

**SOCIAL MEDIA AND JOURNALISM PRACTICE AT THE
OSUN STATE BROADCASTING CORPORATION (OSBC),
OSOGBO**

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Abstract

This study examined the impact of social media on public relations function and practice in the broadcast industry in Nigeria, using the journalists of Osun State Broadcasting Corporation (OSBC), Osogbo as the point of focus. Survey research method was adopted. The sample size for this study was 108. The findings clearly show that social media platforms like instant messaging, social bookmarking, photo-sharing, wikis, Facebook, etc. have had great and significant impact on how journalists who carry out public relations functions communicate as it makes it possible for people and media organizations to have seamless interactions. Other findings from the study reveal that, social media has enhanced the achievement of public relations objectives by impacting on public relations knowledge, enhancing relationships with people, sharing information on the latest innovations, tools and methods of public relations, and also helps in

shaping the attitude of those in public relations practice. The study recommends that government needs to come up with an avenue to create a code of ethics probably through the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) to check contents on public relations published through social media to improve standards and credibility.

Keywords: Public Relations, Social Media, Journalists, Information, Communication, Osun State Broadcasting Corporation (OSBC),

INTRODUCTION

The use of social media globally has gained an upward trend in the world of communication, with Twitter and Facebook as the most used platforms (Dunbar, Arnaboldi, Conti, & Passarella, 2015), and organizations have gained mileage by using these platforms to communicate in a much more effective and fast way with their customers about their businesses as well as responding to queries and questions (Coombs & Holladay, 2010: 66; Carroll & Buchholtz, 2014:23), hence it is important to examine the impact they have on the public relations practice here in Nigeria. Research has shown that organizations have taken up the use of social media as a communication tool for marketing and public relations messages (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007). Thus, the development of social media as communication platform has drawn numerous interests from researchers in the field of public relations. For example, prior studies on the utilization of social media as tools for an organization's public relations strategy have been undertaken (Briones, Kuch, Liu, and Jin, 2011, Gillin, 2008, Wright & Hinson, 2009, Breakenridge, 2009, Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Jefkins (1998, p.6) defines public relations as

Consisting of planned communication, outwards and inwards, between an organisation and its publics for the purpose of achieving specific objectives concerning mutual understanding. Public relations practitioners

have traditionally used “old media” to communicate to its publics but “new media”, a relatively new phenomenon, has gained currency as a tool to be used for communication in many organizations as technology is rapidly changing the media terrain.

According to Gillin (2008), social media are giving rise to a new style of communications that is characterized by conversation and community. It is important to understand these new channels of communication in order to effectively utilize them as a means to communicate with the public as well as to know what implications they may have for the public relations practice. In order to implement these tactics effectively, it is equally important for journalism and public relations programmes on college campuses to provide relevant curriculum for its future practitioners (Gillin 2008).

This study attempts to increase the understanding of the impact of social media on the public relations practice from the Nigerian context. The study also investigated the impact that social media has had on how public relations practitioners communicate and the modes of social media platforms that are used by public relations officers easy delivering of messages. In addition, the study examined how the use of social media has enhanced the achievement of public relations objectives and the factors that determine the preference of social media tools employed in public relations practice by PR professionals in Nigeria. It also examined and determines the number of people that could be reached by public relations officers through social media for effective PR practice. This study is at this point very important because of the humongous amount of social media available for good public relations success. It is believed by the researchers that the findings of this study would be beneficial for future researchers in this area of research in Nigeria and the world at large. The findings will also be beneficial to organizations and practitioners, because it demonstrates the importance of social media to the practice of public relations.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The rise in the use of social media around the world has led to the increase in the impact of social media in the area of media practices, most recently in the field of public relations within the media terrain. It is unarguably true that this new form of communication is growing at an incredibly rapid pace, it is therefore important to analyse the impact that such social and other new media have had on the overall performance of public relations practice in Nigeria most especially among journalists within the broadcast industry who also perform such functions, as studies in this area tend to focus more on public relations practitioners and a few on journalists who are not PR practitioners but also perform these PR functions. Going by literature reviewed for this study, no study was found to have looked at the impact of social media on the public relations functions and practice among journalists of the Osun State Broadcasting Corporation (OSBC), Osogbo who in recent time have developed a strong bond with its host community Osogbo through effective relations. This is the gap this study intends to fill.

Objectives of the Study

The study has the following objectives:

- (1) To investigate the impact that social media has had on how journalists who engage in public relations functions and practice at the Osun State Broadcasting Corporation (OSBC), Osogbo communicate.
- (2) To identify the predominant social media platforms used by these journalists who carry out public relations functions at the station.
- (3) To examine how the use of social media has enhanced the attainment of public relations objectives.
- (4) To investigate the factors that determine the preference of social media tools employed in public relations practice.

Research Questions

The study is guided by these research questions:

- (1) What impact has social media had on how journalists who engage in public relations functions and practice at the Osun State Broadcasting Corporation (OSBC), Osogbo communicate?
- (2) What are the modes of social media platforms used by these journalists who carry out public relations functions at the station?
- (3) How has the use of social media enhanced the achievement of public relations objectives?
- (4) What factors determine the preference of social media tools employed in public relations practice?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Social Media

When many people think of social media, they think of Facebook and Twitter. However, social media do not just include social networking sites, but also blogs, forums, message boards, photo sharing, podcasts, RSS (really simple syndication), search engine marketing, video sharing, Wikis, social networks, professional networks, and micro-blogging sites (Wright and Hinson, 2009). As stated by Wright and Hinson (2009) and reported by the International Association of Business Communicators, “more than half of all internet users have joined a social network, social networks have become the number one platform for creating and sharing content and nearly 75 percent of all Internet users have read a blog” (Young, 2009).

Although social media are impacting the way many organisations communicate and more and more people are becoming active with these new channels, the definition of what social media encapsulates is undetermined due to the rise of many different forms. No two people are defining this media the same way. A number of books have explored how blogs, social media and other new technologies are changing the way organisations communicate with strategic publics such as employees, customers, stockholders,

communities, governments and other stakeholders. Weber (2007) suggests the communications world is dramatically moving in a digital direction and those who understand this transformation will communicate much more effectively than those who do not.

Scott (2008. p.8) believes, "one of the coolest things about the Web is that when an idea takes off, it can propel a brand or a company to seemingly instant fame and fortune". Scott also points out that although communicating via the Web usually is free - as opposed to purchasing space through traditional advertising only a small number of public relations practitioners are effectively using blogs and other social media when communicating with their strategic publics.

Breakenridge (2009) believes powerful new social media tools offer unprecedented new opportunities in a day when most traditional methods of communication will not reach many audiences; much less convince them to do anything.

Types of social media

Weber (2009a) classifies social media into these categories: Internet forums, weblogs, social blogs, wikis, podcasts, pictures and video. Since social media represent a young and emerging set of technologies there are many different thoughts and opinions when it comes to categorization. With the availability of so many social media sites, obviously some receive much more web traffic than others. For example, popular social networking sites such as Facebook (www.facebook.com), MySpace (www.myspace.com), and popular video sharing site YouTube (www.youtube.com) all are ranked by web information service on the list of the world's most accessed websites.

Wikipedia is a free, internet-based, online encyclopedia inscribed with the collective efforts of volunteers and easily accessed by anyone so long as there is internet connection. Blogs are other representations of the social network sites which allow users the chance to publish and take part in different conversations through the

internet (Weber, 2009). They are essential for businesses as they help build reputation especially in the event of positive blogging and can also be destructive in the case of negative blogging. Content communities grant people the chance exchange media information between one another.

The social media sites follow content communities in the assessment of the types of social media. With the help of such types, people connect and exchange information, photos, instant messages and video clips. Also, users can send out invitations to others. Twitter and Facebook happen to be among the two common and popular social media sites in the world and as a result, they are used by many companies to reach out to clients and display their commodities or advertise (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Instant messaging that are most commonly used all over the world nowadays are WhatsApp, Snapchat and messenger. They have been categorized as social media too because of the level of interactivity. Therefore, this part informs that social media will be used in this study in the sense of networking, interactivity and information sharing like photos, videos and notes. It also shows how these media intertwine together.

Concept of Public Relations

Public relations helps to establish and maintain mutual lines of communications, understanding, acceptance, and cooperation between an organization and the public; it informs the management of problems or issues, helps management to be kept informed on and responsive to public opinion, it defines and emphasizes the responsibility of management to serve public interest, helps management keep abreast of and effectively utilize change, serving as an early warning system to help anticipate trends, and uses research and sound and ethical communication techniques as its principal tools (Harlow, 1976, p.36).

Public Relations and Social Media

According to Weber (2009), as stated by Wright & Hinson (2009), “The communications world is dramatically moving in a digital direction and those who understand this transformation will communicate much more effectively than those who do not.” Public relations practitioners are in the business of communicating with publics and therefore must understand this transformation in order to communicate effectively.

However, due to the fast paced growth of social media, it is difficult for these professionals, as well as the universities training future professionals, to keep current. Blogs, for example, are increasing in popularity because they give independence from traditional editors and media gate keeping (Pavlik, 2007). The use of blogs as a means to gather information is increasing as well as the posting of blogs to better position oneself in the eyes of the public. In the past, public relations practitioners were responsible for packaging content and then distributing it to the media in hopes of being published. Today, practitioners are still responsible for packaging the content; however, they are now able to publish the content themselves through blogs, social networks and other online media outlets. Practitioners still send information to the traditional media, but they are now also able to talk directly to the public, view the public’s responses, and act accordingly. For example, when a consumer tweets about a bad experience, the company can view these comments and respond immediately to provide more direct service to its customers.

Importance of Social Media to Public Relations

The new technologies currently embraced by PR practitioners are mainly social media sites such as Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook. The application of the social media is at a very fast rate. A few years ago, blogs and podcasts were the popular means of communication by PR experts though the social networking sites were employed by nearly 24% of the practitioners (Eyrich, Padman, &

Sweetser, 2008). Currently, the social media is regarded as an integral part of PR campaigns. The results of a study conducted by Meske and Stieglitz (2013) showed that social media humanizes a company. The author says that social media puts a face to a company because people want to interact with other people. Therefore, organizations adopt social media usage in order to humanise its interaction with stakeholders. According to the author, organizations that adopt social media usage are more likely to reduce the social gap between the business and consumers.

The potential effect of the social networking sites on PR is immense. Yin in 1994 pointed out that staff blogs have significant and unlimited capability to improve dialogue and aid in the promotion of products and services and pave way for two-way means of communication. Oneya (2010) study on impact of social media on public relations had similar results, in addition, he established that Social media is used though with challenges like lack of internet accessibility, skills, reliability.

From the foregoing, the use of social media is on the increase among organizations in the world, causing the urge to adopt social media as a tactic to improving public relations in the public administration. Cardenas (2013) highlights that for social media to be successful in government, it should advance the department mission, social technology objectives, department goals and activities framework. This is as result of this new form of communication growing at a faster pace. It is important to fill in the gap by assessing its use in public relations practice in government, going by what various scholars refer to be the concerns/benefits in line with new trends in the Public relations practice.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on the theory of technological Determinism as conducted by Marshall McLuhan who states that we are living in a new age of technology that has never been experienced before. McLuhan found himself trying to decipher the media environment that surrounded him. The people that lived through the inventions of the phonetic alphabet, the printing press, and the telegraph saw drastic improvements in the way people were able to communicate. Sometimes known as the "Oracle of the Electronic Age," McLuhan is telling people that the new electronic media is changing the way people think, act, and feel. McLuhan suspects that the current technological environment, when looked back upon, will be seen as a major turning point in the history of communication. In line with this study, technologies are reshaping how journalists who engage in public relations practice in Nigeria operate and at the Osun State Broadcasting Corporation (OSBC), Osogbo, journalists who carry out PR function have been given more leverage to carry out their job functions.

It is a theory that presumes the media is the key element in mass communication processes that evoked widespread controversy during the 1960s mostly due to the colourful writing of Marshall McLuhan, a professor of English. McLuhan declared that each medium alters our physical environment, imposing on us a particular pattern of perceiving and thinking that controls us to an extent we scarcely suspect (Emery, Philip & Warren, 1991, p.56). Social media as a technology has drastically improved the way public relations experts practice in the 21st century Nigeria and at the Osun State Broadcasting Corporation (OSBC), Osogbo, the journalists who carry out PR functions at the station do so through different social media platforms like social networks, online videos, newsgroup/forums, blogs, instant messaging, social bookmarking, photo-sharing, virtual worlds, wikis, podcasting, and music sharing to disseminate both general information, internal information and external information to

their audience on events or things that affects their station and their audience.

The use of these communication technologies for public relations by journalists at the Osun State Broadcasting Corporation (OSBC), Osogbo, corroborates the assertions of the theory of Technological Determinism by McLuhan because there is a paradigm shift in the operations of public relations practices in Nigeria in the 21st century and at the Osun State Broadcasting Corporation (OSBC), Osogbo, because journalists there prior to now engaged in PR functions by going into town to have one on one interactions with their external and even internal publics but with the use of technology at their disposal, these technologies are now altering the physical environment of engaging with their audience, and through the use of these various social media platforms, the ease of carrying out public relations engagements by journalists of Osun State Broadcasting Corporation (OSBC), Osogbo has improved.

Furthermore, as more sophisticated media technologies are being invented and introduced into the media, it would be right to say that, going further; there is tendency that virtually every PR function carried out at the Osun State Broadcasting Corporation (OSBC), Osogbo would be done through the use of technology.

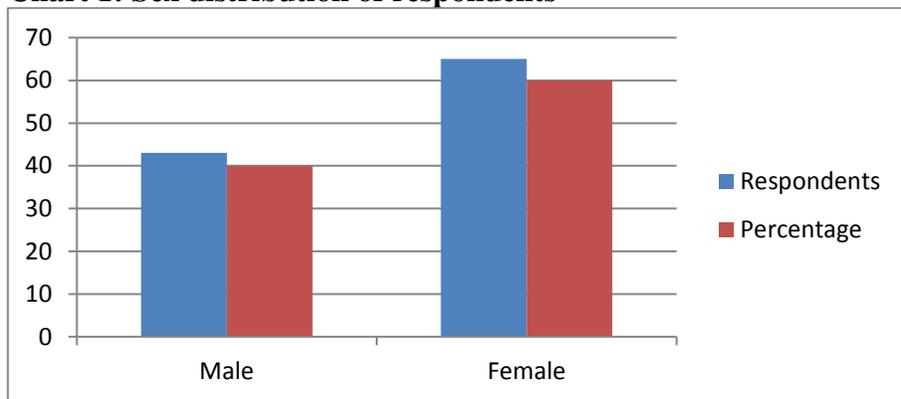
METHOD

The research design adopted for this study is the survey research method while the population considered for the study was the entire journalists of Osun State Broadcasting Corporation (OSBC), Osogbo, Osun State, Nigeria. As at the time of this study 2019, the total number of staff journalists at the station was one hundred and eight (108) staff members, this data was obtained from the administrative department of the Osun State Broadcasting Corporation (OSBC). Hence, the sample size used for this study is the entire one hundred and eight (108) journalists at the media organization. The study made use of purposive sampling technique to select those

journalists among the staff members at OSBC. The research instrument used for data collection for this study is the questionnaire; all copies of the questionnaire were duly filled by the respondents and retrieved by the researchers.

Data Presentation and Analysis

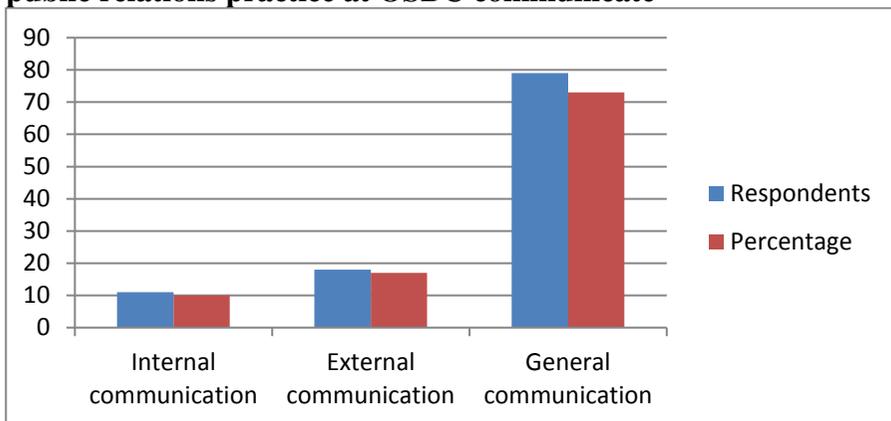
Chart 1: Sex distribution of respondents



Source: field Survey 2019

Chart 1 above shows that 43 journalists of the Osun State Broadcasting Corporation (OSBC) representing 40% of the total number of respondents were males, while 65 staff members representing 60% of the total respondents were females.

Chart 2: Impact of social media on how journalists who engage in public relations practice at OSBC communicate



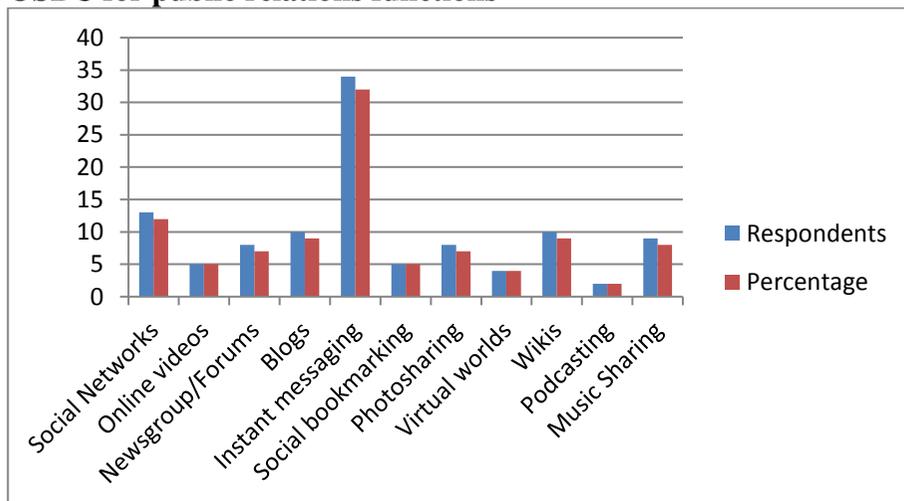
Source: Field Survey 2019

Data from chart 2 above shows that journalists at Osun State Broadcasting Corporation (OSBC) who engage in public relations practice believe that social media have impact on how journalists who engage in public relations functions and practices communicate with their audience. They do so in three major ways as indicated in chart 2 depending on the particular need for such relations at a specific time.

As indicated from chart 2 above, 79 respondents representing 73% of the total respondents opined that they communicate through the social media to disseminate general information to their audience on probably events or things that affects their institutions or organization while 18 respondents representing about 17% of the total respondents believe that they communicate external information through the social media to probably stake holders who do not work directly with their organization but who need to be carried along in the affairs of such organisation like the shareholders are probably communicated on the directions the organisation is taking on matters affecting it without them necessarily needing to come in person. The

last impact of social media on how the journalist who engage in public relations functions at OSBC communicate as indicated in chart 2 above shows that they used it for internal communication. In a nutshell, chart 2 shows that social media has changed the ways media organisations communicate generally.

Chart 3: Modes of social media platforms used by journalists at OSBC for public relations functions

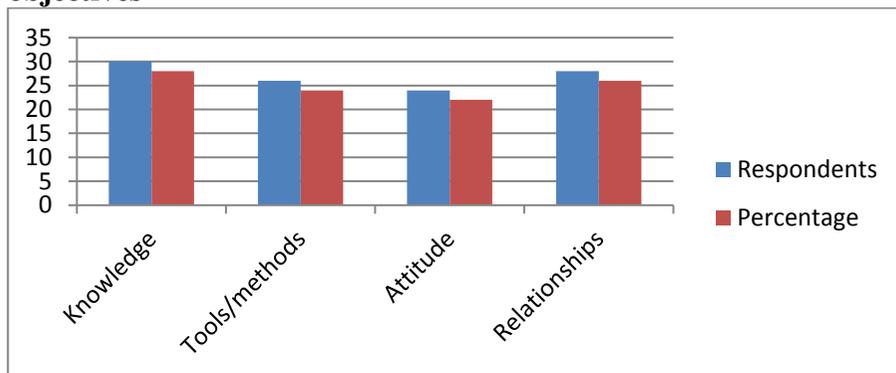


Source: Field Survey 2019

Figures in chart 3 above shows that the modes of social media platforms used by journalists of Osun State Broadcasting Corporation (OSBC) who engage in public relations practice encompasses Social Networks, Online videos, Newsgroup/Forums, Blogs, Instant messaging, Social bookmarking, Photo-sharing, Virtual worlds, Wikis, Podcasting, and Music Sharing. However, 34 people representing 32% of the total respondents agreed that instant messaging platform was more utilized, this could be as a result of the fact that public relations functions requires those saddled with such

responsibility to continuously communicate with a variety of audiences which include the internal staff of the station, the audience of the station who consume mediated content in order to know how programmes of the station or organization impacts the audience and they also need to communicate with the host community of the station.

Chart 4: How the use of social media enhances public relations objectives

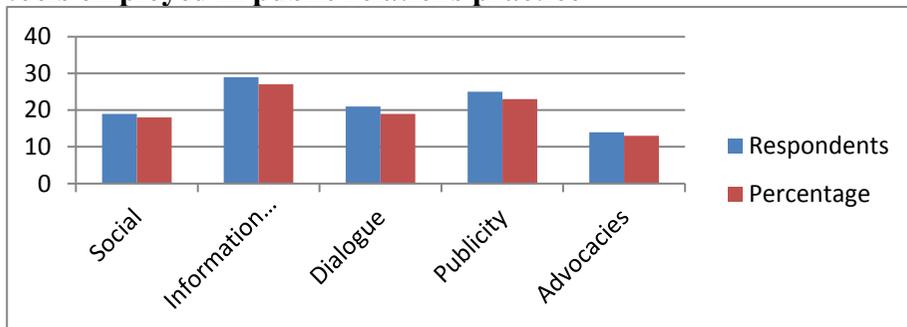


Source: Field Survey 2019

Figure from chart 4 shows that the respondents generally felt that social media has impacted most on public relations knowledge with 28% of the respondents attesting to this. This could be as a result of the fact that in most cases, journalists who carry out public relations functions and even PR professionals try to educate and improve the knowledge of their audience on recent developments within their organisation so that the audience would adapt to any changes created. It is interesting to also note from chart 4 above that 26% of the total respondents agreed that public relations through the social media increases the relationship of the media organisation with their audience. In most cases, given the efficacy of the social media, it becomes easy to woo audience with media programme schedule. In addition to this, the use of social media enhances public relations tools

and methods available to the public relations experts in achieving their targets and objectives.

Chart 5: Factors that determine the preference of social media tools employed in public relations practice



Source: Field Survey 2019

Results from Chart 5 shows that the respondents indicated highest preference for information sharing. This could be as a result of the fact that the most important and pertinent function of a person who engages or performs PR function is to share information. A journalists who performs public relations functions and even public relations personnel might need to dialogue and carry out advocacies when the need be mostly in dare situations. So in a nutshell, when a public relations person advocates or publicises a particular product like a specific programme on air or through any other means, they are sharing information.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Results from the findings clearly indicate that social media has had a great and significant impact on how journalists who engage in public relations practices communicate with their audience as it has changed the ways media organizations communicate generally. One of such impact of social media is that it now makes it possible for

audience to interact with media organisations, especially radio and television houses, to contribute to live programs through online social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram etc and also makes it easy for media consumers to send in their enquiries on anything that appears not to be clear to them during a broadcast programme. This finding is in line with the postulations of Cardenas (2013) where he asserted that from the foregoing, the use of social media is on the increase among organizations around the world, causing the urge to adopt social media as a tactic to improving public relations within such organisations. Cardenas (2013) also highlighted that for social media to be successful in government, in this regard for us, the media; it should advance the media's mission, social technology objectives, and its goals and activities framework. This is as a result of this new form of communication growing at a faster pace.

Secondly, findings from the study suggests that the modes of social media platforms used by public relations officers encompasses Social Networks, Online videos, Newsgroup/Forums, Blogs, Instant messaging, Social bookmarking, Photo-sharing, Virtual worlds, Wikis, Podcasting, and Music Sharing. It was however observed from the responses of the respondents that majority of them still agreed that instant messaging platform was more utilized, the reason for this is not far-fetched; instant messaging has become so popular nowadays that almost everyone that has a mobile device can utilize its advantages, devices like mobile phones, tablets, laptop computers, etc. are made in such a way that they have the facilities that makes it possible to access instant messaging and media houses have now incorporated the use of instant messaging into the ways that people can interact with them.

This finding corroborates the study by Eyrich, Padman, & Sweetser, (2008) where they revealed that the new technologies currently embraced by PR practitioners are mainly social media sites such as Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook etc. where the application of these social media platforms is at a very fast rate. A few years ago, blogs and podcasts were the popular means of

communication by PR experts though the social networking sites were employed by nearly 24% of the practitioners (Eyrich, Padman, & Sweetser, 2008).

In addition, the analysis of data collated and addressed in this study on the second research question revealed that currently, the social media is regarded as an integral part of PR campaigns because of its effectiveness. Similarly, Meske & Stieglitz (2013) found out that social media humanizes a company with its audience and puts a face to a company in the public eyes because consumers of a company's product in this regards broadcast media would want to interact with media and not just follow the media through viewership and listenership. Therefore, organizations tend to adopt social media usage in order to humanize its interaction with its stakeholders. In line with the positions of Eyrich, Padman, & Sweetser, (2008) and Meske & Stieglitz (2013), organizations that adopt social media usage are more likely to reduce the social gap between their business and consumers and as indicated in chart 3 above, 34 people representing 32% of the total respondents agreed that instant messaging platform was more utilized for this purposes due to the availability of internet access through various apps like Facebook, skype, whatsapp, snapchats, etc. which provide such avenue to even have live video and text-based chats during programming.

Furthermore, on how the use of social media has enhanced the achievements of public relations objectives, findings from this study revealed that 28% of the respondents believed social media has enhanced mostly the public relations knowledge of an organization. In line with the study by Wright & Hinson (2009) where the submit that the communications world is dramatically moving in a digital direction and those who understand this transformation will communicate much more effectively than those who do not, this might have prompted the responses gotten from the respondents where they revealed that the use of social media has enhanced the achievement of public relations objectives; firstly, by impacting mostly on public

relations knowledge, followed by relationships with people, and also the tools and methods of public relations, and lastly the attitude of those in public relations practice.

Going by the findings from this study, it would not be farfetched to accept that technological advancement that brought about social media has really helped a great deal in the area of acquiring public relations knowledge; the internet has made it so easy too for media to tap into the advantage of online interactions where several kinds of information about public relations and its practices can be obtained from the audience and as well disseminated to them. Information about new innovations in term of public relations tools and methods which are yet to be known to all and sundry can quickly and easily be obtained with the aid of social media. Social media has also enhanced the achievement of public relation objectives in terms of relationships with people and attitude of public relations practitioners as indicated in chart 4

In the time past, internet was not easily accessible to people and so it was difficult to easily have interactions with people remotely, the only way this could be done then was through telephone, fax or telegram which were relatively expensive and unreliable but the internet and social media have removed all these hurdles nowadays because information sharing through social media has been made more faster, cheaper, safer, and more reliable. It should however be noted that good attitude especially towards the general populace is the hallmark of a good public relations practitioner. It is against this backdrop that social media has made it easy for public relations practitioners to have good relationship with people.

The responses of the respondents to the research question “What factors determine the preference of social media tools employed in public relations practice?” indicated highest preference for information sharing with about 25% of the total number of respondents, followed by publicity, dialogue, social and advocacies being the least. Many of the respondents agreed that the social media

were used to pass information on services, policies, events and others that their department at work is involved with. From the result in chart 5, it is argued that social media provides the means of passing information across from one department to another within an organization, it also allows for sharing information across various organizations and between individuals. Aside from information sharing, it is also used for publicity and advocacies which many online marketers and other stakeholders are now making use of to reach their target audience.

In a nutshell, these findings are in line with the study by Breakenridge (2009) where he opined and believed that powerful new social media tools will offer unprecedented new opportunities in days when most traditional methods of communication will not reach many audiences; much less convince them to do anything. We are presently in those days with the availability of digital plenitude to those journalists who engage in public relations practice within the media terrain (broadcasting). In line with the findings of this study, Breakenridge (2009) suggested that social media is also been used by PR experts for dialogue.

CONCLUSION

Looking at the assertions of the Technological Determinism theory as put forward by McLuhan, indeed the new electronic media is changing the way people think, act, and feel. McLuhan suspects that the current technological environment, when looked back upon, will be seen as a major turning point in the history of communication and indeed it has impacted the job of the public relations professionals today in the media terrain, in corroborating McLuhan's position and going by the findings of this study which revealed that social media platforms like instant messaging, social bookmarking, photo-sharing, wikis, Facebook, etc. have had a great and significant impact on how journalists who engage in public relations practice communicate as it makes it possible for people and media organizations to have seamless

interactions. In addition, social media has enhanced the achievement of public relations objectives by impacting on public relations knowledge, enhancing relationships with people, sharing information on the latest innovations on the tools and methods of public relations, and also helping in shaping the attitude of those in public relations practice. They study suggest that the factors that determine the preference of social media tools employed in public relations practice include information sharing, publicity, dialogue, social and advocacies.

In conclusion, it is evident from this study that social media has indeed had great impacts on the public relations practice as it has changed the way media organizations generally communicate, be it with its internal or external stakeholders. Journalists in the 21st century Nigeria who engage in public relations functions and practice have the opportunity to reach their target audience remotely through the use of social media, unlike in the olden days when the only ways they could do so were through telephone, fax, and telegram which were relatively expensive and unreliable, today instant messaging has made it possible to have live interactions thereby making it easy to receive response to one's inquiry without delays. Aside from the possibility to reach and interact with a very large number of people at once, social media have also impacted on how journalists who carry out public relations functions acquire knowledge, enhanced good relationship with people, serving as a medium of obtaining information about latest innovations on the tools and methods of public relations practice, and it has also helped shaped the attitude of those in public relations practice.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are put forward:

1. More research should be conducted on how best social media outlets could be used for the purposes of public relations in the broadcast industry in Nigeria.

2. High standards should be demanded of those who engage in public relations practice by their organisations and regulatory bodies like the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) whether they are journalists who just perform such functions or those who are PR practitioners. This could be done through training and retraining of journalists and PR practitioners who engage in PR practice or functions.
3. Higher institutions of learning in Nigeria should implement stronger curriculum that would prepare future public relations professionals to use social media effectively as Nigeria joins the global practice of public relations through technological innovations going further into the 21st century.

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