

Impact of Digital Public Relations on Good Governance, Accountability, and National Integration in Nigeria

Tosin Moyinoluwa Aribisala ¹, Akindutire Samson ², Nwachukwu Peace Chinenye ³

¹ *International Communication Association, Nigeria*

21 Street, Washington, 20036, USA

² *Nassarawa State University, Keffi*

P. M. B. 1022, Keffi, Nigeria, Nigeria

³ *National Open University of Nigeria*

Plot 14, 16 Ahmadu Bello Way, Victoria Island 106104, Lagos, Nigeria

DOI: [10.22178/pos.95-35](https://doi.org/10.22178/pos.95-35)

LCC Subject Category: HF5717-5734.7

Received 31.07.2023

Accepted 28.08.2023

Published online 31.08.2023

Corresponding Author:

oluwatosinarib@gmail.com

© 2023 The Authors. This article is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) 

Abstract. This abstract explores the impact of digital public relations on good governance, accountability, and national integration. It highlights the growing importance of digital transformation in shaping democratic processes and ensuring effective management. The use of social media and other online platforms has the potential to enhance monitoring and oversight within government institutions and across public services. Additionally, digital PR practices have been found to influence citizens' attitudes and behaviours towards the government. The study emphasises the role of digital tools and strategies to promote transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in governance, ultimately fostering national integration.

Keywords: Digital PR; Accountability; Good Governance; National Integration; Social Media

INTRODUCTION

The rise of the digital generation has revolutionised the field of public relations. Digital Public Relations (DPR) integrates information and communication technologies (ICTs) into modern PR practices. These include computer-compliant, computer-driven, or computer-mediated approaches [1]. DPR involves communication through cyberspace, the Internet, and the World Wide Web (www) and utilising the extranet for effective two-way communication with various online publics.

One aspect of DPR involves preparing a digital press kit (DPK) to extend the reach and expedite the dissemination of corporate information to the media [2]. Embracing e-public relations or electronic PR, primarily on the Internet and the World Wide Web, can facilitate faster and broader distribution of press releases and invitations [3]. The opportunities offered by DPR are vast, making it imperative for companies and organisations in today's competitive and globalised socio-economic landscape.

To remain relevant and effective in this digital age, contemporary PR managers and executives must understand and master the principles and applications of DPR [4]. The first step is ensuring computer literacy, as DPR is inherently computer-based. Public relations practitioners should grasp the distinction between analogue and digital computers. Analogue computers work with analogue signals, while digital systems represent information as a series of bits (0 and 1) to process data faster and more effectively [5]. Embracing digital technology allows the transmission of multiple information signals over a single channel, enhancing speed, reliability, and efficiency.

Public relations as a communication discipline led to the proliferation of digital tools, and rapid communication technologies should ideally amplify their power and effectiveness [6]. However, many technology-based businesses and multinational corporations struggle to leverage these advancements. Simply overlaying digital tools onto outdated PR strategies is akin to fitting a jet engine onto a horse-drawn carriage. To truly capitalise on the potential of digital tools and audi-

ences, a comprehensive redesign of PR structures and approaches is necessary.

Conventional PR tools, such as press releases, conferences, kits, and facility visits, were designed for professional audiences of journalists during a different era. PR programs must address non-journalist audiences in the digital age, including prospects, customers, stakeholders, human rights organisations, and industry analysts [6]. PR information must be structured and formatted for quick consumption to engage these audiences effectively. The conventional press release format often fails to meet the information requirements of a digital audience. Therefore, PR programs must be redesigned to align with digital applications and audience preferences.

Like developing an annual business plan, PR programs should have a clear plan outlining how they support business objectives and promote corporate reputation. Mere product announcements are insufficient; the key lies in leveraging technology to communicate with digital audiences effectively. This roadmap is essential for achieving results in digital PR. In digital PR programs, it is possible to set up discrete channels to reach specific target audiences, allowing for tailored and customised communication [6]. Responsiveness to information needs and quick follow-up are crucial to maintaining interest and fostering an ongoing dialogue with the media and other stakeholders. Timely responses via telephone or email can make a significant impact on establishing positive relationships and capturing attention in the digital realm.

According to [7], the intensely competitive nature of today's business environment necessitates that multinational corporations adopt new and faster methods to enhance their corporate image. Digital public relations, also known as e-PR, is a recent development in corporate management. This concept involves utilising information communication technologies (ICTs) to engage in public relations activities. With technological advancements, public relations can now be conducted using computers, the Internet, the World Wide Web, global systems for mobile telecommunications, and other information technology systems.

The study investigates the role of digital public relations as a novel strategy in corporate management. It explores how companies, organisations, multinational corporations, institutions, and individuals can leverage digital public rela-

tions to improve their image and reputation among their target audiences and stakeholders. The study highlights that digital public relations is characterised by its high level of creativity, strategic approach, speed, and result-oriented nature, all while being cost-effective. One notable advantage is that accessing information about government agencies on the Internet is free, requiring no payment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Social accountability refers to the ability of citizens and civil society organisations to hold the state and service providers accountable for their actions, obligations, and responsiveness to citizen needs. It involves mechanisms and tools that empower citizens to demand transparency, monitor government performance, expose corruption, and improve public service delivery. Through social accountability, citizens can actively participate in decision-making processes, contribute to policy formulation, and ensure that public resources are used effectively and efficiently. Authors [8] define social accountability as building accountability that relies on civic engagement. In the public sector, social responsibility refers to a wide range of actions and mechanisms that citizens, communities, independent media, and civil society organisations can use to hold public officials and public servants accountable. These include activities such as participatory budgeting, monitoring of public service delivery, public expenditure tracking, investigative journalism, the establishment of public commissions, and citizen advisory boards. These citizen-driven accountability measures complement and reinforce traditional mechanisms such as political checks and balances, accounting and auditing systems, administrative rules, and legal procedures.

Impacts of Digital Public Relations on Government Accountability. The pandemic in Nigeria has changed how businesses, organisations and government agencies run their public relations affairs; modern technology has altered government narratives positively or negatively. According to [9], social media has created an avenue for citizens to interact across borders and participate actively in nation-building. Social media such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and other social media applications serve as platforms for the citizens to hold the government accountable.

Author [10] posits that "the word accountability was derived from the word accountable, which means adjunct something, responsible for your decisions or actions and expected to explain to them when you are accountable to the voters". Also, author [11] says "Public accountability means that those who are charged with the drafting and or carrying out policies should be obliged to explain to their electorate". The electorate is a composite group including clients, employees and the taxpayers. Nigeria and numerous other African developing countries consistently face various issues linked to underdevelopment, including inadequate infrastructure, high mortality rates, low literacy levels, and poor healthcare. Despite abundant human and natural resources, these challenges persist due to a lack of accountability in African nations, including Nigeria.

Despite the successive Nigerian governments implementing various measures to address the issue of poor accountability, the problem continues to endure without significant improvement. Numerous explanations can be put forward for this complex situation; nevertheless, the primary factor, as indicated by writers, scholars, and commentators who analyse Nigeria's development predicament, is the absence of accountability in governance [6, 12, 13].

New technologies have enabled government ministries, parastatals, agencies, and other departments to establish their digital presence for exchanging information with citizens. Additionally, citizens now have the opportunity to provide feedback and communicate with the government, thereby circumventing the formal structures traditionally involved in engaging with various government stakeholders. Unlike traditional media, which often face government censorship and control, the new press offers advantages in terms of timeliness and cost-effectiveness.

Digital Public Relations and accountability go hand in hand in the modern communication and information-sharing era. As the Internet and social media have become dominant channels for public discourse, organisations and individuals have had to adapt their PR strategies to effectively engage with the public and maintain accountability for their actions. Digital Public relations made the government accountable by putting them on their toes to ensure transparency. With the advent of new media, citizens are now well-informed about the objectives and strategies of the government. This enhanced transparency

facilitated by new media extends to government personnel, agencies, and ministries. Furthermore, individuals and civil organisations have utilised new media platforms to hold these government entities accountable for their actions and demand explanations when necessary – this is referred to as social accountability.

Scholars like [14, 15, 16] elucidated that social accountability is a perspective that focuses on society's expectations of its members. It involves holding power holders accountable for their actions through explanations and justifications and facing consequences if necessary. This approach aims to enhance government transparency and accountability by empowering ordinary citizens to exercise their rights and hold governments accountable for using public funds and exercising authority. Social accountability strategies and tools, such as social media, mass media, pressure groups, and consultative groups, have gained recognition for ensuring administrators and public officers are accountable for their actions while performing their duties.

Therefore, using digital media enables the dissemination information regarding government affairs, allowing citizens to express their dissatisfaction with governmental activities. It is evident that without citizens' demand for information through new media platforms, government personnel, agencies, and ministries would not feel compelled to make relevant information available. Consequently, government accountability is contingent upon citizens actively seeking such transparency. Moreover, it is widely perceived that the government and its agencies often attempt to hinder the influence of new media on accountability.

Transparency in the digital age, it is crucial for government PR practitioners to ensure that any information provided is accurate and timely activities, policies and decisions that are in the interest of the citizens to avoid chaos. For instance, in the "Endsars Protest", the situation could have been arrested swiftly if only digital PR had been employed to calm the aggrieved citizens. Also, Digital Public Relations has made the government accountable by monitoring trends and conversations, addressing issues, responding to queries, identifying public sentiment and managing crises. The following are the strategies the government should employ in the digital space to maintain accountability and transparency:

1. Government PR professionals must actively monitor conversations and mentions related to their organisation. This allows them to promptly address issues, respond to queries, and manage the organisation's online reputation. Monitoring also helps identify emerging trends and public sentiment, enabling proactive communication.

2. When faced with a crisis or negative publicity, responding quickly and effectively by acknowledging the issue, providing transparent updates, and demonstrating a commitment to resolving the situation can help maintain accountability and rebuild trust.

3. Engaging with stakeholders and other government agencies through social media and online platforms. This engagement fosters accountability by showing that the organisation values public input and takes it into account.

4. Constant monitoring and analysis of digital metrics to identify areas for improvement and measurement of communication impacts.

5. Establish good communication and synergy with identified influencers to amplify the government's message and maintain accountability.

6. Data privacy and security should be prioritised by ensuring that social media and online platforms are handled by trained personnel and are secured from cyber-attacks.

Digital PR requires governments to be transparent, actively engage with stakeholders, monitor digital conversations, respond to crises effectively, and manage their online reputation. By embracing these practices, the government can enhance their accountability in the digital age and maintain positive relationships with the citizens.

Public Relations and Digital Literacy. The publication of the Government Public Relations (GPR) policy has presented a problem. The primary objective of GPR is to ensure the effective and efficient dissemination of government priority policies and program information to the public. For instance, in Indonesia, to facilitate the implementation of GPR, the Indonesian Ministry of Communication and Information served as the implementation coordinator, which played a crucial role in equipping government personnel with digital competencies. At the local level, the responsibility lies with the local office of communication and information.

Meanwhile, the enhancement of digital competence is closely linked to functional presuming,

which involves the ability to actively engage in creating, distributing, and producing media content [17]. Previous research has primarily focused on entry-level public relations practitioners' digital and social media competencies [18]. However, public relations effectiveness also relies on teamwork, leadership, organisation, and graphic design skills. Additionally, competencies like strategic thinking, creative thinking, and research skills contribute significantly to the effectiveness of public relations.

Another study [19] developed an instrument to measure new media literacy among students in Singapore. The researchers employed quantitative methods, including descriptive statistics and confirmatory factor analysis, to evaluate the quality of the items using interviews and questionnaires. The results confirmed the validity of the framework of new media literacy, comprising ten scales. This framework provides a statistical measurement to address the challenges of assessing new media literacy. Enhancing media literacy can be particularly valuable in combating the spread of hoaxes, especially within government public relations.

Social media literacy is crucial as a knowledge base for understanding new media. New media possesses distinct characteristics compared to traditional media, prompting communication officers in government public relations to embrace and utilise these new platforms actively. A quantitative survey methodology assessed new media literacy among local government public relations officers. The study revealed that local government public relations officers exhibit moderate new media literacy. Interestingly, the study also indicated that the level of critical media literacy surpassed functional media literacy, highlighting the significant role of local government public relations in promoting social media literacy to combat misinformation and hoaxes [20].

Another study emphasised the importance of traditional skills for public relations officers, acknowledging that new technical skills will become increasingly vital. Furthermore, it highlighted social media as the most critical new skill for fresh graduate students in public relations [21]. In a separate research endeavour, the focus was on the government's public relations efforts to mitigate the spread of hoaxes [22]. New media literacy was identified as an essential component and was supported by implementing a new media framework to enhance digital literacy among

government public relations officers [19]. This study employed a quantitative quasi-experimental method to achieve its objectives.

According to the t-test conducted on pre-test and post-test data, training programs have positively impacted social media literacy among government public relations officers. In Indonesia, there is a misconception among some officers that digital public relations activities are synonymous with using social media platforms [23]. Furthermore, certain public relations officers lack standardised operational procedures for digital public relations activities, often relying on the preferences of their superiors [24]. However, they are responsible for serving as communication facilitators between the government and the community, emphasising two-way communication and acting as negotiators [25]. PR officers should effectively utilise online platforms with ethical considerations to promote organisational objectives and empower the public.

New media literacy encompasses traditional, mass, and digital media [26], extending beyond the scope of conventional or mass media literacy. It includes reading and writing as foundational skills. New media literacy is vital for enhancing professionals' effective use of information technology. As professionals in government public relations, officers should possess the skills to utilise technology effectively.

New media literacy serves both a consuming and presuming dimension and a functional and critical dimension. It can be divided into consuming practical skills (competence in accessing media and understanding messages), finishing critical skills (competence in understanding and interpreting social, political, and economic contexts), functional prosuming skills (competence in creating media content), and critical prosuming skills (contextual interpretation of media content during participation in new media). The new literacy framework developed by [17] and expanded upon by [19] encompasses ten comprehensive components: consuming skill, understanding, analysis, synthesis, evaluation, presuming talent, distribution, production, participation, and creation.

Authors [27] studied the transition of global media from traditional public relations to digital public relations. The focus of this research was to examine the utilisation of social media as a digital public relations tool by Nigeria's national and sub-national governments. The study addressed

the existing knowledge gap regarding the frequency of social media usage as a digital public relations tool among Nigerian governments and the levels of e-participation exhibited by the online audience as of February 28, 2022.

A qualitative approach with a descriptive research design was employed as the methodology for this study. The findings revealed that all national and sub-national governments in Nigeria maintain a minimum of two and a maximum of six social media accounts. However, the frequency of social media usage varied, from monthly to yearly, across the 38 governments. Additionally, the study found that the levels of e-participation by the online audience were generally low.

Based on the results, several recommendations were proposed. Firstly, it is recommended that all governments adopt, at a minimum, the top four social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram) as digital public relations tools. Furthermore, the study suggests that governments in Nigeria should fully exploit the potential of Facebook, given its advantages in facilitating e-participation through features such as comments, shares, likes, and views. Lastly, the study recommends that official government accounts be used weekly rather than relying solely on governors' personal social media accounts to enhance e-participation levels in Nigeria.

Digital Public Relations and Stakeholders' Engagement. To enhance public information governance in the millennial era, the ideal strategy for Government Public Relations would involve promoting stakeholder engagement strategy models, storytelling strategies, single narratives, conventional media optimisation strategies, and digital media and social media optimisation strategies. These approaches aim to establish the appropriate positioning for government public relations [28].

Strategic communication is an effective solution for achieving the goals of public communication programs. Well-organised organisations strive to generate publicity through various means, such as press releases, campaigns, social media engagement, special events, visual materials, and other symbolic messages aimed at their target audience [29].

Increased engagement with these platforms is directly associated with more positive attitudes towards their use of social media. Research suggests that social media usage influences aware-

ness about government policies, levels of political involvement, and online trust. This relationship is partially mediated by the frequency of social media use, specifically for users of Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram [30].

Public relations, as one of the management functions, involves evaluating public attitudes, identifying policies that align with public interests for individuals or organisations, and planning appropriate strategies to effectively communicate, engage and implement programs to improve general understanding and acceptance [31].

Like offline public relations, digital public relations aims to enhance the reputation and understanding of an organisation through online media channels [32]. Government public relations professionals must possess communication and journalistic skills to conduct digital public relations activities [33].

In the fourth industrial revolution (4.0) era, various online platforms were available for digital public relations, including websites, YouTube, social media platforms (such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), and podcasts. These platforms offer interactive content that incorporates audio and visual elements. Public, private, and non-profit organisations utilise online platforms to implement their public relations strategies. Effective implementation of digital public relations relies on interaction and message dissemination. Cutlip suggests the concept of the 7Cs: credibility, context, content, clarity, continuity-consistency, channel, and the audience's capability (Cutlip, 2013). The Holmes Report (2015) outlines the following critical public relations skills: 40% social media community management, 39% multimedia content creation, 39% insight and planning, 39% creativity, 31% measurement and analytics, and 23% digital building and production [34].

McQuail introduces several categories of new media. Firstly, new media encompasses interpersonal communication media, which includes private content that can be quickly deleted, such as mobile phones and email. Secondly, new media refers to interactive play media, encompassing computers, video games, and virtual devices [35]. The primary innovation of interactive play media lies in its interactivity and the satisfaction derived from the process and usage. Thirdly, new media comprises information search media, encompassing libraries and data sources offering vast amounts of up-to-date and accessible infor-

mation. Fourthly, new media involves collective participatory media, which consists of using the Internet for sharing and exchanging information, opinions, and experiences through computers, such as social networking websites. Lastly, new media substitutes traditional broadcasting media, enabling the reception or download of previously broadcasted content [35].

Furthermore, this study examined the use of disruptive social media as a digital public relations tool by national and sub-national governments in Nigeria as of February 28, 2022. Specific research questions were formulated to guide the investigation to achieve this objective. The study's findings provide insights into these research questions.

The first research question inquired about the extent of social media utilisation by national and sub-national governments in Nigeria as a digital public relations tool. The findings indicate that all governments employ a minimum of two and a maximum of six social media accounts, including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Flickr, Slideshare, and LinkedIn. These results align with [36] findings, establishing that Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are popular government social media operations platforms. Srivastava concluded that social media use by governments offers a quick, cost-effective, and interactive platform for engaging with citizens despite initial scepticism among governments worldwide.

Notably, only Cross River, Ebonyi, and Kastina States lack an official Facebook account, and Kastina, Kano, and Ondo States do not possess an official Twitter account. Additionally, most states do not have a YouTube account, except for State House (FG), Akwa Ibom, Plateau, Ebonyi, Ekiti, Kano, Kebbi, Niger, Ondo, Sokoto, Taraba, and Yobe States. Furthermore, only the FCT, Anambra, Edo, Kano, Nasarawa, Niger, Ondo, and Taraba States do not maintain an official Instagram account. Some social media accounts, however, have remained inactive for four to six years, as they were associated with past administrations, such as the Facebook and Instagram funds of the Bayelsa State Government. Nevertheless, national and sub-national governments in Nigeria have utilised these social media platforms at various times.

Additionally, it was observed that some government officials used their personal social media accounts to publish activities, neglecting the official social media accounts of the state govern-

ment. Moreover, most active social media accounts were not integrated into the state government websites. Multiple dummy Facebook accounts were also noted, both legitimate from government media aides and illegitimate from fraudsters.

The second research question examined the level of social media usage by national and sub-national governments in Nigeria as a digital public relations tool. Utilising a rating scale from 0-24% (very low), 25-50% (low), 51-65% (high), and 66-100% (very high), the analysis reveals that Facebook demonstrates a weekly usage of 66% (very high) as a digital public relations tool, surpassing all other social media platforms in terms of frequency of use, spanning from weeks to years. On the other hand, Twitter exhibits a weekly usage of 48% (low), indicating below-average utilisation by the 35 governments employing it. The data further suggests that Twitter is more frequently used monthly and yearly than weekly. Instagram registers a weekly usage of 45% (low), also falling below average. Like Twitter, the monthly and annual use of Instagram exceeds the weekly usage. As a digital public relations tool, YouTube demonstrates a weekly usage rate of 25% (deficient), and again, its monthly and yearly usage surpasses the weekly usage. Based on the percentages obtained, the level of social media use as a digital public relations tool by national and sub-national governments in Nigeria is relatively low. These findings concur with existing literature and data analysis, suggesting a trend of government social media accounts being overshadowed by those of political personalities. Author [37] noted that the objectives and outcomes of institutional social media use are not as apparent as they are for individual politicians. Political leaders, such as heads of state and government, tend to be more popular on social media than the institutions they represent, creating uncertainty among government institutions regarding how to effectively leverage social media and its implications for strategic objectives and daily operations.

The third research question assessed the level of e-participation facilitated by social media as a digital public relations tool among national and sub-national governments in Nigeria. The study analysed metrics such as likes, shares, comments, retweets, and views for each social media platform. Posts garnering over 100 likes, shares, comments, retweets, and ideas were categorised as having high e-participation. The findings indi-

cate that all four social media platforms under investigation (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram) exhibit higher percentages of low participation compared to high e-participation. Consequently, the level of e-participation enabled by social media as a digital public relations tool among national and sub-national governments in Nigeria is relatively low. This finding aligns with similar trends in countries sharing comparable media ecologies with Nigeria. A study on the Federal Government of Nigeria's digital relations revealed that mobile Internet users do not perceive the digital media relations of the federal government as vital since they acquire government information from traditional news media. The study recommends promoting the federal government's digital media relations channels, including websites and social media networks.

In conclusion, this study sheds light on using disruptive social media as a digital public relations tool by national and sub-national governments in Nigeria. It reveals the prevalence of social media adoption among these governments, with varying degrees of usage across different platforms. However, social media utilisation and e-participation levels remain relatively low, indicating room for improvement in effectively leveraging these tools. The study underscores the need for government institutions to navigate the challenges associated with social media use, particularly regarding strategic objectives and day-to-day operations, while emphasising the promotion of digital media relations channels to enhance engagement with citizens.

The study [38] focused on the District Government Public Relations in Sleman and their efforts to establish public trust amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The presence of misinformation, particularly regarding COVID-19 and government policies, has contributed to a decline in public trust, leading to a crisis of confidence. Therefore, the primary responsibility of Government Public Relations is to disseminate accurate information, foster public trust, and effectively manage situations.

This research adopts a descriptive approach with a qualitative methodology. Data collection involves conducting in-depth interviews with the Public Relations officials of the District Government in Sleman and conducting a literature review. The study utilises the concepts of Public Relations [39] and the Dimensions of Public Trust (Rawlins) to analyse the efforts made by

Public Relations in building public trust during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The findings indicated that the Public Relations team of the District Government in Sleman has been successful in building public trust and combating hoaxes by promptly delivering information through online media channels, ensuring precise and consistent messaging, and coordinating efforts to establish trust. However, the researcher believes that the efforts made by the Public Relations team in Sleman to build public trust are not fully optimised. One area of improvement is the absence of a precise measurement system employed by the District Government's Public Relations in Sleman to evaluate their performance and gauge the effectiveness of their trust-building initiatives within the community, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Impacts of Digital Public Relations on National Integration and Unity in Nigeria. National integration refers to promoting unity, cohesion, and solidarity among the diverse groups and communities within a nation. It fosters a sense of belonging, shared values, and a common identity among individuals from different backgrounds, ethnicities, religions, and cultures. National integration aims to create a harmonious and inclusive society where all citizens can live together peacefully and contribute to the nation's development. It often involves promoting equality, social justice, respect for diversity, and a strong sense of patriotism and national pride.

Though National Unity and National Integration are different, both aim to achieve togetherness at the apex. The US Department of National Unity defines national unity as "a situation in which all citizens from various ethnic groups, religions and states live in peace as a united nationality giving total commitment to national identity, based upon the Constitution. National unity refers to cohesion and harmony among the various groups and individuals within a nation. It emphasises the shared sense of identity, purpose, and values that unite people as a collective entity.

On the other hand, national integration focuses on bringing together diverse groups and individuals within a nation, ensuring their inclusion, participation, and equal opportunities. It emphasises accepting and recognising different cultural, religious, ethnic, and linguistic identities while promoting social cohesion and equality. National integration aims to create a sense of oneness and

solidarity among various communities, bridging divides and reducing social disparities.

While national unity and integration share the goal of fostering a cohesive society, their approaches and emphasis differ. National unity emphasises the shared sense of identity and purpose, focusing on the collective consciousness and loyalty to the nation. National integration, on the other hand, emphasises the inclusion and recognition of diverse identities, promoting social equity and harmony. Both concepts are essential for a stable and harmonious society, as they contribute to nation-building, social cohesion, and progress. However, achieving national unity and integration requires efforts to address social, economic, and cultural disparities, promote equal opportunities, and foster a sense of belonging and shared values among all members of society.

CONCLUSIONS

Though [40] argued that measures such as the Federal Character Principle, National Youth Service Corps, and Federal Unity Schools have had some positive effects, they have not fully achieved the goal of promoting national integration in Nigeria. Digital public relations can promote national unity by leveraging online platforms to disseminate messages that foster a sense of shared identity and values among diverse groups within a nation. Here are a few ways digital PR can contribute to promoting national unity:

1. Engaging with diverse audiences: Digital PR allows organisations to connect with various audiences, including ethnic, cultural, and social groups. By tailoring messages and content to resonate with these diverse audiences, digital PR can help create a sense of inclusivity and representation.
2. Promoting dialogue and understanding: Digital PR can facilitate conversations and discussions among citizens from different backgrounds through social media and online platforms. This can lead to increased awareness, empathy, and collaboration, which is essential for promoting national unity.
3. Highlighting common values and goals: Digital PR campaigns can emphasise shared values, traditions, and aspirations that unite citizens across various regions and demographics. Digital PR can

reinforce national identity by showcasing stories and narratives emphasising commonalities.

4. Celebrating diversity: Digital PR can also play a role in celebrating the diversity within a nation. Digital PR can foster a sense of pride and appreciation for the nation's multicultural fabric by highlighting the contributions and achievements of different communities, cultures and regions.

5. Addressing social issues: Digital PR can raise awareness about social problems and promote

inclusive policies that address disparities and social justice. Digital PR can contribute to a more equitable and united society by amplifying voices and advocating for positive change.

6. Digital PR has been a powerful tool for promoting national unity by leveraging online platforms to engage, communicate, and connect with diverse audiences while emphasising shared values, celebrating diversity, and addressing social issues.

REFERENCES

1. Nkwocha, J. (2004). *Digital Public Relations*: Lagos: Zoomlens.
2. Nosike, L. (2003). *Internet Literacy*. Enugu: Delizon.
3. Andric, B., Lackovic, K., & Stimac, M. (2021). Introduction and Maintaining Public Relations of Small Enterprises in Virtual Environment. *DAAAM Proceedings*, 0009–0015. doi: [10.2507/32nd.daaam.proceedings.002](https://doi.org/10.2507/32nd.daaam.proceedings.002)
4. Nkwocha, J. (1999). *Effective Media Relations: Issues and Strategies*. Lagos: Zoom Lens Publishers.
5. Baron, N. S. (2004). See you Online. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 23(4), 397–423. doi: [10.1177/0261927x04269585](https://doi.org/10.1177/0261927x04269585)
6. Gberevbie, D., Oyeyemi, A., & Excellence-Oluye, N. (2014). *The Challenges of Good Governance, Accountability of Governmental Agencies and Development in Nigeria*. *ACTA Universitatis Danubius*, 6(2), 80–97.
7. Galloway, C. (2005). Cyber-PR and "dynamic touch." *Public Relations Review*, 31(4), 572–577. doi: [10.1016/j.pubrev.2005.08.018](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2005.08.018)
8. Malena, C., Forster, R. & Singh, J. (2004). *Social accountability: an introduction to the concept and emerging practice*. Retrieved from <https://www.ircwash.org/resources/social-accountability-introduction-concept-and-emerging-practice>
9. Jimada, U. (2019). *Social Media in the Public Sphere of Accountability in Nigeria*. *Global Media Journal*, 17(32), 1–9.
10. Hornby, A. (2000). *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary* (6th ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
11. Johnston, J. (2020). *Public Relations: Theory and Practice*. New York: Routledge.
12. Olufemi, O., Ajayi, Abiodun, I. (2021). *Citizens Perception on New media and Government Accountability in Nigeria*. *KIU Journal of Social Sciences*, 7(2), 193–204.
13. Amosun, I. (2017, May 15). *Lack of Accountability, Nigeria's major problem*. Retrieved from <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/05/lack-accountability-nigerias-major-problem-amosun>
14. McNeil, M., & Malena, C. (Eds.). *Demanding Good Governance. Lessons from Social Accountability Initiatives in Africa*. Washington: The World Bank.
15. Akindede, S., & Adeyemi, O. (2011). *Corruption and the Nigerian State: A Critical Discourse*. Germany: LAMBERT Academic Publishing.
16. Pradhan, S. (2010). Foreword. In M. McNeil, C. Malena (Eds.), *Demanding Good Governance. Lessons from Social Accountability Initiatives in Africa* (pp. 11–13). Washington: The World Bank.
17. Chen, D.-T., Wu, J., & Wang, Y.-M. (2011). *Unpacking New Media Literacy*. Retrieved from <https://www.iiisci.org/journal/PDV/sci/pdfs/ol508kr.pdf>

18. Meganck, S., Smith, J., & Guidry, J. P. D. (2020). The skills required for entry-level public relations: An analysis of skills required in 1,000 PR job ads. *Public Relations Review*, 46(5), 101973. doi: 10.1016/j.pubrev.2020.101973
19. Lee, L., Chen, D.-T., Li, J.-Y., & Lin, T.-B. (2015). Understanding new media literacy: The development of a measuring instrument. *Computers & Education*, 85, 84–93. doi: 10.1016/j.compedu.2015.02.006
20. Putra, N. A. (2017). Literasi Media Sosial Humas Pemerintah Daerah. *INFORMASI*, 47(2), 271. doi: 10.21831/informasi.v47i2.17235
21. Paskin, D. (2013). Attitudes and perceptions of public relations professionals towards graduating students' skills. *Public Relations Review*, 39(3), 251–253. doi: 10.1016/j.pubrev.2013.01.003
22. Intanny, V. A., & Putra, N. A. (2019). Studi Eksperimen Peningkatan Literasi Media Sosial Humas Pemerintah Daerah [Experimental Study to Improve Social Media Literacy For Local Government Public Relations]. *JURNAL IPTEKKOM: Jurnal Ilmu Pengetahuan & Teknologi Informasi*, 21(2), 109. doi: 10.33164/iptekkom.21.2.2019.109-122 (in Indonesian).
23. Azhary, S. (2020). Strategi pemeliharaan relasional dalam kegiatan public relations online badan publik di Indonesia [Relational maintenance strategies in online public relations activities of public bodies in Indonesia]. *PROfesi Humas Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Hubungan Masyarakat*, 4(2), 193. doi: 10.24198/prh.v4i2.19558 (in Indonesian).
24. Sani, A., Sumartias, S., Hafiar, H., & Ismail, N. (2022). West Java Regional Police Public Relations Personnel's adaptation to digital age communication. *PROfesi Humas Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Hubungan Masyarakat*, 7(1), 73. doi: 10.24198/prh.v7i1.38645
25. Prastowo, F. A. A. (2020). Pelaksanaan fungsi pokok humas pemerintah pada lembaga pemerintah [Implementation of the main functions of government public relations in government institutions]. *PROfesi Humas Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Hubungan Masyarakat*, 5(1), 17. doi: 10.24198/prh.v5i1.23721 (in Indonesian).
26. Jenkins, H. (2009). *Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21st Century*. Retrieved from https://www.macfound.org/media/article_pdfs/jenkins_white_paper.pdf
27. Garba, M. J., Yakubu, K. S., Maryclaret, O. K., & Williams, E. E. (2022). An Investigation of Social Media as a Government Digital Public Relations Tool: The Nigerian Experience. *Journal of New Media and Mass Communication*, 8(1), 1–13. doi: 10.18488/91.v8i1.3025
28. Nugraha, A. R., Sjoraida, D. F., & Novianti, E. (2022). Analisis strategi humas pemerintahan era milenial dalam menghadapi tata kelola informasi public [Analysis of millennial era government public relations strategies in dealing with public information governance]. *PROfesi Humas Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Hubungan Masyarakat*, 6(2), 286. doi: 10.24198/prh.v6i2.37095 (in Indonesian).
29. Sufian Nory, N. S., Yasin, M. A. I., Shekh Alsagoff, S. A., & Bidin, R. (2021). Strategic Communication: Outlining the Way Forward to Encourage Tax Compliance in Malaysia. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 11(7). doi: 10.6007/ijarbss/v11-i7/10049
30. Zagidullin, M., Aziz, N., & Kozhakhmet, S. (2021). Government policies and attitudes to social media use among users in Turkey: The role of awareness of policies, political involvement, online trust, and party identification. *Technology in Society*, 67, 101708. doi: 10.1016/j.techsoc.2021.101708
31. Grunig, J. E. (2013). *Excellence in Public Relations and Communication Management*. London: Taylor and Francis.
32. Permatasari, A. N., Soelistiyowati, E., Suastami, I. G. A. P. P., & Johan, R. A. (2021). Digital Public Relations: Trend and Required Skills. *Jurnal ASPIKOM*, 6(2), 373. doi: 10.24329/aspikom.v6i2.836
33. Ratnasari, E., Rahmat, A., & Prastowo, F. A. A. (2018). Peran Humas Perguruan Tinggi Negeri Badan Hukum dalam Implementasi Kebijakan Keterbukaan Informasi [The Role of Public Relations of

- Legal Entity State Universities in the Implementation of Information Disclosure Policy]. *Profesi Humas: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Hubungan Masyarakat*, 3(1), 21. doi: [10.24198/prh.v3i1.14034](https://doi.org/10.24198/prh.v3i1.14034)
34. Alexander, D. (2016). *What Digital Skills are Required by Future Public Relations Practitioners and can the Academy Deliver Them?* Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/313909113_What_digital_skills_are_required_by_future_public_relations_practitioners_and_can_the_academy_deliver_them
35. McQuail, D. (1987). *Mass Communication Theory: An Introduction*. London: Sage Publications.
36. Srivastava, M. (2013). Social Media and Its Use by the Government. *Journal of Public Administration and Governance*, 3(2), 161. doi: [10.5296/jpag.v3i2.3978](https://doi.org/10.5296/jpag.v3i2.3978)
37. Mickoleit, A. (2014). Social Media Use by Governments: A Policy Primer to Discuss Trends, Identify Policy Opportunities and Guide Decision Makers. *OECD Working Papers on Public Governance*, 26. doi: [10.1787/5jxrcmghmk0s-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/5jxrcmghmk0s-en)
38. Apriliani, R. (2022). Gaining Public Trust Through Digital Media by Government Public Relations of Sleman Yogyakarta. *Profetik: Jurnal Komunikasi*, 15(1), 34. doi: [10.14421/pjk.v15i1.2212](https://doi.org/10.14421/pjk.v15i1.2212)
39. Cutlip, S. M. (1994). *The Unseen Power*. Public Relations: A history. London: Routledge.
40. Abdulahi, A., & Baba, Y. T. (2020). Nationalism and National Integration in Nigeria. *Advances in African Economic, Social and Political Development*, 305–319. doi: [10.1007/978-3-030-50509-7_16](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-50509-7_16)