# Citizens Perception on New media and Government Accountability in Nigeria

OLUFEMI O. AJAYI,     KEHINDE ABIODUN ISINKAYE

Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Nigeria

**Abstract.** Nigeria like many other developing countries of Africa are ceaselessly confronted with under-development related problems such as poor infrastructure, high death rate, low level of illiteracy, poor health amongst others. These challenges notwithstanding the abundance of resources (human and natural) persisted because African countries-Nigeria inclusive have accountability problem. Despite various measures put in place to tackle poor accountability by successive Nigerian government, the menace does not seem to abate. This article therefore essentially studied the perceptions of citizens on new media and accountability in governance between 2015 and 2019 by focusing on ways of utilisation of new media by Nigerians and the effects of new media on accountability in governance. The study adopted a descriptive research approach which involves gathering data that describe events or a problem and organises, tabulates such. Data were gathered through the administration of questionnaires to a sample of 300 in three (3) local governments in Lagos state as well as materials retrieved from books, internet sources, articles and journals. The gathered data were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) based on simple percentages and frequency counts. The study found that there is consensus in the views of respondents that new media improves transparency and accountability of officials of government as major new media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram aided in engaging and making government officials in explaining actions to citizens.

**Keywords**: New media, Accountability, governance, facebook

## 1. Introduction

Development in the Nigerian state has been a challenge over the years as various regimes and administrations of government have attempted to engineer development but futile in their attempts. Various reasons may be advanced for this quagmire; however, the chief factor has been identified by writers, scholars and commentators on Nigeria's development challenge as lack of accountability in governance (Gberevbie, Shodipo & Oviasogie, (2013), Gberevbie; Oyeyemi & Excellence-Oluye (2014) & Amosun (2017)). The issue with accountability in governance of the Nigerian state can be historically traced suggesting that Nigeria's problem of accountability in governance did not just emerged now. It can best be traced to the historical development of Nigeria particularly the colonial period.

Nigeria as it is known today is a product of colonialism. From formal annexation of Lagos in 1861, Nigeria became a British protectorate in 1901 to the amalgamation of the Southern and Northern protectorates in 1914, Nigeria's emergence as a state was that of externally influenced. Throughout the colonial phase, the governance of the country was also externally influenced and dominated. British personnel were in charge of the governance of the Nigerian territories and as such, government officials were not accountable to Nigerians but to the Queen in England. This lack of accountability necessitated different agitations and protests both in writing and physical.

The various agitations and protests culminated in the independence of the Nigerian state from colonial authoritarian rule and in its place self rule was installed. The period of independence also coincided with the period democracy as a system of governance was spreading like wild fire throughout the world in

what Samuel Huntington has described as the second wave of democratisation. Democracy appealed to all above any other forms of governance because it offers political leadership that is accountable to and emanated from as well as connected to the interests and demands of the citizens (Gabrow, 2011).

Democracy allows for citizens to choose their leaders and representatives through the process of competitive election in which candidates from different political platforms (parties) presents candidates.

Accountability is one of the major hallmark of democracy. In democracy, citizens can hold representatives to account for their actions in office. This apparently is absent in other forms of governance. Various institutions are available in a democracy that guarantees this. Institutions like the judiciary, executive, parliament checkmating one and other. Likewise, the presence of civil society groups, ombudsman and particularly the traditional media (Radio, Television, Newspaper etc).
Poor accountability in Nigeria governance can be traced to inherited structures from the colonial master. Perhaps because the colonialists failed to be accountable to the Nigerian populace, the immediate occupiers of office just after the colonialists found no need to be accountable to Nigerians.

Just like the colonial era and the immediate republics after it, the fourth republic Nigeria is also plagued with the issues of poor accountability in governance. Poor accountability had unrestrained consequences on the development nature of the Nigerian state. While the Nigerian state is not a failed state yet, all the indices suggesting a failing state are quite obvious regarding the Nigerian state. There are cases of dysfunctional government, widespread insecurity of lives and property, collapsing infrastructure and public services, dysfunctional educational system, fictional medical and healthcare facilities (Okotoni, 2017).

Various organisations in the state have been constantly pushing for governmental accountability. Among which are the civil society, religious organisations, socio-cultural and political groups as well as the mass media. The conventional media (newspapers, magazines, radio and television) have been in the forefront of asking for the reason for actions of government. For instance, the newspaper played key roles in the struggle for the decolonisation, demilitarisation and democratisation of Nigeria. Likewise, newspapers like the West African Pilot, Nigerian Tribune and Daily

Times were thorns in the flesh of the British colonialists. During the era of the military junta in Nigeria, news media outlets like like The PUNCH, National Concord, The Guardian as well as Newswatch, The News and Tell magazines played significant roles. Their efforts contributed in the return of Nigeria to civil rule from military junta. On various occasion, these news media outlets were severally banned by various military regimes.

The media served as a tool in the hands of would-be users to demand accountability in governance. This however perhaps has not yielded much result for various reasons which include : the high cost of booking space on this media outlets, oftentimes, the editor of the various media decides on what views to promote.

## 2. Problem Statement

Getting government to be more accountable to the citizens has been one of the major efforts of the conventional media (newspapers, magazines, radio stations and television outlets). The media has been seen as the watchdog and a guarantee for effective democratic governance in any state. However, the cost of getting an opinion publish and aired on the various conventional platforms proved problematic and this has usually been a challenge to the demands for more accountability of various public office holders. Coupled with the distance between the public and the various conventional media, it has been rather a limitation to the demand for accountability in governance. However, the advent and spread of new media from the 1980's till date has changed radically who is in control of information. The uses of digital technologies like the internet and personal computers have brought to bear the ease to which the public gather information and disseminate such. New media such as Twitter, Facebook, Blogspot, and other platforms in the social media category have been able to alter the meaning of geographic distance, allow for communication, , provide opportunities for interactive communication and allow forms of communication that were previously separate to overlap and interconnect amongst others which were the challenges with conventional media. The ease at which information is gathered and disseminated makes citizens to be actively involved in governance. Using platforms of the New media, member of the public can question the act of a representative and demand for accountability. This has been the order of the day as New media has often been used to mobilise the public for protest against governmental policies. Various studies of the media and accountability in a

democracy have been carried out, but there is a void in the use of New media to demand and promote accountability in government. It is yet unknown the extent to which platforms like BudgiT, Enough is Enough, Udeme.com etc. have been successful in demanding accountability in Nigeria's government since 2015 till date.

The objectives of this paper are: to investigate the various ways New media has been used by Nigerian citizens in Nigeria's Fourth Republic and to determine the effects of the use of New media on accountability in governance in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

### 3. Conceptual Clarification and Review of Literature

Governance as a concept is often used interchangeably with government. Even though the two terms are used synonymously, the two terms are distinct are differ in usage and meaning. Governance-the art of governing is what government do (Capano, Howlett & Ramesh, (2015)). It is a term used to connote the mode of government coordination used by state actors in the bid to solve familiar problems of collective actions inherent to government and governing (Colebach, 2014). Capano et al (2015) stated further that governance is
*"about establishing, promoting and supporting a specific type of relationship between governmental and non-governmental actors in the governing process"*

It is about different people who are regarded as actors who are constantly interacting which are based on each players understanding of ideas and interests in a coordinated manner in the policy process. Governance is another way of ordering reality, of explaining how public policies are decided and implemented, and of indicating those actors with a role in such policy-making, and the interaction between these policy-makers (Capano et al. 2015). To this end, the task of ensuring there is order in states which is brought about by the entrenchment of justice and delivery of social goods is a basic function of government. Similarly, according to the Committee of Experts on Public Administration (2006), governance is seen as the exercise of political and administrative authority at all levels to manage a country's affairs. It comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions, through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences. The effectiveness of government and governance regarding the quality of service delivery

depends largely on the institutional and human capacities involved in the governing process. Likewise, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) sees governance as the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. It comprises mechanisms, processes, and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences. Similarly, the United Nations Social and Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific sees governance as not a new concept claiming that it is as old as human civilization and went ahead to say "governance" simply means: "the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented)." Relying on the definition provided by Kaufman, Kraay & Zoido-Lobaton (1999), governance is seen from the state point of analysis, governance is:
*"The traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised"*

Aidt (2009) conducted a study and divided governance into two dimension- good governance and bad governance. He sees good governance as the use of governing process, traditions and institutions for creating high economic growth with low corruption whereas bad governance is the opposite. Olson, Naveen, and Swamy (2000) in their work Governance and Growth identified that low incidence of corruption, high bureaucratic quality and entrenchment of institutions that guarantees the rule of law makes the governance of a territory to qualify as good governance.

Keping, (2018) in his work Governance and Good Governance: A New Framework for Political Analysis sees governance to refer to "a set of institutions and actors that are drawn from but also beyond the Government". Keping, (2018) challenges the authority of the State or the Government in the traditional sense and maintains that the Government is not the only power centre of a state. As long as the power exercised by a public or private institution is recognized by the public, it is possible to become a power centre at a specific level.

### 3.1 The Concept of Accountability

The concept of accountability has attracted and continuously attract scholars and researchers alike in the area of political science, governance, public sector, financial accounting, development policy and studies, international donors and agencies. Many have seen it as a means in governance while others have emphasized that it is the end of governance.

Lindberg (2009) claimed that John Locke had accountability in mind when he proposed his theory of Superiority of Representational Democracy which can only be possible when the governed are separated from the governors. According to Lindberg (2009) building on Locke's theory, the central idea is that
when decision-making power is transferred from a principal (e.g. the citizens) to an agent (e.g. government), there must be a mechanism in place for holding the agent to account for their decisions and if necessary for imposing sanctions, ultimately by removing the agent from power.

This line of thinking aligns with that of Sartori, (1991) which sees accountability as one of the many methods of constraining power. In Regulation Inside Government: Waste-watchers, Quality Police, and Sleaze-busters, accountability was simply captured in this phrase
"The more strictly we are watched, the better we behave"
This suggests that power is best checkmated with accountability especially when government agents realised that all their actions and inactions are in public glare. It thus suggest further that without mechanisms to restrain power, arbitrariness will be the order of the day.

Accountability is associated with the act of discretionary governing, typically understood as the authoritative allocation of resources and exercising control and coordination which in turn points toward the need for an identifiable locus of authority (Lindberg, 2009). The identifiable locus of authority therefore ensures that there is a form of location of responsibility of an action. Mill (cited in Lindberg 2009) claimed that:
*'Responsibility is null and void when nobody knows who is responsible. ... there must be one person who receives the whole praise of what is well done, the whole blame of what is ill'*
It suggests that layers accountability to a large extent creates a stronger fortification against the arbitrary use of authority.

Unegbu, (2012) claimed that accountability means answerability for ones actions or behaviour. For every action undertaken by personnel particularly in public or governmental setting, such personnel must report to authority higher than it in the hierarchical order with the people for whom the services or actions are for at the utmost rung of the hierarchical ladder at least in a democracy. Etzioni (cited in Adeyemi et al 2012) associated accountability with three different meanings: greater responsibility to elected superiors; greater responsiveness to community groups; and greater commitment to

values and higher standards of morality In their work titled Institutionalizing the culture of accountability in local government administration in Nigeria, Adeyemi, Akindele, Aluko & Agesin (2012) asserted that accountability is often used synonymously with such concept as responsibility, answerability, blame-worthiness, liability and other terms associated with the expectation of account giving. To them, all that accountability borders about is the act of acknowledging and assumption of responsibility for actions, decisions and policies within ones scope, while also having the obligation to and be answerable for resulting consequences from such.

Accountability has been viewed from the social spectrum suggesting the expectation of the society on members. Malena & McNeil (2010) stated that accountability exists when power holders must explain and justify their action or face sanctions. Adeyemi et al (2012) claims that social accountability is an approach to enhancing government accountability and transparency which refers to wide range of citizen actions to hold the State to account for its actions. Social accountability strategies and tools help empower ordinary citizens to exercise their inherent rights and to hold governments accountable for the use of public funds and how they exercise authority (Pradhan, 2010: 12). It involves the use of the mass media, pressure groups and consultative groups has gained some credence in making career administrators and other public officer to be accountable for their various actions in the course of performing their duties.

## 3.2 The Concept of the Media, Mass Media

Media as a concept according to Henrico (2008) is derived from the latin word 'medium' which means in the middle. Annie (2008) argued that in media entrepreneurship, the media refers to traditional mass communication system and content generators as well as other technologies for mediated human speech. Stating further, Annie (2008) said this would include traditional publishing (newspapers, periodicals, or books), traditional electronic media (broadcasting, broadband, cable, or satellite), motion pictures, video gaming, recorded music, advertising, and adaptations of the Internet for any of these media. Potter (2013) claimed that the most common way of defining the media particularly mass media has arguably been simply to list the major channels used to disseminate messages broadly throughout a society. Potter (2013) went further to classify media into three categories. First, print media which includes Newspapers, Magazines, Booklets and Brochures, House Magazines, Periodicals or

Newsletters, Direct Mailers, Handbills or Flyers, Billboards, Press Releases, Books. The Second type is Electronic Media which includes Television, Radio, and Films while the third types of media are New Age Media includes Mobile Phones, Computers, and Internet.

Dunu (2013) sees the media as the watchdog of the society and that their information and monitoring roles help engendering good governance as well as promotion of democracy. Duru (2013) went further to say the media is the agenda setter of public discourses and interpreter of public issues and events, the media have a special role in governance with the main responsibility of the media includes: to provide comprehensive, analytical and factual news and opinion to the people on everyday issues and events of popular concern.

Regarding roles for the media in a state, Duru (2013) stated that the media can play pivotal role in promotion and enhancement of accountability in government as it is opined that the media represent one of the major mechanisms of accountability stating that:

*Holding government accountable therefore is a constitutional requirement of the Nigerian media.*

From Duru (2013) view, the media can be viewed as a tool. A tool for the promotion of accountability in governance.

In The Media, government, accountability and citizen engagement, Voltmer (2004) stated that the media have an effect over and above other important factors that are known from the literature to influence political orientations, in particular age, education, gender, ideological predispositions, and socio-economic positions. It can be extended that the media not only influences the above, it affects the way and manner citizens react to issues in the state.

Barbruvan (2017) identified the impact of media to be the following

Provision of Information, (b) Serves as public watchdog, (c) Safeguarding the democratic society (d) Entertainment, (e) Platform for educating the citizens (f) Instrumental in economic growth

**3.3 Review of New Media**

There are disputed claims as to who coined the term "social media," however it can be said that the term emerged in the early 1990s in reference to emerging web-based communication tools that facilitated online interaction (Bercovici 2010). Trottier & Fuchs (2015), who noted that the nature of social media theorists could reasonably adopt any of three forms of sociality as a focal point: a) cognition, b) communication, or c) cooperation. A focus on cognition is concerned with shared knowledge and therefore media, such as newspapers, websites, or even televisions, which provide masses with access to similar information, would operate as social media.

The advent of the internet meant that new means of information sharing emerged. Otherwise referred to as 'New Age Media', Barbruvan (2017) sees the new media as high technology mass media which is not only faster than the old school mass media, but also has a widespread range. Barbruvan (2017) identified mobile phones, computer and the internet as new age media stating that the internet created new opportunities for mass communication including email, websites, e-forums, e-books, blogging, internet TV and many others. In the same vein, the internet has also started social networking sites which have redefined mass communication all together. Sites like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube had made communication to the masses all the more entertaining, interesting and easier. Barbruvan (2017) went further to tag the latter list social media.

Mensah & Nizam (2016) gave a definite clarification for the concept of social media when they see as:

*web-based services that gives individual the opportunity to create either a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, add a list of others to with they share a connection and view and transverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system.*

From the foregoing, it can be deduced base on the agreement in views of writers above that new media herein referred to as social media are social network and structure made up of individuals or organizations called "nodes", which are connected by one or more specific types of interdependency, such as friendship, kinship, common interest, financial exchange, dislike, sexual relationships or relationships of beliefs, knowledge or prestige. The new media/social media affords the individuals in society with unrestricted access to information gathering and sharing. On the effect of new media/social media, Babatunde (2017) while examining the Influence of Social Media and Environmental Factors on Academic Performance of student Nurses in South West Nigeria claimed that social media affected student's performance and recommended less attention of students to social media and government provision of more infrastructure.

In terms of participation in politics, Madueke & Ogbonnaya (2017) examined the Role of Social Media in Enhancing Political Participation in Nigeria concluded that the social media usage in politics

became prominent since Barack Obama's interest in becoming United States of America presidency as social media aided in making more people participate. Relying on the Uses and Gratification Theory, Madueke & Ogbonnaya (2017), the study concluded that social media has grossly affected the participation of individuals on a day to day activities in politics. From hearing information, to sharing same, to shaping opinion, to contributing on different social platforms and many others, individuals' interest in politics aroused. Madueke & Ogbonnaya (2017) claimed that the 2011 elections in Nigeria was the watershed in the use of social media to influence peoples' participation in politics.

**3.4 Theoretical Framework**

This research relied on the theory of pluralism. The theory was developed in the last quarter of the 19th century by German jurist Otto Von Gierke. The theory was further developed by F.W Maitland and has its advocates in Harold Laski, Ernst Barker, MacIver, R, George Douglas, Howard Cole amongst others. As a political sociological theory of society, it recognises various types of organisations present in the state. Such organisations include the religious, political, social etc.

Pluralism connotes a situation or state of affairs wherein there are multiple groups, institutions or organisations operating within the society. The state is also one of the organisations in society. Whereas the state as an organisation in society makes law for the preservation of the individuals in society and regulation of conducts, the other organisations and groups exerts influence on the state such that the interests of the members of such organisations/institutions/groups are catered for and protected by the state. The agency of the state (government) is powerful no doubt; at the same time, other organisations and groups within society are powerful and in a democracy, the overarching power resides in the people. The different groups and organisations within the state can exert their influence in such a way that government yields to their bidding if not all, at least to a considerable extent.

Among such groups and organisations in society is the media. The use of various New media platforms diffuses the gathering and dissemination of information. This often helps in exerting influence on the government of the state to ensure the interests of the members of the state are protected especially by calling out representatives of the people on various New media platforms. Likewise, the users of New

media being members of the larger society could take it upon them as a task to ensure government works for the generality of the populace and not necessarily for their own particular interests.

Relating to this research and based on the theory of pluralism, the major interest and preoccupation of people in society using New media platforms are hinged on exerting pressure on the government to be accountable to the citizens thereby engendering development to the members of the state – one of the purposes for which the government exist.

**4. Research Method and Design**

The methodology adopted for this research is both quantitative and qualitative. Descriptive research design is adopted for the study. Descriptive research involves gathering data that describe events and then organizes, tabulates, depicts, and describes the data collection (Glass & Hopkins, 1984). Descriptive research involves gathering data, describes phenomenon and then organises, tabulates depicts and describes data collection, in the form of graphs and charts, in order to help the reader to understand the distribution of data (Cooper & Schindler, 2011).

**4.1 Population of study and Study Area**

Online users in Lagos state; south west of Nigeria serves as the population of this research work. Lagos state, Nigeria houses nearly all the ethnic nationalities in Nigeria as the state is a hub of commercial activities and industrialization hence necessitates the mass movements of people in to the state on a daily basis. Similarly, as a commercial hub, Lagos is composed of majority inhabitants who are very active using internet and all other new media platforms. Lagos state boasts of more than 17.5 million people (LASG, 2016) with a population density of 6,871 residents per square kilometre. More than 250 ethnic groups are represented in Lagos state with the Yoruba dominant whilst other groups such as Hausa, Igbo, Fulani, small minorities of Americans, British, Chinese, White Zimbabwean, Greek, Japanese also represented. The youth within the age bracket (20- 39 years) represent 45% of the population. Users of new media in these state serve as the target population. Due to the nature of the research, their views and perception on new media and accountability in governance are explored. Based on reports by Nigeria Bureau of Statistics, these states represent active users of new media in Nigeria with Lagos state having the highest number of active users.

**4.2 Sample of study**

Random sampling was adopted for the study. A total of three hundred (300) questionnaires were randomly administered within three (3) local governments in the state with One hundred questionnaires distributed in each local government. The Local Governments purposively chosen were Alimosho Local Government, Ikorodu Local Government and Ikeja Local Government. The rationale for choosing these local governments is because they are the most populated local governments in Lagos state.

**4.3 Data Sources**

Data were obtained from both primary and secondary sources. Data from the secondary sources were retrieved from books, internet sources, articles and journals. The secondary data aided in defining and measuring key concepts. Primary data were obtained through the instrument of questionnaires. The data obtained were used to verify the formulated questions with a view to solve research problem. The questionnaire is divided into two sections. Section A enabled the respondents to provide demographic information while section B deal with major variables in the research topic.

**4.4 Method of Data Analysis**

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences was used to analyse the responses of respondents using simple percentages and frequency counts.

5.   **Result and data Analysis**

300 copies of the questionnaire were distributed but 13 were incompletely filled and therefore deemed as void. Hence, the analysis of data was based on the 287questionnaires properly filled. This gives a return rate of 95.7%.

**Interpretation of Responses**

**Objective One:** To investigate the various ways New media has been used by Nigerian citizens in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

**How often do you use social media?**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Daily | 53 | 18.5 | 18.5 | 18.5 |
| | More than once a week | 46 | 16.0 | 16.0 | 34.5 |
| | Once a week | 46 | 16.0 | 16.0 | 50.5 |
| | Less than once a week | 44 | 15.3 | 15.3 | 65.9 |
| | Never | 98 | 34.1 | 34.1 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 287 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

*Source: Field Survey 2019*

65 per cent of people sampled utilise a form of new media while 34.1 percent reported to never have used any form of new media.

**Which of the media above do you use frequently?**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Facebook | 64 | 22.3 | 22.3 | 22.3 |
| | Twitter | 56 | 19.5 | 19.5 | 41.8 |
| | Instagram | 71 | 24.7 | 24.7 | 66.6 |
| | YouTube | 31 | 10.8 | 10.8 | 77.4 |
| | All of the above | 65 | 22.6 | 22.6 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 287 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

*Source: Field Survey 2019*

While some citizens use a combination of any of the new media (22.6 %), Instagram and Facebook are more popular with the citizens (24.7 % and 22.3 % respectively).

**Issues about government and its activities are best known through new media platform.**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Strongly Agree | 215 | 74.9 | 74.9 | 74.9 |
| | Agreed | 72 | 25.1 | 25.1 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 287 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

*Source: Field Survey 2019*

The new media forms a better means of knowing about government activities compared to the traditional means with all respondents in agreement.

**New media aid the citizens to question the activities of government?**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Strongly Agree | 86 | 30.0 | 30.0 | 30.0 |
| | Agreed | 57 | 19.9 | 19.9 | 49.8 |
| | Undecided | 33 | 11.5 | 11.5 | 61.3 |
| | Disagreed | 55 | 19.2 | 19.2 | 80.5 |
| | Strongly Disagreed | 56 | 19.5 | 19.5 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 287 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

*Source: Field Survey 2019*

49 percent of the respondents agree that new media is instrumental in citizens questioning the activities of the government.

**New media serves as a tool in the hands of organizations (particularly civil society) to demand good governance from government in Nigeria.**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Strongly Agree | 101 | 35.2 | 35.2 | 35.2 |
| | Agreed | 76 | 26.5 | 26.5 | 61.7 |
| | Undecided | 25 | 8.7 | 8.7 | 70.4 |
| | Disagreed | 42 | 14.6 | 14.6 | 85.0 |
| | Strongly Disagreed | 43 | 15.0 | 15.0 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 287 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

*Source: Field Survey 2019*

There is agreement among respondents (61 per cent) that civil society organizations such as SERAP, Enough is Enough and others utilise New media to demand good governance from government.

**Research Objective Two:** the effects of the use of new media on accountability in governance in Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

**Government personnel and agencies are made to explain their actions via new media.**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Very Often | 46 | 16.0 | 16.0 | 16.0 |
| | Often | 60 | 20.9 | 20.9 | 36.9 |
| | Uncertain | 50 | 17.4 | 17.4 | 54.4 |
| | Only Few Times | 68 | 23.7 | 23.7 | 78.0 |
| | Never | 63 | 22.0 | 22.0 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 287 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

*Source: Field Survey 2019*

Regarding making government personnel and agencies to explain their actions via new media, a considerable number of respondents perceive this to be the reality (36.9 per cent), few others are not certain (17.4 per cent), a high percentage of 23.7 per cent believes it is only on few occasions whilst many others perceive that government had never been made accountable through the new media.

**New media aided the widespread of e-government as means to disseminate information.**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Strongly Agree | 94 | 32.8 | 32.8 | 32.8 |
| | Agreed | 75 | 26.1 | 26.1 | 58.9 |
| | Undecided | 33 | 11.5 | 11.5 | 70.4 |
| | Disagreed | 47 | 16.4 | 16.4 | 86.8 |
| | Strongly Disagreed | 38 | 13.2 | 13.2 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 287 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

*Source: Field Survey 2019*

Majority of the respondents (58.9 per cent) agree that new media aided government to spread more information thereby becoming accountable to the citizens.

**With New media, the purposes and strategies of government are well known to citizens.**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Strongly Agree | 62 | 21.6 | 21.6 | 21.6 |
| | Agreed | 48 | 16.7 | 16.7 | 38.3 |
| | Undecided | 42 | 14.6 | 14.6 | 53.0 |
| | Disagreed | 60 | 20.9 | 20.9 | 73.9 |
| | Strongly Disagreed | 75 | 26.1 | 26.1 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 287 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

*Source: Field Survey 2019*

Majority of the respondents (47 per cent) do not agree that government put out their purpose or strategies in public glare for citizens utility.

**New media improves transparency of government personnel, agencies and ministries.**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Strongly Agree | 88 | 30.7 | 30.7 | 30.7 |
| | Agreed | 63 | 22.0 | 22.0 | 52.6 |
| | Undecided | 32 | 11.1 | 11.1 | 63.8 |
| | Disagreed | 48 | 16.7 | 16.7 | 80.5 |
| | Strongly Disagreed | 56 | 19.5 | 19.5 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 287 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

*Source: Field Survey 2019*

Response from respondents shows that citizens believe that new media improves transparency of government personnel, agencies and ministries.

**Through the use of new media, civil organizations have been able to make government personnel, agencies and ministries to be responsible for actions taken and bear consequences of same**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Strongly Agree | 94 | 32.8 | 32.8 | 32.8 |
| | Agreed | 75 | 26.1 | 26.1 | 58.9 |
| | Undecided | 33 | 11.5 | 11.5 | 70.4 |
| | Disagreed | 47 | 16.4 | 16.4 | 86.8 |
| | Strongly Disagreed | 38 | 13.2 | 13.2 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 287 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

*Source: Field Survey 2019*

Citizens perceive that new media aided civil society organizations to make government personnel, agencies and ministries as well as ensuring such face the consequences of their actions.

**New media made governments and its agencies to obliged to furnish the citizens timely information of actions of government.**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Strongly Agree | 94 | 32.8 | 32.8 | 32.8 |
| | Agreed | 75 | 26.1 | 26.1 | 58.9 |
| | Undecided | 33 | 11.5 | 11.5 | 70.4 |
| | Disagreed | 47 | 16.4 | 16.4 | 86.8 |
| | Strongly Disagreed | 38 | 13.2 | 13.2 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 287 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

*Source: Field Survey 2019*

Majority of respondents (58.9 per cent) perceive that new media is instrumental in making government personnel, agencies and ministries to provide timely information to citizens hence bringing about accountability.

**Objective Three:** challenges to new media and accountability in governance

**Government and its agencies pay some new media influencers to misinform Nigerians and project the image of the government positively.**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Strongly Agree | 88 | 30.7 | 30.7 | 30.7 |
| | Agreed | 63 | 22.0 | 22.0 | 52.6 |
| | Undecided | 32 | 11.1 | 11.1 | 63.8 |
| | Disagreed | 48 | 16.7 | 16.7 | 80.5 |
| | Strongly Disagreed | 56 | 19.5 | 19.5 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 287 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

*Source: Field Survey 2019*

More than 50 per cent (52.6%) of respondents agree that government is purposely sponsoring new media influencers to misinform the public with a view of discrediting new media and subsequently reduce its effects.

**There is limited citizen's involvement beyond the level of comment, sharing and repost.**

|  |  | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Strongly Agree | 110 | 38.3 | 38.3 | 38.3 |
|  | Agreed | 58 | 20.2 | 20.2 | 58.5 |
|  | Undecided | 37 | 12.9 | 12.9 | 71.4 |
|  | Disagreed | 29 | 10.1 | 10.1 | 81.5 |
|  | Strongly Disagreed | 53 | 18.5 | 18.5 | 100.0 |
|  | Total | 287 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |

*Source: Field Survey 2019*

Most respondents (58.5%) believed that there is nothing that can be done beyond commenting, sharing and reposting information regarding government inadequacies.

**Nigerian government agencies are usually selective with responses to the freedom of information request often sent to them.**

|  |  | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Strongly Agree | 88 | 30.7 | 30.7 | 30.7 |
|  | Agreed | 63 | 22.0 | 22.0 | 52.6 |
|  | Undecided | 32 | 11.1 | 11.1 | 63.8 |
|  | Disagreed | 48 | 16.7 | 16.7 | 80.5 |
|  | Strongly Disagreed | 56 | 19.5 | 19.5 | 100.0 |
|  | Total | 287 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |

*Source: Field Survey 2019*

There is a deliberate attempt by government and its agencies to frustrate the effects of new media on accountability as 52.6 per cent of respondents agree that government and its agencies are selective in responding to requests from citizens.

### 6. Major findings

Based on the results above, new media aided the widespread of e-government used by government to disseminate information. With new media, the purposes and strategies of government are well known to citizens, new media improves transparency of government personnel, agencies and ministries, and that through the use of new media, individuals and civil organisations have been able to make government personnel, agencies and ministries to be responsible for actions taken and explain same. Through new media, issues about government and its activities are known and citizens use the new media to express dissatisfaction with government activities. It is observed that without demand for information via the new media platforms by citizens, government personnel, agencies and ministries would not necessarily make information available. Invariably, government would not necessarily accountable until citizens' demand for such accountability. Likewise, it is the general perception that there is usually an attempt by government and its agencies to frustrate the effects new media could have on accountability a

### 7. Conclusion

This study on new media and accountability in governance highlighted the increasing importance of new media on everyday life and governance in Nigeria. The preference for the use of new media is as a result of its cheap, accessibility and opportunities. It created through the various platforms for seeking, probing, dissemination of information and demand for explanations and justification of actions by the public on government/public office holders. New media is very effective on accountability no doubt but for challenges such as failure of public officials to respond to Freedom of Information (FoI) request on time, the phenomenon of fake news, subjection to manipulation (government sponsored) amongst others limited the effect of new media on accountability in governance. Similarly, the aspect of accountability covered by new media is the explication and justification part leaving out the sanctioning part.

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