



Zaria Archaeology Papers (ZAP)

Vol. 13, 2020

ISSN: 2736-0563



A Publication of
The Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies
Faculty of Arts, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

YOUTUBE: A VERITABLE PLATFORM FOR THE PROMOTION AND PRESERVATION OF AFRICA'S HERITAGE

Baduku Silas Anthonia
Department of Sociology,
Kaduna State University, Kaduna
toniabaduku@gmail.com

Abdulmalik Abdulrahman. Abdulmalik
Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies
Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

And

Daniel Nuala Hassana
Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies
Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

Abstract

YouTube falls within sharing social media platforms where data are being recorded for the benefit of an audience. This is part of the most trending social media platforms in the world where vital information can be viewed and knowledge is also shared. YouTube plays vital roles in the knowledge sharing and consumption among other social media platforms in the world. African heritage is in line of going into extinction because of several factors which is not the concern of this paper, but through social media platforms, African heritage and culture can be communicated to the world and preserved for future generations, most especially through YouTube. Several studies have emphasized the uses of social media in the communication of culture. This paper, however, aims at giving insight on the role of YouTube as a social media platform in the promotion and preservation of cultural heritage in African societies. The paper is a review of several literatures relating to the subject matter and concluded by recommendations on the effective uses of YouTube in the promotion of African cultural heritage.

Key words: YouTube, Africa, Social media, Cultural Heritage, Preservation.

Introduction

Cultural heritage generally is a broad term that set across of all assets, values, traditions, norms, monuments, among many other

defined ways of life of the group of people in society. In other words, this could simply refer to peculiarly known traditions or total ways of life of a group of people, which is well

known to the people of the society. Culture is a tradition that touches every aspect of human life and, as such, what comes out of culture is what is referred to as heritage. In a simple language, it is also defined as "traditions, achievements, beliefs, etc., that are part of the history of a group or nation". ICOMOS (2002), defined cultural heritage as an expression of the ways of living developed by a community and passed on from generation to generation, including customs, places, practices, objects, artistic expression and values, which could be expressed as both tangible and intangible. William (2007) also defined it as the legacy of physical artefacts and intangible attributes of a group or society that is inherited from past generations. Thus, heritage in a real sense of culture could be classified into both tangible and intangible heritage, in as much as it upholds the significance and tradition of the society. Take, for instance, a monumental architecture of a particular society could be referred to as heritage, while the oral tradition of how the architecture put in place and who and how it was constructed is also part of heritage of that same society. Carrying out of sacrifices (tangible) prior to the Osun Oshogbo festival is part of the heritage of the people and the incantation (intangible) while carrying out the

sacrifice is also part of their cultural heritage. Sullivan (2016) attested that cultural heritage includes tangible culture (such as buildings, monuments, landscapes, books, works of art, and artefact), intangible culture (such as folklore, traditions, language, and knowledge); and natural heritage (culturally significant landscapes and biodiversity).

However, these heritages (tangible and intangible as stated supra) that need to be passed down to heirs (future generations) are dismissing and fading gradually in African societies. The causes of the extinction of most of these cultural heritages include: looting, climatic changes, natural disaster (volcanic eruptions and earthquakes), cultural affinity, civilization, cultural contact (conquest) among many other factors as highlighted by some scholars (Sullivan, 2016; Stenning, 2015; Lenzerini, 2011; William, 2007). Apparently, the so-called well-preserved heritages today among some African societies are facing the challenges of modification and rebranding all in the name of promotion for development.

Literature Review

In contemporary society, information communication technology (ICT) and reference to social media platforms have become the greatest means of

sharing and promoting information and, as such, could be useful for the preservation and promotion of African cultural heritage. Morrison et-al (2006) observed that information communication technology and social media, have brought many opportunities for heritage preservation and has improved the distributions, transaction and general flow of information in the present world. Technological innovation and attitudinal change are likely to be keystones of advances in heritage presentations in most part of the world (Boniface and Fowler, 2003). Internet has a tremendous impact on the promotion of cultural heritage today and represents the major causes for their preservation (Nezakati et-al, 2015). Mangold and Faulds (2009) state that social media is "Online information that are created, initiated, circulated, and used by consumers' intent on educating each-other". Barkan (2009) emphasizes that social media is "a collection of internet-based applications that enable peer to peer communication and sharing of information". Campbell (2009) indicates social media as "a type of website, application or communication vehicle where people connect to one another; discuss and interact; share content and ideas; and build relationships". The uses of social media in heritage management

and promotion are growing rapidly (Nezakati et-al, 2015), and viewers (visitors) on the other hand are opportune to review, comment and present different perceptions about the displayed culture (Mansson, 2011).

Gaitan (2014) has made it more obvious that if social media is part of our everyday lives, why shouldn't it be part of our cultural heritage institutions? Indeed, social media can offer a lot to cultural heritage efforts. It can be used for conservation, dissemination, protection and participatory culture (including social tagging and social memory, for example). If teenagers and young adult can access YouTube every day and download movies of different kinds, why not an opportunity to upload videos of cultural heritage concern for the benefit of visitors and other communal. Nezakati et-al (2015) from his analysis observed that social media users are more focused on Facebook followed by YouTube among other social media platforms. He stated further that the segment of internet users is between the age of 16-74 years old, domestic and urban and that more than 50% of these internet users have access to social media platform. He stated that the top three benefits of these social media include: increase in market exposure, increase in awareness

(publication) and traffic growth; and the other benefit of social media could be seen as reduction of travelling. Virtual presentation of data present, publish and interpret culture/heritage and cultural artefacts as they are today or as they might have been in the past (Roehl, 1997; Moltenbrey, 2001; Levy et-al, 2004; Jeffrey and Lynn 2007;).

YouTube as Popular Culture in Africa

GCF (2020) defined YouTube as a free video sharing website that makes it easy to watch online videos; and users can as well create and share person video and share with others. Users on the YouTube can as well create a playlist to organize videos and group together. YouTube allows users to upload, view, rate, share, add playlist, report, comment on videos, and subscribe to other users. YouTube offers a wide variety of user-generated and corporate media videos.

There are three main parts of YouTube Culture as stated by Zanatta (2017) namely: the home and family on YouTube, the YouTube community, and the post-television audience. These main points are essential for YouTube Culture to thrive. Zanatta (2017) highlights YouTube as being a self-driven job that will influence the future of

culture, politics, warfare, and family life. Although famous YouTube subscribers have managers, they are their own boss and work in collaboration with YouTube and other companies who want their products advertised. For the ordinary person, picking up a camera and filming themselves could become a lifelong job if done right.

There is another platform on YouTube called "YouTube Red" (Zanatta, 2017), this supported the means of saving videos offline that can be accessed without an internet. This platform also support accessibility to Google Play and access to exclusive video content made specifically from the content creators who signed with YouTube Red's contract. Another YouTube's platform is "YouTube TV", which is a huge step for YouTube as a platform, and even bigger for the content creators. YouTube TV is a platform where viewers can stream live TV from popular networks. Not only can people watch live TV from all of the collaborating networks, but they also have the ability to DVR or record shows they might miss. It is all stored in iCloud with unlimited storage. Event such as AAN, SAFA, WAA conferences, among other popular indigenous events can be streamed on YouTube TV for other participants who could not physically

participate during the event(s) and could as well be saved for future use.

However, there are some technical challenges people face when using a video-sharing platform such as YouTube. Other than user errors, the platform itself has been experiencing technical difficulty as well. Before the covid-19 outbreak, the platform had numerous glitches and subscribers are being lost, which means ad revenue drops per video, since less people are receiving notifications about new videos being uploaded. This issue had many content creators upset for a couple reasons; they were not making as much money as they used to, but more importantly the platform lost their audience (Cayari, 2011; Zanatta, 2017). But, during the pandemic, the platform was more accessible by viewers and assisted in disseminating information among the people of Africa and other part of the world. Many events were streamed online as physical participation was not possible for many people and most events were as well uploaded online for other subscribers to access at any time. The popular Big Brother Naija event where we have over 20 million viewers around the globe was streamed online for people of Africa to access online and videos sections were uploaded to be accessed offline. With this YouTube culture as well,

Africans are confronted with many challenges in accessing live stream events on YouTube and these challenges include: poor internet, poor gadgets, and electricity, among others that would not allow Africans to participate fully or even at all in most events online. These challenges are considered minor and addressable as the events are uploaded and can be downloaded at any time.

The Place of YouTube on Preservation and Promotion of Africa's Heritage

One of the key advantages of YouTube over other social media platforms is that it presents the culture in holistic form to the public. Because the way an activity is covered by a researcher and uploaded on YouTube will be accessible and downloaded the same way by an audience without changes. The platform also allows the viewer/visitors to place a suggestion, comments, and many more options, as this gives room for the development and more promotions of the information shared on the platform. YouTube users are classified basically into two groups: one group includes those people who simply look for information assistance, another group consists of those people who are eager to share their knowledge with other individuals (Qu & Lee, 2011), which means both the operator of cultural

heritage activities and the visitors are the users of the YouTube and can both utilize the avenue for passing information between each other.

YouTube is one of the powerful social media platforms, related to the idea of uploading and viewing video documents. There are many documents related to cultural heritage on this platform, and anyone who is interested can easily access information and movies about cultural heritage destinations, such as: museums, castles, churches, shrines, mosques, among others (Nezakati et-al, 2015). Also, the YouTube advantage offers to visitors is related to the possibility of uploading a movie of the visited asset, displaying own experiences on the platform, also with own thoughts and positive or negative reviews (Nezakati et-al, 2015). However, uploading on YouTube platform is not meant for the cultural heritage operator only, but the visitors can as well share experiences, comments and make suggestions.

YouTube creates preliminary awareness to the visitors about the heritage of the intended visiting society prior to their visit and this reduce the negative consequences of visit among the visitors. In southwestern Nigeria, places like Osun, Ile-Ife, Kishi among many

typical Yoruba societies engaged in pre-ceremonial rites prior to some of their festival celebrations and mostly ask no one to come out within a fixed time for the rituals most especially the visitors. If this is well displayed on YouTube, the intended visitors will have information of their traditions prior to their visit to the location.

YouTube also gives a platform for preparation towards the visitation such as hotel booking or accommodation arrangement, logistics, welfarism, among many necessary preparations of visitors to a location prior their visitation. A recent study has revealed that 84% of leisure travellers used the internet as a planning source that gives them information about flights, costs, and destinations (Torres, 2010), as social media helps travellers to search, organize, and share their travel memories and experiences through Facebook, YouTube, and many other ways (Leung et al., 2013).

Another important aspect of YouTube in the preservation and promotion of culture is the low monetary cost (Pepe and Bournique. 2017). YouTube among many social media platforms require less charges for both the operator of the cultural heritage and the visitors to the platform. Social media platforms and internet generally have made a

vibrant impact on the promotion of different culture from different part of the world. Nezakati et-al (2015) opined that internet makes visitors and tourist more curious in discovering new cultures and new places worldwide and made them accessible to the visitors. Visitors are attracted today from the information promoted and presented through social media (Mansson, 2011), as many and latest information are updated on the social media for visitors. YouTube as a social media platform, makes the shared heritage popular and promoted to all the visitors to the website (Nezakati et-al, 2015), and this also gives room for innovations and new ideas in the promotion of cultures.

The Rijksmuseum at Amsterdam in Netherlands, for example, had some of its sections closed for remodelling for many years and when the time came to announce the re-opening, instead of publishing advertisements on newspapers or journals (being such an important museum, that probably would have been enough), they created a great campaign through social media that culminated with a flash mob (which can be found on YouTube, another great social media used to share videos) (Gaitan, 2014). YouTube allows us not only to disseminate cultural heritage, but it can also break the distance that may

exist between the user/public and the institution (Li Liew, 2014; Rine, 2012). For instance, if the Argungu Fishing Festival of Kebbi State has been uploaded on YouTube, it will break the distance of many visitors who are willing to know how the festival is been celebrated.

Many scholars recognize social media's growing importance for engaging with visitors and is one of the most influential ways that enhances marketing efforts (Pepe and Bournique, 2017) and it is unequivocally recommended here as well that YouTube should be part of the channels for the communication of culture to the African societies, since statistics have shown that social media has traditionally been associated with teenagers and young adults. Thus, for the most African historical societies that host programmes and offer services in different venues as they do not have a permanent space, such as a historic house or a museum for audiences to visit, it might be difficult for large audience visitors to attend such events. However, the YouTube platform will be a most encouraging avenue for the dissemination of such information. Gaitan (2014) viewed the point that several institutions are using numerous social media platforms to engage with their community, by sharing with them

day-to-day updates of an excavation, information about restoration projects, or the staging of an exhibition. Although, they are mostly used to raise awareness on cultural heritage issues, but YouTube creates more awareness of these activities through their posts. Another place of YouTube in Africa is the ability to store event(s) online most especially when the Africans are at disadvantage of participating on live events but can be accessed offline at any time.

Conclusion

On the YouTube platform today, there are several excavations, restorations, exhibitions among many other activities of Europe which are accessible by anybody in the world, and these made their activities more popular. This platform also promotes and preserves their techniques as they were well known with those techniques everywhere in the world through their upload on the platforms. As Gaitan (2014) observed, if a community feels strongly identified with its heritage and feels the need to protect it, social media can be a great instrument to protect it. YouTube protects more of the cultural heritage as once uploaded, it will be there for future generations, and this allows the upcoming to have access to the data and to also understand the peculiarity of culture to the society. This social media platform (YouTube) will assist

the upcoming generations to also highlight cultural influences, changes and development that have taken place over time in their respective cultural heritage, as differences will be understood from YouTube playlist uploads. The Argungun festival, for instance, as a case study, the preparation schemes, performances and post events comments could be streamed online through YouTube for the audience to participate virtually and the videos can as well be placed for those that could not participate during the event to have access and have the glance view on how it is done. A playlist can as well be created where subsequent videos about the Argungun festival can be uploaded online and accessible every time to Africans as the event takes place over the settlement. This playlist upload will allow audiences to determine the cultural contact, changes and development if any over time in the festival practices, because the playlist will serve as a record room where data of different years are stored and accessible to people to understand. The YouTube in this regard will serve as research institute/educational centre for researcher(s) that is interested in anything about the Argungun festival, and the playlist will serve as part of principal source of data for such investigations. The YouTube in this regard will as well serve as an entertainment centre for

those interested in the participation of the event for fun. We can as well agree that YouTube in this regard will serve as a bridge to break the distance of audience and the event location, which means there is access to the event without physical presence. Most especially, the pandemic period or any period of movement restriction, this platform presents the event to audiences holistically and virtually. Thus, the practice, if it is applicable to every culture and practices as analysed above, will permit Africans' accessibility to their heritage virtually and promote the knowledge of the indigenous practices among the Africans. The popular known indigenous dyeing practice in Kano and Wurma; cloth weaving in Iseyin, Ilorin and Oyo; wood carving among the people Birnin-Kudu, iron production among the Buhayas and Ibibio among many other indigenous practices will be preserved online through YouTube and will be accessible to audience at anytime and anywhere in the world. It should be, however, recommended that African cultural heritage (both material and non-material) should be presented, promoted and published virtually most in particular, through YouTube as stated supra, because this will serve as a warehouse for African Indigenous systems that will promote and preserve them for future references.

REFERENCES

- Barkan T (2009). *How to Develop a Successful Social Network Strategy*. Social Networking and Media Association.
- Boniface, P., Fowler, P.J., (2003). *Heritage and Tourism in 'the Global Village*. Taylor & Francis - Library.
- Campbell A. (2009) *Social Media Explained*. American Express Open Forum. Europe. PDF.
- Cayari, C. (2011) "The YouTube Effect: How YouTube Has Provided New Ways to Consume, Create, and Share Music." *The International Journal of Arts Education*. Retrieved on: <http://www.ijea.org/>
- Gaitan, M (2014) *Cultural Heritage and Social Media*. Annual Digital Journal on Research in Conservation and Cultural Heritage.
- GCF 2020. GCF Global: *Creating Opportunities for a Better Life*. Retrieved from Good Will Community Foundation, INC.
- ICOMOS (2002). *International Cultural Tourism Charter. Principles and Guidelines for Managing Tourism at Places of Cultural and Heritage Significance*. ICOMOS International Cultural Tourism Committee.

- Jeffrey, J. and Lynn, H. (2017). *Virtual Heritage: Living in the Past*. Techné: Research in Philosophy and Technology. Volume 10. No 3. pp. 1-7
- Lenzerini F. (2011). *Intangible Cultural Heritage: The Living Culture of Peoples*. European Journal of International Law, Volume 22 (1). Pp. 101-120.
- Leung, D., Law, R., van Hoof, H., & Buhalis, D. (2013). Social Media in Tourism and Hospitality: A literature Review. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 30(1-2). Pp. 3 -22.
- Levy, R.M., P.C. Dawson, C. Arnold. (2004). "Reconstructing Traditional Inuit House Forms Using Three-dimensional Interactive Computer Modeling." *Visual Studies* 19 (1).
- Li Liew, C. (2014). *Participatory Cultural Heritage: A Tale of Two Institutions' Use of Social Media*. D-Lib Magazine. Vol. 20 (3/4).
- Mangold W.G. and Faulds D.J. (2009). Social Media: The New Hybrid Element of the Promotion Mix. *Business Horizons*, 52(4):357-365.
- Mansson, M., (2011). *Mediatized Tourism*. *Annals of Tourism Research*. Vol. 38 (4):1634-1652.
- Moltenbrey, K. 2001. "Preserving the Past." *Computer Graphics World*. Oriental Institute Publications Medinet Habu. Chicago: The University of Chicago.
- Morrison, A., Rimmington, M., Williams, C., (2006). "Entrepreneurship in the Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure Industries", Butterworth Heinemann.
- Nezakati, H., Amidi, A., Jusoh, Y.Y., Moghadas, S., Abdul Azize, Y., Roghayeh S., (2015). Review of Social Media Potential on Knowledge Sharing and Collaboration in Tourism Industry. *Global Conference on Business & Social Science*. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 172. 120-125.
- Pepe, M.S. and Bournique, R. (2017). *Using Social Media as Historical Marketing Tool for Heritage Sites in Eastern New York State*. *The Journal of Applied Business Research*, Volume 33 (1).
- Qu, H., & Lee, H. (2011). *Travelers' Social Identification and Membership Behaviors in Online Travel Community*. *Tourism Management*. Vol. 32(6): 1262-1270.

- Roehl, D. B. 1997. "Virtual Archaeology. Bring New Life to Ancient Worlds." *Innovation* 28 & dash; 35.
- Rinne, S. (2012). *Cultural Heritage in Social Media, Museum of Photography* (Master's Thesis). University of Jyväskylä, Department of Art and Culture Studies.
- Stenning S. 2015. Destroying Cultural Heritage: More Than Just Material Damage. British Council World wide website.
- Sullivan, A.M. (2016). *Cultural Heritage and New Media: A Future of the Past*. *Journal Marshall Rev. Intell. Prop. L* 604.
- Torres, R. (2010). Today's Traveler Online: 5 Consumer Trends to Guide Your Marketing Strategy. Eye for Travel, Travel Distribution Summit, 14.
- William L.S. (2007). Closing Pandora's Box: Human Rights Conundrums in Cultural Heritage". In Silveman, Helaine; Ruggles, D. Fairchild (eds.) *Cultural Heritage and Human Rights*. New York NY: Springer.
- Zanatta, J. A. (2017). "Understanding YouTube Culture and How It Affects Today's Media". Senior Theses. Retrieved on: <https://doi.org/10.33015/dominican.edu/2017.CMS.ST.03>.

Contents

Looting of Cultural Heritage and the Disruption of Traditional Sovereignty in Africa Emery Patrick Effiboley	1
Survey of Ilado Hill top Settlement, Mopamuro Local Government Area, Kogi State, Nigeria Stephen Ladega	17
The Contribution of Bori Cult (Spirit Possession Cult) to Health System in Nigeria: The Perception of Samaru Residents of Kaduna State Ibrahim, Abubakar	30
The Concept of Space in Hausa Orature Abubakar Ayuba	47
The Economy of Wudil District, Kano Province under Colonial Domination 1907-1960 Nura Isah Zubairu	64
The Pluralization of Personal Narratives in African American Writing: Lessons from Barrack Obama's <i>Dreams from my Father and the Audacity of Hope</i> Dominic James Aboi	84
The Visual Commentary of Knowledge in the Paintings of Nura Garba, 2004 - 2008 Nadir Abdulhadi Nasidi and Nura Garba	96
Three Voices, One School: Welded Metal Sculpture in the Zaria Art School Abdul Lasisi LAMIDI	110
Youtube: A Veritable Platform for the Promotion and Preservation of Africa's Heritage Baduku Silas Anthonia, Abdulmalik Abdulrahman. Abdulmalik and Daniel Nuala Hassana	125

