

The Impact of Social Media on the Performance of Construction Teams in the Wake of Covid-19 Pandemic in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT

The spike of Covid-19 pandemic was announced on 27th February, 2020 when an Italian citizen was tested positive to Covid in Lagos, Nigeria left everyone dismayed. The first of the lockdown commenced on April , 27th 2020 which triggered lockdowns , economic disruptions, , social distancing , isolations, restrictions which alter normal life of the people and cause serious economic downturn . During lockdown period, all sectors of the economy were grounded leaving the hope of media channels for communications, meetings, business operations, interactions, and all forms of productive engagements because all forms of physical and social contact are prohibited. This eventual lockdowns alerted the Nigerian government and various stakeholders to begin action on how to stem down the scourge of the deadly virus.It is noteworthy to know that the use of social media and other innovative technology played out at this time for use by government , corporate institutions, construction industry , educational establishments, agencies to mention a few as they keyed in into to undertake daily activities during the lockdown as it was lasted. This study aim to examine the impact of social media on the performance of construction teams in the wake of covid-19 pandemic in Ekiti State with a view to enhance the performances of construction teams through the adoption of social media while carrying out their project functions. Primary data

were collected through a well-structured questionnaire administered through random sampling technique on construction professionals in Ekiti State. The study used the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyse for their relative importance index using the mean item score .The study found that social media aid social and business interactions and this has a significant effect on the performance of construction teamsin the state during pandemic period. The study also revealed that the use of social media during covid - 19 pandemic lockdown contributed immensely to the performances of professional services. The study therefore recommends that the construction teams should of necessity improve on information technology infrastructures provisions, be well verse in their usage so that this can enhance professional performances while delivering professional duties from home, or through virtual office, thereby meeting the project target despite the lockdown constraints.

Key words: Social Media, Covid-19 pandemic, Construction Teams.

I. INTRODUCTION

The spike of Covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria was announced on 27th February, 2020 which took everyone with a surprise. According to (NCDC 2020), the first victim of the virus in Nigeria was an Italian man who arrived into the country on the 25 February 2020 was showing

evidence of symptoms of the virus after he was tested to covid and was admitted in Yaba Isolation Centre in Lagos. This dreaded pandemic triggered eventual restrictions that alter the normal life of the people and cause serious economic downturn, lockdowns, social distancing, economic disruptions, and isolations.

During the lockdown periods, all sectors of the economy were grounded, leaving the hope of social media channels for communicating, holding meetings, undertaking business activities, social interactions, and all forms of productive engagements were put on hold because of covid -19 protocols which were duly enforced by the government.

Hughes,(2020) argued that the use of social media took a prominent stage during pandemic period as a result of provision of fund towards capitalization of the expansion of communication infrastructure thereby increasing the opportunities for stakeholders to relate along their lines of individual businesses.

The scourge of the pandemic grossly affected the operations of the construction teams and hampered project works on site from making appreciable progress due to various control protocols rolled out by the government and National center for Disease control which affected the movement of people from one place to the other and restrictions of public transportations which affected services of construction Teams, workers and goods to site for work.

Murphy, (2013) viewed Social Media as the collection of websites and web-based systems that allow for mass interaction, conversation and sharing among members of a network has significantly increase the participation of all social media. Hence, the use of social media and other innovative communication technologies played out at this time for use by government, corporate institutions, construction stakeholders , educational establishments, agencies to mention a few as they undertake their daily activities while the lockdown lasted. Many researchers of different literatures observed that the use of social media and networking technologies, such as WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Telegram and Zoom have impacted significantly on the performances of the construction Teams' core responsibilities during the pandemic and were found operational as alternative means of social interaction, business engagement and corporate meetings with the stakeholders, so that the on-going projects can be effectively executed.

On this note, this research work seeks to examine the impact of social media and the effects of COVID-19 pandemic on the performance of construction teams in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The objectives of this study are;

- i. to identify the effects Covid -19 pandemic on the performance of construction teams in Ekiti State , Nigeria
- ii. to address the limitations to effective usage of social media on the performance of construction teams in Nigeria during Covid -19 pandemic period.
- iii. to examine the impact of social media on the performance of construction teams in Nigeria during covid -19 pandemic,

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Impact of Social Media on the Performance of Construction Teams in Nigeria.

Social media is one of the primary source proliferating the information regarding the virus (Gao et al., 2020). The major drawback of social media amid a problematic situation as COVID-19 pandemic is that social media has been conveniently used as an approach to convey misinformation and fake news (Park et al., 2020). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) , argued that social media is used to describe an online tools and utilities that allow communication and information, participation and collaboration in online environments. It is based on a group of internet based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundation of Web 2.0 and allow the creation of exchange.

The concept of Social media from the studies of many researchers is viewed as a computer based technology, that facilitates the sharing of ideas, thoughts and information through the building of virtual network and communities using various electronic device such as computer tablets, or smartphone via web based software or application which has the capacity to connect the users to anyone at the same time across the globe with the aim of sharing pieces of information. Because of the impact of covid -19 which has brought untold hardship on people and negative effect on the world economy, social life of the people in all sectors of the economy (businesses, educational sectors such as schools, universities, and transportation, tourism aviation, agriculture, oil and gas, manufacturing industry and Construction industries) , the social media has been found very useful in communication and social relationships

among various classes of people across the world (Gamil & Alhagar, 2020; Laing, 2020; Nicola et al., 2020).

According to DiMaggio et al. (2001) social media facility uses the internet and electronic network or networks that link(s) people and information through computers and other digital devices; thus allowing person-to-person communication and information retrieval through social media platforms such as the What Sapp, Telegram, Zoom, Microsoft Team, and Edmodo. It connects people across the globe where they are able to keep in contact with each other sharing common experiences. Furthermore, through social media, the global market is open upfor ease of doing business by government as well as the private sector in carrying out their day –to –day business activities(Susanto & Almunawar 2015) .

The use of social media industry has contributed immensely to the survival of construction activities in both large and medium scale construction by providing needed collaboration, innovation and promotion, improved image of such industry, enhance knowledge management, bridge the gaps between

stakeholders of the project and (Construction Industry Council, 2014; Dave & Koskela, 2009;).

Graham & Dutton, (2017) added that social media has proved to be beneficial in terms of Interaction; dissemination of information; building relationships among construction teams; and enhance two-way communication among construction stakeholders, provides useful information for needed administrative functions, facilitate dialogue between construction teams, advertise for workers.

According to (Chow et al., 2005; Winch, 2009; Spatz, 2000) posited that professionals in the construction industry such as Architects, Contractors, Material Suppliers, Specialists sub-contractors, Quantity Surveyors, Mechanical and Electrical Engineers and government planners can work together as a team in the construction industry to deliver a completed project at a specified time ,cost and specifications while Social media usage by this professionals in construction industry claims to produce numerous benefits in reaching business goals and objectives which is critical to a successful project business pursuits, and open the way for economic and social sustainability in all business environment.

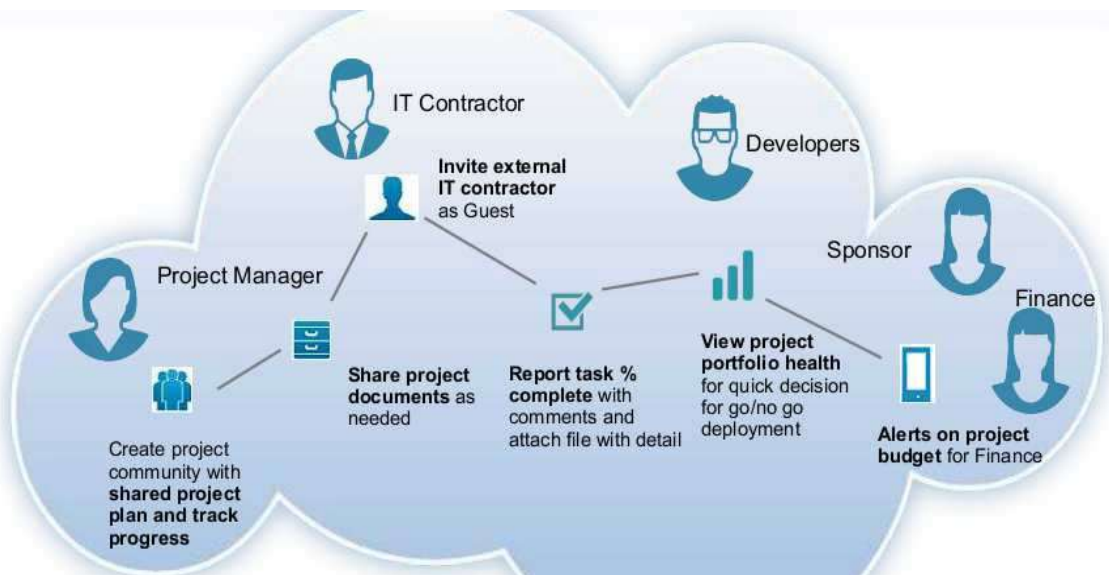


Figure 1: Social project interactions (Trilog Group, 2013)

Studies from other researchers also revealed the significant impact in the use of Social media among the construction teams during covid - 19 pandemic and has made it possible for the wide range of benefits to construction businesses. Among these benefits are, correct feedback , improve communication among global audience, improve interrelationship networks, improve

awareness of a company products, enhance knowledge on current issues and initiatives, innovation, facilitate knowledge management, drive traffic to website; raise company profile; increase online visibility of the organisation, the products and the services; allows consumers to engage with company, improve work efficiency, increase public relation opportunities with other

industry, helps to monitor competitors and aid immediate response to negative feedbacks. (Brown, 2012, Salcido, 2011, Pauley, 2014, Bradwell and Reeves, 2008, Patten, 2007).

The specific objectives of this research are; (i) to identify the challenges against the usage of social media on the performance of construction teams in Ekiti State, Nigeria during Covid -19 outset;

(ii) to examine the impact of social media on the performance of construction teams in Nigeria during covid -19 outset; (iii) to examine the best approaches to address the limitations facing effective usage of social media on the performance of construction teams in Nigeria during Covid -19 pandemic period

2.2 The Effects Covid -19 Pandemic on the Performance of Construction Teams.

Construction professionals such as Architects, Building Contractors, Quantity Surveyors, Subcontractors, Material Suppliers, Specialists Contractors, Mechanical/ Electrical Engineer and others professionals, work together as a team to accomplish a project in a most efficient manner. (Chow et al., 2005; Winch, 2009; Spatz, 2000). During the pandemic, a lot of challenges were encountered along the actual performance of construction teams in caring out the sole responsibilities and functions expected on projects.

Pasco, et.al (2020) argued that Construction workers are highly susceptible to covid -19 infections and are more likely to be hospitalized as a result of COVID-19 than workers in other industries. Several other researchers also highlighted that the risk of covid -19 infection is high among construction staff and professional. Michaelidou et al., (2011) stated that lack of understanding and encouragement from top management (Brown, 2012), unfamiliarity of staff/lack of technical skills in handling social media platforms, perceived unimportance, lack of use by the competitors are reported to be the barriers of social media implementation in construction organisations.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction to Research Methodology

This research aims to examine the impact of social media on the performance of construction teams amid the COVID-19 pandemic in Ekiti State, Nigeria. This was achieved with the study of related work and field study conducted within the state for collection of primary data from construction professional in the building industry such as Architect, Builders,

Civil/Structural Engineers, Electrical Engineers, Mechanical Engineers, Construction/Project Managers and Quantity Surveyors.

3.2 Data Collection

The data for this study were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected through questionnaires administered on the construction teams as respondents in Ekiti state. Secondary data were sourced from textbooks, journals, research works, seminar / conferences papers, and the internet.

From the existing literature and field experience, a questionnaire was designed to identify the impact of social media on the performance of construction teams during covid -19 pandemic in the state. A total of 100 questionnaires were distributed to Architects, Building Engineers, Civil/Structural Engineers, Electrical Engineers, Mechanical Engineers, Construction / Project Managers and Quantity Surveyors within Ekiti and total of 75 were returned for analysis. SPSS software (a social science statistical package) was used for the analysis of the data.

The respondents were asked to identify and rank each of the factors in order of importance on a 1-5 Likert type scale using '1' for not very important, '2' for slightly important, '3' for uncertain, '4' for very important and '5' for extremely important. In all 100 questionnaires were distributed out of which 75 were returned, yielding a response rate of 75%. The impacts were assessed for their relative importance index using the mean item score as follows:

$$\text{Relative Importance Index} = \frac{5n_5 + 4n_4 + 3n_3 + 2n_2 + 1n_1}{5N}$$

5N

Where, n_1 = number of respondents for not important, n_2 = number of respondents for slightly important, n_3 = number of respondents for moderately important, n_4 = number of respondents for very important, n_5 = number of respondents for extremely important, N = Total number of respondents

The relative importance indices are then ranked from the highest to the lowest in order to determine the most important impact factor, the "weighted average" of the mean item scores for each of the 15 factors from group was evaluated.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

The respondents who participated in the questionnaire survey were professionals such as

Architect, Builder Quantity Surveyor, Civil/Structural Engineer
Mechanical/Electrical Engineer and

TABLE 1: Challenges of covid-19 pandemic on the performance of construction teams in Ekiti State, Nigeria

S/N	Challenges of covid -19 pandemic	Mean	RII	RANK
1	Restrictions of movements and misinterpretation of social media information	4.4	0.88	1 st
2	Health and safety measures	4.29	0.857	2 nd
3	Supply chain disruptions	4.26	0.851	3 rd
4	Reduction in productivity	4.26	0.851	3 rd
5	Early closure of banking institution	4.23	0.846	5 th
6	Potential global recession	4.17	0.834	6 th
7	Inadequate materials for work	4.06	0.811	7 th
8	Challenges on result of operation and capital resources	4	0.8	8 th
9	Inadequate of Labour requirement	3.94	0.789	9 th
10	Difficulties in funding project	3.91	0.783	10 th
11	Adjusted working space	3.89	0.777	11 th
12	Impacts on tax, trade, or immigration	3.89	0.777	11 th
13	Not having enough information to make good decisions	3.77	0.754	13 th
14	Substandard project delivery	3.74	0.749	14 th
15	Decrease in client confidence	3.57	0.714	15 th

Source: Field survey 2021

TABLE 2; LIMITATIONS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE PERFORMANCE OF CONSTRUCTION TEAMS AMIDST COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN NIGERIA

S/N	Limitations of social media on the performance Of Construction Teams	Mean	RII	RANK
1	Unguaranteed users Privacy in the adoption and use of social media platforms	4.34	0.869	1 st
2	Material and Labour inflation	4.31	0.863	2 nd
3	Fraud risks	4.23	0.846	3 rd
4	Cyber security risks	4.23	0.846	3 rd
5	Loss privacy on the social media Account Hacked	4.23	0.846	3 rd
6	Misinterpretation of information	4.2	0.84	6 th
7	Easy access for hackers to launch spam attack commit fraud	4.2	0.84	6 th
8	High cost of maintenance	4.17	0.834	8 th
9	Government policies	3.97	0.794	9 th
10	Companies are ridiculed by unwanted negative feedback or publicity	3.91	0.783	10 th
11	Lack of cordial relationship among construction teams	3.83	0.766	11 th
12	Lead to negative feedback from employee	3.83	0.766	11 th
13	Facilitate laziness	3.8	0.76	13 th
14	Inadequate skills among professionals	3.74	0.749	14 th
15	Possibilities of photos being uploaded on social media to be misused	3.74	0.714	15 th

Source: Field survey 2021

Table 3: Impact of Social Media on the Performance of Construction Teams amidst Covid-19 Pandemic in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

S/N	Impact of social media on social media	Mean	RII	RANK
1	Easy communications and interactions among teams and clients for speedy actions on project matters	4.54	0.909	1 st
2	Get vital information out to audience fast	4.46	0.891	2 nd
3	Improve awareness of new style of construction	4.43	0.886	3 rd
4	Capable of reaching global audience	4.43	0.886	3 rd
5	It serves as a source to get needed information and assistance.	4.4	0.88	5 th
6	Increase opportunities with industry publications	4.37	0.874	6 th
7	Economic and social sustainability	4.34	0.869	7 th
8	Problems are solved faster without meeting physically.	4.31	0.863	8 th
9	Enhance knowledge on current issues and initiatives/innovation.	4.29	0.857	9 th
10	Help on monitoring competitors and act on negative comments	4.26	0.851	10 th
11	Facilitate knowledge management.	4.23	0.846	11 th
12	Improve work efficiency.	4.2	0.84	12 th
13	Make information easy to assimilate	4.2	0.84	12 th
14	Improve collaboration and create more conducive environment	4.09	0.817	14 th
15	Allow consumers to engage with company	3.94	0.789	15 th

Source: Field survey 2021

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

From the Table 1; The restrictions of movements and misinterpretation of social media information is the most highest ranked challenge out of many others. The Relative Important Index (RII) is 0.88 which connotes that, during covid 19 pandemic, the performance of construction teams in Ekiti State, Nigeria was significantly affected.

From the Table 2; unguaranteed users' Privacy in the adoption and use of social media platforms is the highest ranked limitation among others. The Relative Important Index (RII) is 0.869 which means a lot to bring set back on the performance of construction teams in Ekiti State, Nigeria during covid- 19 pandemic.

From Table 3; The highest Relative Important Index (RII) is 0.869 is ranked to be the first among the impact of social media on the performance of construction teams in Ekiti State, Nigeria during covid- 19 pandemic. The most significant impact is easy communications and interactions among teams and clients for speedy actions on project matters. This has influenced the success of the construction teams in Ekiti State during the period of the ravaging pandemic

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusions and Recommendations

From the quantitative data analysis, it is clear that the means of communication within the construction industry during the pandemic period is social media platforms. Media platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram, YouTube among others have imparted immensely on the performance of construction teams in Ekiti state during the period under review. The survey data concerning the effectiveness of these social media platforms on the performance of construction teams revealed that 100 percent of the respondents found it favourable, accessible to use and efficient during the lockdown.

This platform provided exceptional support for construction teams during meeting schedules, decision implementation, giving out instructions to construction workers without necessarily being on site physically and firm's communication activities therefore allowing ease of information sharing among many users of common interest connected to the project in a most efficient manner.

This paper therefore seeks to recommend the following underlisted points as the outcome of

the findings from the research work undertaken on the impact of social media on the performance of construction teams in Ekiti State, Nigeria. It is hoped that the work will add to the body of existing knowledge in the field of related research.

They are as follows;

1. The use of social media should be encouraged among construction teams and workers during and after the pandemic as a veritable tool for reaching global audience, improve awareness of new style of construction, make information easy for dissemination and articulation .
2. Users of Social media should get trained on how to secure their information and data so as to prevent their account been hacked Fraud risk
3. Government policies on the use of social media should be favourable towards adoption and usage of all construction workforce and stakeholders.
4. Construction companies should invest in providing communication facilities in their domain for efficient project delivery.
5. The social media can be used effectively during pandemic or any other events beyond human control, posing restrictions of movements and personal contacts on those who are directly involved in construction activities.
6. Adequate funding, training and time resources should be made available for day to day operations, maintenance, backups and security of social media facilities.
7. Information dissemination on social media platforms should be made consistent and uninterrupted so as to maintain a social interactions among in the industry.

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