






## AN INVESTIGATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA AS A GOVERNMENT DIGITAL PUBLIC RELATIONS TOOL: THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE

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### ABSTRACT

#### Article History

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#### Keywords

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The global media migration from traditional public relations to digital public relations is a new realm of research and the purpose of this study was to investigate social media as a digital public relations tool by the national and sub-national governments in Nigeria. The knowledge-gap on the frequency of usage of social media as a digital public relations tool by the Nigerian national and sub-national governments and the levels of e-participation by the online audience as at February 28, 2022, formed the basis of the investigation. The methodology of the study was the qualitative approach, with descriptive research as the research design. The findings of the chapter show that all national and sub-national governments use a minimum of two and a maximum of six social media accounts. Nevertheless, it was found out that the frequency of use ranged from monthly to yearly usage among all the 38 governments in Nigeria and the e-participation levels by the online audience are low. The chapter recommends that efforts should be made for all governments to adopt at least the top four social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram) as digital public relations tools. Also, the full exploitation of Facebook as the foremost social media platform by governments in Nigeria due to its e-participation advantages of comments, shares, likes, and views is recommended. Finally, the study recommends that weekly usage of official government accounts and not governors' personal social media can boost e-participation levels in Nigeria.

**Contribution/Originality:** This research adds to the current literature by analytically examining the use of social media by Nigeria's national and subnational governments. As a result, it demonstrates how social media technologies are employed for digital public relations in Nigeria's democratic administration to promote e-governance and e-participation.

### 1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Public relations can be described as the projection of a positive image of an organization, institution, product, person, or idea to the general public, which may include the internal public or the external public, as the case may be. Public relations, abbreviated as PR, is a managerial function to ensure that communication flows from one person, group of persons, or institution to another, as a breakdown of communication could affect not only the

image and reputation but the productivity of the person, group of persons, or institution (Pahwa, 2018). A person, like a politician, would require PR to build a good image among his or her constituents. A group of people, like people living with disabilities, would desire PR to promote their ideals and campaign against the stigmatisation of their members. An institution or an organisation would desire PR to manage its internal and external public as a precursor to industrial harmony and community-relations harmony. Institutions could range from educational institutions to governmental institutions and non-governmental institutions. The government and its institutions (ministries, departments, and agencies) have been known to use PR tools and strategies to communicate their constitutional and legal mandates to the general public (Turney, 2009).

PR has been known to be executed in different forms. The most common are Media Relations, Community Relations, Corporate Relations, Internal Communications, Public Communications, Events and Protocol Management, Financial Relations, and Government Relations, among others (Luke, 2019). Each of these forms of PR has its own unique and overlapping strategies, and these strategies over time have evolved from traditional PR strategies to digital PR strategies. If traditional PR used billboards, in-house journals, press releases, calendars, diaries, among others, digital PR presents information of all forms in digital formats, be it digital text, digital audio, digital video, or digital photos. These e-versions of PR materials are distributed in cyberspace and accessed via blogs, websites, and social media. Today, governments are known to use Web 2.0 tools for two major things: E-government and Digital Public Relations (Kang & Norton, 2006). E-governance is described as the utilisation of the internet to facilitate government operations. In the realm of e-governance, internet communication facilitates the interaction between government to government (G2G), government to employees (G2E), government to citizens (G2C), and government to business (G2B) (Biswas, 2020). Digital PR is the use of digital and online media to facilitate public relations (Anušić, 2020).

The Nigerian government at the federal and state levels have adopted websites and social media as digital public relations tools for promoting its activities to the general public but how disruptive or effective has social media been as a digital public relations tool is a question that needs investigation.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Internet was introduced on April 30, 1993 to the general public through the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) after he developed a computer program, the World Wide Web (CERN, 2019). This was the origin of the disruption in the global communication system, which before now was dominated by the electronic media, especially satellite communication. The new disruptive technology of Internet communication affected all aspects of human endeavour as communication became instant, immediate feedback instant, the closing of geographical divides, the digital inclusion of citizens from the Global South with the Global North, and a general change in the messages of communication from consumers to Prosumers.

A Pew Research Center article by Stansberry, Anderson, and Rainie (2019) concluded that in the 21st century due to the disruptive technology of Internet communication, industries and organisations have aligned themselves with this new normal and the end result is the birth of a Digital Culture. GDS Insights (2020) in their paper explained that, as a notion, digital culture outlines how technology and the internet are influencing how we interact as people. "It's the way that we behave, think, and communicate within society." Digital culture is the product of the endless persuasive technology around us and the result of disruptive technological innovation. It's applicable to multiple topics, but it comes down to one overarching theme; the relationship between humans and technology "(para, 1). The above two studies give an insight that shows that digital culture can be described as the use of new media and digital technologies to communicate. This is because digital culture reflects on the impression made by Internet communication to evolve a new ecosystem driven by information communication and technology that has resulted in what can be described as products of a digital culture. These products of a digital culture are e-banking, e-payment, e-learning, e-commerce, digital health, e-governance, artificial intelligence and robotics, also described

as the Internet of Things, coding and programming, computer networking and systems, software development, mobile application design, and Web 2.0, among others that were non-existent in the electronic culture (the era of radio, television, and film).

In [Sadeghi \(2012\)](#) chapter contribution to *The Practice of Public Relations*, Web 2.0 refers to a set of Internet-based tools that improve communication by being more open and participatory. People have the added capability of generating material and engaging in two-way communication through the use of these technologies, such as blogs and social media platforms like Facebook. The author adds that one of the key ideas behind the creation of these technologies is to empower people via open communication. Instant two-way communication was originally thought to be impossible, but Web 2.0 technologies are rapidly evolving, making peer-to-peer networking easier and faster. Consider that radio and television took more than 50 years to achieve a 50 million audience, whereas the Internet took only 7 years to reach the same number of users ([Sadeghi, 2012](#)). The above proposition joins the long list of scholars that have admitted the power and possibilities of Web 2.0 in contributing to the digital culture we now experience globally as the shift from read-only (Web 1.0) to read-write (Web 2.0) as we approach the semantic web dominated by artificial intelligence (Web 3.0).

As a product of a digital culture, the activities of e-governance are like government to government (G2G), government to employees (G2E), government to citizens (G2C), and government to business (G2B), are promoted through digital public relations tools. Digital PR tools such as online newspapers are platforms where news and articles are written to inform the general public about G2C and G2B services; government and agency websites that serve as channels for G2C, G2B, G2G, and G2E; and social media, which is the replication of the same functions as a website but with the advantage of a larger audience and instant interaction and feedback in all multimedia formats. This does not rule out the possibility of websites being ineffectual, but according to [Byars \(2012\)](#) government websites genuinely assist agencies to carry out their core objective while keeping strong connections with stakeholders in an online society or a society with a digital culture. [Byars \(2012\)](#) adds that despite the popular perception that the internet will usher in an Orwellian future, the public is increasingly using it to obtain information, request services, and connect with government authorities; this digital information exchange is part of a growing dialogue between the government and citizens; and social media does not have the same characteristics as formal government participation. The study above points to the instance that through a government website, a citizen can vote in a local government election and not physically at the polling booth. This is not common with social media. So, for government engagement, a website stands out, but for government publicity, social media stands out.

Nevertheless, a study on the interactive structure of selected Nigerian government agencies' websites leaves much to be desired. [Gberevbie, Ayo, Iyoha, Ojeka, and Abasilim \(2016\)](#) goal of examining and analysing the websites of 16 government agencies was to ascertain their online existence and identify the channels of communication to access the services provided to the online audience, or in this case, Nigerian citizens (G2C). A key finding shows that despite the fact that all of the 16 government agencies had websites, not one of them developed pathways for individuals to acquire access in order to contribute to their choices. While the above study focused on federal government agencies' websites, [Matyek \(2017\)](#) studied the federal government of Nigeria's digital relations via its website ([nigeria.gov.ng](http://nigeria.gov.ng)) and social media and revealed that mobile Internet users do not perceive the importance of the digital media relations of the Federal Government of Nigeria because they get information about the government from the news media and recommends more promotion of the FG's digital media relations channels (websites and social media networks).

Despite the above studies, generally social media as a digital PR tool seems to be much more appreciated than a government website. A study by [Banday and Mattoo \(2013\)](#) concluded that the benefits of social media like co-action, involvement, and empowerment (e-participation) have appealed to governments to use it in public administration. It is used to promote e-services, increase transparency and improve trust in the government.

Persistent, pervasive, and aggressive threats are faced by government information systems, which get intensified through the environment created by social media as it involves risks on multiple fronts, including those related to behavior, ergonomic configuration, regulation, and technology. When used in e-governance, social media may also pose risks of isolation, exclusion, violation of privacy, misuse of information, and security threats. Therefore, governments have devised comprehensive frameworks, policies, guidelines, and best practises to serve as key enablers for government organisations for the use of social media in governance (Banday & Mattoo, 2013).

The use of social media as a digital PR tool in government has been accepted by various literature findings. A study by Graham and Avery (2013) on the usage of social media technologies by local government administrations and their opinions of citizens' use of social media was investigated using survey data obtained from 463 local government officials from administrative districts across the United States of America. The research looked at how social media is utilised in public relations to support participatory and transparent models in a variety of government settings. According to the findings, local governments use social media to a lesser extent than they should, with just roughly 70% of them using it. According to the findings, Facebook and Twitter were most commonly used by local government officials (Graham & Avery, 2013).

Another study of Facebook used by the Jordan government by Khasawneh and Abu-Shanab (2013) indicated that the engagement by citizens was positive where they interacted with the posts published via shares, likes, views and comments (e-participation).

Pandey (2015) concluded his study by asserting that in India, social networking services "can help agencies to disintegrate the duration of the required consultation process and immediate feedback can be received on services delivered" (p. 34).

Srivastava (2013) posited that, in descending order, YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook are popular forums for government social media engagement with the citizens, which is unsurprising as, initially, governments throughout the world were sceptical about utilising social media to improve governance, but governments are slowly but surely coming around to this platform. Srivastava (2013) adds that social media by governments may give rapid, efficient, and bidirectional government dialogues with their citizens for optimal policy formation and policy execution.

The above studies highlight experiences from the USA, Jordan, and India and show a positive collaboration between social media and government relations, but none of the studies showed a collective view of social media and governments. To this end, Mickoleit (2014) assessed this relationship among intergovernmental economic organisations. According to Mickoleit (2014), governments in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) are seeing how social media may help their citizens contribute to government agendas and policy processes. "The most prominent topics discussed on social media include elections and political campaigns, disaster and emergency situations, and political unrest. But social media are more than just a global place for discussions; they have become a vehicle for the organisation of collective action "(p.4). But there seems to be a caveat to this position that affects most nations, as there is a distinction between social media for government institutions and social media for political personalities. In this regard, Mickoleit (2014) posits that the purpose and returns of social media use by government institutions are not as clear as they are for governmental public officers. This causes disarray among government agencies about how to efficaciously use social media for strategic goals and day-to-day public administration. On social media, public officers, such as presidents of states and governments, are more popular than the governments they represent. For instance, the official Facebook page of the Kano State Government (facebook.com/kanogovt) has been 'abandoned' for over four years and weekly attention is given to the Facebook page of the governor, Abdullahi Ganduje (facebook.com/drabdullahiumargandujeofr).

### 2.1. Rationale of the Study

The foremost rationale of this study is its contribution to the body of knowledge on the use of social media by governments and especially the Nigerian experience as of 2022. This is necessary as the data and information on

Internet use and applications like Web 2.0 technologies are always evolving and changing. Research findings five years ago are not the same as those of today due to the dynamics of the ever-growing Internet user database and the gradual transition to Web 3.0 technologies. Another rationale for this study is that the Web 2.0 design of the structure of social media, especially social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), content communities (YouTube), and instant messaging (WhatsApp, Messenger), allows for robust interaction, participation, and collaboration as a digital PR tool. With over 4.62 billion social media users in the world as of January 2022 (DataReportal, 2022) and over 33.3 million social media users in Nigeria as of January 2021, social media is the foremost PR tool for digital PR as its features surpass those of a website that is based on Web 1.0 technologies. There is no PR without the public, and meeting the public in their domain is a good PR strategy to ensure that they are well informed and are given the opportunity to interact, participate, and collaborate in the activities of individuals, groups, organisations, and governments at the federal, subnational, and local levels have not been left out in the use of social media as a digital PR instrument. Investigating the innovation of social media as a digital PR tool among the national and subnational governments in Nigeria will gauge the level of disruption of social media in government relations.

## 2.2. Problem Statement

Social media has originally been an Internet communication medium for individuals but has since diffused as a channel among institutions and organizations. Today, social media is used as a tool for digital public relations, and governments all over the world use social media to enhance governance. This is because governance is purely public administration and since the government is accountable to the citizens, public relations can help a public administrator do a better job by implementing the agency's central mission and fulfilling the democratic responsibilities inherent in government (Lee, 2012). The rationale of the study is an indicator that the adoption of digital public relations through social media has not been adequately established in Nigeria. Findings in other African countries show that social media and governance are still at an early adopter stage. Asamoah (2019) case study research design showed that social media full deployment in e-governance has not been realised in Ghana and that, despite favourable digital culture, individuals in the survey region do not make good use of social media to interact with their local government administrators. Similarly, in South Africa, social media for citizen engagement in e-governance is still in its infancy and is ideological, and even though social media has been touted as a tool for public engagement and participation, this purpose has yet to be achieved (Ifeoluwapo & Barnard, 2021). The knowledge gap that this study seeks to fill is to know if the Nigerian national government and subnational governments have social media accounts and their levels of use as a digital public relations tool that gives the citizens the opportunity for e-participation.

## 2.3. Research Questions

1. How many national and sub-national governments in Nigeria use social media as a digital public relations tool?
2. What is the level of social media use as a digital public relations tool by the national and sub-national governments in Nigeria?
3. What is the level of e-participation with the use of social media as a digital public relations tool by the national and sub-national governments in Nigeria?

## 3. RESEARCH METHOD

The quantitative method of the descriptive research design was used to answer the research questions. Descriptive research is a kind of study describing the attributes of the population or issue under investigation. This method places importance on the "what" of the research topic rather than the "why" of the research topic (Bhat,

2018). “Descriptive research aims to accurately and systematically describe a population, situation, or phenomenon. It can answer what, where, when, and how questions, but not why questions. A descriptive research design can use a wide variety of research methods to investigate one or more variables” (McCombes, 2020). To describe if the Nigerian federal government and state governments have a social media account, an Internet web search of their official websites was done, and those websites that integrated their social media links were opened to reveal the social media platforms used by the government. Where there were none, an Internet web search of social media was done to find the official social media of the government. Coding sheet was the instrument of data collection and the data retrieved was categorised into types of social media used, frequency of updates of these social media, and the frequency of likes, shares, comments, retweets, and views (e-participation) by the online audience.

### 3.1. Data Analysis

The Descriptive Statistics of Frequency Analysis was used to analyse the data from the descriptive research design. Frequency Analysis is a branch of statistics that studies the number of occurrences (frequency) and evaluates metrics such as central tendency, dispersion, percentiles, and so on. Descriptive statistics is the study of quantitatively characterising the properties of a set of data (Researchoptimus.com, 2022). The number of occurrences of each response chosen by the respondents is shown in frequency analysis, which is a descriptive statistical method. SPSS Statistics can determine the mean, median, and mode when performing frequency analysis to assist users in analysing and drawing conclusions (Instructables.com, 2013).

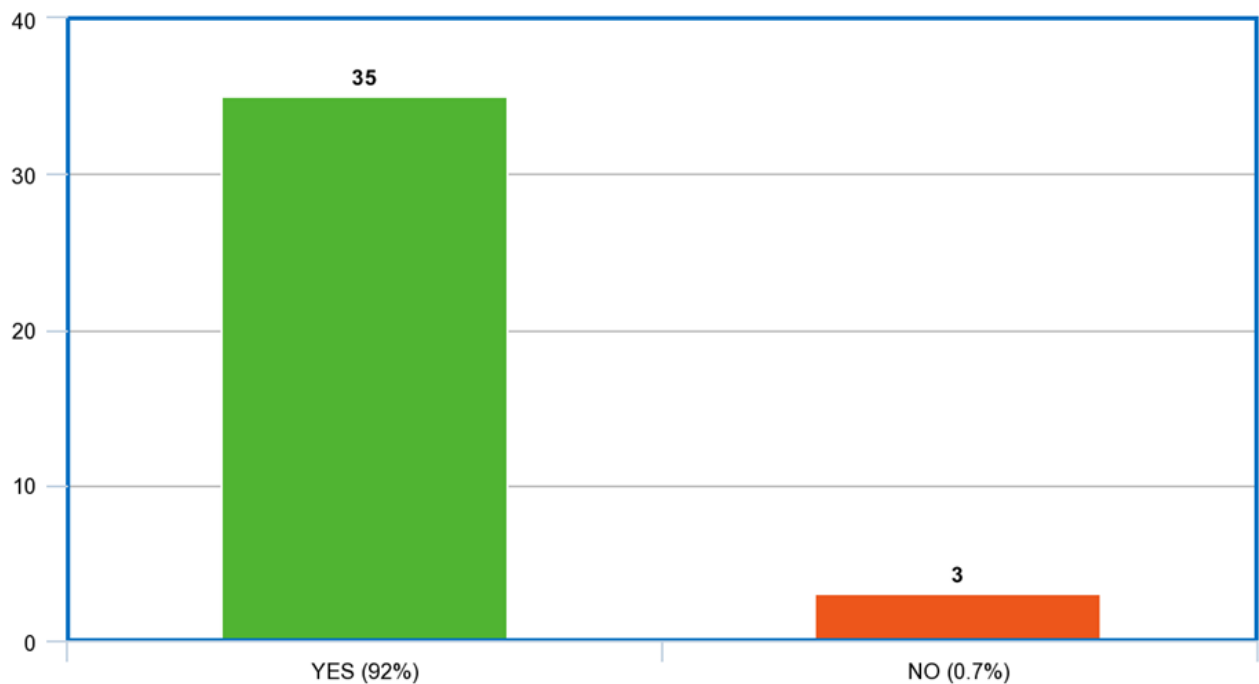


Figure 1. Illustrates the number of governments that have and do not have websites in Nigeria.

The frequency bar Figure 1 above shows that out of the total number of all governments in Nigeria at the national and sub-national level (i.e., the federal government, FCT Abuja and all 36 states), 35 of them have active websites while three (Adamawa, Bauchi and Benue States) do not have websites as at February 28, 2022. While the domain names are active, their hosting plans are suspended.

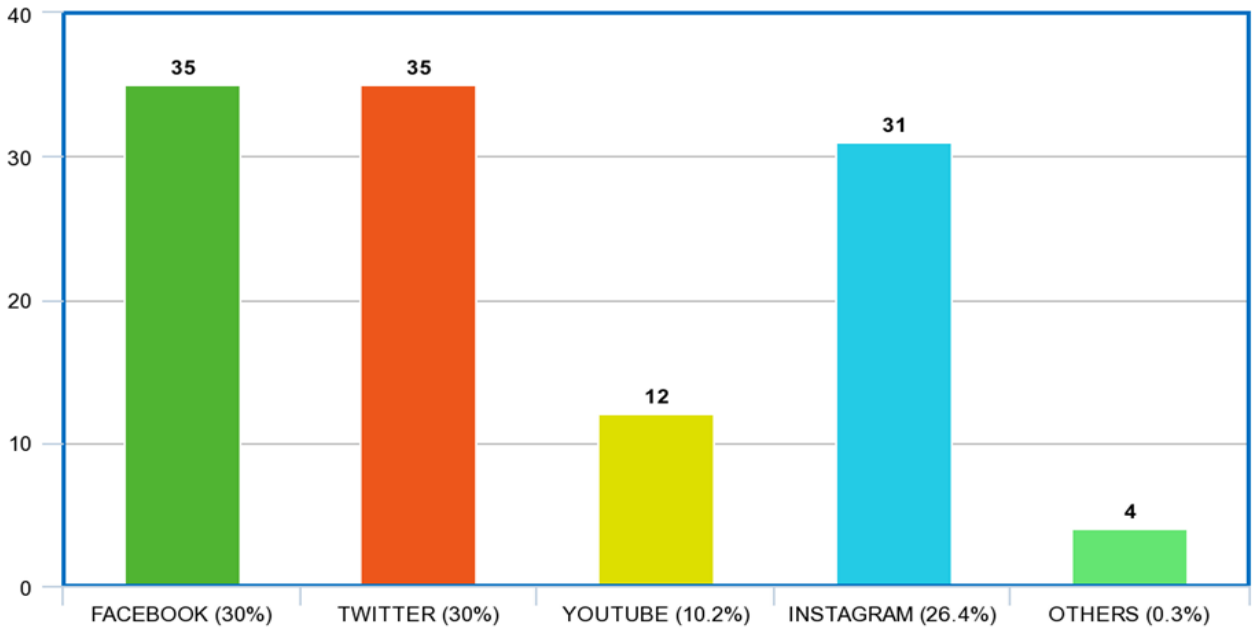


Figure 2. Illustrates the different social media used by governments in Nigeria.

The data Figure 2 above shows that Facebook and Twitter are the most used social media as digital public relations tools by 35 national and sub-national governments, with 30% being the highest. This is followed by Instagram, used by 31 governments at 26.4% and YouTube, among 12 governments at 10.2%, while 4 other social media like SlideShare, Flickr, and LinkedIn were used by the Ekiti State Government at 0.3%.

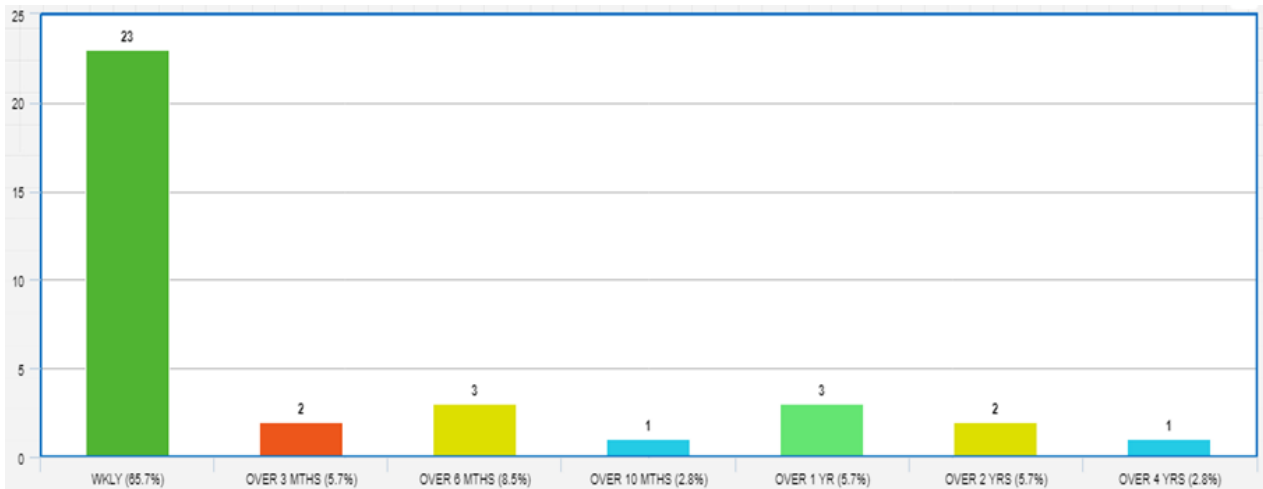


Figure 3. Illustrates governments' Facebook frequency update in Nigeria.

The Figure 3 above reveals the frequency of Facebook use among the national and subnational governments in Nigeria as of February 28, 2022. Facebook usage as a digital public relations tool is used weekly by 23 state governments and the federal government, with 66% of the total 35. One state government, Kano, has not used its Facebook page for over four years. This is due to the fact that the governor has his own personalised Facebook account (Facebook.com/drabdullahiumargandujeofr) that is updated weekly and has a high level of e-participation. Overall, the 66% weekly usage from 23 governments shows a high level of Facebook as a digital public relations tool.

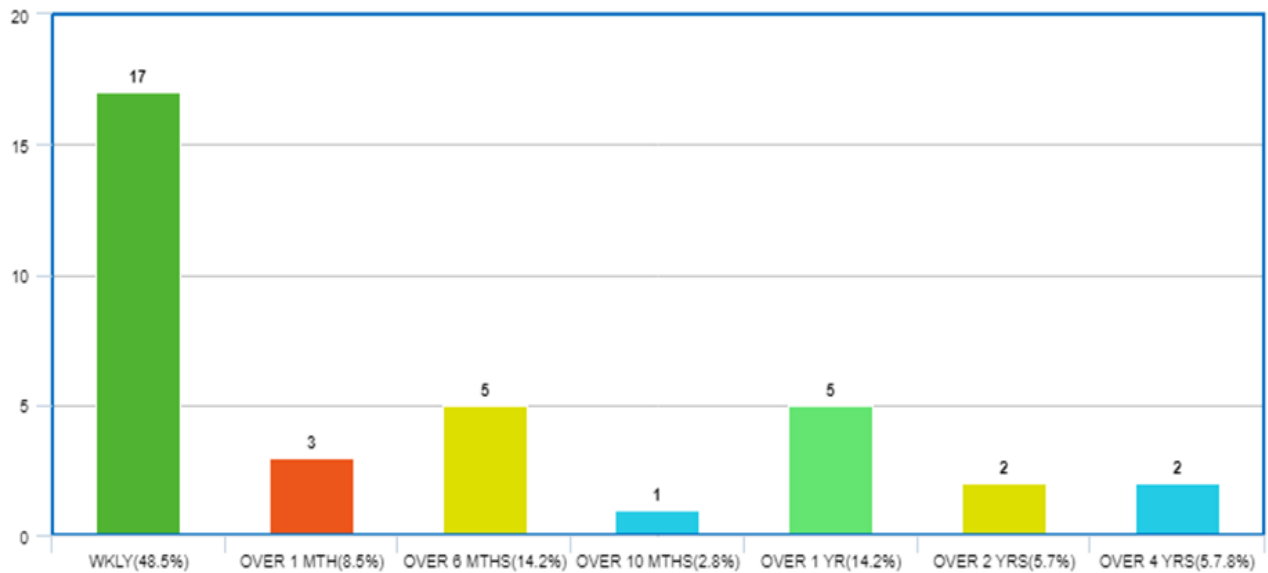


Figure 4. Illustrates governments' Twitter frequency update in Nigeria.

The data in the Figure 4 above posits that of the 35 governments that use Twitter, 17 of them, including the federal government, use it on a weekly basis, at 48%. Two governments last used their Twitter accounts in four years (Cross Rivers State and Enugu State), with 5.7%. The weekly 48% indicates a low level of use of social media by the 35 governments that use it. The chart revealed that even the personalised account of the Governor of Cross Rivers State ([twitter.com/ben\\_ayade](https://twitter.com/ben_ayade)) was last used in October 2017. This is a pointer to the fact that both the government and the governor (political personality) do not see social media as an important digital public relations tool to promote the e-participation of their public activities.

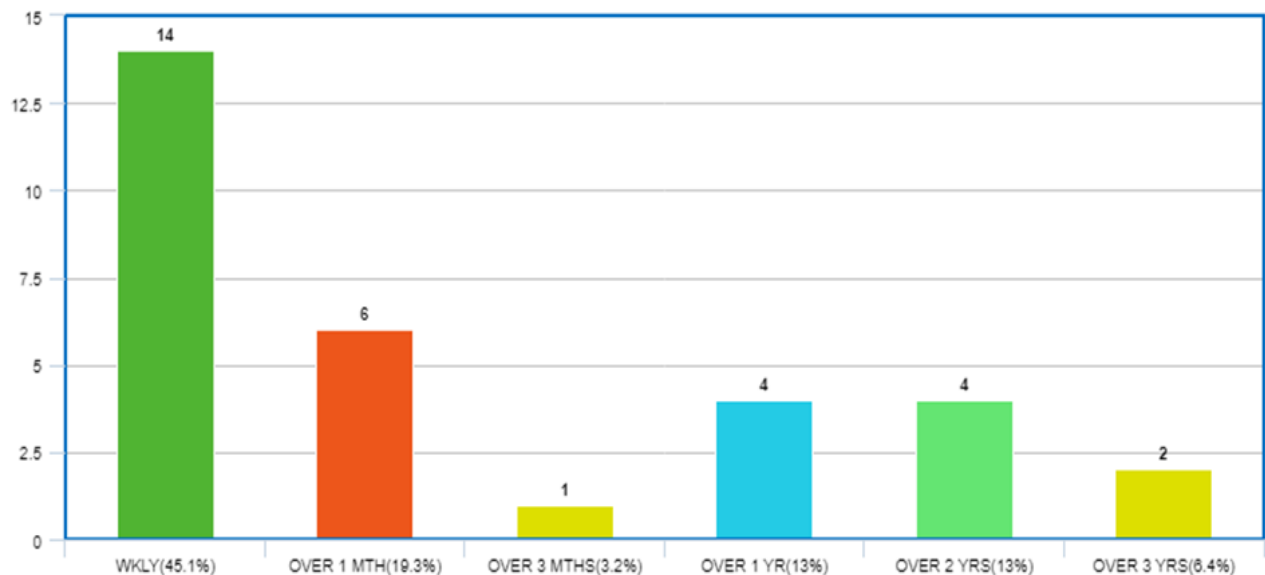


Figure 5. Illustrates governments' Instagram frequency update in Nigeria.

The Figure 5 above indicates that out of the 31 governments that use Instagram as a digital public relations tool, 14 (45%) use Instagram on a weekly basis. Two governments (Osun State and Plateau State) last used their official Instagram accounts over three years ago. The weekly usage of Instagram by governments, at 45%, is low.



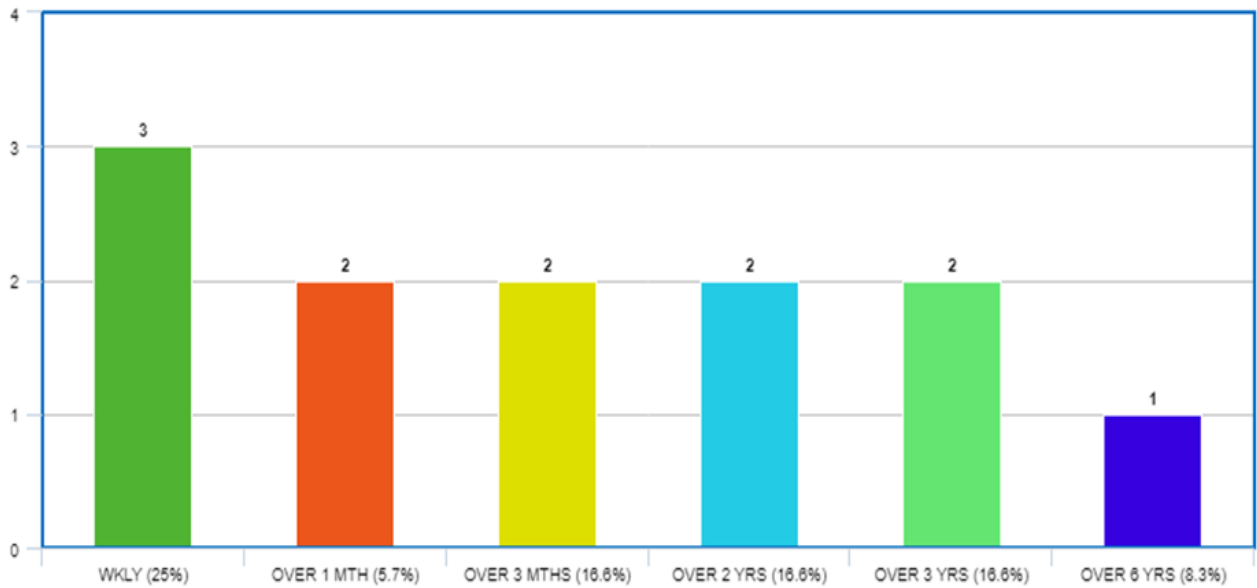


Figure 6. Illustrates governments' YouTube frequency update in Nigeria.

The data Figure 6 above shows the level of YouTube usage by 12 governments in Nigeria. Weekly usage stands at 25% from three governments (Akwa Ibom, Sokoto, and Yobe), while one government (Kano) has last used YouTube in six years. Nine governments last used YouTube from over a month to over six years. The 25% weekly usage of YouTube is very low.

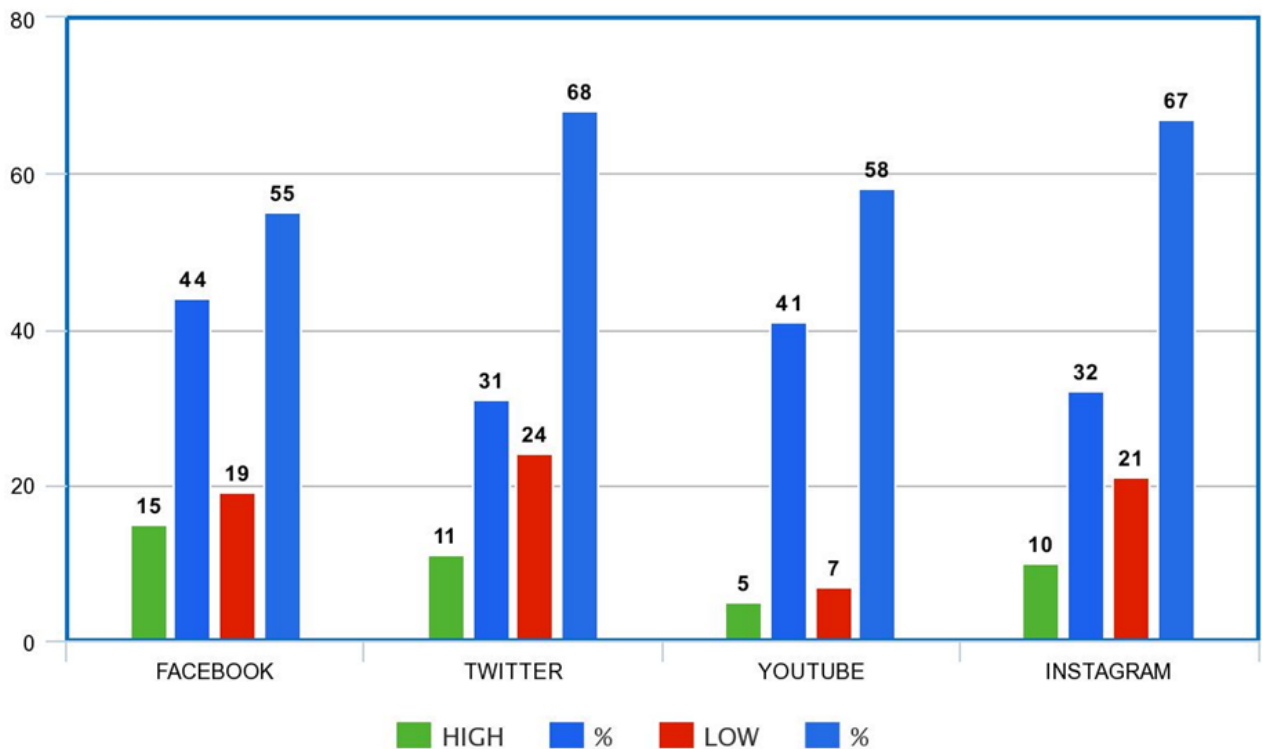


Figure 7. Illustrates e-participation levels of government social media.

The Figure 7 above shows the e-participation levels of the social media audience of the government's social media as a digital public relations tool. Among all the social media, Facebook has the highest e-participation level among all four social media from 15 governments at 44%. At 68%, Twitter has the lowest e-participation levels of 24 governments. The findings show that all four social media under investigation (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram) have higher percentages of low participation than percentages of high e-participation.

#### 4. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The intent of the study was to investigate disruptive social media as a digital public relations tool by the national and sub-national governments in Nigeria as of February 28, 2022. To achieve this purpose, research questions were formulated to guide the study. The findings of the study answer the research questions.

##### *1. How many national and sub-national governments in Nigeria use social media as a digital public relations tool?*

The finding shows that all national and subnational governments in Nigeria use a minimum of two social media accounts and a maximum of six social media accounts, which include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Flickr, Slideshare, and LinkedIn. This agrees with the findings of [Srivastava \(2013\)](#), who found that Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are among the most popular platforms for government social media operations and concluded that the use of social media by governments can provide a quick, cost-effective, and two-way interactive platform for government conversations and exchanges with its citizens because, initially, governments around the world were sceptical of using social media to improve governance. Only Cross River, Ebonyi, and Kastina States do not have an official Facebook account, while Kastina, Kano, and Ondo States do not have an official Twitter account. All the states do not have a YouTube account except State House (FG), Akwa Ibom, Plateau, Ebonyi, Ekiti, Kano, Kebbi, Niger, Ondo, Sokoto, Taraba, and Yobe States, while only the FCT, Anambra, Edo, Kano, Nasarawa, Niger, Ondo, and Taraba States do not have an official Instagram account.

The finding shows that some of these social media accounts have not been used for over four to six years, as some of them were from past administrations, like Facebook and Instagram of the Bayelsa State Government, which were among the activities of the immediate past government. Nevertheless, these social media platforms were used as part of the digital public relations by the national and sub-national governments of Nigeria at one time or the other. Also, the chart records that the inactivity of some government social media was ascribed to the use of the governor's personal social media to publish their activities to the detriment of the official social media of the state government. Also, most of the active social media were not integrated into the websites of the state governments. Also noted were multiple dummy Facebook accounts that were legitimate from government media aid and illegitimate from fraudsters.

##### *2. What is the level of social media use as a Digital Public Relations tool by the national and sub-national governments in Nigeria?*

Using the level rating of 0%-24% (very low), 25%-50 (low), 51%-65% (high), 66%-100% (very high), the chart shows that Facebook as a digital public relations tool shows a 66% (very high) weekly usage from 23 governments and supersedes all other frequency usages from months to years. The use of Twitter as a digital public relations tool shows a weekly 48% (low) that indicates a below-average level of use of social media by the 35 governments that use it. It also indicates that the monthly and yearly usage of Twitter surpasses the weekly usage. The weekly usage of Instagram as a digital public relations tool by governments at 45% (low) is below average. It also indicates that the monthly and yearly usage of Instagram surpasses the weekly usage. YouTube, as a digital public relations tool, has a 25% (very low) weekly usage rate. It also indicates that the monthly and yearly usage of YouTube surpasses the weekly usage. Based on the percentages above, the level of social media use as a digital public relations tool by the national and sub-national governments in Nigeria is averagely low. As indicated in the literature and in the data analysis, there seems to be an abandonment of government social media accounts for political personalities. According to [Mickoleit \(2014\)](#), the goal and returns of institutional social media use are not as evident as they are for political individuals. As political leaders, i.e., heads of state and heads of government, are more popular on social media than the institutions they represent, there is uncertainty among government institutions about how to best leverage social media and the implications for strategic objectives and day-to-day operations.

##### *3. What is the level of e-participation with the use of social media as a Digital Public Relations tool by the national and sub-national governments in Nigeria?*

In rating e-participation, the research analysed likes, shares, comments, retweets, and views for each of the social media, and whenever there was a post with over 100 likes, shares, comments, retweets, and views, it was indicated as HIGH. The findings show that all four social media under investigation (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram) have higher percentages of low participation than percentages of high e-participation. Therefore, the level of e-participation with the use of social media as a digital public relations tool by the national and sub-national governments in Nigeria is averagely low. This finding is consistent with countries that share the same media ecology as Nigeria. A study on the Federal Government of Nigeria's digital relations revealed that mobile Internet users do not perceive the importance of the digital media relations of the Federal Government of Nigeria because they get information about the government from the news media. The study recommends more promotion of the FG's digital media relations channels (websites and social media networks).

#### *4.1. Practice-Based Recommendation of the Study*

Recommendations of this study are generated directly from the findings of the study. The first finding shows that there is a very high use of social media by the national and sub-national governments in Nigeria. All 38 governments have at least two social media accounts. This study recommends that efforts should be made for all governments to adopt at least the top four social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram) as digital public relations tools. Because there is no law that mandates social media use by governments, considerations can be made in this regard to re-enact the Freedom of Information Act 2011 to make it mandatory for the creation and use of social media as a digital public relations tool to promote e-governance activities of the national and sub-national governments in Nigeria. The second finding reveals that there is averagely low usage of social media by the 38 national and sub-national governments in Nigeria. The monthly and yearly usage of social media surpass the weekly usage of social media. Also, this research question revealed that despite the low usage of social media, Facebook still stands out as the most used, especially on a weekly basis at 44%. This study recommends the full exploitation of Facebook as the foremost social media by governments in Nigeria due to its e-participation advantages of comments, shares, likes and views. The final finding of the study is that e-participation levels are averagely low. This finding is due to some identified effects of non-weekly usage of social media and the abandonment of government social media accounts for the social media accounts of political personalities, in this case, state governors. The study recommends weekly usage of official government accounts and not governors' personal social media. If this is done, there could be an increase in e-participation levels as to where there is nothing to publicize, there will be no e-participation from the online audience.

#### *4.2. The Implication of the Study*

This study has filled the vacuum of knowledge in the area of the use of social media as digital public relations tools by governments in Nigeria. Its general findings of a very high rate of website use by national and sub-national governments at 92%, the high rate of social media use by all national and sub-national governments, the low frequency of social media usage by national and sub-national governments and low e-participation levels by the online audience in Nigeria is a snapshot of the use of social media as digital public relations tools by governments in Nigeria. These findings are a pointer to the fact that social media as digital public relations tools for governments have not reached a disruptive stage or effective levels. For example, the Twitter handle ([twitter.com/NigeriaGov](https://twitter.com/NigeriaGov)) of the Federal Government of Nigeria on the Russia-Ukraine war on 27th February 2022 had 7 comments, 188 retweets, 203 likes but the United States Government ([twitter.com/WhiteHouse](https://twitter.com/WhiteHouse)) Twitter post on the Russia-Ukraine war on 27th February 2022 had 2,542 comments, 20,400 retweets, 78,000 likes.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Nigeria has a not-too-favourable image in the global governance ranking. The Chandler Good Governance Index (CGGI) 2021 ranks Nigeria 102 out of 104 countries and is the first of a planned annual series that will analyse government performance in 104 countries around the world. The Index looks at governance from a non-ideological and non-partisan standpoint. Social media has become so popular globally because of the singular feature of self-expression with little or no hindrance or communication barriers. As a democratic state, the primary aim of the government shall be the security and welfare of the people, and participation by the people in their government shall be ensured in conformity with the provisions of this Constitution. Section 14 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria protects all Nigerians' human rights and basic freedoms, especially that of expression. While traditional media has been empowered in section 22 to hold the government accountable to the people, social media allows the people to express themselves and react to government programmes and policies. The 33 million social media users in Nigeria need to be informed of government programmes and policies as well as accountability of government activities to the people. The lack of weekly publicity of the programmes and opportunities for citizens leads to low e-participation levels. If the disruptive technology of social media is to be optimized, the government needs to utilise social media as a digital public relations tool.

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