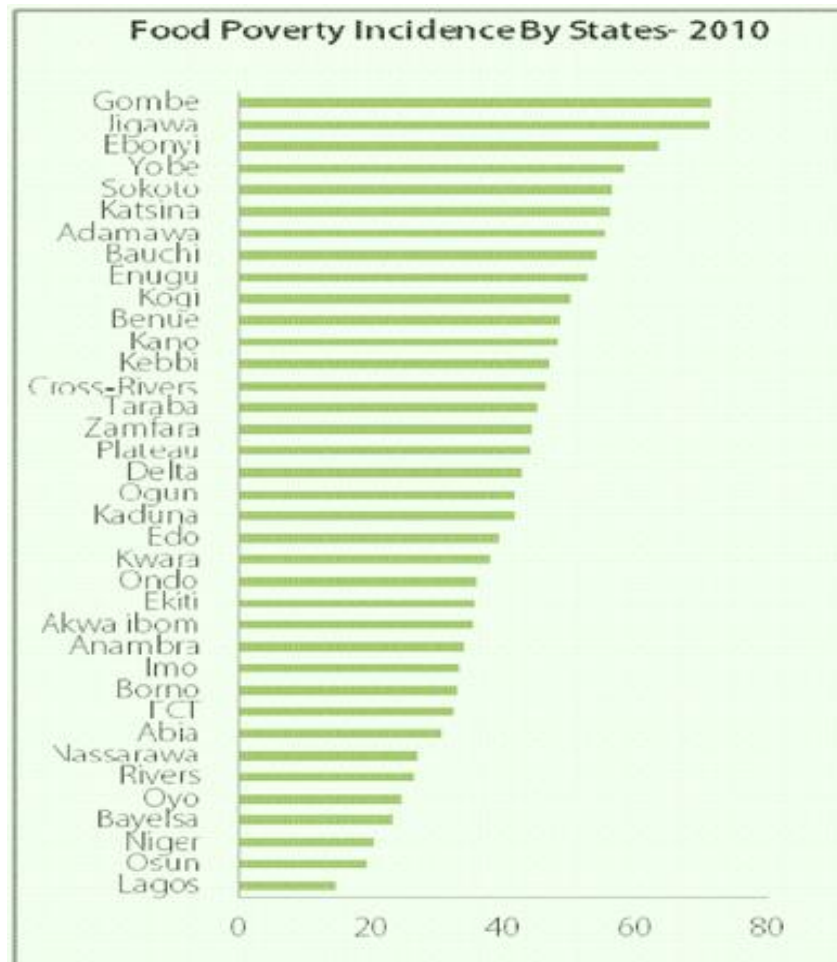


Chart 2. Source: National Bureau of Statistics, (2010).

The incidence of poverty in Nigeria appeared moderate prior to democratic transition in 1999. As a proportion of the population, twenty seven point two percent (27.2%) of Nigerians were living below poverty line in 1980. The poverty incidence did not cross the fifty percent (50%) mark until 1996 when it surged to sixty five percent (65%) as a result of the near collapse of the Nigerian economic system. In 1995, Nigeria economic growth reached its lowest at two point five percent (2.5%) in 1995 and four point three percent (4.3%) in 1996.

The high incidence of poverty in the five years period of 1995-1999 could be justifiably adduced to the political instability that characterised that period. Democratic rule in 1999 heralded a period of high economic growth built on the back of improved flow of capital into the economy as a result of renewed confidence in democratic rule.

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), 2010 measured four types of poverty incidence which are:

1. food poverty measure, which defines proportion of population living on less than 3000 calories of food per day;
2. absolute poverty measure which defines those living below a defined minimal standards of food, clothing, healthcare and shelter;
3. relative poverty measure, which defines those living below the living standards of majority in a given society; and
4. dollar per day measure, which defines those living below one United State (US) dollar US\$1 per day on the World Banks Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) index.

In 2010, it was estimated that sixty six million (66million) Nigerians or forty point six, three (40.63%) of the population did not have access to 3000 calories of food per day. About ninety nine million (99million) or sixty point five percent (60.5%) of Nigerians were absolutely poor living below humanly acceptable level of food in take, had no decent clothing and no access to standard healthcare and shelter. One hundred and twelve million (112million) Nigerians were also relatively poor, and ninety nine point five million (99.5million) lives on less than a dollar per day.

This is evident in the table and chart that follows:

Distribution of Poverty Incidence by type (2010)				
Zone	Food Poor	Absolute Poor	Relative Poor	Dollar Per Day
North Central	38.60	59.50	67.50	59.70
North East	51.50	69.00	76.30	69.10
North West	51.80	70.00	77.70	70.40
South East	41.00	58.70	67.00	59.20
South-South	35.50	55.90	63.80	56.10
South west	25.40	49.80	59.10	50.10
Average	40.63	60.48	68.57	60.77

Table 1. Source: National Bureau of Statistics, (2010).

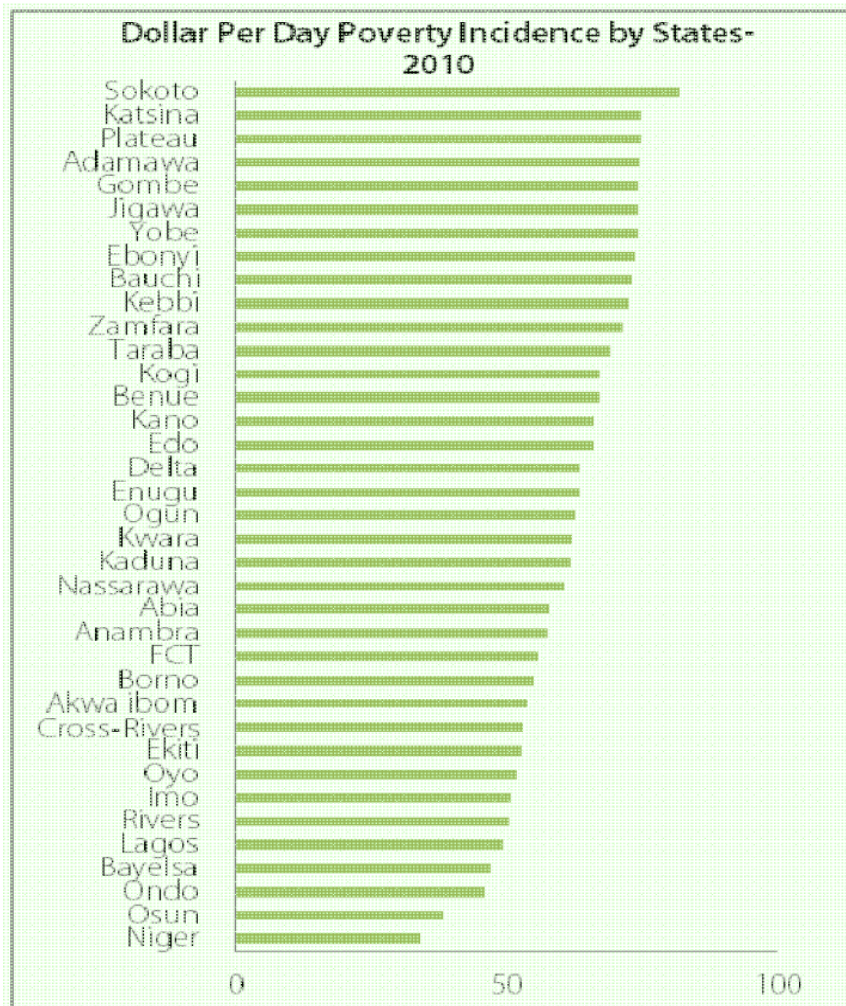


Chart 3. Source: National Bureau of Statistics, (2010).

Across the six (6) geopolitical zones, the Northwest had the highest incidence to poverty across the poverty measures. The south west had the lowest incidence of poverty. Among the thirty six (36) states of the federation, Gombe State had the highest incidence of food poverty while Lagos State had the lowest on chronic poverty measures. Interms of dolar per day, Sokoto State had the highest incidence of chronic poverty while Niger State had the lowest.

An average Nigerian lived on less than one United State dollar (US\$1) per day in 2010. This supported the high inequality measure of zero point four, five gini coefficient (0.45GC). Although, the real per capita income of Nigerians had trended upward, rising from five hundred and fifty nine United State dollars (US\$559) in 2004 to seven hundred and fifty seven United State dollars (US\$757) in 2010. The growth rate had been slower at an average annual growth of three point eight, five percent (3.85%) over the same period and it was projected to remain unchanged through 2012.

The unemployment rate shows rising poverty incidence, as Nigerian economy operates below its Production Possibility Frontier (PPF), as revealed by the chart that follows:

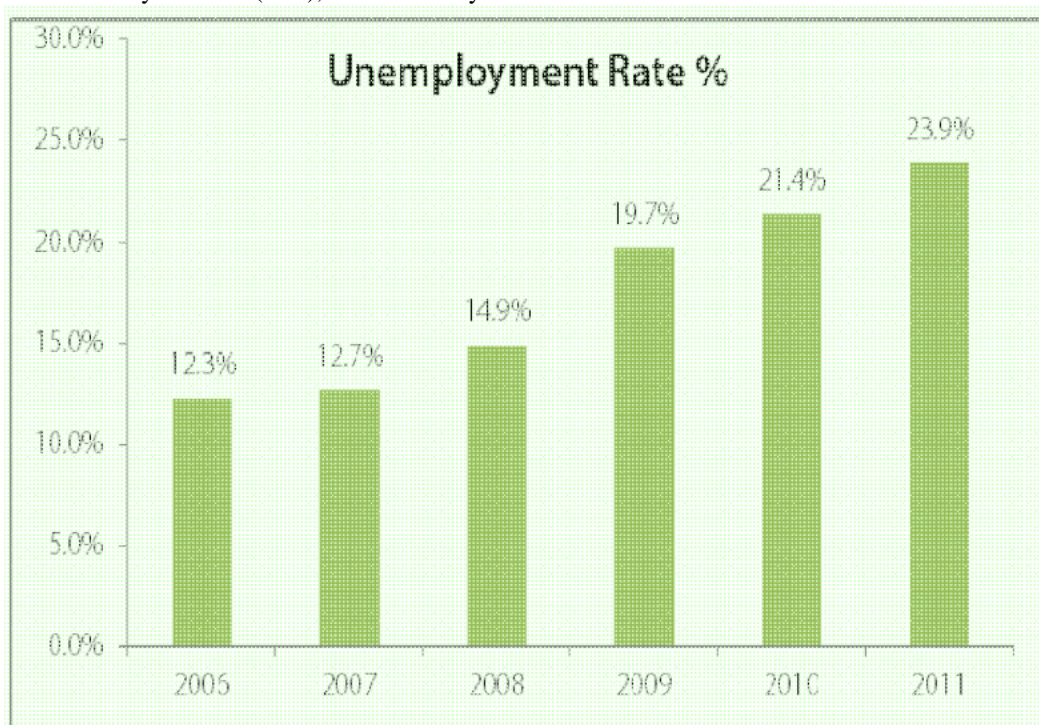


Chart 4. Source: National Bureau of Statistics, (2010).

At a population growth rate of two point six percent (2.6%) per annum and a demographic structure that suggest that the youthfulness of the population remain vibrant, the average annual entrant to the labour force was one point eight million (1.8million) between 2006 and 2011. Many of these people have not been able to find a job or a re under-employed such that between 2006 and 2011, overall unemployment rose from twelve point three percent (12.3%) of labour force to twenty three point nine percent (23.9%). A surge in unemployment rate was witnessed in 2009 for obvious reason, which was the fallout of global and local economic meltdown.

The problem of unemployment becomes disturbing when the unemployment is considered statistically. In 2011, thirty seven point seven percent of Nigerians of age 15-24 and twenty two point four percent (22.4%) of those between age 25-44 were willing to work but did not find work. On the average, youth unemployment rate in Nigeria was forty six point five percent (46.5%) in 2011. When unemployment and underemployment was extended to resources use, it became a fact that Nigerian economy operates substantially below Production Possibility Frontier (PPF). The indices of manufacturing capacity, agricultural productivity and mineral resources exploitation suggest idle capacity and wastes. Manufacturing capacity stagnated at fifty three percent (53%) through 2010 before it rose to fifty seven point three percent (57.3%) in the second quarter of 2011. The indices of both industrial and agricultural productions have largely stagnated since 2006.

The Nations agricultural productivity measured by yield per hectare is one of the lowest in the world. The yield per hectare in Nigeria is twenty percent (20%) compared to fifty percent (50%) in similar developing countries. Also, Nigeria has one of the lowest usage rates of agricultural inputs. Considering the natural fertility of the Nigerian soil and agriculture friendly climate, the five percent (5%) average growth rate per annum of

agriculture sector might be double by improvement in sector productivity thereby pushing the economy toward its PPF.

The influence of these bad living standards in Nigeria is that larger proportion of resource inputs which include human, capital and material for goods and services that are consumed in Nigeria resides abroad. The positive, but fast declining overall balance of payment of the economy is supported by oil and gas exports which accounts for ninety six point four percent (96.4%) of Nigerias total export. The solution to the dire job and living standard crisis in the country therefore lies in the reversal of this trend.

Investors are not encouraged to invest in Nigeria because of the instability and inefficiency of Nigeria's economy. Their investment is supposed to reduce unemployment and boost Nigerians' living standards so that they could afford to live a better life. But, worsened is the case at this period when All Share Index (ASI) slid 97 basis points to a five months low of 40,051.29 points and the Year to Date (YTD) and Month to Date (MTD) performance of the market drifted further south to negative 3.1 percent and 2.8 percent respectively. The decline was driven by selloofs in bellwether's Dangote Cement and Nestle (Nation, 2014). With this incidence, investors that suppose to support the Federal Government (FG) in building the Nations economy runs away to better countries, which results into bad living standards and increased unemployment in Nigeria.

V. Conclusion and Recommendations

How will Nigerians be able to adequately and effectively access the social network for teaching and learning purposes when they: leave below one United State dollar (US\$1) per day; are unemployed; can not afford good food to school; can not afford good clothing to school; and can not afford to buy a computer to learn on social networks in school due to poverty level? The bad living standards in Nigeria will continue to influence effective teaching and learning on social networks, if the Federal Government (FG) can not improve the countries economy for better, by eliminating importation of goods that can be cheaply produced in Nigeria, which creates more employment opportunities and increases the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This eliminates poverty and inflation and improves the living standards of Nigerians for future generations.

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