Social Media and Youth Violence in Nigeria: A Psychosocial Review
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Abstract

While the causes of youth violence in Nigeria are multifactorial, extant literature are quite compelling that young people's exposure to social media violence plays an important role in the aetiology of violent behaviour in the country. Drawing from sociological and psychological perspectives, literature on violence and online social media that demonstrated that youth violence which include cyberbullying, gang violence, and self-directed violence increasingly occurs in the online space, were reviewed. To this end, the paper leaned heavily on Bandura's Social Learning Theory in explaining how young people learn to behave aggressively by watching the aggressive behaviour of others over various social media platforms. The review showed that while some forms of online violence are limited to internet-based interactions, others are directly related to face-to-face acts of violence. Central to the purpose of this article is uncovering the real-world consequences of these online events, and making use of this information to design effective prevention and intervention strategies. The paper conclude that electronic youth violence needs to be accorded attention of researchers in the criminal, sociological, psychological, medical, and public health domain. While the author invites sustained interest of researchers in examining the negative effect of social media on developing aggressive behaviour amongst the youths, three fundamentally different strategies that address prevention, intervention and suppression were suggested.

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Introduction

Social media has no doubt attained a highly influential status on the way young people think and behave all over the world (Greenfield, 2014; Lenhart, 2015; Ioannidis, Chamberlain, & Treder, 2016). Recent research are indicative that around 96% of 13-18 year olds make use of social media platforms and almost a quarter of teenagers aged 13-17 are 'almost constantly' checking their social media accounts (Lee & Lee, 2017; McLennan, 2018). Meanwhile, based on the continuing acceleration of technological innovation and the expanding ownership of smartphones amongst young people, it appears unlikely that these trends towards greater use of social media will cease in future years. Consequent upon this context, it is not surprising that online-offline boundaries are becoming increasingly blurred. Experts noted that the media has so propagated and promoted violence that it has made many people feel that crime is everywhere and, therefore, one needs some form of violence for self-defence (Eshiet, 2014; Mengü & Mengü, 2015; Younes, Halawi, & Jabbour, 2016; Shakya & Christakis, 2017).

Empirical studies have indicated that exposure to violence has a negative impact on youth mental health, academic performance, and relationships (Altbacker, Plozer, Darnai, *et al*., 2016; Calvert, Appelbaum, & Dodge, 2017; Morioka, Itani, & Osaki, 2017). This assertion was established globally as various scholars indicated the daunting effect that social media has over

the attitudes and behavioural patterns of the youth across the world (Florea, 2013; Greenfield, 2014; Lenhart, 2015; Lim, Gwak, Park, *et al.*, 2015). For example, in Canada, it was reported that social media has been fueling youth violence as young people who have been victims of crime in Camden are being taunted on platforms such as Instagram and Snapchat, leading to retaliatory violence by those determined not to "lose face" (McLennan, 2018).

In Nigeria, there has recently been remarkable concern expressed by stakeholders on the effects of social media on behavioural pattern of the youths in the country. For example, in separate interviews conducted by News Agency of Nigeria, some parents in the Federal Capital Territory expressed concern about the negative impact of the social media on their children and the youth (Vanguard, 2017). They described the impact of the social media on teenagers as destructive and harmful to their academics as well as their morals. Recent news has reported various darker sides of use of social media in the country which include cyberbullying, criminal activity, gang violence, and suicide fuelled by social media (Adaja & Ayodele, 2013; Eshiet, 2014; Vanguard, 2017).

In recent times, there have been various newspapers reports in Nigeria of teenagers engaging in violent crimes as a result of their interaction with the social media (Nigeria Monitor, 2017; Vanguard, 2017). Punch Newspaper (2016) reported how a teenager arrested for a robbery in a South-West state caused considerable trepidation in the minds of many. During Police's interrogation, the young suspect confessed that he got interested in robbery after watching a Yoruba movie on Youtube in which the protagonist was a major armed robber. He said the exploits of the criminal influenced him greatly, and he decided to promptly commence a career in banditry.

On one hand, social media is embedded with the positive potential to further enhance levels of communication between people across the world and the improvement it has brought to human wellbeing is unprecedented and exciting, on the other hand however, the negative derivatives its comes with equally enormous and grave consequences. Whilst this paper is not aimed at challenging the positive potential, it does lay bare a more troubling side to the use of social media. Debate surrounding the impact of social media representations on violence and crime generally, and youth violence specifically has raged for decades and shows no sign of abating. While this paper intends to align with existing literature on this trend, it will advance knowledge by providing sociological and psychological perspectives in examining the effect of social media on youth violence in Nigeria.

Conceptualising Social Media and Violence

According to web content analyst, Ron Jones, he defined social media as "a category of online media where people are talking, participating, sharing, networking, and bookmarking online" (Perren *et al.*, 2012:284). At present, there is an array of social media networks in the world, ranging from social sharing sites such as YouTube, Twitter to LinkedIn and Facebook. However, Facebook is described as the most popular social network in the world (Shakya & Christakis, 2017). It is also one of the two most frequented websites in the entire internet (Altbacker *et al.*, 2016; Ioannidis, Chamberlain, & Treder, 2016). It was reported as the first social networking site that surpassed the landmark of 1 billion user accounts (McLennan, 2018). It routinely trades places with Google as the most visited web service.

The social media that are commonly used in Nigeria include Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, LinkedIn, 2go, WeChat, BBM, Yahoo Messenger, among others. They all offer their

users with unrestricted access to chat and connect with their friends, relations and other acquaintances. Nigerian youths have massively adopted social networking sites, starting from Facebook and Twitter. The use of social networking sites has been gradually impacting on their lives and daily routines (Cash, Thelmall, Peck, Ferrell, & Bridge, 2013; Patton, et al., 2014; Younes, Halawi, & Jabbour, 2016). There is a growing number of youths that acquire mobile phones with internet facilities to enable them to connect to social networking sites to chat with their friends, family and relations at all corners of the globe. Before the deregulation of the Nigerian telecommunication sector in 1999, fewer Nigerians had access to computers while the lack of sufficient technological infrastructure such as the Internet and mobile phones constrained communication within the society (Eshiet, 2014). However, with the deregulation of the telecommunication sector, social network spread like wide fire in Nigeria. Today, all classes of Nigerians, have unlimited access to the social media.

On the part of violence, Florea (2013) described it as been an indispensable part of human life and asserts that either as children or adults, violence is witnessed by all frequently in different forms. Mengü and Mengü (2015: 212) defined violence as "a way of action … based on the power- physically and materially to hurt other creatures or to be harmed." They also extended its meaning to "the exertion of physical force so as to injure or abuse" or "injury by … distortion, infringement, or profanation." It refers to killing, destroying, doing intentional harm, robbing, expelling as the five basic forms. Out of the five basic forms, killing stands out as the most extreme limit of violence. In totality, violence refers to both the use of physical force intended to bring about destruction, injury or harm and also the exhibition of unjustified, wrongful and illicit actions meant to daunt and dismay. It does not matter if we are children or adults, we might be the "aggressors, victims or witnesses of an aggression" (p.214). It is indeed a truism that in the modern world, any incidence might easily trigger deep-rooted aggression as a consequence of economic, political, or social reasons.

Theoretical Consideration

In his social learning theory, Bandura (1971) stated that people in their everyday lives continually observe the actions of others and the occasions on which they are rewarded, punished or ignored (p.46). This theory was inspired from the idea of modelling behaviour as a way of learning how to behave. Imitation, modelling and observational learning are considered important ways in which social context learning takes place. Generally, proponents of social learning theory put forward the argument that individuals are capable of learning by modelling the behaviour of others as well as the outcomes of the observed behaviours. According to social learning theory, even in the absence of behavioural change, learning can still take place and imprints the individual with a modified norm. Researchers who studied social learning theory have however posited that learning can also occur through observation, but may or may not be reflected as a behavioural change (Ormrod, 1999). The theory further suggests that there is a role of reasoning relevant to the process of learning and that expectations and awareness of possible punishment or reinforcement may have an effect on the final decision of an individual.

According to the theory, people learn to behave aggressively by watching the aggressive behaviour of others (Bandura, 2002). This is particularly true when those others are rewarded for their aggressive behaviour. Several types of learning occur. One can learn specific ways to harm someone, including novel use of initially innocuous items. One can also learn what types of situations call for aggression. And of course one also learn a host of related attitudes and beliefs

concerning aggression, many of which may be objectively incorrect but which influence the media violence consumer's perceptions and actions in the real world. Social learning theory is one of the few theories that lean on both sociological and psychological traditions in explaining the process of modelling attitudes and behaviours of others. This theory can certainly explain some types of media violence effects, because media such as television, films, and video games all provide opportunities for people to view the behaviour of others and often depict rewards for that behaviour.

In respect of the mass media, Bandura (1986) postulated that an influential source of social learning at any age is the abundant and varied symbolic modelling provided by television and other visual or media (p.70). Although much social learning is fostered through observation of real-life models, advances of communication have increased reliance upon symbolic models (Bandura, 1971:2). The advent of social media has introduced a new dimension to modelling of other people's behaviour. Youths are exposed to the lifestyles of more people over the social media and they are vulnerable to being influenced by people that they interact with on different platforms. Gerbner (2002), through his work with the Cultural Indicators Project, investigated the various symbolic models upon which television viewers rely. The Cultural Indicators Project, which began examining the images of broadcast television programming in 1967, conducts both content analysis and cultivation analysis (Signorielli, Gerbner, & Morgan, 1995) on this- artificial reality that makes TV violence so popular. Cultivation analysis, specifically, inquiries into the assumptions television foster about the facts, norms, and values of society (Gerbner & Gross, 1976).

Social Media and Violence

In more ways than one, social media has been integrated into the lives of millions of people. Either it is being used to bridge friendship, stay informed or express oneself, it offers everyone unique ways of staying connected to the world. However, just as it has positive potentials, the darker side of social media are quite prevalent and daunting.

It is noteworthy to state that harmful social media use rarely stays in cyberspace. More often than not, the ramification spill into the real world and what at first seems like an unprovoked event is illuminated by a review of the social media activity that preceded it. The most common types of youth violence perpetrated and facilitated by the social media include cyber bullying/victimisation, harassment, electronic dating aggression/cyber-stalking, gang violence, peer-to-peer violence including school shootings and cyber-suicide (Patton, Eschmann, & Butler, 2013: 549). In recent times, there is a new phenomenon that is referred to as 'internet banging' which is reported by media outlets across the world. Internet banging is an act in which individuals involved in gangs or neighbourhood factions use social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to incite dares, trade insults or make threats of violence which may result in homicide or victimisation (Patton et al., 2013: 549). These examples clearly indicate the extremities of the internet abuses.

Though there is limited research that points out that an increased number of hours on social media directly correlates with aggressive behaviour, there is however literature that links certain types of internet use to increased aggressive behaviour. For example, there might be contributions from the quality of online exposure as Lee & Lee (2017) asserted that youths who perpetrated serious crimes are significantly more likely to have viewed violent online content. Moreover, just as it is similar to the way that media coverage of suicide can act as a contagion

for "copycat" suicides (Alao, Soderberg, Pohl, & Alao, 2006), evidence also abounds that some mass killings may be influenced by other violent acts in the immediate past (Patton, et al., 2014). In the present times, the internet now offers unfettered access of images to real-life violence, for example, recent videos of murders and gang violence uploaded to Facebook Live, overall exposure to, and potential for, copycat violence may be increased.

According to McLennan (2018), teens that spend hours "liking" their friends' pictures on social networking sites may be significantly more likely to have other traits associated with violent behaviour aside from their internet habits. The characterisation of the population of adolescents with problematic internet use (PIU) and to examine comorbidities has been the goal of a large body of research (Lim *et al.*, 2015). Alcohol use and depressive symptoms both predict violent behaviour in adolescents, and these factors have also been positively correlated with internet use. Perhaps, it is not surprising based on the neuroimaging findings that point out that brain structural abnormalities in reward circuitry in adolescents with PIU, adolescent PIU is connected with higher levels of alcohol use. This association has been found both in cross-sectional analyses, as well as in a longitudinal study in which internet overuse corresponded with heavy alcohol use by early adulthood.

The quantity of time used over the internet has also being identified as a contributory factor for violent behaviour. There are studies that have connected problematic internet use (PIU) or internet addiction (IA) to increased aggressive behaviours, perhaps as a result of similar neurobiology between the two conditions. PIU and IA are usually broadly defined as internet use that is not controllable, markedly distressing, time-consuming or that leads to social, financial or occupational difficulties. A study of over 2000 Korean high school students found a nearly two-fold increase in aggression in severely internet-addicted youth over mildly internet-addicted youths, and similar findings have been replicated in other adolescent studies (Menesini *et al.*, 2012). There are other measures that have equally shown correlation between aggressive behaviour and internet-addiction (Ioannidis, Chamberlain, & Treder, 2016). Students of high schools in America who met criteria for PIU were significantly more likely to have been in physical fights than those that were in a non-PIU cohort.

Though it has been quite contentious, there is growing evidence that pathologic internet use may positively correlate with depressive disorders, and even "normal" everyday scrolling of the Facebook may have long-term consequences (Lenhart, 2015). Recent longitudinal studies have discovered that the use of Facebook is predictive of a decline in subjective wellbeing (Greenfield, 2014; McLennan, 2018), and similar associations have been delineated between depressed mood and overall social network use, as well as with online chatting. Added to this, while PIU can be conceptualised as an addiction, it has also been characterised as an impulse control disorder. There have been suggestions by several studies that a high degree of overlap between PIU characteristics and impulsivity, depression, aggression, and even increased substance use that may support the idea that adolescents who spend countless hours online may become more violent than they would be if they spent less or no time online (Ioannidis, Chamberlain, & Treder, 2016; Lee & Lee, 2017).

Social Media and Typologies of Youth Violence in Nigeria

Social media have provided an open arena where the youths are free to exchange ideas on various violent acts. The advent of social media technologies in Nigeria has seen to the manifestation of both positive and negative realities. Just as obtainable in other climes, Nigeria

youths are exposed to various types of violent behaviours and victimisation as a result of the rapidly growing rate of social media in the country.

Cyberbullying/Victimisation

This is perceived as the first major category of social media-involved youth violence. Also referred to as electronic bullying, cyberbullying is generally defined as a type of bullying that involves the use of online or computer-mediated communication, such as Twitter, Facebook, instant messaging, or text messaging (Smith et al., 2008; Menesini et al., 2012). Examples of cyberbullying include sending threatening or insulting messages, disclosing personal information, spreading rumours, excluding others during online communication, or displaying embarrassing pictures (Perren et al., 2012; Van Laer, 2014). Although there appears to be a significant conceptual overlap between cyber-bullying and face-to-face bullying (Cross et al., 2009; Dooley et al., 2009), cyberbullying is different from traditional bullying based on the fact that humiliating text or visual materials sent to social media can be made permanent and made available to a larger number of people (Heirman & Walrave, 2008). Moreover, whereas physical bullying is generally characterised by physical dominance, a physical advantage is not necessary in cyberbullying; perpetrators can instead dominate a victim through knowledge of social media usage, anonymity, and the victim's limited possibilities of defence and few options of escape (Perren et al., 2012).

Reports vary widely as to what percentage of adolescents have been exposed to cyberbullying, presumably because of a lack of consistency in the way the term is operationalised by researchers. There have been widespread reports of Nigerian youths engaging in cyberbullying to subdue their victims (Okoiye, Nwoga, & Onah, 2015). Studies conducted by Aborisade and Fayemi (2013) on barriers to rape reporting by university female students revealed that rapists often engage in threats of posting the videos of the rape act online as a way of intimidating the victims into nondisclosure of the rape incidence. Meanwhile, there have been incidences of such posting of nude pictures and videos of male and female victims as retaliation for relationship breakdown. Similarly, Eshiet (2014), found that approximately 20% of Nigerian youths had indicated being a victim of cyber-bullying at some point in their lives. Electronic technology also enables adolescents to hide their identities by posting or sending messages anonymously, by using a false name, or by taking up the on-screen identity of someone else.

Gender-based Violence

This type of violence is described as any harm that is perpetrated against a person's will and that has a negative impact on the physical or psychological health, development, and identity of the person. Violence is a means of control and oppression that can include emotional, economic force or social, pressure or coercion, as well as physical assault or threatening someone with a weapon; it can also be covert, in the form of intimidation, threats, persecution, deception or other forms of psychological or social pressure. Minerson, Cardo, Dinner, and Jones (2011), posited that the person who is the target of this kind of violence is compelled to act against his/her will out of fear. In its various forms, gender-based violence is endemic in communities around the world. The perpetration of the crime is done across religion, class, age, race and so on. Meanwhile, the revolution in information communication technology in present times has further presented perpetrators with new avenues of expressing gender-based violence.

Though there is perceived prevalence of gender-based violence in Nigeria, it is

nevertheless underreported as a result of social stigma, shame, and other socio-cultural factors that inhibit women from discussing incidence of violence (Aborisade & Fayemi, 2013). However, the social media frequently report cases of violence perpetrated against women and girls by family members, religious leaders, friends, and so on, when such cases are brought to the open. Recently, there have been widespread reports of cases of gender-based violence perpetrated by acquaintances and friends that are met through social media. Such violence includes theft, rape, sexual assault, kidnapping and murder. For example, Cynthia Osokogwu, a 25 year old postgraduate student of Nasarawa State University, a daughter of a retired Nigerian Army General and a business woman was murdered on July 22, 2013 in a hotel by friends she met through a social network site (facebook) (Vanguard, 2012). Echezona Nwabufor (33years) and his cousin Ezekiel Eloka (23years) (both undergraduates of Nigerian Universities) lured Cynthia from her base in Nassarawa State to Lagos, for the purpose of stealing her money. Cynthia owned a fashion boutique and was engaged in frequent travels abroad to purchase goods for sales. Her friends aware of this information through their Facebook interactions wanted to steal her money but ended up killing her as attested to by their confessions.

Similarly, Vanguard Newspaper (2012) reported the case of Arthur Obiora, a 26 year old unemployed graduate of Igbinedion University Okada and the Centennial College, Ontario, Canada, who pushed down his Facebook lover Nkiruka Akabuogu, from a multi-storey building over a disagreement on sex. Obiora met 21 year old Nkiruka Akabuogu, a Linguistics student of the University of Lagos, on Facebook (barely a week earlier) and invited her to go clubbing with him. From the club, they moved to Obiora's house, where Obiara demanded for sex. On Nkiruka's refusal, he tore her dress and thereafter pushed her down from the third floor of the storey building. Nkiruka fell unconscious and sustained multiple injuries, including a fractured pelvis.

These cases and many more that have been reported on the news are indicative of the fact that social media orchestrated violence perpetrated by the youths are prevalent in Nigeria.

Gang Violence

The presence of urban street gangs on social media is a relatively new area of research. Criminologists have, in the last five years, investigated how and why gang members use social media (Decker & Pyrooz, 2011; Pyrooz, Decker, & Moule, 2013; Ranney & Daya, 2013). The presence of gangs on social media has been described as a form of cyberbullying, but the real-world violence precipitated by gang-related online threats or communications points to the possibility that it may be an entirely different phenomenon. In Nigeria, there have been a number of reports street gangs and cult groups engaging in cyberbullying to drive home their supremacy over rival gangs in the same area. In particular, News Line (2017) reported the cyber activities of a particular street gang known as 'Surulere Boys' who were threatening some rival groups over the Facebook and claiming supremacy in the control of the entire Surulere area. The group was mentioning names of targeted members of the rival groups until their Facebook accounts were blocked following series of reports against them and their online activities. Similarly, it is common knowledge that some street groups harvest information about their targets from their social media accounts and activities in order to determine their vulnerability and decide when to attack them. Though there is a dearth of empirical studies that have explored the ways urban gangs use social media to facilitate violence and crime in Nigeria, there are however considerable

newspaper reports that have exposed the various ways gangs use social media to determine which crime to commit, their target, when to strike among others.

Empirical studies have asserted that gangs spend a significant amount of time surfing the Internet, particularly social media sites (Decker & Pyrooz, 2011; Lenhart, 2015). However, gang member use of the internet and access to the internet is remarkably lower than overall Nigerian youth internet usage. While researchers have not settled on a term to describe this phenomenon, recent work uses phrases such as "cyberbanging" a term often used by the police and "Internet banging" (Patton, Eschmann, & Butler, 2013), to describe this unique form of computer-mediated communication. Gangs engage in a couple of online activities that include but not limited to watching videos, posting videos, announcing activities, making fun of a recent conquest or victimization of rival groups or individuals, inciting dares, displaying weapons, and discussing and displaying illegal and other substances (Decker and Pyrooz, 2011, Patton et al., 2013).

Cyber-Suicide

This is a self-directed form of youth violence. It is defined in different ways but generally, cyber suicide is known to indicate individuals using the internet to communicate suicidal ideation (Alao, Soderberg, Pohl & Alao, 2006). Few research studies have examined how frequently or why youth discuss suicide on social media sites. In a study that examined adolescent suicide statements on Myspace, Cash et al. (2013) reviewed 1038 Myspace posts that were collected from publicly available profiles. The researchers downloaded account profiles with the use of algorithm which downloaded over 40,000 profiled. There were inclusion and exclusion of final comments based on the following criteria "had a public profile; did not self-identify as a musician, comedian or movie maker; had received less than 4000 comments. Findings from this study revealed that youth communicated suicidal thoughts in direct response to negative experiences with personal relationships, substance use, a complicated mental health status which may include thoughts of various methods of suicide. The researchers theorise in this preliminary work that youth expressing suicidal thoughts online may be seeking resources and support as they cope with challenging experiences in their daily life. They also expressed that there are concern that social media can create a space for youth to learn about ways of committing suicide and others who have done so, and that online engagement with a prior suicide may even motivate them to replicate the event, a phenomenon referred to as the *Werther effect*.

There is no gainsaying about the fact that the rate of suicide and suicide ideation among the youth in Nigeria has been on the increase in recent times. Studies have pointed out that the overbearing effect of social media on the youths is gradually reducing the traditional protective factors (e.g., strong kinship networks, cohesion within groups and cultural affiliations, role of the elderly, strong sense of religiosity and spirituality). These factors that acts as social support systems that inhibits decision to commit suicide have been weakened because of greater influence that social media has on the youths (Atilola & Ayinde, 2015; Adewuya, Ola, Coker, *et al*., 2016; Oladele & Oladele, 2016). There is now a growing penchant among the youths for taking their lives for reasons as mundane as a quarrel with a sibling, loss of a game by a fan's favourite team among others (Animashaun & Animashaun, 2016). Ruder et al. (2011) made use of a case study to theorise about the ways in which youths use Facebook for the discussion of suicide. They found that youth indeed post suicide statements on Facebook, and in response, individuals with whom they network attempt to prevent the potential suicide attempt. The researchers point toward the opportunity to use Facebook as a tool for suicide prevention. More research is however

needed to drive a comprehensive understanding of how and why youth communicate suicidal thoughts through social media.

Conclusion

A considerable number of studies examined the potential effects of violent social media exposure on the youth. The rapid growth of social media activities confirms their entrant into mainstream culture and integration into the daily lives of adolescents. This review, drawing from psychological and sociological perspectives, has examined the links between young people's use of social media and serious youth violence. Without mincing words, it is evident that electronic youth violence needs to be accorded attention of researchers in the criminal, sociological, psychological, medical, and public health domain. Certainly, there is a dearth of literature on the impact of social media on the youth in Nigeria. This apparent apathy by indigenous researchers needs to be addressed as the negative effect of social media on developing aggressive behaviour amongst the youths cannot be overemphasised. Intervening on the challenges identified by young people's use of social media and its connection with serious youth violence is indeed a daunting task. Online technology is providing young people with unprecedented tools of communication. Whilst this is raising exciting opportunities, it is also creating serious risks and challenges that we are failing to tackle.

Social Learning theory emphasises the importance of observing and modelling the behaviours, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others. Since the youths are highly vulnerable to being influenced by their peer groups and significant others, their attitudes and behavioural patterns stands to be altered by their contacts on social media. The amount of violence on social media in the present times is enormous. Meanwhile the youths spend so many hours every day surfing the internet and watching these scenes of gore. Violence becomes their reality. Meanwhile, many youths find it difficult to distinguish between reality and fantasy. This makes violence 'normal' for them. The discussion of a number of incidences of social media-mediated youth violence in this review is a manifestation of this trend.

At this crucial point, the relevant question to ask is, where do we go from here? In providing answer to this question, it is useful to separate three fundamentally different strategies: prevention, intervention and suppression. Different groups and organisations will express interest and commitment to each of these strategies. It is however relevant that the stakeholders should not disregard them as competing against one another. Rather, it should be realised that none of these strategies will be effective in isolation. As a result, they ought to be considered as complementary strands of activity that all share the common goal of tackling the connection between the behaviour of young people online and serious incidences of violence on- and offline.

Prevention: it is germane that adults get themselves more involved with young people in the use of social media, and where possible, cohabit these spaces so that they contain a degree of adult oversight. There is usually limited knowledge and understanding of the social media apps that young people currently use expressed by parents, guardians and professionals, not to talk about how young people's use of them is connected to their attitudes and behaviour in real life. It is therefore imperative for adult close associates of the youths to get more interested in these modern communication channels.

Intervention: policy and practice in Nigeria around social media intervention strategies is practically non-existent. Countries like the UK and USA have put in place such policies that

offer effective use of social media by outreach youth workers in pre-empting and preventing serious incidents of face-to-face violence between young people. In such countries, youth workers make use of social media platforms to pick up early warning signs of increased tension between high-risk individuals and groups. Youth workers thereafter work on this information by making attempt to reduce the heat between young people and groups anytime there seems to be an imminent occurrence of real-life violence. It is desirable for such initiative to be adopted in Nigeria to foster quick and effective intervention as a way of reducing the negative effects of social media on the youth to its barest minimum.

Suppression: the suppression of social media effects on youth violence should bother on the role of the police in enforcing and monitoring content uploaded on social media platforms. However, this is a sensitive issue that stands to infringe on fundamental rights to privacy. Therefore, a blanket surveillance of activity on social media platforms would be both unnecessary and undesirable. However, a complete lack of oversight by the police or any other responsible adults will continue to contribute to the willingness of young people to upload the type of content. There must certainly be a compromise between these two extremes that would enable the police to selectively identify most serious incidents of criminal behaviour being broadcast and shared over social media platforms. In addition, it is proper for social media providers to always remove content that goes against their own community guidelines, for example, content that appear to be violent or contains threats.

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