THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN GOVERNANCE: STUDY OF OGUN STATE GOVERNMENT

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Abstract

The researcher's goal is to look at how the governor of Ogun state has been using social media to communicate with his supporters and people of Ogun state about his political party's ideology or goals and achievements in office, unlike what takes place before now when government makes use of traditional media (radio, television, newspapers and magazines) especially those owned by government to pass and relay information to the people. The research is both descriptive and content-based. The study's descriptive component was carried out using the survey technique of research, with questionnaires distributed to 100 randomly selected respondents, while the content analysis was carried out by looking at information provided by the governor on his social media platforms. Political Communication Theory was examined, which defined the deliberate methods by which elected and appointed officials, the media, and ordinary individuals employ communications to generate and distribute meaningful information about political practices. The survey found that the majority of the people in the state utilize Governor Abiodun's Facebook account to get information from him, and that they prefer getting information from him directly and personally, despite problems such as network failure, literacy, and data costs. Another discovery is that Governor Abiodun has a number of social media accounts, the most prominent of which is his Facebook page.

Keywords: Citizens, Information, Government, Social Media, Platforms

Introduction

Within an organization, institution, or political entity, governance refers to the process by which members of society wield power, authority, and influence to execute policies and choices concerning public and social upliftment. It refers to the interactions and decision-making among the participants in a collective problem that result in the establishment, reinforcement, or reproduction of social norms and institutions. (Bevir, 2012)

Governance, according to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, is the practice of exercising power or control over a socio-political body, such as a company, state, or institution. A government on the other hand, is the most formal, as it is a body whose main job and authority is to make legally binding decisions in a certain geopolitical system (such as a state).(Hufty, 2011)

"The exercise of economic, political, and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels," according to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) which was founded in 1945, It includes the techniques, processes, and institutions that persons and groups use to express themselves, exercise their legal rights, fulfill their obligations, and mediate their conflicts." Transparency is one of the foundational concepts of good governance, which ensures that decision-making, due process monitoring, and program and project implementation are transparent, publicly available, and directly accessible to all stakeholders. (UNDP, 1997)

Web-based platforms that allow users to create, share, rate, and search for material and information are referred to as social media. These tools become 'social' in the sense that they are designed to allow users to share and communicate with one another. (Tankovska, 2021)

Facebook, one of the most prominent social networks, was founded in 2004, YouTube, the most popular video sharing website, did not exist until 2005, and Twitter, the most popular micro blogging site, was founded in 2006. As a result, public officials, political parties, and activists are increasingly using them to communicate with the developing virtual community. (Tankovska, 2021)

State governments are increasingly using social media to disseminate policy announcements and update the public about their administrations' actions and accomplishments. This has progressed to the point that some governors now have Special Advisers, Special Assistants, and Consultants on Information and Social Media rather than Information Commissioners, who would have been expected to assess not only information and social media, but also the use of traditional media (radio, television, newspapers and magazines), depending on the objectives, the message, and the characteristics of the people for whom the message is intended. (Hufty, 2011)

The usage of social media to disseminate information to the general public appears to have surpassed that of traditional media such as radio, television, newspapers, and magazines. This is because social media is thought to be more effective than conventional media; yet, both should work together to make communication more effective and reach the majority of people. To summarize, social media should be utilized with caution and its application closely monitored to avoid the misleading conclusion that it is the most effective tool available. The bulk of the people being ruled can be reached through this effective method. (Knapp & Daly, 2002)

Though social media is thought to be very fast and efficient at disseminating information to a large number of people in a short amount of time, and it also has the benefit of immediate feedback, it is believed that it will be unable to reach the majority of people, particularly those in rural areas and non-users. As a result, traditional media and inter-personal communication by political and community leaders remain important in interacting with a substantial percentage of the governed. (Knapp & Daly, 2002)

In Nigeria, for example, an analysis of overall internet penetration in 2018 revealed that just about 15% of the population, or approximately 29.3 million Nigerians, used the internet. While it is predicted that just 32.4 million people would use social media by 2020 and 36.8 million by 2023, (Statista, 2019)

According to the Digital 2020 Global Overview, just 10% of Nigerians who have internet connection in 2019 are active users, implying that 60% of Nigerians do not have internet access or do not utilize it. This suggests that, while social media has become an integral part of our daily lives, it would be erroneous for governors or government officials to imagine that it is the most significant or primary means of connection with the majority of their constituents in their state. (Digital 2020)

Ogun State is a south western state created by the military administration of Olusegun Obasanjo in 1976 carved out of the old western state of Nigeria and named after Ogun River which runs across it from North to South. The State has twenty local governments, with population of over 5 million people and land area of 16,432 square kilometres. (Ogun State Diary 2020)

Ogun State is dominated by people from Egba, Ijebu, Yewa, Remo and Awori with many sub groups. The predominant language spoken is Yoruba, Egun, Ijebu and English with majority of the people being traders and farmers. (Ogun State Diary 2020)

Prince Adedapo Oluwaseun Abiodun, the fifth elected governor of Ogun State was born on May 29, 1960 in Iperu-Remo and sworn in as Ogun state Governor on his birthday. He is from Remo in Ogun Eastern part of the state. His face book account is Prince Dr. Dapo Abiodun, MFR with about five thousand followers, Twitter account is dabiodun MFR and Instagram account at dapoabiodun MFR with over two hundred thousand followers. (Ogun State Diary 2020)

According to the available literature, not enough research has been done on how state governments use social media to interact with citizens. The importance of communication, particularly between a state governor and the people he leads, cannot be overstated because communication allows the leader and governor to carry people along in the ways he carries out the mandate given to him to lead by stating his activities in terms of actions taken on behalf of the people as well as projects; particularly social infrastructures provided for the people, what the leader expects from the people, and some other things.

Previous research, on the other hand, has primarily focused on the goals, applications, and benefits of social media as a platform for communication and a means of reducing or eliminating gaps between groups of people. Although this research focuses on a governor's usage of social media to communicate with the people he controls, it also looks at how effective the medium is and the problems that come with using it.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To find out how often people get information from the Governor via social media platforms
- to examine obstacles that the general public face in getting information from the governor.
- to study if messages received from social media are clear, understandable and can be trusted
- to find out how effective social media platforms are in disseminating information to the general public.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How often do people get information from the Governor via social media platforms?
2. What are the obstacles that the general public faces in getting information from the governor?
3. Is the information people of the state received from social media clear, understandable, and can be trusted?
4. How effective are social media platforms at disseminating information to the general public?

THEORETICAL REVIEW

POLITICAL COMMUNICATION THEORY

The purposeful procedures through which elected and appointed leaders, the media, and ordinary people employ messages to generate relevant knowledge about political practices are explained by political communication theory. When people use their power for the greater good, their messages and interactions become a strategic tool for influencing public policy. In political communication theories, conceptualizations of who has power and how they wield it are common. The ability of political actors to gain, maintain, and wield authority in governmental affairs, as well as affect relationships and policies, is referred to as power. Because they set laws and sanction behaviors, convey and withhold social and economic advantages to individuals, and influence mass media sources, political elites (elected officials, party leaders, legislators, and agency directors) have the power to influence huge populations.

Citizens' power stems from their legal rights, understanding of political processes, and ability and willingness to participate in policy debates. Because the public relies on the media for political information, media outlets take advantage of this influence to tell people what to think about political leaders, issues, and policies. Political elites are stewards of public interests; they share goals and objectives, push policies with the permission of those governed, and justify policy benefits by saying that they fulfill constituents' interests. The public expects the government to pay attention to their wants and issues and develop policies that will benefit them.

One reason for the media's existence is that it is acutely aware of the power of political elites and citizens. Policy concerns are framed in terms of public rather than organizational and material interests, according to sources. Political elites frequently include reasons stressing public advantages in the content of their communications. One effect is to convince citizens that their elected and appointed officials are acting in their best interests. Another effect is to improve the personal credibility and authority of political elites, which is less visible. By selecting political symbols, crafting strategic messages, and engaging in intentional encounters, political communicators exercise authority and ensure persuasive results.

Political communication theories have emerged as a result of research in political science and communication that has drawn and extended concepts and explanations from social construction, message and media effects, and deliberative democracy since the 1970s. From symbolic interaction, the social constructionist perspective emerges. a social theory on how people use and reflect on symbols in social interactions to create reality. The theory is based on George Herbert Mead's intellectual ideas and its political applications in Murray Edelman's work. The substance presented through spoken, written, visual, and aural messages determines the meaning of political symbols, which is revealed through social interactions. People generate meanings from their conceptions of political events, their significant others' reactions to those symbols, and the subsequent self-reflective interpretations they ascribe to symbols and messages through interactions.

As a result, symbolic interaction encourages self-awareness, social knowledge, and interpretive explanations, all of which are important in political communication theory. Every symbol represents something other than the sign itself. Referential symbols refer to objective elements of a situation.

METHODOLOGY

The study's focus will be on governance in Ogun State, which is governed by a powerful ruling political party in Southwest Nigeria. The All Progressives Congress (APC), sometimes known as the Progressives, is the political party. The goal is to look at how the governor has used social media to communicate with his supporters about his political party's ideology or program.

The research is both descriptive and content-based. The survey method of research will be used for the descriptive component of the study, while the content analysis will be done by looking at information provided by the governor on his social media channels.

Content analysis is the study of documents and communication artefacts, which can include various types of texts, images, audio, and video. Content analysis is a method used by social scientists to investigate communication patterns in a repeatable and systematic way. (Alan, 2011)

The questionnaire used were in two sections; section A for Bio-data and section B contained questions relevant to research questions.

The study used judgment sampling as its sampling method. Purposive sampling is another term for judgment sampling, a total of100 young people, both men and women who are computer literate and reside in Abeokuta, the state capital were chosen for this study

RESULTS

QUESTION	**RESPONSE**	**PERCENTAGE**
How frequent do you get information from Ogun state governor on social media?	Everyday Every week Every month **Total**	20 (20%) 45 (45%) 35 (35%) **100%**
On which social media platform do you receive the messages/information	Facebook Instagram Twitter **Total**	45 (40%) 25 (25%) 30 (30%) **100%**
What are the challenges you experience in getting information from the Governor on social media	Network failure Literacy Account identity	30 (20%) 10(10%) 20(20%)
	Data Expenses No problem **Total**	20 (20%) 20(20%) **100%**
Do you think the Governor's use of social media platforms to pass information is effective?	Yes No I don't know Total	60 (60%) 20 (20%) 20 (20%) 100%
Do you believe what the Governor says on his social media platforms?	Yes No Total	80 (80%) 20 (20%) 100%
Do you like getting information from Ogun State Governor from his social media platforms?	Yes No I am indifferent Total	75 (80%) 10 (%) 15 (15%) 100%

DISCUSSION

According to the table above, the majority of respondents (40%) use Facebook to connect with the governor in order to receive information from him, while 35% use Twitter and the remaining 25% use Instagram. According to the findings, the majority of individuals in the state utilize Governor Abiodun's Facebook account to obtain information from him.

80% of respondents reacted positively and believed information received from the Governor about his actions and initiatives that were carried out or completed in the state, just 20% of repondents replied negatively. When asked if they enjoy receiving information from the Governor, 75% said yes, 10% said no, and 15% were unconcerned whether they received information or not.

On a weekly basis, residents of the state receive information from the Governor's social media platform, and they enjoy receiving information from the Governor via social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Majority of the respondents believed and trusted information obtained from Governor Abiodun via social media platforms and despite literacy levels, unstable or failed network, and expensive data were some of the problems people encounter in accessing information from Governor Abiodun through his social media platforms.

CONCLUSION

This research found that Ogun State Governor, Prince Dapo Abiodun, uses several social media platforms (particularly Facebook) to communicate with the state's huge diversified population. He also uses social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, according to the investigation to communicate with a large group of people As a complement to traditional media, the platforms were utilized to communicate his actions as well as projects carried out by his administration in the state.

The number of followers and likes on the Governor's social media messages suggested that the messages were comprehended and that the direct information received from the Governor was appreciated. Message responses were likewise spontaneous and numerous. Some residents went so far as to request that certain facilities be built in their neighborhoods, and they also expressed interest in the Governor's social media posts continuing.

Because of the vast number of individuals that react and offer comments whenever the Governor posts information, social media is particularly successful in delivering information from the Governor to the people of the state. Furthermore, some of the material posted by the Governor is frequently cited as a source of information in traditional media news, and some of the recipients of the messages share them with as many people as possible. Though some people have been unable to connect with the Governor on social media due to their low literacy levels, inability to recognize the governor's identity codes on social media platforms, and network issues (some people do not have good network), inability to use social media due to a lack of funds or the inability to buy data or internet services. Despite some of the challenges, however, some people have been able to connect with the Governor on social media platforms.

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