**Title :** INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE PRACTICE OF

PUBLIC RELATIONS : A study of Global Communication Nigeria

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**INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON AIRTEL PRACTICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS**

**BY**

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**CHAPTER ONE**

1. **Introduction**
   1. **Background to the Study**

Communication is a basic human need and for that reason, man has always found a means of satisfying this need. It is believed that no human society can function effectively if there is no exchange of ideas, experiences, etc between and among the people within the society since no man can live in isolation of others.

The earliest forms of trado-media, interpersonal and group forms of communication had the benefit of being easy to use and did not necessarily need complex technologies. The weaknesses of not being able to communicate to large audience led to the development of mass media such as: telegraph, newspapers, magazines, radio and television and to the recent Internet/ICT/ which has helped in broadening the scope of digital public relations.

Advancement in modern technology has revolutionized all facets of communication during the past decades. Access to the people and information practically anywhere and anytime in the world has been quicker, cheaper and easier.

Awake (2002) cited in Kur (2004), posits that the dynamic nature of the 2ls century and more centuries to come rest on technological revolution. No wonder, Marshall McLuhan, a Canadian English Professor in 1964 propounded the concept of “*Global Village*” regarding the entire globe as having the potentials of becoming a “global community” where information and news about anything and anywhere in the world would be readily available for anyone’s consumption in any part of the world and without mincing word, the impact of International Network (Internet) in achieving this feat cannot be underestimated.

This new technology has compressed the whole world into a single electronic to where information about far and near can be exchanged and shared with just a click of mouse or touch of screen.

Adepoju et. al (2009). Observe that internet being the host of many other media tagged socio-media like: Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Ebay, Ebuddy, Eskimi, 2go, e.t.c making information distribution faster, cheaper and easier especially for public relations practitionals whose job is to build, maintain and polish the image and interity of company.

The arrival of this information and communication technology has influenced and shaped every human activities ranging from Education to Agriculture, Business, Mass communication, Politics, Health etc.

Public relations use social media to share organisations view, opinions, e-releases, seek the opinion of publics, make feedback easier and faster i.e it enhanced effective two ways communication.

According to Paul Gillin (2008), Senior fellow society of new communication Research, social media are giving rise to a new style of communication that is characterized by conversation and community.

However , the practice of public Relations is not exceptional as ICT has influenced the PRS practice in this century.

Carrying out project work relating to the influence of social media on the practice of public relations will lead to the definition of core words “ Social Media and Public Relations from different perspectives.

According to Mark Dykeman (2008)) “ Social media are the means for any person to publish digital creative content, provide and obtain real time feedback via online discussion, commentary and evaluation and incorporate changes or correction of the original content (p.1). 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, search engine marketing, wikis, professional network and micro blogging sites (Wright and Hinson, 2009).

According to the institute of Public Relations, “Public Relations is a deliberate planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organization and its various publics.

Digital public relations or e- public relation is the latest concept in corporate reputation management.

* 1. **Statement of the Problem**

Due to the rise in social media use among consumers around the world, there as been an increase in the use of social media as tactics for many public relations practitioners to track their consumers and relate with them.

Because we are in the era of consumer satisification due to heavy competition. The major concern of this research is to ascertain how social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Instagram e.t.c has influenced the practice of public relations especially in creating and maintain mutual understanding for better interaction within internal and external publics.

Also, imitation of web pages and sharing of fake or untrue information to consumers by fraudster is another challenge identified imaging somebody imitate or design a facebook official page of Dangote and send “you have won tone of cement in our company quickly pay 10,000 to double your tones: this offer is available only today and tomorrow”. This brings setback on the extent to which social media can be use as PRs tools.

Although others have examined some part of the contribution of new communication media to the practice of public relations, there are fewer studies looking at how public relations practitioners actually are using these new media.

It is also the interest of the study to examine cost effectiveness, speed delivery of message and see how public relations can translate the social media into feedback and opinion media.

To this end, the research examing the influence of social media on the practice of public relations especially in a telecommunication organization

* 1. **Purpose of the study**
* To investigate the potential roles of social media in modern practice of public relations.
* To study the difference and similarity in terms of cost and effectiveness while using social media and traditional for message dissemination.
* To examine the publics response attitude towards the social media message.
* To investigate whether the socio- media are suitable for public relation practice.
* To show the strength and weakness of socio- media as a public relation tools.
  1. **Research Questions**

i. Does MTN use social media in communication and sharing of ideas and concepts?

ii. To what extent have social media helped MTN in solving problems and complaints from its various publics?

iii.Have social media enhanced the performance of public relations department of MTN?

iv. To what extent has social media influenced the service of MTN to its various publics

v. What are the strength and weakness of socio-media as public relations tools?

**1.5 Significance of the Study**

This research which is relatively new to the field of mass communication and public relations, yet only few people ever written on social media and its contribution to public relations profession or practice.

Therefore, being a new research, it will benefit individual, corporate bodies, government, researchers, students, media professionals and host of others

The study is to reveal how socio-media can be translated into powerful tools in the hand of innovated and creative public relations especially in building public confidence and effective interaction.

Individuals will benefit from this study as they will know the best way to use and react to social media messages and information.

Future researchers who may what to carry out research in this area or related aspect will find this material useful, while it forms bulk of academic materials.

**1.6 Scope of the Study**

This research focuses on the effect of social-media on the practices of public relations with a reference to the global communication Nigeria especially public relations and customer care departments. However, demography of the respondents within MTN will be examined before the administration of data collection instrument (questionnaire) such factor include but not limited to age, sex, education, work experience, etc.

**1.7 Limitation of the Study**

Although, it is too earlier to start pointing at limitations, nevertheless, some limitations are visible at the outset of this research. First, the research is limited to Global comumunication and its publics. Duration for the research work is relatively short compared to tasks involved in carrying out this research as there are other stresses emanating from other academic activities.

Little materials are also available due to the fact that the topic is relatively new because previous researchers have focuses on mass media and not social media aspect of public relations practice.

**1.8 Operational definition of the Terms**

**Publics**: These are the MTN internal public and extental public usually the subscribers, staff, government, hosting community, etc whose activities influence global communication.

**Public Relations:** This refers to as various efforts to deliberate planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understandings between MTN and all its subscribers, government, staff etc

**Relations:** The way in which MTN deals with all its publics, including staffs, subscribers etc.

**Social Media:** A group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content such as facebook, twitter, instagram etc

**CHAPTER TWO**

**2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

The literature materials of this research came from books, journal, articles, web pages, blogs, newspaper writing by credible writers and web contributors in the area of public relations, consumer behaviour and customer satisfaction.

This chapter is a review of literature on the topic “**The influence of social media on the Practice of Public Relations**” (A study of MTN Nigeria)”.

The chapter is organized under the following headings.

• Theoretical Framework

• Conceptualization

• Empirical Findings

**2.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

**2.1.1 Mediamorphosis Theory**

This theory was postulated by Roger Fidler (1997:191) cited in Soloman, et al (2008:191). According to him, Mediamorphosis can be defined as the transformation of communication media, usually brought about by the complex interplay of perceived needs, competitive and political pressures, and social and technological innovations. The essence of Mediamorphosis is the idea that the media are complex adaptive systems. In other words, the media , as other system, respond to external pressures with a spontaneous process of self-recognition.

Fidler argues that new media do not arise spontaneously and independently; rather, they emerge gradually from the metamorphosis of older media. Like McLuhan, Fidler also suggests that emerging forms of communication media propagate dominant traits from earlier forms. That social media is an offshoot of traditional media which a reputable company must not toy with but embrace to improve its service delivery now that majority of consumers now available online.

**2.1.2 Model of Public Relations**

A model is similar to a theory in the sense that it usually provides a framework for effective practice in a specific field or discipline. In public relations, there are a number of models that can provide such framework to make its practice an effective one. Grunig and Hunt (1984) cited in Ewuola (2008) have given four models of public relations which can serve as a guide for practitioners in the field. These models include:

**i. Press Agentry /publicity Model:** This model believes that complete truth is neither necessary nor helpful. Therefore, half-truths should be told and information could be distorted. The public relations officer can disseminate incomplete and distorted information in presenting the views of his organization, government or institutions. The feedback process is considered a waste of time as communication is intended to tell and not to listen to receiver of the message. The communication is one way.

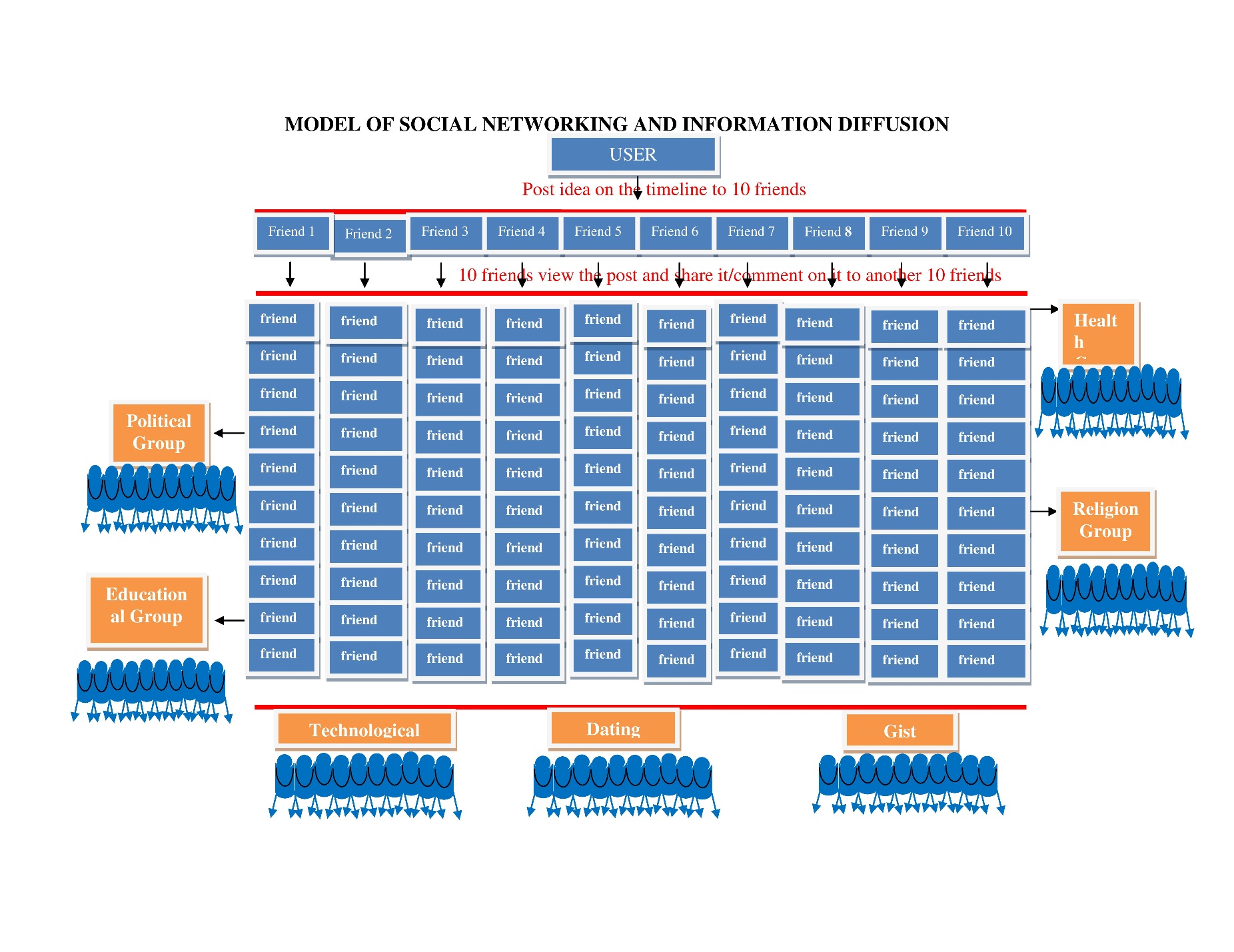
ii. **Public Information Model**: This model believes that there is need for complete truth in the information to be presented to the publics. Therefore, the public relations practitioners should give objective information about the activities of his organization. However, communication is still one-way under this model as the feedback process is still seen as not essential. The public relations practitioners here give objective information about his organization but he does not bother to receive any feedback as it is seen as necessary.

iii. **Two Way Asymmetric Model**: This model says that the objective of the relations officer is to scientifically persuade the receiver of his information or message. Although truth is essential, the feedback system is cosmetic as it is not intended to affect or change the activities of the organization. The feedback system is there to create a false impression that the organisation is a listening one. Therefore, Communication here is two way with unbalance effects because it is intended to influence and change behavior of the publics and not the organization.

iv. **Two Way Systematic Model**: Under this model, the communication objective is to achieve a true mutual understanding and satisfying the mutual interests of both the organisation and its publics. This model embraces dialogue rather than monologue in its communication approach. It holds that truth is essential and the feedback system must be genuine and objective so that mutual understanding and benefits can be achieved.

**Relevant of the Model to the research**

From the model above, it is clear that “Two Way Systematic Model appears more effective and accurate especially with the use of social media which is online communication platform in forstring and building interaction communication between the company and its pulics. Sometimes, company update its website and share the latest look to its facebook, twitter, instagram and other social network platform for its publics to access. In another way round, latest development is shared via social platform, it also serve as a source of generating effective feedback, comments, criticism, and other valuation contributions that will improve the organization efficacy.

**2.1.3 Model of Social Networking and Information Diffusion (SNID)**

***SOURCE: Olayinka S.A (2014)***

**EXPLANATION OF THE MODEL**

**Name of the Model: Social Networking and Information Diffusion (SNID)**

**Name of the Researcher:** Olayinka Saheed Olaitan

**Date of postulation:** January 1, 2015

**Assumption of the model:** It is observed that social media like Facebook and twitter offers lots of advantages in spreading idea, information, business, etc. Olayinka, S.O. (2015) while explaining the model highlighted these 10 ways as means which information are shared on social media.

1. **Through Post:** Ideas (politics, education, tech gist) are posted on social media like Facebook and twitter, WhatsApp etc. for users to read.
2. **By Sharing Link(s):** Users can share a link of post stumbled upon on a particular issue or idea to social media since most of the website and blogs are now having sharing links and through this many friends of the users will see the link while a post can also be re-link within social media.
3. **Reposting a Post:** This is another way social media users communicate information to one another by reposting an earlier posted message or reposting a link earlier linked by users friend(s)
4. **Like a Post:** Post or message can be enhanced and spread by clicking on liking icon below the post in order to show interest and the number of like motivate the originator of the message to post another time.
5. **Like a Comment:** Users can as well like a comment send or post by another social media user who responded to the post earlier posted by someone, through this the same information is expanding.
6. **Tagging Friends in a Post or Comment:** Friends can be tagged in a particular post to arouse the users that are tagged to read or view the post which can be dropped directly on the wall with the word (you are tagged in a post, picture etc.
7. **Creating a Group:** On social media like Facebook, WhatsApp, 2go etc. it is very possible to create a group and discuss issue of interest where other users can contribute, such group could be titled “MTN Promo”, “Tech Gist” “MTN Smartphone Data” etc. and it will be moderated by you while you will be getting friends by adding friends etc. and whoever is in the group will be able to post comment and see your comments if it is a closed group etc.
8. **Direct Message:** Direct message or information can be posted to friends to raise discussion “Get 20mb free Data with #50. Note that message like this will trigger any sensible friend to react and even repost or share it with other friends while a personal plead can be made to share the link with their friends.
9. **Direct Chart:** PRs can pass message while charting directly with friends, clients and customers on some latest information as touching vital issues can be discussed. In short, PRs can open a discussion like this to create interest. “10 reasons MTN data is superb”

**x. Follow Message:** On twitter users are free to follow other users to get connected to the desire message at all time and it should be noted that the more followers a company get are the number of the people that is likely to see his/her post, PRs can be followed while his/her contents can be re-twitted and expanded.

**2.2 CONCEPTUAL REVIEW**

**2.2.1 Meaning of Public Relations**

British Institute of Public Relations (BIPR) cited in Arowosegbe (2005) defines public relations as the deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organization and its publics.

International Public Relations Association (IPRA) writes that public relations is *a management function of a continuing and planned character through which public and private organization and institution seek to win and retain the understanding, sympathy and support of those with whom they are or may be concerned by evaluating public opinion about themselves in order to correlate as far as possible their policies and procedure to achieves by plan and wide spread information more productive cooperatives and more efficient fulfillment of their common interest*.

Oluarowosegbe (2005) quoting Sam Epelle describes public relations *as an articulate, audible and effective voices in pleading for an ideal, individual or organization because the site of public opinion in the hope that the ideal individual or organization shall be accepted to be in the public which underlines the social responsibilities of public relations.*

World Assembly of Public Relations Association in Mexico City (1978). Writes that public relations is *the art and social science of analyzing trends, predicting their consequences, counseling organisation leaders and implementing planned programmes of action which will serve both the organisation and the public interests.*

Finally, the definition recognizes that a public relation deals with relationship between an organization or company and its various publics.

**2.2.2 History of Public Relations**

What is today known as public relations was believed to be established in the United States of America in the late 19th and 29th centuries. Ivy Lee, a former reporter with the New York Journal is reputed to be the first public relations practitioner. Lee in 1906 successfully handled the shattering strikes which the US Coal Industry was then facing. He used public relations techniques to restore peace and good image to the industry.

Later Lee came up with the famous “Declaration of Principles” which to a large extent laid the foundation for modern public relations practice. He believed that his public relations outfit:

“Is not a secret press bureau. All our work is done in the open. We aim to supply news. This is not an advertising agency. If you think any of our matters ought properly to go to the business office, do not use it. Our matter is accurate. Further details on any subjects related will be supplied promptly and any editor will be assisted most cheerfully in verifying any statement of fact. In brief, our plan is frankly and openly on behalf of business concerns and public institutions, to supply to the press and public of the United States prompt and accurate information concerning subjects which is of interest, and value to the public to know about”

Edward Barneys is another prominent American name in the emergence of public relations. He was the first person to teach public relations in a university (the New York University). He also wrote a book on public relations in 1923. The book was titled “Crystallizing Public Opinion”.

Later, practitioners were and are still often- recruited from the ranks of journalism. Some reporters concerned with the ethics criticize former colleagues for using their inside understanding of news media to help clients receive favorable media coverage. Some historians regards Lvy Lee as the first real practitioner of public relations, but Edward Bernays, a nephew and student of Sigmund Freud, is generally regarded today as the profession’s founder. In the United Kingdom, Sir Basil Clack 1879-1947) was a pioneer of Public relations.

Other contributor s to the development of public relations are Sir. Stephen Tallents of the United Kingdom and Gustav Mevissen of Western Germany.

**2.2.3 Public Relations in Nigeria**

Modern public relations according to Orraca-Tetteh (1986) was introduced into Nigeria on January 1944 with the establishment of the first ever public relations office in the country. It was a creation of the colonial government and its function then was much too close to that of propaganda to deserve being referred to as a public relations office. This was however, the beginning of the formal public relations practice in Nigeria. The office was headed by Mr. D.C. Fletcher and its goal was to present a picture of Nigeria to the outside world as well as to assist the government in all activities requiring propaganda for want of a better term- in- one form of another.

By 1946, the department had created three main units namely:

1. The Publications Section
2. Hospitality Section
3. The Press and Publicity Unit

**2.2.4 Historical Background of MTN Nigeria**

MTN Nigeria is part of the MTN Group, Africa’s leading cellular telecommunication company. May 16th, 2001, MTN became the first GSM network to make call following the globally lauded Nigeria GSM auction conducted by the Nigerian Communication Commission earlier that year. Thereafter the company launched full commercial operation beginning with Lagos, Abuja and Port Harcourt in august 2001.

MTN is a South African company founded by sifiso Dabengwa, the company was founded in 1994 and it’s headquarter is located in Johannesburg.

Since it’s launched in august 2001, MTN has steadily deployed its services in 223 cities and towns, more than 10,000 villages and communities and a growing number of highways across the country spanning the 36 states of Nigeria and the federal capital territory, Abuja.

The company’s digital microwave transmission backbone the 3,400 kilometer Y’ello ban was commissioned by then President Olusegun Obasanjo in January 2003 and is reputed to be the most extensive digital microwave transmission infrastructure in all of Africa. The Y’ello ban has significantly helped to enhance call quality on MTN network.

The company subsist on the core brand values of leadership, relationship, integrity, innovation and can do.it prides itself on its ability to make the impossible, possible, connecting people with family, friends and opportunities.

MTN’s overriding mission is to be a catalyst for Nigeria’s economic growth and development, helping to unleash Nigeria’s strong developmental potential not only through the provision of world class communication but also through innovation and sustainable corporate social responsibility initiatives.

MTN Nigeria has over the years expanded its network capacity to include a new numbering range with the prefix 08101, having exhausted its initial subscribers numbering range of 0803, 0806, 0703, 0706, 0813, 0816, etc.

In its resolve to enhance quality customer’s services, MTN Nigeria has introduced a self-help toll free 181 customer care line through which subscribers can resolve their frequently asked question free of charge. Also to improve its customers satisfaction it created MTN web self service (WSS), Sim Registration Tips to enable subscribers register their sim. Also MTN mobile self-care App and also MTN Walk In Center.

The

Although MTN Mobile was the first telecommunication operator in Nigeria, within seven years of the company’s operation, its subscriber base has grown to over 5 million. MTN also provides services that enable subscribers enjoy endless internet surf like MTN data bundles, MTN mobile internet and also MTN internet modem.

MTN products and services are available at its friendship centers which have a structure and some departments. It also have nationwide network of dealership, banks and convenience channel.

**2.2.5 Goals of Public Relations**

Under this study, goals of public relations cannot be over emphasized, but only need and require for analysis. Public relations practice a successful and distinct job. The officer should have the heart of way forward in every programme set before the organization that he represent, ready to solve issues and problems within internal public and external one, part of the crucial work of the public relations in an organization is that he is the thinking thank of the firm during crisis especially on the image of product or service.

According to this study , the goals of public relations in commercial organizations and their relevant publics such as government agencies, employees, customers, shareholders, distributors, suppliers e. t. c

As a PRO alertness to keep informed, should be the first thing to learn or know, followed by well-planned schedule or strategies with proper involvement of the ethics of the profession.

To make the explanation succinctly clear, below are some of the goals of public relations in any organization:

* Establishing and sustaining god reputation
* Mentally to counseling
* Focusing on interpretation of all attitudes
* Preparing budget
* Advising management corporate design matter
* Creating links for organization
* Supervising all public relations
* Production of literatures
* Monitoring and evaluation of public activities

All the above points should be one of the focuses for any public relations officers. In addition, this research will see to the need for explanation of its point is after the other in short words.

**2.2.6 Functions of Public Relations**

1. Public relations provide the rules and policies that always guide the operation of the organization that is serving.
2. Public relations have the purpose of promoting goodwill.
3. Public relations creates understanding, empathy.
4. Public relations facilitates and ensures an inflow of representative opinions from the organization‘s constituent publics so that policies and operations may be in tune with the need and views of the public.
5. Public relations devises and carries programmes that will gain wide and favorable interpretation of the organization’s policies.
6. Public relations counsels senior officials on ways and means of maintaining or reshaping operations or communication policies to gain maximum public acceptance.
7. Public relations does conduct research on other opinion and attitudes surveys of the various publics with which an organization interacts ( such publics may include consumers, shareholders, distributors, communities within which the organizations is located and also between the management and staffs of the organization)
8. Public relations recognizes and accords premium place to the interest of the public in all affairs relating to the organization’s existence.
9. Public relations service as a central source of information about the organization and as the official channel of communication between the organization and publics.
10. Public relations coordinates the activities which affect the organization’s relations with their general public and specific publics.
    * 1. **Some of the Publics MTN**

These are individuals or group of persons or groups that MTN is dealing with day by day.

Publics can be internal or external. They are considered as a crucial ingredient in any organization and no responsible organization will neglect its publics. Below are some of the public of the MTN. Olayinka, (2015)

1. The Consumers
2. Marketers or Supermarkets
3. The Employees
4. The Government
5. Banking Sector
6. Media Organisations
7. Advertising agencies
8. Transporters etc.
9. All MTN network users
10. Nigeria Communication Commission
11. National assembly committee on telecommunication
    1. **The Four-Step Process of Public Relations**

**The R-A-C-E Formular**

Babs Bello(2004) For any person to perform well in Public Relations, a good knowledge of the four-step process of Public Relations is very mandatory while the item R-A-C-E formular is essentially required to master and muster this process.

The basic four steps in the process of Public Relations are extremely important because the organized practice of Public relations is a Continuing effort in bringing about a harmonious adjustment between an institution and its publics.

The adjustment requires an exchange of opinions and information. Although this exchange of information and opinion does not happen automatically in the present society it has to be planned and provided for. This is actually the Public Relations practitioner’s job.

The Public Relations practitioner however, serves in the role of the listener Counselor communicator and evaluator in the process of Public Relations, because Public Relations is essentially a Problem solving process of basic steps.

(a) Research or Fact Finding

(b)Action or Planning

(c) Communication

(d)Evaluation

**(a) Research:** As fact finding in Public relations involves the probing of opinions, attitudes and actions of those concerned with the acts and policies of an organization in an attempt to evaluate the flow of information. This task requires determining facts regarding the organization’s Problems, situations, background, causes, precedent, allies, opponents and neutrals. Essentially, research entails facts finding mission in an attempt to know what is happening in and around the organization.

**(b) Action or Planning:** Entails decision making and programming of plans that can be used to proffer solutions to the problems discovered or unearthed. Action or planning involves bringing these attitudes, opinions, ideas, and reactions to bear on the policies and programmes of the organization. It enables the organization to chart a Course in the interest of all parties concerned and further help in planning certain strategic analysis, objectives, alternatives, risk and benefit, consequences, decisions, tactics and proposals on media vehicles, talents and cost and finally the approval of commitment, support and participation on what can be done.

**(c)** **Communication:** Involves explaining and dramatizing the chosen course to all those who may be affected and whose support is essential to the organization. Communication is normally processed and done through media advertisement, advertorial, press conference, press release, in-house publications, house journals, newsletters, community relations activities and corporate gifts. Proper timing, repetition and follow-ups are very important in communication. The question normally asked in communication is ‘what do we need to do and why?’

**(d) Evaluation:** Involves assessing and evaluating the results of the programmes and the effectiveness of communication and media techniques used essentially: how we did it.

Evaluation is more or less the feedback. Or even the outcome of the results and yardsticks used in measuring the results, the conclusion of the programme and the renewal of the actions. However, it is very important to note that each of the steps of the process and formula is as important as the other.

Each one is vital to an effective programme. It is further important noting that research or fact finding, action and planning are what distinguishes public Relations from publicity.

**2.2.9** **Public Relations Communication Platforms in an Organization**

Below are some of the public relations various communication platform as established by Ewuola, P.O. (2008)

1**. Press Release:** Press Release is a primary tool used by public relations professionals. Public relations representatives submit release to media outlets in hopes that they will share editorial commentary or the press news with their audiences, according to business dictionary, print media, radio media and television are targeted by public relation representative prepare the written or taped news releases and distribute them to media contents. Press releases are ‘pseudo- news story written in third person, that seeks to demonstrated to an editor or reporter the news worthiness of a particular person, event, services or product”.

2. **Press Conferences:** Press conferences are commonly used by medium to large size organizations. A press conference is gatherings of media at a location where a representative(s) of the organization share some type of news or information, according tool the physicians for Human Rights site. The site outlines two common types of press conference, proactive and reactive. Companies use proactive to share news that helps build the company’s brand image. Reactive press conferences are typically used in more desperate situations for damage control e. t. especially during crisis.

**3. Website, Email and Social Media:** Social media has become a popular public relations tool in the early 21st century indicates Mike Sachoff in his October 2010 web pro news article, using social media as a public relations representation are rapidly increasing their use of social media to help companies replace other more expensive traditional media to get their messages out. Facebook, twitter, YouTube, blogs, podcast are just some of the many popular social network. Examples among a large pool of social media that companies can use. Sachoff points out that 89 percent of reporter say they source from online blogs. While 65 percent get stories from social media.

4. **Traditional Media:** Traditional media, including, newspapers, magazine, television and radio, is on the defensive as public relations campaign migrates tom the internet. Traditional media content providers still command high audiences, however, they are able to attract public relations firms. Albeit at lower prices than before the internet comes. For PR campaign, traditional media presents a way to reach older .more conservative audiences whose trust in old media is far higher than that of the internet.

**2.2.9.1 Other tools of Public Relations for Communication**

As always required in any profession, certain tools of trade are always needed for the practice of that profession. Therefore, the tools of trade, also known as tools of communication. Bello B. (2004)

(1) House Publications

(2) Pamphlets

(3) Books

(4) Letter and Bulletins

(5) Newsletters

(6) Inserts and Enclosures

(7) Printed Speeches

(8) Bulletin Boards

(9) Posters

(10) Billboards

(11) Information Racks

(12) Institutional Advertising

However, for the purpose of this research efforts is dwelled on social media as platform for public relations

**2.1.10 Concept of Social Media**

Social media are elements of the new media and according to Danny (2010) have become the highest activity on the internet today.

The concept of “social media” or “social network site” is broadly used to refer to Web sites that enable users to articulate a network of connections of people with whom they wish to share access to profile information, news, status updates, comments, photos, or other forms of content.

Elshout (2012) writes that social networks form a good platform for organizing countervailing power by political activists and consumers.

Social media is a form of electronic communication which facilitates interaction based on certain interests and characteristics.

Boyd & Ellison (2007) Social media are media for social interaction, using highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques. They use web-based technologies to transform and broadcast media monologues into social dialogues. They support the democratization of knowledge and information and transform people from content consumers to content producers.

Olayinka (2013) observes that the rapid growth of social media activities that has been observed over the last two to three years is indicative of its entry into mainstream culture and its integration into the daily lives of many people because it disseminated information at a very high speed, cheaper and enhance immediate feedback been an interactive media.

Social media are web-based and mobile technologies that facilitate interaction between organizations, communities and individuals. Important characteristics are that the technologies are ubiquitous, communication instantaneous and that they enable the creation and exchange of user-generated content.

Social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Google+, WordPress, and YouTube are just a few of the hundreds of applications that make participatory information sharing and social networking possible.

**2.1.11 Popular Social Media and Rank**

Below are some of the popular social media platforms used during the election in the 2015 .

**a. Facebook**

Facebook.com started as a local social network made for the students of Harvard. It was developed by a sophomore, Mark Zuckerberg. Facebook was actually made by hacking Harvard’s data base containing identification images of students. The initial idea was actually to compare the faces of students with images of animals, for entertainment purposes. However, due to the potentially damaging contents of the site, the creators decided to put it down before it caught the attention of school authorities but today it is a tool and platform for political debate, mobilization and education.

**b. YouTube**

The history of YouTube began on February 14, 2005 when three former PayPal employees Chad Hurley, Steve Chen and jawed Karim activated the internet domain name “YouTube.com” and started to create a video-sharing website on which users could upload, share and view videos.

The first YouTube video was titled Me at the Zoo and shows co-founder Jawed Karim at the San Diego Zoo. The video was uploaded on April 23, 2005.

According to July 16, 2006 survey, 100 million video clips were views daily on YouTube with an additional 65,000 new videos uploaded every 24 hours. The website averaged nearly 20 million visitors per month. It should be recalled that political speeches, discussion, messages of different parties and stakeholders are uploaded and downloaded on youtube for those who missed the actual event in the real live scene. It is platform for streaming of live political campaign, really, television programme such as “Nigeria decides”

**c. Twitter**

Twitter is an online social networking service and microblogging service that enables its users to send and read text-based messages of up to 140 characters, known as "tweets".

It was created in March 2006 by Jack Dorsey and launched that July. The service rapidly gained worldwide popularity, with over 500 million active users as of 2012, generating over 340 million tweets daily and handling over 1.6 billion search queries per day. Twitter is one of the social media that witness high traffic as politicians, party candidate, voters, INEC, security agencies among others invaded twitter for latest update on their programmes, activities and policies.

**d. WhatsApp**

WhatsApp is a propriety, cross-platform instant messaging subscription service for Smartphone and selected feature phones that uses the internet for communication. In addition to text messaging, users can send each other images, video and audio media messages as well as their location using integrated mapping features. WhatsApp Inc. was founded in 2009 by Brian Action and Jan Koum both former employees of yahoo. The company is based in Mountain View, California and employ 55 people. Currently the company “WhatsApp” is being acquired and controlled by Facebook having paid $19 billion to the former owners.

As of September 2014, WhatsApp is the most globally popular messaging application with 600 million users, followed by china’s WeChat with 438 million users and Japan’s LINE with 400 million users. Some political discussions and debates also took plat on this platform during the poll.

**e. Instagram**

Instagram is an online mobile photo-sharing, video-sharing and social networking service that enables its users to take pictures and video and share them on a variety of social networking platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr and Flickr.

A distinctive feature is that it confines photo to square shape similar to Kodak instamatic and polaroid images, in contrast to the 4:3 aspect ratio typically used by mobile device cameras. Users can also apply digital filters to their images. The maximum duration for Instagram videos is 15 seconds.

Instagram was created by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger and launched in October 2010. The service gained rapid popularity with over 100 million active users as of April, 2012.

The service was acquired by facebook in April 2012 for approximately $1billion in cash and stock. It should be noted that at the time of electioneering many political photography are showcased while pictures of campaign, really etc

Here are the 15 Most Popular Social Networking Sites as culled from http://eBizMBA.com/16/5/2015

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Social Media** | **eBizMBA Rank** | **Alexa Rank** | **Statistic Per Month** | **Update** |
| Facebook | 3 | 2 | 900,000,000 | 5/7/2015 |
| Twitter | 14 | 11 | 310,000,000 | 5/7/2015 |
| LinkedIn | 23 | 13 | 250,000,000 | 5/7/2015 |
| Pinterest | 25 | 29 | 150,000,000 | 5/7/2015 |
| Google Plus+ | 30 | 110,000,000 | 120,000,000 | 5/7/2015 |
| Tumblr | 35 | 35 | -------------- | 5/7/2015 |
| Instagram | 72 | 38 | 85,000,000 | 5/7/2015 |
| VK | 99 | 26 | 80,000,000 | 5/7/2015 |
| Flickr | 103 | 82 | 65,000,000 | 5/7/2015 |
| My Space | 345 | 884 | 40,000,000 | 5/7/2015 |
| Tagged | 546 | 338 | 38,000,000 | 5/7/2015 |
| Ask.fm | 598 | 155 | 37,000,000 | 5/7/2015 |
| Meetup | 662 | 369 | 35,000,000 | 5/7/2015 |
| Meet Me | 1,162 | 1,983 | 10,500,000 | 5/7/2015 |
| Classmates | 1,193 | 3,165 | 10,000,000 | 5/7/2015 |

**2.1.12 Rising of Online Platform in Nigeria**

Over the years, the global system has seen monumental increases in the use of ICTs platforms. A report by the International Telecommunications Union indicates that global mobile subscriptions increased from 738 million in 2000 to more than 7 billion in May 2015, with 3.2 billion people using the internet globally, out of which two billion, or 62.5 per cent, are in developing countries (ITU, 2015). In the area of access, global Internet penetration increased seven fold from 6.5 to 43 per cent within the space of 15 years, and the proportion of households with Internet access at home advanced from 18 per cent in 2005 to 45 per cent in 2015 (ITU, 2015). Collectively, Unwin (2012) provides a summary of the features and structural opportunities inherent in ICTs platforms across the globe:

1. The increasing freedom that mobile technologies offer for people to communicate from any part of the world and at any time, or what might be called *space-time liberty*.
2. A change in the balance of distributional power, away from the down‘ dissemination of information by media corporations that were often state owned, to the co-creation of information, and more recently the widespread sharing of ideas, ‗news‘ and information between ‗peers‘, what might be called *sharing liberty*.
3. A dramatic reduction in the cost of information creation and communication, making it much more accessible to poorer people, witnessed through the dramatic explosion and take-up of miniaturized digital technologies such as mobile phones and cameras – what might be termed *access liberty* (Unwin, 2012, p. 44).

Nigeria has not been left behind in the global deployment of ICTs in general everyday human endeavor, especially in relation to governance. The ICTs sector has recorded phenomenon growth over the years, helped largely by Nigeria‘s predominantly young population. The sector has however been plagued by challenges including relatively poor literacy rate which limits interest on the part of the people, poor infrastructure especially in relation to electricity and digital divide (Abubakar, 2012). The challenges notwithstanding, Omobola Johnson, then Minister of Communications Technology, affirmed that ―Nigeria‘s ICT sector has increased tremendously in the past 12 years, growing at 20 per cent annually, making it the fastest growing [sector] in the country‖ (quoted in Nahimah, 2013). These improvements have been aided by public policies. Some initiatives such as the National Telecommunications Policy and the National Information Technology Policy (both formulated in 2000), the National Information Technology Development Agency Act 2007 and the regulatory and supervisory frameworks provided by the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) and the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) have combined to accelerate ICTs expansion in Nigeria 11 (Committee on ICT Policy Harmonization, 2012).

The country has moved from approximately 400,000 available fixed telephone lines pre-1999 to over 196 million available mobile telephone lines, of which 147 million are active, by May 2015, effectively highlighting Nigeria's telecommunications market as the fastest growing in Africa (NCC, 2015).

Table 1: **2014 Population and Internet Users Statistics (Second Quarter) cited in** Odeyemi, T. I. and Mosunmola, O. O. (2015)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Territory** | **Population** | **Internet Users Dec. 31, 2000** | **Internet Users Latest Data** | **Internet Penetration %** | **Growth 2000-2015** |
| World | 7, 264, 623, 793 | 360, 985, 492 | 3, 079, 339, 857 | 42.4% | 753.0% |
| Africa | 1, 158, 353, 014 | 4, 514, 000 | 318, 633, 889 | 27.5% | 6,958.2% |
| Nigeria | 177, 155, 754 | 200, 000 | 70, 300, 000 | 39.7% | 35, 050% |

In relation to platforms, Nigeria has also experienced remarkable growth. According to data published by internetworldstats.com (see Table 1 above), while the world had a 42.4 percent Internet penetration as at 2014, Africa had 27.5 percent with over 318 million Internet users. Nigeria alone accounts for over 70 million of this, with a 39.7 per cent Internet penetration rate. The phenomenal growth can be further put into perspective when compared with the year 2000 when Nigeria had just 200, 000 Internet users. A similar report by internetlivestats.com shows that at 16 percent, Nigeria had the world‘s joint second highest growth rate in the number of Internet users between 2013 and 2014.

A report by the NCC in June 2015 puts the number of subscribers browsing the internet on Nigeria‘s telecoms networks at over 87 million as at April, 2015 (Ubabukoh, 2015). The number of Facebook users in Nigeria increased from 400, 000 in 2007 to over 11 million in January 2014 (Social Media Week, 2014; Ehidiamen, 2013). Some statistics put the current figure at 14.8 million in 2015 (Nwabasha, 2015) in Odeyemi, and Mosunmola, (2015)

The country also boasts a sizeable number of Twitter and YouTube users, running into millions. George (2015), for instance, puts the number of active Twitter users in Nigeria at 6 million by 2013, while the other social media sites account for another 6 million. These figures may overlap; someone can maintain accounts on multiple social media sites (George, 2015) cited in Odeyemi, and Mosunmola, (2015)

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**2.2. 10 Characteristics of Social Media**

Below are some of the features of internet according to (Rus, 2002) and Wikipedia, 2016).

**i**. **No single person, body or institution owns it:** Internet is not own by a single body or organisation thereby making it a very free platform with little restriction.

**ii. Speed of Information**: the pace at which information is distributed or shared is very fast and is in just a click or touch of screen.

iii. **Reduce Cost of Communication**: Technology has brought down the costs of communication significantly and improved people’s access to communication, people now communicate at a very low cost and effective.

iv. **Access to more Information**

The proliferation of online forums, live coverage of news, and other such media related initiatives have resulted in world wide access and participation in news and information by almost everyone. It brings about a cyber-revolution that has changed as citizen journalism come to play and ends of government mono-poly of mass media platform.

**v. No Barrier:** Technology helps remove such barriers of distance and ensure a level playing ground for everyone all over the one to relate.

**v. Interactive Communication:** It eases communication and makes communication interactive since there is always room for feedback that is very spontaneous.

**2.2.11 Differences between Social Media and Traditional Media**

The properties that help describe the differences between social media and traditional media depend on the study. Some of these properties are highlighted by Adeniran (2007):

1. ***Reach*** - Both mass media and social media technologies provide scale and enable anyone to reach a global audience.

2. ***Accessibility*** - The means of production for traditional mass media are typically owned privately or by government; social media tools are generally available to anyone at little or no cost.

3. ***Usability*** – traditional mass media production typically requires specialized skills and training. Most social media does not, or in some cases reinvent skills, so anyone can operate the means of production.

4. ***Response Time*** - the time lag between communications produced by mass media can be long (days, weeks, or even months) compared to social media (which is capable of virtually instantaneous responses; only the participants determine any delay in response). As industrial media are currently adopting social media tools, this feature may well not be distinctive anymore in some time.

5. ***Permanence*** – Traditional mass media, once created, cannot be altered (once a magazine article is printed and distributed changes cannot be made to that same article) whereas social media can be altered almost instantaneously by comments or editing. Community media constitute an interesting hybrid of industrial and social media.

Though community-owned some community radios, TV and newspapers are run by professionals and some by amateurs. They use both social and industrial media frameworks.

”Social media can take many different forms, including Internet forums, weblogs, social blogs, microblogging, wikis, podcasts, pictures, video, rating and social bookmarking. By applying a set of theories in the field of media research (social presence, media richness) and social processes (self-presentation, self-disclosure) Kaplan and Haenlein created a classification scheme for different social media types in their Business Horizons article published in 2010.

**2.2. 12 Why Social Media is adopted by Public Relations**

Social media use has increased among consumers around the world, causing an increase in the adoption of social media as tactics for many public relations professionals. Because this new form of communication is growing at such a rapid pace, it is important to analyze the impact it has on the overall public relations practice as well as on how universities are putting it into their communications curriculum to better prepare future practitioners. Through an online survey of Northeastern Wisconsin (NEW) Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) members, this project set out to assess the use, value and impact social media have on public relations practitioners in the Fox Cities. The data were then compared to the curriculum currently being taught at select Wisconsin universities.

The survey of public relations professionals revealed that they value social media more than they actually use it; however, a majority of respondents believe social media have changed the way their organizations communicate. Respondents’ answers showed that they and their firms are not measuring the impact of social media practices even though most agree that public relations practitioners should measure who is talking about their organization or their clients’ organizations in these outlets.

**2.2.13 How Social Media are Influencing the Public Relations Practice**

According to Larry 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.

**2.2.14 How Public Relations Practitioners are Actually Using Social Media**

A study conducted by Wright & Hinson (2009) sampled the use of social media among 574 public relations practitioners across the United States. The study asked basic questions regarding the importance practitioners felt certain social media had on the overall communication and public relations efforts of their organization (or their client’s organizations) and how important these practitioners felt social media should be.

Other questions included which social media these practitioners personally use for gathering general news as compared to gathering news related to the public relations field.

Search engine marketing was considered the most important, followed by blogs, social networks, video sharing and forums or message boards. Photo sharing and social bookmarking, which are used to store, organize, search and manage web pages, were considered the least important.

* 1. **EMPIRICAL STUDIES**

**2.3.1 In the work of Sanusi R. (2013) titled role of public relations in an organization**. Is very related to this research except that it focuses on the general role of PR in a manufacturing firm while this research focuses on the role of PR in enhancing customer’s satisfaction. By and large, Sanusi made it clear that public relations is an essential ingredient for the growth and success of an organization. Adding that public relations differ from advertisement and propaganda because public relations aim at deserving, acquiring and reaching a good reputation and image for an organization. It is now obvious that the activities of public relations cut across of the phrase of human endeavor.

He added that good image is the watchword of public relations. For any business organization to strongly remain afloat, they should understand that a well-articulated policy on public relations is mutually beneficial a great necessity for a peaceful coexistence between public relations and the entire public.

**2.3.2 Angelica, E., Jane, T., and Scott, T. (2011).Twitter as a Public Relations Tool.**

Public Relations Journal of Public Relations Society of America. Vol. 5, No. 1. The study explores the uses of Twitter in communications campaigns. Findings suggest that public relations practitioners consider microblogging to be a valuable asset to a campaign’s social media strategy. They believe that Twitter offers a form of communication not offered by other social media applications, and they believe microblogging will continue to be an essential part of an integrated communications campaign. Also, industry executives point out that they lack measurement tools to prove its success. One respondent mentioned that until someone develops a way to measure Twitter’s return on investment, it will be difficult to quantify its value. Future research should expand on this study by developing a way to measure useful information such as the number of times a link is posted or a tweet is re-tweeted. Also, as Twitter itself works to discover a revenue option for the application, researchers may have the option to define success based on revenue.

As Chester and Montgomery (2008) in in Angelica, E. et. al. (2011). discovered, social networking tools allow public relations professionals to target specific audiences. Respondents agreed that Twitter offers a new kind of micro-targeting in Twitter’s searchable environment that other existing tools do not offer. Respondents agree that Twitter is not the only social media tool that allows public relations practitioners to reach their audiences, but the short, instant structure is new and useful. The real-time, one-on-one conversation is unprecedented in social media. The opportunity to instantly connect with an audience and often receive a rapid response offers a new way to communicate.

Also, the nature of Twitter communications provides public relations practitioners with the ability to create a conversation and a relationship with their audience in real-time. Botan and Taylor (2004) in Angelica, E. et. al. (2011). discussed the basic definition of public relations as relationship building. While industry professionals use this method to communicate directly with their target audiences as respondents discussed, an unexpected relationship-building opportunity with the media has grown out of the Twitter environment. This connection to the media provides an entrée into the journalism community that public relations professionals lacked in the past. Twitter provides the ability to respond directly to media requests and offer suggestions for articles that put their client’s names into the public’s eye. As two respondents pointed out, the media community tweets to connect directly with public relations practitioners in a way that email and telephone calls left a gap. Members of the media often ignored cold calls from public relations professionals, or did not seek out their input for stories. Twitter offers an opportunity for the media to reach out directly to public relations practitioners for story ideas and gives practitioners the opportunity to strategically place their clients in articles.

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**CHAPTER THREE**

**3.0 Research Methodology**

The research methodology covers the research design, the target population, sample size determination, description of sampling procedure, research instruments and statistical techniques, sources of data, and method of data analysis. It also covers the validation and reliability test.

**3.1 Research Design**

Survey method involve the analysis of data collection systematically from samples of the population through some objective random data gathering of information from the topic about the opinion, attitude and behavior on a particular issue of a natural phenomenon

Study used survey method as a quantitative method; survey approach affords the researcher to use questionnaires to gather data from the respondents who are regarded as relatively large.

* 1. **Characteristics of the Study Population**

Apan K. (2005) defined population of the study as “the total number of people, objects, subjects, element, in a given environment which a research is set to study.

The research population for this study were workers and management of MTN Abuja, who were 125 in numbers, out of the total population, 55 were male while 70 were female. Also, 25 were senior staff while 100 were junior workers.

* 1. **Sampling Design and Procedure**

The sampling procedure that was used in this study is a simple random sampling method. This gave the entire workers of MTN Abuja, equal chance of being selected.

* 1. **Sampling Size**

One hundred (100) workers of MTN Communication Ltd Abuja Zone were selected out of 125 workers. This means 80% formed the sampling size.

**3.6 Data Collection Instrument**

The main data collection instrument for this study is questionnaire. It was divided into two parts. Part ‘A’ was set of questions relating to personal profile of the respondents, while part ‘B’ was on the questions on the research subject.

* 1. **Validity and Reliability of Study Instrument**

A pilot study was carried out for the purpose of correcting the questionnaire in order to ensure validity and reliability.

**3.8 Administration of Data Collection Instrument**

Copies of the questionnaire were administered by hand within MTN office in Abuja to ensure immediate return to the researcher.

* 1. **Rate of Return of Questionnaire**

Out of 100 questionnaires that were administered to elicit responses for this study, 90 % of the questionnaires were returned. The analysis of this research work based on the questionnaires returned.

**3.10 Data Analysis Procedure**

The data analysis procedure used in the research was the simple percentage method with tables.