

**Social Media gets faster responses from leaders than the Traditional Media does:
A study of Twitter users in Nigeria**

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Abstract

This article focuses on the fastness of leaders' responses to issues and/or news on social media and traditional media. It reveals the quickness of social media's interactions via an online survey of Nigerian Twitter users and the observation of certain Twitter timelines. The users revealed how fast leaders engaged them on emerging issues and the manner of the latter's engagements. The survey results were compared with traditional media results from previous studies, as well as the observed timelines' results. Furthermore, implications for leaders and managers were highlighted, with focus on how they may interact better with social media users (millennials and Generation zers especially).

Key words: Leaders, Leadership, Social Media, Traditional Media, Twitter

1 INTRODUCTION

According to Ravasi et al. (2019), Social Media (SM) gained its reputation much faster than the Traditional Media (TM). SM is prevalent among millennials and Generation zers between 25 to 39 years (Lee et al., 2018). This generations' obsession has attracted the attention of both academics and professionals because of the growing influence of SM. This study examines and compares the durations of time leaders take to respond to issues on SM and TM. This is important because SM is changing mass communication and several studies also signified its competition and impact on TM (Jasik, 2013). Thus, investigating both media platforms with respect to leaders (response durations), can improve the understanding and use of SM. This study focused on Nigerian Twitter users only.

The objectives of this article may be summarised as follows:

1. To measure the fastnesses of SM (Twitter in particular).
2. To examine the relationship between leaders, SM and TM.
3. To investigate the demography of SM users in Nigeria.
4. To examine if SM's use can be improved.

SM is changing how issues are publicised and impact the formation of organisational reputation, along with its leadership (Etter et al., 2018). Today, SM is quite popular, with several platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.) through which almost any social/public communication is possible. This was not usually so with TM, where communication was strictly one-way. How leaders engage SM is worth studying because there is a dearth of research on the relationship between SM and TM with respect to leadership. Thus, it is worthwhile to reveal whether leaders respond faster to issues on SM today than they respond to similar issues on TM.

TM are communication media including radio, television and print (Williams & Schoonvelde, 2018). Print media includes newspapers and magazines (Catalan-Matamoros & Peñafiel-Saiz, 2019). SM is a series of networked internet spaces enabling computer-proxy communication, designed to share and exchange information (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). SM are the "various electronic tools, technologies, and applications that facilitate interactive communication and content exchange" (Hamilton, 2009 as cited in Luo et al., 2015). Basically, TM is the mass media avenue used before the advent of SM, while SM is the use of the internet (websites and mobile applications) for more interactive mass communication.

According to Roy (2016), the major differences between SM and TM include:

- SM reaches a maximum audience, while TM's reaches a targeted audience.
- SM is versatile (editable), but TM, once broadcasted, is set in stone.
- SM is instantaneous, while TM may be delayed till press time.
- SM is a two-way conversation, whereas TM is mostly one-way.
- SM often has inaccurate demographic data, but TM's is more accurate.

According to Grint et al. (p. 3, 2016), leadership is conventionally defined as its alleged opposite, management. Leadership is essentially knowing what to do, while a leader is a person chosen because he/she seemingly knows what to do. SM has increased the participative discussion on leadership, which has put leaders under more scrutiny (Luo et al., 2015). While leaders may easily get away with unpopular actions or opinions on TM, SM allows its users to react immediately to such. So, TM communication needs to yield to a more advanced conversational way (Groysberg & Slind 2012). Therefore, leaders need to fathom how to use SM more effectively because of the instantaneous reactions expected.

SM has experienced exponential growth in the last decade, reshaping how the public views and characterises business, politics and civic engagement (Ravasi, 2019). He asserted that political discussions among peer SM users have become a notable indicator of civic political engagements. The several SM platforms provide access for the general public to take part in all discussions, which also presents leaders with a unique opportunity to directly influence public opinion and foster quality relationships (Hyun & Kim, 2015). TM has been around for decades and remains a major medium of communication in many parts of the World (Catalan-Matamoros & Peñafiel-Saiz, 2019). Thus, while SM may be growing exponentially, TM is still much in use.

The rest of the paper includes a comprehensive literature review (chapter 2), the methodology adopted (chapter 3), data/results (chapter 4) and the conclusion (chapter 5).

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Robbins and Judge (2013), leadership is the ability to influence a group to achieve a clear vision or goals. A leader is usually someone with formal authority to make

decisions and guide others, while the decisions have outcomes that affect everyone (Rus et al., 2010a as cited in Wisse et al., 2019). Knowing how to pass on a message on SM is useful to leaders who communicate with Millennials and Generation Zers, who grew up with SM (Weinstein, 2018). Leadership is the ability to guide a group of people to achieve predetermined goal(s) and a leader is someone with the authority to make decisions.

SM's higher participation leadership (Lee & Chan, 2009) may be alluded to the interactiveness of its conversations, unlike TM where the conversation is one-way (Roy, 2016). Thus, SM, TM and leadership are all interconnected since leaders need to communicate via SM and TM. However, SM has provided ordinary people with an avenue to engage leaders however and whenever they want. This is not the case with TM, which is under the influence of the media houses and publicists. Thus, comparing SM and TM in terms of how they are used and perceived by ordinary users is an interesting research area that requires more clarity. This would provide more insight into the efficient use of SM.

According to Gruber et al. (2015), SM has accelerated the speed at which news spread and also amplified the reach of news. Crises have become more common and critical because of the increase in their relevance and gravity due to SM, as leaders try to grapple with management and leadership in this new ecosystem. They concluded that SM has rendered certain TM strategies obsolete in modern mass communication. Hence, it is paramount for academics and leaders to figure out the instantaneous power of SM and how to manage it. Sharing information via SM is not enough for leaders, they also need to be prepared to manage instantaneous reactions appropriately.

Luo et al. (2015) asserted that there are really no SM experts among publicists. Many SM users were "*everyday users*" on Twitter (Sweetser and Kelleher, 2011 as cited in Luo et al., 2015). They observed that senior publicists only focus on how to use SM platforms to cultivate public interactions and generate traffic. They have no protocol for when things go wrong, unlike TM where there are experts who know what to do in every given circumstance. Thus, while SM spreads news fast and wide, it is often difficult to successfully manage it when things go wrong. This is because there are no SM experts who have accurately studied how reactions work and measured the time they take, in order to design a foolproof protocol.

Moreover, there are individuals (SM influencers) who develop a unique public image for commercial benefits and/or cultural capital (Khamis et al., 2017). SM influencers are SM users with a micro-celebrity status, who both textually and visually display their peculiar

daily lives to a sizable number of followers (Chae, 2018). SM influencers are individuals in a user's social graph who have a direct impact on the behaviour of that user (Brown & Hayes, 2008 as cited in Ge & Gretzel, 2018). Successful influencers are experts at promoting their perspectives and often represent brands and/or leaders (Chae, 2018) by monetising SM users.

This is because they appeal to and retain many followers, often possess a sense of humor and more importantly, they display what followers wish to have but do not (Saul, 2016 as cited in Hhamis et al., 2018). Influencers help us to understand their followers better, they are also experts on promoting brands and issues on SM. However, they are not equipped to manage escalated issues, especially users' responses to leaders.

SM has become a common source of news and over 50% of American adults use it as such (Gottfried & Shearer, 2016 as cited in Moravec et al., 2019). The problem with this is the prevalence of fake news, as SM has transferred the responsibility of quality control from trained journalists to regular SM users (Moravec et al., 2019). Fake news are news articles intentionally falsified to mislead their readers (Allcott & Gentzkow 2017). While fake news is not new, it became increasingly important during the 2016 United States' election (Cerf 2016) and probably influenced the outcome (Barthel et al. 2016). Though there are studies on how SM users may detect fake news, there are none on how they should be effectively managed in a timely manner.

The speed with which information spreads on SM creates an opportunity to quickly spread fake news (Moravec et al., 2019). About 23% of SM users admitted to have spread fake news (Barthel et al. 2016), and fake news spreads faster than true news mainly because of people, not bots (Vosoughi et al. 2018). Thus, once a news breaks on SM, the chance of it spreading across the globe is high even though it may be unverified. Conversely, leaders can also be victims of fake news. There is a limited time within which fake news should be responded to before it escalates beyond control. Thus, how fast leaders are able to respond is critical.

2.1 Research Questions and Hypotheses

Literature shows that SM is quite fast and interactive, but there is no precise measurement of its speed. TM platforms all have a known routine, while SM is spontaneous because there is no particular routine for how events unfold. These research questions are to be answered:

1. How fast do leaders respond to issues/events on SM?
2. Is their SM response time faster than that of TM?
3. Are leaders more cautious on SM than they are on TM?

From the research questions, the following hypotheses were implied:

H₀₁: SM elicits faster responses from leaders than the TM.

H₀₂: SM makes leaders' responses more cautious.

H₀₃: SM is more influential than TM.

2.2 *TM Bias*

Younis et al. (2012) asserted that TM may go as long as 6 days without covering some major stories. Sometimes neither giving major stories the required amount of airtime nor daily coverage; making these stories not get the necessary traction. Conversely, the same stories may be discussed on SM for weeks. Twitter (a microblogging site) is now one of the most powerful SM platforms through which leaders and organisations communicate with other stakeholders (Alexander & Gentry, 2014). Hence, it is vital that the instantaneous power of Twitter and its effects on crisis management is understood (Gruber et al., 2015). Measuring how fast SM is can reveal more about TM's bias.

2.3 *Speed and Effect of Social Media*

SM has increased the speed of information sharing, intensified the range of messages and consolidated the ability of different individuals to organize people and events (Gruber et al., 2015). While SM is noted for breaking and spreading news rapidly, its actual speed remains unknown. Some crises begin on SM, whereas others may begin offline but are brought onto SM because they remained unresolved (Gruber et al., 2015). SM influencers are skilled at promoting topics by sustaining discussions for more traction (Ge & Gretzel, 2018). Thus, SM is also used to address issues that happened offline, because of its speed and growing effect.

In Agbo's article (2020), Nigerian Twitter was agog with the hashtag [#BuhariChallenge](#) on March 27, 2020 during the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. "Where is Buhari?" (the current Nigerian President), was the message of the tweets. The hashtag trended as number one for the next 72 hours. [@MBuhari](#) and [@NGRPresident](#) tweeted about the President's live broadcast (aired on the Nigerian Television Authority, NTA) on March 29, 2020. The hashtag had paid off, Twitter users succeeded in pressuring the president into a national broadcast. This is a testament to the speed and effect of SM. However, airing the broadcast on the NTA shows that TM is still much relevant.

According to You and Joshi (2020), TM remains the best tool to introduce new events (advertising or news) to people. This is because TM possesses an established coverage and measurement metrics. It may be inferred that TM has been mastered by its experts because of

its proven predictability over the decades. They also posited that SM is the better tool for customers' feedback. While leaders also try to exploit the influence and speed of SM, knowing the exact response time(s) to issues would improve their application drastically. Therefore, if the quickness of SM can be determined, then its use can be optimised.

2.4 Social Media as a Rallying Platform

According to Boykoff (2006), TM often shows the propensity to influence, demoralise marginalise or disregard movement groups. These groups sometimes find success on SM, since it is easier and cheaper to communicate directly with their supporters and the general public online (Lee et al., 2018). The internet has created an alternative platform for the growth of activism, along with an alternative media for the discussion of issues (Harcup, 2013). These platforms are important sources of pro-activism information and messages (Lee et al., 2018). Besides, TM platforms have a rife difference in opinions among their ranks, which implies the existence of a significant media bias (Younus et al., 2012). This created a distrust of TM, spurred SM's growth and probably reduced TM's influence.

Younus et al. (2012), further asserted that SM's influence increased because TM often tries to control the news and narratives. This has put more pressure on leaders because they have no control of SM. Thus, they have to respond to issues on SM promptly, else, their influence and position may be threatened and/or lost. However, there is still an ambiguity on how much TM's influence is waning or not.

SM leads to a higher participation leadership that may turn people away from TM (Lee et al., 2018). Though TM could not totally ignore the large-scale Tiananmen square rally in 2009, its low coverage was habitually criticised and blamed on TM's fear of the Chinese government (Lee & Chan, 2009). This implies that political leaders may possess strong and even sometimes unethical influence over TM, by either suppression and/or unobjective coverage. Thus, political leaders could buy time this way and delay response to issues. Such high-handedness suggests that people often dismiss TM in favour of SM, particularly in contexts where the former's credibility is tainted (Lee et al., 2018). So, SM's easier access and lack of central control made it a formidable rallying platform within a short while.

2.5 Comparing SM's Influence with that of TM

SM has progressively replaced TM (Manfred et al., 2012), with consumers moving away from TM (TV, radio, magazines) and using SM to search for information (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). The rise of SM paved new ways for brand promotions (online brand

management). For instance, Starbucks' SM instant feedback by seeking consumers' advice on improving their products, alongside Coca-Cola and Danone's activities on Facebook and Twitter (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). While these companies are well known for big TM campaigns, they have also jumped on the SM bandwagon in order to keep up with their customers.

SM is reinforcing the influence of TM (Ravasi et al., 2019). Many TM outlets are also active on SM, in order to go with the tide and some even abandon their TM positions completely in scenarios where budget is an issue (Roy, 2016). He asserted that though SM might have replaced TM in some scenarios, the latter remains strong in regions lacking strong online presences or when self-reported demographic data will not suffice. Nevertheless, TM's use of SM campaigns to appeal to subscribers lends credence to Ravasi's (2019) assertion that SM is reinforcing the influence of TM. Since TM platforms put up short clips or links of full stories on their SM platforms, directing users back to their original platforms.

The rising application of SM to brand engagement offered vital understanding to the relative influence of SM on brand equity (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). This led to notable implications for companies' brand marketing activities. Their comparative assessment of SM and TM revealed that TM campaigns are more effective in raising brand awareness, while SM improved brand image. This was possible because business leaders could engage consumers on SM in real-time (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Thus, TM creates initial awareness while SM provides continuous feedback.

Mangold & Faulds gathered their data through a standardized online-survey completed by 393 respondents. Their data showed that many respondents positively viewed brands who answered online queries swiftly and promptly (by measuring brand attitude and purchase intention of respondents). Whereas this is not possible with TM because of its one-way communication. However, business leaders are inclined to make judgements based on TM factors since TM still has a wider coverage generally (Blevins & Ragozzino, 2018). Though only SM is able to show consumers' perception of brands. Hence, knowing the actual speed of SM could shed more light on the influence of both media, since the full extent of SM's influence is still unknown.

2.6 Twitter as a Source of Live News and the Power of Social Media

Twitter has developed into a real-time global newswire for individuals and organizations, its use spread via the technology's socially interactive and rapid nature (Gruber et al., 2015). In

spite of Twitter's number of words limitation, 140 characters but now 280 (Tsukayama); users often include links to comprehensive information, pictures, as well as videos. Twitter possesses a strong influence on topics such as politics, brands, sports, entertainment and so on. Academics have shown the several ways that organisations use Twitter to communicate and network with their stakeholders (Gruber et al., 2015).

Twitter's influence as a live news source drew the attention of academics and practitioners during the University of Virginia's (UVA) 2012 crisis (Gruber et al., 2015). The case was about the dismissal of the UVA's President Sullivan, which was a trending topic then. Trending topics produce the largest number of tweets, which are shown conspicuously on the Twitter users' interface to get more attention (Gruber et al., 2015). The continuous trending of the dismissal put the university's board under so much pressure that they had to rescind the decision within days. The students' Twitter campaign was because they did not like the process itself, not whether the president was guilty or innocent (Gruber et al., 2015).

Twitter's capability to share images, videos, reactions, and other real-time cues led to considerable momentum and action, which had massive consequences for UVA's reputation (Gruber et al., 2015). The university's alumni magazine recapped the crisis with an online article titled, "*How social media helped change university history*". This title portrayed how critically important SM had become in managing and sharing information. Scholars have painstakingly looked at how the influence of technology has altered some of the TM defenders (Hirsch & Gruber, in press). An alteration so evident with flattened access permitting individuals to share information in real time (Gruber et al., 2015). SM is quite vital from this perspective and makes leaders respond faster to issues, unlike TM where issues may be controlled or delayed.

SM is a powerful communication tool and the government's knowledge of its public opinion can be used to create an effective digital public engagement (Men et al., 2018). While seeking more transparency, responsiveness and engagement, governments at all levels have progressively exploited SM to foster government-public relationships (Bertot et al., 2010). SM allows users to interact with leaders instantaneously, making it difficult for the latter to stall or control the narrative (Bruhn et al., 2012). Thus, TM is a one-way communication platform which allows the initiator to control the narrative, while SM is completely opposite because it allows for a two-way communication. This two-way communication makes time essential, since instantaneous reactions are what actually make SM powerful.

2.7 Social Media as a Double-edged Sword

According to Dahlin and Gratell (2018), SM is a double-edged sword which gives businesses access to billions of people all over the world, as well as the possibilities of rifts and misconceptions. They used a qualitative semi-structured interview to get information from 7 entrepreneurs. A semi-structured interview is used to discover other people's perceptions of issues, with the intent of obtaining innate subject knowledge (Brinkmann, 2013 cited in Dahlin & Gratell, 2018). The 7 leaders all used SM regularly and were aware of the pitfalls. Inductive research strategy was used, this strategy allows the themes and dimensions to develop from the data (Bryman & Bell 2011).

Dahlin and Gratell asserted that SM's relative newness makes it difficult to completely know how it works and impossible to accurately predict reactions. Thus, an absence of rules and proper etiquette on SM makes rifts and misconceptions common. These could be scandalous or profitable, hence, the term 'double-edged sword'. Their model also showed that some of the respondents were against SM because of data protection fears. They concluded that the quickness of SM (Twitter in particular) is a delicate matter because of how important it is for leaders to react promptly and rightly to issues, to avoid or manage rifts and misconceptions.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The choice of a certain research methodology needs to be secondary to the research questions (Magruk, 2015), as well as being totally fit to answer them. Scientific systems require an increasing improvement in methodology and theory substantiation processes (Ioannidis et al., 2015), since methodology is vital to any research's success. The literature review showed that previous studies were dominated by online surveys, followed by different interview styles.

3.1 Empirical Data from Previous Studies

Men et al. (2018) tested their hypothesized model by conducting a 15-minute online survey of 396 Chinese WeChat users (average age of 38 years, $M = 37.79$, $SD = 11.85$). About 60% of the respondents were male and 40% were female, similar to the real gender ratio of Chinese WeChat users (Tencent, 2015). 92% of the respondents possessed at least "some college" education. Averagely, the respondents had used WeChat for 2.5 years during the survey ($M = 2.58$, $SD = 1.06$). A 7-point Likert scale (from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree') was used to measure the respondents' perception of the President's responses and timeliness on WeChat. The results showed that President Xi enjoyed a positive leadership

effectiveness perception from the WeChat users because of his timely initial and responsive communication, which the users found vital in leadership but unavailable on TM.

Lee et al. (2018) surveyed the participants of the 2014 June 4 commemoration rally in Victoria Park, Hong Kong. The survey had 626 respondents with 85.9% response rate. 59.6% of the rally participants were male and 64.3% had tertiary education. Among respondents aged 20 or above, 54.2% of the rally participants were between 20 to 39 years old. In the onsite survey, 52.4% of the respondents were male, 67.9% had tertiary education. Among respondents aged 20 or above, 53.7% were also between 20 to 39 years old. The demographic profiles of the rally participants derived from the onsite and the telephone surveys were quite similar, this validates the data. Thus, SM is mostly used by millennials and generation zers.

Lee et al. (2018) and Men et al. (2018) both stand out in their application of the online survey because they also provided certain demographics typical to the target respondents. These characteristics include age, level of education and gender distribution of SM users. Since this article is trying to measure time, quantitative data collected via an online survey with restricted response choices is apt (Southam-Gerow & Dorsey, 2014). Also, only an online survey can get many respondents to partake in the study within a relatively short time.

Furthermore, a few relevant Twitter handles and timelines were observed for a 6-month period (January to June 2020). The time durations between when a news was tweeted and when the necessary leaders responded were noted. The durations were then compared with the survey results. The timelines studied are:

- Two SM based news agencies: [@SaharaReporters](#) and [@thecableng](#).
- Two print newspapers: The Punch ([@MobilePunch](#)) and TheGuardian ([@GuardianNigeria](#)).
- Three television stations: Nigerian Television Station ([@NTANewsNow](#)), African Independent Television ([@AIT_Online](#)) and Channels Television ([@channelstv](#)).
- Few leaders and several businesses (merchants and service providers).

3.2 Quantitative Research: Online Survey and Research Ethics

The sole purpose of this research is to measure how fast leaders respond to issues on Twitter Nigeria. Nigeria has an estimated population of about 193,392,517 people (NBS, 2020).

There are about 1.7 million Twitter users in Nigeria (Kemp, 2020), representing just 0.88% of the total population. Twitter was chosen because the demographic characteristics identified from the literature were typical among the Nigerian Twitter users. It is vital that respondents anonymity, consent and dignity are protected always (Easterby-Smith et al., 2102). This

article required no direct identifiers such as names, addresses, or telephone numbers; rather dependable answers.

Participants' enlistment and data collection measures were fully described, such that they could easily discern the research's intent(s). Failure to develop trust may result in respondents just resorting to telling the researcher what they think he or she wants (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012: 136). The survey was conducted via Twitter where such practices are authorised and supported. All data collected were stored on a secure hard drive.

3.3 Misrepresentation, Sampling and Sampling Size

The study population was made up of average Nigerian Twitter users. A systematic random sampling method was used to select the respondents, based on the demography derived from the literature. In systematic random sampling, a researcher relies on the knowledge of a list in some form or other, concerning the population of interest (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012: 226). A pilot study was conducted with just ten participants, to pretest each question, ensure respondents could easily comprehend them and also test the reliability of the questions. "The accuracy of conclusions drawn from a sample depends on whether it has the same characteristics as the population from which it is drawn" (Easterby-Smith et al. 2012: 223). The actual survey was done within 7 days. Clearly defining the population from which a research sample is taken is vital in avoiding data misrepresentation.

3.4 Data

The primary data was from the online survey. The respondents were random Nigerian Twitter users of different knowledge levels, age, academic background and Twitter familiarity. The questions asked were simple and straightforward.

Data Analysis

Data collected was downloaded as an Excel spreadsheet via the online tool used. The quantitative data obtained required no conversion, while the qualitative data were converted to quantitative (via coding of respondents words by grouping similar words) for easier presentation and analysis. Though coding could be daunting, a uniform data presentation format is appealing. Weissberger et al. (2015) asserted that improved data presentation exercises will increase the readership and understanding of published data. Excel's simplicity ensures that published works include information required to critically evaluate results from small sample size studies. Excel also tabulates results simply and plots graphs effortlessly.

Data/Results Presentation

Tables and diagrams (graphs/charts) are the simplest formats many readers grasp easily, making them good for data presentation. A research's original data may be summarised only with a table and still retain its vital composition of interpretation (Verkade, 2015).

4.0 DATA AND RESULTS

There were 237 respondents to the online survey, but only 212 were usable. Table 1 below shows the data summary.

4.1 Validity of Data

Table 1: Respondents' demography

| | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Number of Respondents | 212 | 100 |
| Gender | | |
| Female | 111 | 52.36 |
| Male | 101 | 47.64 |
| Education | | |
| Secondary | 4 | 2 |
| Undergraduate | 69 | 32.5 |
| Master & PhD | 139 | 65.5 |
| Number of Twitter Users | 212 | 100 |

| | | |
|-------------|------|-------|
| Average Age | 28.4 | |
| Age Ranges | | |
| <18 | 4 | 1.89 |
| 18-25 | 90 | 42.45 |
| 26-35 | 94 | 44.34 |
| 35-50 | 24 | 11.32 |

Table 1 shows the detailed summary of the respondents' demography. The respondents' average age was 28 years and 98% of them had at least some tertiary education. These correspond totally with the findings from the literature review (Lee et al., 2018 & Men et al., 2018). Hence, the data is demographically valid and generally acceptable.

4.2 Analysis and Findings from the Survey.

Table 2: Time leaders took to respond to issues according to respondents.

| Time leaders took to respond (hours) | Frequency (Respondents) | Cumulative Frequency | Cumulative (%) | Weighted Average Time (hours) |
|---|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <3 | 46 | 46 | 21.70 | 3.00 |
| <6 | 25 | 71 | 33.49 | 4.06 |
| <12 | 22 | 93 | 43.87 | 5.94 |
| <24 | 31 | 124 | 58.49 | 10.45 |
| <48 | 29 | 153 | 72.17 | 17.57 |
| <72 | 28 | 181 | 85.38 | 25.99 |
| >72 | 27 | 208 | 98.11 | 47.65 |

| | | | |
|------------|---|-----|--------|
| Don't know | 4 | 212 | 100.00 |
|------------|---|-----|--------|

Table 2 shows that the duration of responses varied from <3 hours to >72 hours. About 22% (46) of respondents chose <3 hours, while <6, <12, <24, <48, <72 and >72 had an average of 12.74%, except for 1.9% (4) of respondents who did not fill out any time duration. The weighted averages were derived by the summation of the products of each time duration and frequency divided by the cumulative frequency.

$$\frac{(3 * 46 + 6 * 25 + 12 * 22 + 24 * 31 + 48 * 29 + 72 * 28 + 168 * 27)}{(44+25+22+31+29+28+27)} = 47.65 \text{ hours} \cong 48 \text{ hours}$$

It was assumed that >72 hours should be pegged at 168 hours in order not to leave out 27 respondents. This might have skewed the results, but was adopted as a worst case scenario.

4.3 Discussion

Table 2 shows that about 85% of respondents believed issues were responded to within 72 hours (3 days) on Twitter. The weighted average of these 85% gives a response time 26 hours. Thus, 26 hours is a much faster response time than the 6 days (144 hours) Younis et al.'s (2012) asserted to leadership response on TM. Nevertheless, if the 27 responses of >72 hours are also included in the weighted average (assuming a maximum response time of 168 hours), the weighted average time becomes 48 hours. 48 hours is still much lower than 144 hours.

Therefore, the answers to research questions:

1. *How fast do leaders respond to issues/events on SM?* Between **26 to 48 hours**.
2. *Is SM response time faster than that of TM?* **Yes**, 48 hours are less than 144 hours.

Since the results show that SM gets faster responses from leaders than the TM does, hypothesis H_{O1} (SM elicits faster responses from leaders compared to TM) is accepted.

Figure 1: Chart of Time Responses (hours)

Figure 2: Twitter Usage by Respondents

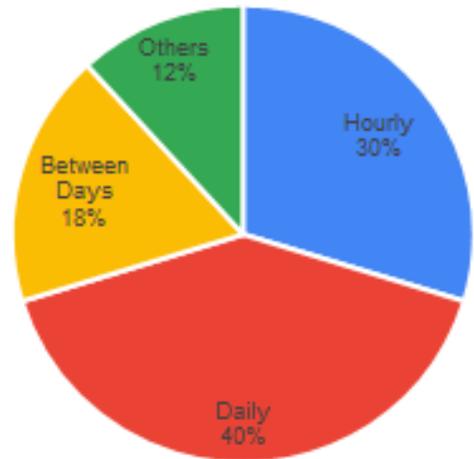
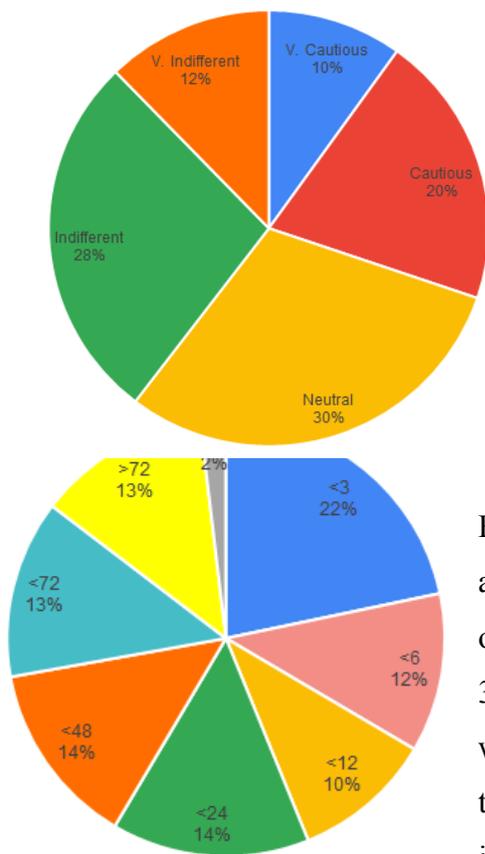


Figure 1 shows a pie chart of the data in Table 2, while Figure 2 shows how often respondents use Twitter.

Figure 3: Responses (Business Leaders)

Figure 4: Responses (Political Leaders)



Figures 3

and 4 show how the respondents perceived the manner of leaders' responses on Twitter. For business leaders, 36% of them were considered very cautious, while 45% were cautious and 19% of other responses completed the 100%. Conversely, the political leaders responded indifferently 28% of time, very indifferent 12%,

cautiously 30% of the time and neutrally 30% of the time. 81% of business leaders and only 40% of political leaders may be regarded as cautious in their responses.

Thus, the answer to the third research question:

Are leaders more cautious on SM than they are on TM? **No**, not all leaders are cautious on SM. However, business leaders are more cautious than the political ones.

Furthermore, Hypothesis H₀₂ (*SM makes leaders' responses more cautious*) is rejected, since not all leaders may be regarded cautious on SM.

Analysis and Findings from Observed Twitter Timelines.

Table 3 below, shows the Twitter timelines of some notable stakeholders (SM, TM and leaders). The dates in italics signify the first time an issue was raised and who raised them. Table 3 is a summary of the 6-month Twitter timelines observation, showing the time duration of responses to breaking news (issues such as security, economics etc.). There are recognisable patterns on the timelines, beyond the scope of this article. However, most of the news/issues were raised first by the SM platforms and political leaders often took time to respond in most cases. There were also issues raised by all on the same day. The table also shows that TM is slower in reporting issues, though print media seems to be faster than the TV stations.

Table 3: Selected Twitter timelines of SM platforms, TM platforms and leaders.

| News/Issues (Subjects) | SM (online news agency) | | Print Media | | Leaders | | Television Stations | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | <i>Sahara Reporters</i> | <i>The Cable</i> | <i>Mobile Punch</i> | <i>TheGuardian</i> | <i>M. Buhari</i> | <i>Nigeria President</i> | <i>NTA News</i> | <i>Channels Television</i> |
| | @SaharaReporters | @thecableng | @MobilePunch | @GuardianNigeria | @MBuhari | @NGRPresident | @NTANewsNow | @channelstv |
| Insecurity | <i>1/10/2020</i> | 1/11/2020 | | | 1/21/2020 | 1/22/2020 | | |
| Finance Act 2020 | 1/14/2020 | 1/14/2020 | 1/14/2020 | 1/14/2020 | <i>1/14/2020</i> | <i>1/14/2020</i> | 1/14/2020 | 1/14/2020 |
| Lassa fever | 2/20/2020 | 2/20/2020 | 2/20/2020 | 2/20/2020 | 2/20/2020 | 2/20/2020 | 2/20/2020 | 2/20/2020 |
| Insurgency | <i>2/14/2020</i> | | | | 6/6/2020 | 6/6/2020 | | |
| Isolation Centers | 3/5/2020 | | <i>3/4/2020</i> | | | | 5/12/2020 | |
| ASUU Strike | <i>3/9/2020</i> | <i>3/9/2020</i> | 3/10/2020 | 3/11/2020 | | 3/20/2020 | 3/20/2020 | 3/20/2020 |
| Total Lockdown | 3/24/2020 | 3/24/2020 | 3/24/2020 | 3/24/2020 | 3/24/2020 | 3/24/2020 | 3/24/2020 | 3/24/2020 |
| #BuhariChallenge | <i>3/27/2020</i> | 3/27/2020 | 3/28/2020 | 3/28/2020 | 3/29/2020 | 3/29/2020 | 3/29/2020 | 3/29/2020 |
| Covid-19 Palliatives | <i>3/25/2020</i> | | 4/1/2020 | | 4/7/2020 | 4/7/2020 | 4/7/2020 | 4/7/2020 |
| Financial Issues | 5/28/2020 | 5/28/2020 | 5/28/2020 | 5/28/2020 | 5/28/2020 | 5/28/2020 | 5/28/2020 | 5/28/2020 |
| Electricity | <i>5/17/2020</i> | | 5/28/2020 | | 5/27/2020 | 5/27/2020 | | |
| School resumption | 6/29/2020 | 6/29/2020 | 6/29/2020 | 6/29/2020 | 6/29/2020 | 6/29/2020 | 6/29/2020 | 6/29/2020 |

[@SaharaReporters](#) and [@thecableng](#) often broke the news on Twitter. Some got responses from [@MBuhari](#), [@NGRPresident](#) and other relevant handles only after an average of 3 days or more. This corresponds completely with 85% of respondents who said issues were responded to within 72 hours. Responses often took longer on TM or there were no responses sometimes. In addition, the television stations ([@NTANewsNow](#), [@AIT_Online](#) and [@channelstv](#)) tweeted news originally from the SM based news agencies, but they never aired such news on their stations as they broke. It can also be noted that general issues (Finance, lockdown, school) or simple matters were covered promptly by both SM and TM, while controversial or difficult subjects (security) were covered promptly only by SM.

On the other hand, issues having to do with businesses, especially customer complaints were also investigated. The business handles as well as the business owners' handles often got involved in addressing issues and customers promptly. Hence, leadership responses from business handles were straightforward and required no further investigation; lending some credence to Figure 3. Business related issues on SM were mostly between consumers and business owners, with no involvement of news agencies, except for rare cases which were not discovered during the course of this research. While TM platforms possess considerable presence on Twitter, the core of their business model is still based on the TM template. It may be assumed that they are only competing with the online platforms by referring Twitter users back to their television stations and print newspapers.

Comparison between Survey Results and Findings from Twitter Timelines.

Table 4: Survey result versus observed Twitter timelines' result.

| | Average Time taken by leaders to respond on SM (hours) |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Survey results | 26 to 48 |
| Twitter timelines (business) | 24 |
| Twitter timelines (political) | ≥72 |

From Table 4, it takes between 26 to 48 hours for leaders to respond to issues according to the respondents of the survey. Conversely, observed Twitter timelines' showed that political leaders responded after 72 hours or more while business leaders only took 24 hours. The average for both observed Twitter timelines (business and political) is 48 hours, which corresponds to the higher weighted average of the survey results. However, most of the

observed issues on the timelines were political, which may have skewed the results. The 212 respondents' answers were based on millions of tweets they had interacted with, while about 30,000 tweets were observed. Clearly, both survey and observed timeline results clearly show that SM gets faster responses from leaders than TM.

Thus, hypothesis H_{O3} (*SM is more influential than TM*) is accepted under certain conditions. This is because SM is more influential than TM when it comes to the speed of communication. In addition, leaders tend to respond to SM queries faster, SM is more influential than TM in this regard. However, TM has a significant presence on SM and also has some advantages over SM. Therefore, TM is probably more influential than SM under certain conditions.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The survey proves that SM elicits faster responses from leaders than TM. Leaders are not generally cautious in their responses to SM users, though business leaders are more cautious than political ones. SM is also more influential than TM when considering leaders' faster responses to issues on SM than on TM. Finally, the demography of SM users can be generalised as young people (18 to 35 years old), who possess formal education (at least undergraduate level).

5.1 Research Limitations

While this article examined how fast leaders respond to issues on SM, the study was limited to just Twitter Nigeria. Thus, results may vary on other SM platforms like Facebook. Moreover, the Twitter timelines showed several interesting patterns beyond the scope of this article. There were also disparities among TM platforms, print media report news faster than TV. There is also a possibility that different TM platforms possess diverse expertise on different subjects. Thus, there is more to the actual details and patterns of issues reported by the different TM outlets and there are still millions of tweets unexamined.

5.2 Future Research

It established that SM elicits faster responses from leaders than TM and business related issues were responded to quicker than political ones. However, the theoretical significance of the findings are not totally dependent on the possible causal claims, owing to findings in previous literature. For instance, the way respondents perceive leaders' responses is based on

the respondents' personal experience and their interpretation of how these responses were worded. Thus, there is a possibility of bias on the part of respondents since their responses are limited to their personal experiences and emotions, which are not really a reliable source of scientific research.

In addition, how 0.88% of the total population (SM users) influence the rest of the population offline should be studied. This influence can be assumed because of the attention the 0.88% attract online (especially from leaders). Future research should also investigate other patterns from the observed Twitter timelines (especially reasons for disparities among TM platforms). Finally, future research should also investigate Twitter influencers' role in all of these, especially how they influence other SM users' attitudes towards leaders and issues.

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