

PERCEIVED USEFULNESS, PERCEIVED EASE OF USE, PERCEIVED MUTUAL RELATIONSHIP, PERCEIVED INTERACTIVITY AS DETERMINANTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA USE AMONG PR PRACTITIONERS

Mukhtar El-kasim & Syed Arabi Idid

ABSTRACT

Social media diffusion has accentuated the practice of public relations across the globe. Studies established the social media's impact in the promotion of mutual relationships between organizations and publics. However, most of these studies were focused on examining how organizations utilized social media as a whole, little attention was given on examining the perceptions of practitioners on social media as end users particularly from developing countries perspective. The aim of the current study was to investigate the perceptions of public relations practitioners on the relevance of social media for enhancing mutual relationship between organizations and their publics. This study utilized Technology Acceptance model (TAM) as theoretical framework. Specifically, practitioners' perceptions on perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, perceived mutual relationship, perceived interactivity and behavioral intention were examined. Five hundred and thirteen questionnaires were administered to public relations practitioners through a systematic random sampling. The data collected from the respondents were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The results of t-test conducted on the five variable suggested that practitioners perceived social media as useful and easy to use in the promotion of mutual relationship between and organizations and their strategic publics. Hence, the result showed that practitioners have positive perceptions on the ability of social media to enhance mutual interactivity. Therefore, practitioners' behavioral intention to use social media was influenced on the perceptions of the four other variables. However, the result of ANOVA revealed that, young practitioners have higher positive perception on perceived usefulness and perceived mutual relationships variables. The study provides recommendations and conclusion was drawn based on the findings of the study.

Keywords: PR Practitioners, social media, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, perceived mutual relationships, perceived interactivity, and behavioral intention

INTRODUCTION

It is believed that social media is changing the way public relations practitioners communicate with their stakeholders (Wright and Hinson, 2012, 2013). The social media transformed entirely

the way organizations relate to both their internal and external publics. What is social media then? There were general definitions of social media offered by scholars, as well there were specific definitions of social media as it relates to public relations practice. In terms of the general definition, social media is described as online applications, platforms and media which aim to facilitate interactions, collaborations and the sharing of content. The importance of social media lies in the interaction between consumers and the community, and in the facilitation of asynchronous, immediate, interactive, low-cost communications (Palmer and Koenig-Lewis, 2009). Patti Anklam (2009) defines social media as a set of software tools and internet applications that ensure the expansion of relations between people, as well as a personalized set of online tools, where individuals are identified by name. Dykeman (2008) says, "Social media are the means for any person to: publish digital creative content; provide and obtain real-time feedback via online discussions, commentary and evaluations; and incorporate changes or corrections to the original content" (p. 1)

From public relations and journalism point of view, Joe Marchese (2007) observed that the difference between traditional media such as newspapers, magazines, radio, television and social media "is not the media itself, but the system of discovery, distribution, consumption and conversation surrounding the media. Many studies discovered the influence and impact of social media in public relations practice (Seltzer and Mitrook 2007, Wright & Hinson, 2008, Wright & Hinson, 2009, Eyrich, Padman and Sweetser, 2008, Nah and Saxton, 2013, Wright & Hinson, 2012, Wright & Hinson, 2013). However, the issue of major concern is that, most of the studies that examined the social media relevance and impact to public relations practice and practitioners were not theoretically guided. Additionally, as observed by Caers et al (2013) and Writes (2013) most of the empirical studies that investigate the impact of social media in the public relations domain were carried out in the west. Therefore, there is no to replicate and expand these studies to settings that are non-western with different demographic characteristics and cultural tune.

It is against this background, this study investigate the perceptions of public relations practitioners on the utilization of social media in their work place for enhancing mutual relationships with their publics. This study employed Technology Acceptance Model as a theoretical framework to explain the determinants of social media use among public relations practitioners in a country which is non-western. Moreover, two variables were incorporated to TAM to explain how practitioners utilized social media in their workplace. They are named: perceived mutual relationship and perceived interactivity.

The main objectives of this paper are to investigate the 1) practitioners' perception of the major variable under study, 2) to assess the demographic differences in terms of social media utilization for enhancing mutual relationships with their publics.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media in PR

Many empirical studies established the relevance and impact of social media in enhancing relationships between organizations and their stakeholders. In their three-year-long international survey of public relations practitioners Wright and Hinson (2008) examined the impact blogs and other social media are having on public relations practice. Their study findings showed these new media are dramatically changing public relations. Results indicate blogs and social media have enhanced what happens in public relations and that social media and traditional mainstream media complement each other.

Eyrich, Padman and Sweetser (2008) investigated the working public relations practitioners about their adoption of 18 social media tools and their perception on the growth of social media trends in public relations practice. Overall, their survey revealed that, practitioners have adopted nearly six different social media tools professionally. Practitioners have clearly adopted the more established and institutional tools (e-mail, Intranet), yet practitioners also seem very comfortable with blogs and podcasts.

In another study, Nah and Saxton (2013) investigate what motivates organizational adoption and use of social media through a model build around four key factors namely: strategy, capacity, governance, and environment. Their study used Twitter and Facebook and other data on 100 large US nonprofit organizations schools behind in school excellence strive to use the Web as an important public relations tool to overcome their inferiority to superior schools.

Similarly, the study of Seltzer and Mitrook (2007) on the dialogic potential of weblogs in relationship building observed that, a gap exists between the relationship building potential of traditional web sites, the objectives of public relations practitioners and the actual design of organizational web sites. Their study extends the investigation of online relationship building through a content analysis of 50 environmental weblogs. A comparison of weblogs to traditional Web sites suggested that weblogs incorporate dialogic communication principles to a greater degree than traditional Web sites, potentially making them better suited for online relationship building.

Technology Acceptance Model

Technology Acceptance Model explained why a specific information system is accepted or rejected by its potential users. The model provides four determinants of accepting a new technology. They are perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, behavioral intention and actual use (Davis, 1985). Perceived usefulness explained the degree at which users believed that the benefit he/she will derived from using a new technology would enhance his/her work performance. In addition, perceived ease of use refers to the users' believed that using that technology would ease his/her physical and mental efforts to perform his/job. According to the TAM, these two determinants would influence user's behavioral intention to actually use that technology in his/her workplace (Davis, 1989).

Numerous empirical studies confirmed the explanatory power of Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) in the acceptance of new information system (Davis, 1989, Davis, Bagozzi &

Warshaw, 1992, Venkatesh & Davis, 2000, Davis and Venkatesh, 1996, Dishaw & Strong, 1999, Venkatesh, 2000, Kripanount, 2006). The current study therefore, employed perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and behavioral intention to examine the Nigerian public relations practitioners' utilization of social media for enhancing mutual relationship with their target constituents.

Perceived mutual relationship

The primary responsibility of any public relations job is to promote mutual relationship between organizations and their publics and create favourable image of the organization a practitioner is working with. Relationship management literature established key relational elements that most used to achieve mutual relationships between organizations and their strategic publics. They include: trust, commitment, openness, involvement, investment, satisfaction (Ledignham, Bruning Thomlinson and Lesco 1997, Ledignham, Bruning & Wilson, 1999, Ledignham and Bruning 1998, Hon and Gruning, 1999, and Bruning and Ledignham 2000).

This study utilized three of relationship management dimensions (*trust, commitment and satisfaction*) to measure practitioners' perceptions on the utilizations of social media for the promotion of mutual relationship. This variable is termed as Perceived mutual relationship.

Perceived Interactivity

Promotion of interaction between organizations and their publics, particularly symmetrical communication has been described as the best practice of the modern public relations (Gruning & Gruning, 1995, Gruning & Huang, 2000, Gruning, Gruning, Dozier, 2002, Gruning, 2002, Gruning, Gruning & Ehling, 1992, Kent and Taylor, 2002, Gruning, 2009). This study employed three interactivity dimensions of active control, two-way communication and synchronization developed by Liu 2003 to measure practitioners' perceptions on the utilization of social media for enhancing mutual relationships with their publics.

Based on the literature reviewed, this study sought to find answer to the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the practitioners' perceptions on the social media usefulness and ease of use towards enhancing mutual relationship and interactions between organizations and their publics?

RQ2: What are the differences in terms of demographic perceptions (gender, age, education, region, occupation, organization and position) on perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, perceived mutual relations, perceived interactivity and behavioral intention as determinant of social use among practitioners?

RESEARCH DESIGN

A quantitative survey was conducted in 2014 to examine the demographic perceptions of public relations practitioners on how social media could be used to promote mutual relationships

between organizations and their publics in Nigeria. Questionnaires (n = 513) were administered to public relations practitioners nation-wide. The respondents of this study were all members of the Nigerian Institute of Public relations (NIPR). The questions measured demographic perceptions on the five major variables of the study, namely, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, perceived mutual relationships, perceived interactivity and behavioral intention. The study assessment of these variables was based on the practitioners' gender, age, education, region, occupation and length of service. The data collected was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 20). Specifically, t-test and One-way ANOVA were used for the analysis.

FINDINGS

There were more male respondents (60%) than female respondents (40%) according to the demographic information collected for this study. Most of the participants (45%) were between the ages of 26 – 30 years. Practitioners whose age range begin from 36 years and above have the lowest percentage (8%). In terms of educational qualification, practitioners who obtained degree plus PR certificate were (48%) followed by masters plus PR certificate (16%), National Diploma (12%), other qualification (12%). From the regional angle, 62% of them practiced in the southern part of Nigeria, while 38% practice in the north. Private employees account (53%), followed by government employees (33%) the rest (14%) were independent practitioners or PR consultants.

PRACTITIONERS' PERCEPTIONS ON PERCEIVED USEFULNESS, PERCEIVED EASE OF USE, PERCEIVED MUTUAL RELATIONS, PERCEIVED INTERACTIVITY AND BEHAVIORAL INTENTION

A one sample t-test was conducted for the five main variables under study to ascertain the general perception of the respondents on each one of them. The result indicated that public relations practitioners perceived the major variable as vehicles for enhancing organization-public relations. The table below displayed the distribution of practitioners perception in respect to the main variables, perceived usefulness (t = 40.740, p = .000); perceived ease of use (t = 29.920, p = .000); perceived mutual relationship (t = 35.046, p = .000); perceived interactivity (t = 25.921, p = .000); behavioral intention (t = 34.302, p = .000). However, as displayed in Table 1 below among the variables, practitioners expressed highest positive perception on social media usefulness (M = 4.12) towards enhancing mutual relationship. This was followed by behavioral intention (M = 4.10), perceived mutual relations (M = 4.04), then perceived ease of use and perceived interactivity with (M = 3.74) for each.

Table 1: One-sample t-test showing social media variables

No.	Variable	M	SD	t	df	P
1	Perceived usefulness	4.12	.627	40.740	512	.000
2	Perceived ease of use	3.74	.565	29.920	512	.000
3	Perceived mutual relations	4.04	.676	35.046	512	.000
4	Perceived interactivity	3.74	.646	25.921	512	.000

5	Behavioral intention	4.10	.729	34.302	512	.000
---	----------------------	------	------	--------	-----	------

**note: Perceived mutual relationship variable consists three dimensions (trust, commitment and satisfaction) while perceived interactivity consists three dimensions (active control, two-way communication and synchronization)*

This study is interested in observing whether there is significant difference in terms of practitioners' perception between perceived usefulness and perceived ease of social media as the TAM established variables on one hand and between perceived mutual relation and perceived interactivity of social media as newly introduced variables on the other hand. Table 2 below displayed the paired sample t-test conducted to ascertain the differences. The findings revealed a significant difference between perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use ($t = 24.179, p = .000$) and between perceived mutual relationship and perceived interactivity ($t = 16.418, p = .000$). Public relations practitioners demonstrate higher positive perception on social media usefulness ($M = 4.12, .627$) towards enhancing organization-public relationships than perceived ease of use ($M = 3.74, SD = .565$). It was also revealed that perceived mutual relations has higher positive perception ($M = 4.04, SD = .679$) compared to perceived interactivity ($M = 3.74, .646$).

The findings further suggested a significant strong positive correlation between perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use ($r = .826, p = .000$) and between perceived mutual relations and perceived interactivity ($r = .797, p = .000$).

Table 2: Paired sample t-test between social media variables

	Variables	N	M	SD	df	r	p	t	p
Pair 1	Perceived usefulness	513	4.12	.627	512	.826	.000	24.179	.000
	Perceived ease of use	513	3.74	.565					
Pair 2	Perceived mutual relations	513	4.04	.676	512	.797	.000	16.418	.000
	Perceived interactivity	513	3.74	.646					

**note: Perceived mutual relationship variable consists three dimensions (trust, commitment and satisfaction) while perceived interactivity consists three dimensions (active control, two-way communication and synchronization)*

DEMOGRAPHIC AND MAIN VARIABLES

Practitioners' perception by gender

This study was inquisitive to investigate the differences across demographic characteristics with regards to the main variables under study. An independent sample t-test was conducted in order to ascertain how males and females practitioners differ in respect of their perceptions on the main variables. The findings as presented in the table 3 below indicated that, there was no significant difference across gender in this respect. Perceived usefulness ($t = .616, p = .538$); Perceived ease of use ($t = .364, p = .716$); Mutual relationship ($t = -.067, p = .946$); Interactivity ($t = -.076, p = .939$); Behavioral intention ($t = -.460, p = .646$).

Table 3: Independent sample t-test showing the differences between male and female practitioners with regard to main variables

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p
Perceived usefulness	Male	309	4.14	.622	.616	511	.538
	Female	204	4.10	.634			
Perceived ease of use	Male	309	3.74	.544	.364	511	.716
	Female	204	3.73	.596			
Mutual relationship	Male	309	4.04	.685	-.067	511	.946
	Female	204	4.04	.662			
Interactivity	Male	309	3.73	.656	-.076	511	.939
	Female	204	3.74	.656			
Behavioral intention	Male	309	4.09	.754	-.460	511	.646
	Female	204	4.12	.691			

**note: Perceived mutual relationship variable consists three dimensions (trust, commitment and satisfaction) while perceived interactivity consists three dimensions (active control, two-way communication and synchronization)*

Practitioners' perception by region

Another independent sample t-test was calculated to examine whether there is significant difference between south and north regions in respect of their perceptions on the main variables. The results presented in the table 4 below revealed significant difference among some variables. There is significant difference in terms of perceived usefulness variable between the two regions ($t = -3.46$, $p = .001$). The findings revealed that, public relations practitioners from northern region have the highest positive perception on the usefulness of social media ($M = 4.24$, $SD = .514$) than their southern counterparts ($M = 4.05$, $SD = .677$). In terms of their perception on the social media ease of use, still the result depicted another significant difference ($t = -4.19$, $p = .000$). Practitioners from northern region have higher positive perception on its ease of use towards enhancing mutual relationships ($M = 3.87$, $P = .481$) compared to their southern counterparts ($M = 3.67$, $SD = .598$). The result further revealed another significant difference in terms of perceived mutual relationship variable ($t = -.477$, $p = .000$). Northern public relations practitioners here also expressed high certainty on social media potentiality to enhance organization-public relationship ($M = 4.22$, $SD = .561$) compared to southern practitioners ($M = 3.93$, $SD = .716$).

Table 4: Independent sample t-test showing the differences between male and female practitioners with regard to media social media

Variable	Region	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p
Perceived usefulness	South	320	4.05	.677	-3.469	511	.001
	North	193	4.24	.514			
Perceived ease of use	South	320	3.67	.598	-4.19	511	.000
	North	193	3.87	.481			
Mutual relationship	South	320	3.93	.716	-4.77	511	.000
	North	193	4.22	.561			
Interactivity	South	320	3.71	.715	-1.36	511	.174
	North	193	3.79	.511			

Behavioral intention	South	320	4.01	.810	-1.47	511	.141
	North	193	4.25	.542			

*note: Perceived mutual relationship variable consists three dimensions (trust, commitment and satisfaction) while perceived interactivity consists three dimensions (active control, two-way communication and synchronization)

However, the result showed no significant difference between practitioners from the two regions in terms of their perceptions with regards to their perceptions on interactivity potentials of social media and behavioral intention of utilizing social media in public relations practice ($t = -1.36, p = .174$) and ($t = -1.47, p = .141$) respectively.

Practitioners' perception by age

This study was interested in examining the differences in terms of main variables across age groups. One-way ANOVA was run to ascertain whether there is significant differences (Table 5). The result suggested that, there was significant difference in terms of perceived usefulness variable ($F = 5.630, p = .004$). The Post Hoc Scheffe showed that, the difference existed between young adult and old adult groups, whereby, young adults perceived the usefulness of social media as a means of promoting mutual relationship higher ($M = 4.26, SD = .388$) than old adult ($M = 4.01, SD = .762$). The result didn't show any significant difference among the age groups in terms of perceived ease of use, behavioral intention and perceived interactivity variables.

However, in the case of perceived mutual relationships, there exists another significant difference as displayed in the table below. Here also young adult expressed higher positive response on the utilization of social media towards enhancing organization-public relationships ($M = 4.17, SD = .515$) compared to their old adult counterparts whose mean was ($M = 3.96, SD = .788$).

Table 5: One-Way ANOVA and Post Hoc Scheffe showing differences across age groups in terms of main variables

Variable	Age	N	M	SD	F	df	p	t-comparison
Perceived usefulness	Young adult	116	4.26	.388	5.630	512	.004	Young adult-old adult
	Adult	233	4.14	.604				
	Old adult	164	4.01	.762				
	Total	513	4.12	.627				
Perceived ease of use	Young adult	116	3.82	.399	2.249	512	.107	not significant
	Adult	233	3.75	.527				
	Old adult	164	3.68	.697				
	Total	513	3.74	.565				
Behavioral intention	Young adult	116	4.16	.515	.653	512	.521	Not significant
	Adult	233	4.10	.739				
	Old adult	164	4.05	.838				
	Total	513	4.10	.729				
	Young adult	116	4.17	.515				

Perceived mutual relationship	Adult	233	4.03	.653	3.346	512	.036	Young adult	adult-old
	Old adult	164	3.96	.788					
	Total	513	4.04	.676					
Interactivity	Young adult	116	3.79	.534					
	Adult	233	3.77	.632	2.118	512	.121	Not significant	
	Old adult	123	3.65	.729					
	Total	513	3.74	.646					

Original scale: 1 = 18 – 25 years; 2 = 26 – 30 years; 3 = 31 – 35 years; 4 = 36 – 40 years; 5 = 40 years and above.
Recorded: 1 = young adult (1, 2); 2 = adult (3, 4); 3 = old adult (5)

Practitioners' perception by education

Utilizing One-way ANOVA, this study examined the differences in the perception of the main variables across educational qualification of the respondents. The findings revealed a significant difference in this respect ($F = 3.608$, $P = .28$). The Post Hoc Scheffe depicted that for all the five main variables of this study, there was a significant difference in the perception of the main variables between practitioners with educational qualification below degree on one hand and practitioners with degree and higher degrees on the other hand.

As contained in the table 6 below, in all of the five variables of the study, practitioners with degree and higher degrees expressed more positive perception on social media as medium of enhancing organization-public relationships than those without degree. This can also be noticed from the mean and standard deviation distribution of all the five variables.

Table 6: One-Way ANOVA and Post Hoc Scheffe showing differences across education groups in terms of main variables

Variable	Education	N	M	SD	F	df	p	t-comparison
Perceived usefulness	Below degree	65	3.93	.796	3.608	512	.028	Below degree-Degree- Below degree- Postgraduate
	Degree	325	4.14	.614				
	Postgraduate	123	4.17	.540				
	Total	513	4.12	.627				
Perceived ease of use	Below degree	65	3.52	.751	6.326	512	.002	Below degree-Degree- Below degree- Postgraduate
	Degree	325	3.76	.536				
	Postgraduate	123	3.82	.497				
	Total	513	3.74	.565				
Behavioral intention	Below degree	65	3.77	.896	10.359	512	.000	Below degree-Degree- Below degree- Postgraduate
	Degree	325	4.10	.739				
	Postgraduate	123	4.27	.523				
	Total	513	4.10	.729				
Perceived mutual relationship	Below degree	65	3.77	.877	6.607	512	.001	Below degree-Degree- Below degree- Postgraduate
	Degree	325	4.06	.672				
	Postgraduate	123	4.14	.513				
	Total	513	4.04	.676				
Interactivity	Below degree	65	3.43	.761	9.327	513	.000	Below degree-Degree- Below degree- Postgraduate
	Degree	325	3.76	.649				
	Postgraduate	123	3.83	.519				
	Total	513	3.74	.646				

Original scale: 1 = ND/NCE; 2 = Bachelor Degree; 3 = Bachelor Degree with PR cert; 4 = Master; 5 = Master Degree with PR cert; 6 = PhD; 7 = Others

Recorded: 1 = Below degree (1, 7); 2 = Degree (2,3,); 3 = Postgraduate (4,5,6).

Practitioners' perception by occupation

To ascertain whether there is a significant difference in the perception of the main variables across occupation of the respondents, a One-way ANOVA was conducted (Table 7). The result showed that, there were significant differences among the respondents in respect of their various occupations. (F = 24.705, P = .000). A Post Hoc analysis using Scheffe was conducted for further comparisons. The result indicated a significant difference in terms of perceived usefulness variable. Private sector employee (M = 4.26) and Independent employees (M = 4.44)

expressed more positive perception on usefulness of social media than government employees (M = 3.82).

Similarly, in the case of social media ease of use, independent employees (M = 4.00) and private sector employees (M = 3.88) displayed higher positive perception than government employees (3.44) on the utility of social media for enhancing organization public relationships. The same result applied to behavioral intention and perceived mutual relation variables.

Moreover, for the interactivity variable another significant difference also emerged between government workers and public relations consultants. The findings showed that, independent employees (M = 4.02), private sector employees (M = 3.88); public relations consultants (M = 3.99) expressed more positive perception on interactivity potentials of social media than government workers (M = 3.40).

Table 7: One-Way ANOVA and Post Hoc Scheffe showing differences across occupation groups in terms of main variables

Variable	Occupation	N	M	SD	F	df	p	t-comparison
Perceived usefulness	Govt. employee	171	3.82	.824	24.705	512	.000	Govt-prvt Govt-indpndt
	Private employee	272	4.26	.432				
	Independent employee	54	4.44	.274				
	PR consultant	16	4.03	.597				
	Total	513	4.12	.627				
Perceived ease of use	Govt. employee	171	3.45	.751	27.693	512	.000	Govt-prvt Govt-indpndt
	Private employee	272	3.88	.377				
	Independent employee	54	4.00	.304				
	PR consultant	16	3.71	.304				
	Total	513	3.74	.565				
Behavioral intention	Govt. employee	171	3.79	.998	17.470	512	.000	Govt-prvt Govt-indpndt
	Private employee	272	4.25	.494				
	Independent employee	54	4.30	.388				
	PR consultant	16	4.21	.490				
	Total	513	4.10	.729				
Perceived mutual relationship	Govt. employee	171	3.68	.922	29.178	512	.000	Govt-prvt Govt-indpndt
	Private employee	272	4.21	.421				
	Independent employee	54	4.33	.313				
	PR consultant	16	4.13	.338				
	Total	513	4.04	.676				
	Govt. employee	171	3.40	.829	28.284	512	.000	Govt-prvt

						Govt-indpndt Govt-PR constl.
	Private employee	sec.	272	3.88	.458	
Interactivity	Independent employee		54	4.02	.373	
	PR consultant		16	3.99	.388	
	Total		513	3.74	.646	

Practitioners' perception by organization

Another One-way ANOVA was conducted to investigate the difference in the perception of the main variables across the practitioners' organizations (Table 8). The findings here also revealed a significant difference ($F = 20.872, P = .000$). A Post Hoc Scheffe result suggests a significant difference among the main variables, specifically between the practitioners from government organizations and the practitioners from other types of organizations. In all cases, public relations practitioners from government organizations have less positive perceptions on the social media potentiality of enhancing organization-public relationships when compared with practitioners working with other types of organization. This can be observed from the lowest mean of government organization ($M = 3.83; M= 3.45; M=3.78; M=3.67; M= 3.39$) for perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, behavioral intention, perceived mutual relations and perceived interactivity respectively.

Table 8: One-Way ANOVA and Post Hoc Scheffe showing differences across type of organization in terms of main variables

Variable	Organization	N	M	SD	F	df	p	t-comparison
Perceived usefulness	Govt. org.	166	3.83	.832	20.872	512	.000	Govt-prvt Govt-PRconstl Govt-own firm
	Private org.	261	4.24	.453				
	PR consultancy	53	4.30	.438				
	Own firm	33	4.38	.289				
	Total	513	4.12	.627				
Perceived ease of use	Govt. org,	166	3.45	.746	25.865	512	.000	Govt-prvt Govt-PRconstl Govt-own firm
	Private org.	261	3.86	.393				
	PR consultancy	53	3.96	.330				
	Own firm	33	3.91	.356				
	Total	513	3.74	.565				
Behavioral intention	Govt. org.	166	3.78	1.00	17.214	512	.000	Govt-prvt Govt-PRconstl Govt-own firm
	Private org.	261	4.25	.491				
	PR consultant	53	4.31	.366				
	Own firm	33	4.17	.588				
	Total	513	4.10	.729				

Perceived relationship	mutual	Govt. org.	166	3.67	.920	29.315	512	.000	Govt-prvt Govt-PRconstl Govt-own firm
		Private org.	261	4.19	.433				
		PR consultant	53	4.36	.336				
		Own firm	33	4.22	.397				
		Total	513	4.04	.676				
Interactivity		Govt. org.	166	3.39	.828	10.268	512	.000	Govt-prvt Govt-PRconstl Govt-own firm
		Private org.	261	3.87	.465				
		PR consultant	53	3.99	.3354				
		Own firm	33	3.99	.477				
		Total	513	3.74	.646				

Practitioners' perception by position

One-way ANOVA was employed to detect whether there is significant difference in the perception of practitioners on the social media utilization for mutual relationship according to the position a practitioner hold in his organization. Here too, Post Hoc Scheffe indicated a significant difference among the practitioners ($F = 6.422, P = .000$).

For all the five variables of the study, the result demonstrated that junior worker have less positive perception on the utility of social media towards enhancing mutual relationships between organizations and their publics. This was discerned from the lowest mean obtained by the junior level workers ($M = 3.72; M = 3.38; M = 3.69; M = 3.66; M = 3.34$) for PU, PEU, BI, PM and PI respectively.

However, it is worthy of noting that, no significant difference existed in terms of perception of the main variables between junior level staff and technical assistants. This may be due to the fact that all of these categories obtained similar educational qualification which was below degree. During the analysis of education qualification, a similar result was also found, which indicated no significant difference within the groups with education qualification below degree.

Table 9: One-Way ANOVA and Post Hoc Scheffe showing differences across position in organization in terms of main variables

Variable	Position	N	M	SD	F	df	p	t-comparison
Perceived usefulness	Upper lvl	128	4.13	.630	6.422	512	.000	Junior-Upper Junior-Middle Junior-PR const.
	Middle lvl	202	4.18	.578				
	Junior lvl	39	3.72	.878				
	PR constl	58	4.30	.281				
	Tech. Asst.	86	4.02	.685				
	Total		513	4.12	.627			
	Upper lvl	128	3.78	.542	7.760	512	.000	Junior-Upper

									Junior-Middle Junior-PR const.
Perceived ease of use		Middle lvl	202	3.80	.512				
		Junior lvl	39	3.38	.825				
		PR constlt.	58	3.90	.301				
		Tech. Asst.	86	3.60	.623				
		Total	513	3.74	.565				
		Upper lvl	128	4.18	.627	7.767	512	.000	Junior-Upper Junior-Middle Junior-PR const.
Behavioral intention		Middle lvl	202	4.17	.642				
		Junior lvl	39	3.69	1.05				
		PR consultant	58	4.30	.459				
		Tech. Asst.	86	3.86	.904				
		Total	513	4.10	.729				
		Upper lvl	128	4.09	.614	8.771	512	.000	
Perceived relationship	mutual	Middle lvl	202	4.12	.586				
		Junior lvl	39	3.66	.995				Junior-Upper Junior-Middle Junior-PR const.
		PR consultant	58	4.26	.366				
		Tech. Asst.	86	3.80	.814				
		Total	513	4.04	.676				
		Upper lvl	128	3.80	.615	10.824	512	.000	Junior-Upper Junior-Middle Junior-PR const.
		Middle lvl	202	3.80	.570				
Interactivity		Junior lvl	39	3.34	.830				
		PR consultant	58	4.00	.421				
		Tech. Asst	86	3.49	.746				
		Total	513	3.74	.646				

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study investigated the practitioners' perceptions on the usefulness and ease of use of social media towards enhancing mutual relationships and mutual interactivity between organizations and their publics. The findings of the study confirmed relevance and impact of social media's usefulness and ease of use in promoting cordial relationships between these two entities. Moreover, the study proved the social media's relevance in achieving mutual interactivity between organizations and there publics. These findings were consistent with the established literature on the relevance of new technology in the public relations practice (Kent and Taylor, 2002, Wright and Hinson, 2008, 2009, 2012 & 2013, Gruning, 2009).

This study also found a statistically significant difference as indicated in Anova on the relevance usefulness and ease of use of social media based on age. Younger practitioners indicated more positive perception perceived usefulness and perceives ease of use of social media towards enhancing mutual relationships than older practitioners. This confirmed the findings of previous studies (Marie Lee, 2013, Wright and Hinson, 2012, Wright and Hinson 2913) which suggested that younger practitioners advocate greater use of social media than old

practitioners. However, this study didn't find significant difference in terms of practitioners' perception on the perceived mutual relations and perceived interactive variables between young and old practitioners. This suggested that both agreed with social media's relevance in promoting mutual relationship and mutual interactivity.

The result of t-test result which compared responses from male and female the perceptions of on the main variable showed no significant difference. The reason for this may not be unconnected to the fact that, there were more male respondents than female. Therefore, it will be difficult to get significant difference in that aspect. However, based on the demographic information on gender, it suggested that, still males are dominant in PR practice in Nigeria. It was evidence from the study finding that practitioners with higher education qualification perceived the relevance of social media in terms of usefulness, ease of use, mutual relations and interactivity higher than practitioners with education qualification below degree. Similarly, the it was found that, junior workers has less positive perceptions on the relevance of social media in enhancing mutual relationship compared to the senior staff who indicated higher positive perception. This supported the earlier finding which suggested those with higher education qualification showed more positive perception of social media than those with lower educational qualification. This finding is consistent with a similar finding of practitioners in Malaysia (Idid & El-kasim, 2015).

REFERENCES

- Anklam, P. (2009) The Social-Network Toolkit: Building organizational performance through collaborative communities. Retrieved from www.artgrouppaustralia.com on 08 December 2013.
- Bruning S. D. and Ledingham, J. A. (2000). Relationships and evaluations of satisfaction: An exploration of interaction, *Public Relations Review*, 26(1) 85-95.
- Davis, F. (1985). A technology acceptance model for empirically testing new end-user information system: theory and results, Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, MIT Sloan School of Management, Cambridge, MA.
- Davis, F. D. (1989) Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use and user acceptance of Information Technology. *MIS Quarterly* Vol. 13, No. 3. Pp. 319-340.
- Davis, F., Bagozzi, R. & Warshaw, P. (1992). Extrinsic and intrinsic motivation to use computers in the workplace. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 22(14), pp.111-32.
- Davis, F. and Venkatesh, V. (1996). A critical assessment of potential measurement biases in the technology acceptance model: three experiments. *International Journal of Human-computer Studies*, 45(1), pp. 19-45.
- Dishaw, M.T. and Strong, D.M.(1999), "Extending the technology acceptance model with task-

- technology fit constructs”, *Information and Management*, Vol. (36) pp. 9-21.
- Dykeman, M. (2008). How do you define social media?” February 9. Retrieved from <http://broadcasting-brain.com/2008/02/09/how-do-you-define-social-media/>
- Gruning, L. A., Gruning, J. E and Dozier, D. M. (2002) *Excellence Public Relations and Effective Organizations: A study of communication management in three countries*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrance Erlbaum Associates.
- Eyrich, N., Padman, M. L. and Sweetser, K. D. (2008). PR practitioners’ use of social media tools and communication technology. *Public Relations Review*, 34, 412-414.
- Gruning, J. E. (2002) *Excellence in Public Relations and Communication Management*. Hillslade, NJ: Lawrance Erlbaum.
- Grunig, L. A., Grunig, J. E., & Ehling, W. P. (1992). “What Is An Effective Organization?” in J.E. Grunig (Ed.), *Excellence In Public Relations and Communication Management* (pp. 65-89). Hillsdale, NJ, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Grunig, J. E. (2009) Paradigms of global public relations in an age of digitalisation. *Prism*. vol. 6, no. 2.
- Kent, M. L. and Taylor, M. (2002) *Toward a dialogic theory of Public Relations*. *Public Relations Review*, 28, 21-27.
- Hon, L. C. and Gruning, J. E. (1999) Guidelines for measuring relationships in public relations. Retrieved 13th February, 2012, from www.instituteforpr.org.
- Kripanount, N. (2006) Using Technology Acceptance Model to Investigate Academic Acceptance of the Internet. *Journal of Business Systems, Governance and Ethics*. (2) Pp. 13-28
- Ledingham, J. A., Bruning, S. D., Thomlison, T. D., & Lesko, C. (1997). The applicability of interpersonal relationship dimensions to an organizational context: Toward a theory of relational loyalty; A qualitative approach. *The Academy of Managerial Communications Journal*,](1), 2343.
- Ledingham, J. A., & Bruning, S. D. (1998). Relationship management and public relations: Dimensions of an organization–public relationship. *Public Relations Review*, (24) 55–65.
- Ledingham J. A. Bruning, S. D. and Wilson, L. J. (1999). Time as an indicator of the perceptions and behavior of members of a key public: Monitoring and predicting organization-public relationships. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, (11) 167-183.
- Marchese, J.(2007).Defining social media. October, 2015 Retrieved from http://www.mediapost.com/publications/?fa=Articles.showArticle&art_aid=61442

- Nah, S. and Saxton G. D. (2013). Modeling the adoption and use of social media by nonprofit organizations. *New Media & Society* 15(2), 294-313.
- Palmer, A. and Koenig-Lewis, N. (2009) "An experiential, social network-based approach to direct marketing", *Direct Marketing: An International Journal*, Vol. 3 Iss: 3, pp.162 – 176
- Seltzer, T. & Mitrook, M. A. (2007). The dialogic potential of weblogs in relationship building. *Public Relations Review*. 33, Pp. 227-229.
- Venkatesh, V. & Davis, F. (2000). A theoretical extension of the technology acceptance model: four longitudinal field studies. *Management Science*, 46(2), pp. 186-204.
- Venkatesh, V. (2000). Determinants of perceived ease of use: integrating control, intrinsic motivation, and emotion into the technology acceptance model. *Information System Research*, 11(4), pp. 342-365.
- Wright, D.K. and Hinson, M.D. (2008e). How blogs and social media are changing public relations and the way it is practiced. *Public Relations Journal*, Vol. 2, No. 2, Spring, 2008. Retrieved from <http://www.prsa.org/prjournal/spring08.html>.
- Wright, D. K., & Hinson, M. D. (2009). Examining how public relations practitioners actually are using social media. *Public Relations Journal*, 3(3), 65-74
- Wright , D. K. and Hinson, M. D. (2012). Examining how social media have been used in public relations between 2006 and 2012: A longitudinal analysis. Paper presented at the 12th Annual BledCom Conference in Bled, Slovenia, June 2012.
- Wright , D. K. and Hinson, M. D. (2013). An updated examination of social media and emerging media use in public relations: A longitudinal analysis between 2006 and 2013. *Public Relations Journal*. Vol. 7(3), Pp. 2-39.

Corresponding author

Mukhtar El-kasim

Mukhtar El-kasim is currently a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Communication, International Islamic University, Malaysia (IIUM). He has research interest in public relations, new media and communication theories.

melkassim@gmail.com

+60146729485

Syed Arabi Idid

Department of Communication

International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM)

Syed Arabi Idid is a professor of communication in the Department of Communication, International Islamic University, Malaysia (IIUM) His research areas are public relations, communication theories and research. He wrote numerous articles and books in these fields.

sarabidid@iium.edu.my