

The Role of Social Media in Enhancing Good Governance in Enugu State, 2015-2023

Egwuagu Uloma Bridget, Anikeze Nnaemeka Hillary and Chukwu Chinaza Emmanuella

Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Management Science Enugu state university of science and Technology

Email ulomaegwuagu@gmail.com; nnaemeka.anikeze@esut.edu.ng

ABSTRACT

This study is an empirical investigation of the role of social media in enhancing good governance in Enugu state, 2015 - 2023. Specifically the study is designed to; determine the role of facebook in enhancing citizenship participation in South East Nigeria ascertain the role of whatsapp in promoting fundamental human right; examine the role of instagram in promoting freedom of speech. The research design adopted for the study descriptive survey research design. The targeted population for the study comprised 785,000 residents in Enugu Metropolis, while a sample of 400 respondents was drawn using Taro Yamane Sampling techniques. The study made use of a structured questionnaire designed by the researcher as the instrument for data collection. The data gotten from the respondents were analyzed using simple percentage while Chi square (X^2) formula was used for testing of the Hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that; Facebook has positive significant effect in enhancing citizenship participation in Enugu Metropolis; WhatsApps has positive significant effect in promoting fundamental human right in Enugu Metropolis; Instagram has positive significant effect in promoting rule of law in Enugu Metropolis. Based on the findings the following recommendations were made; Government and institutions should use social media to share information, data and decision to promote transparency and accountability ;Government and institutions should integrate the use of social media in ascertaining public opinions, and consequently provide timely respond; Social media platform should be accessible and usable for all citizens regardless of social, economic and cultural background.

Keywords: Role, Social media, good governance, enhancing, rule of law, fundamental human right

INTRODUCTION

Governance is a crucial factor in promoting national and economic development. It involves the efficient and effective management of resources, ensuring that they are used in a manner that benefits society as a whole. Good governance is characterized by several key principles, including transparency, accountability, responsiveness, and equity. When these principles are upheld, it creates an environment that fosters trust and confidence among citizens, leading to a more stable and prosperous society [1]. [2], noted that by implementing good governance practices, countries can attract foreign investment, stimulate economic growth, and reduce poverty. One of the most significant benefits of good governance is its ability to promote sustainable development. By ensuring that resources are managed responsibly, countries can avoid depleting their natural resources and protect the environment. This not only benefits the planet but also ensures that future generations will have access to the resources they need to thrive. Furthermore, [3], averred that good governance plays a vital role in promoting social justice and reducing income inequality. By ensuring that all citizens have access to education, healthcare, and other basic services, countries can create a more equitable society. This not only improves the well-being of individuals but also strengthens the overall economy, as a healthy and educated workforce is more productive and innovative. Good governance is essential for national and economic development. By implementing good governance practices, countries can attract investment, stimulate growth, protect the environment, and promote social justice. However, developing nations, of which Nigeria is not an exception often, face numerous challenges in implementing good governance. [4], averred that one of the primary challenges faced by developing nations is corruption. Corruption erodes trust in government institutions and undermines economic growth. Another significant challenge is limited access to information and technology. In many developing nations, citizens have limited access to reliable information and communication technologies, which hampers their ability to participate

in decision-making processes. Lack of political participation is another challenge that developing nations face. In many cases, citizens in these nations have limited avenues for expressing their opinions and influencing government policies [5]. Developing nations face several challenges in implementing good governance. However, by addressing corruption, improving access to information and technology, and promoting political participation, these nations can overcome these challenges and build more prosperous and inclusive societies. Social media is a viable tool which the developing nations can leverage on in order to enhance access to information, increase political participation and fight corruption. In this era of information communication technology, social media has become an integral part of our lives. It has revolutionized the way we communicate, interact, and share information. The impact of social media extends beyond personal relationships and entertainment; it also has the potential to enhance good governance in society. Social media platforms provide a unique opportunity for citizens to engage with their governments and policymakers. Through online petitions, social media campaigns, and community discussions, individuals can voice their opinions, raise awareness about important issues, and mobilize support for positive change. This level of citizen participation is crucial for holding governments accountable and promoting transparent decision-making processes. Moreover, social media enables governments to reach a wider audience and disseminate information more effectively. By leveraging social media channels, governments can share updates on policy initiatives, engage with citizens in real-time, and provide timely responses to their concerns. This increased transparency and accessibility can help build trust and credibility among the public, ultimately leading to better governance practices. Furthermore, social media platforms can facilitate collaboration and knowledge sharing among policymakers, experts, and stakeholders. By participating in online discussions, attending virtual conferences, and sharing research findings, these individuals can exchange ideas, learn from each other's experiences, and develop innovative solutions to complex governance challenges. This collaborative approach can accelerate decision-making processes and improve the overall quality of governance. Social media has emerged as a powerful tool for enhancing good governance. By empowering citizens, fostering transparency, and facilitating collaboration, social media can help create a more inclusive, responsive, and accountable government. It is based on the foregoing background that the researcher wishes to examine the role of social media in enhancing good governance in South East Nigeria. Specifically the study is designed to; determine the role of facebook in enhancing citizenship participation in South East Nigeria; ascertain the role of whatsapp in promoting fundamental human right; examine the role of instagram in promoting freedom of speech

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Social Media

The emergence of social media was a consequence of communication advancements. Before now, the most popular form of sending and receiving information using the internet was the email but now, there has been an upsurge in communication platforms in addition to email. The emergence of social media has devolutionalised and democratised communication. Just like any other concept in the social sciences, it is a herculean task to arrive at a single definition of the concept of social media. Suminas [6], sees the social media as "interactive technologies" and ways in which they can be used when individuals interact among themselves sharing the content generated. Similarly, [7], assert that social media are online tools and utilities that allow communication of information online, participation and collaboration. Also, social media represents the wide range of internet based and mobile service that allows users to participate in online exchanges, contribute user created content, or join online communities. Sometimes refers to as web 2.0 [8], social media include but not limited to Twitter, Facebook, and Youtube. It is driven by the internet to bring together community of heterogeneous people to form a close-knit who collaborate to share information on political discourses. Thus, social media is a veritable tool in bringing people together and closer with the underlying denominator of communication and interaction among them. Social media networks are increasingly becoming a critical component of civic engagement and an ideal mode of communication, as they generate virtual discourse among friends, acquaintances, groups with similar aspirations and with whoever shares one's common interests. The word 'Social media' means collection of applications (facebook, twitter, whatsapp, linkedin, Youtube and others) and websites that link people to share information and aware people about event through social networking.

Good Governance

Good governance is an indeterminate term used in international development literature to describe how public institutions conduct public affairs and manage public resources. The concept of "good governance" often emerges as a model to compare ineffective economies or political bodies with viable economies and political bodies. "Good governance is not just about government. It is also about political parties, parliament, the judiciary, the media, and civil society. It is about how citizens, leaders and public institutions relate to each other in order to make change happen." Most international organizations provide definitions of governance rather than of good governance. The World Bank for example, outlines three aspects of governance: i) the type of the political regime, ii) the public management of economic and social resources, and iii) the capacity of Government to design, formulate and implement policies. The former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan describes good governance as a force ensuring

respect for human rights and the rule of law, strengthening democracy, promoting transparency and capacity in public administration. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) declared in 1996 that "promoting good governance in all its aspects, including by ensuring the rule of law, improving the efficiency and accountability of the public sector, and tackling corruption, as essential elements of a framework within which economies can prosper." The IMF feels that corruption within economies is caused by the ineffective governance of the economy, either too much regulation or too little regulation.

Fundamental human rights

Fundamental human rights are the rights accrued to a person by virtue of being human. In contemporary human rights regime, the right to life, freedom from slavery, and the right to basic human needs such as food, clothing, shelter, and medical care are known as 'fundamental human rights' different from other subjective rights. They represent the rights that are inalienable; rights that are not given or earned, but inherent by virtue of being a human being. They are also universal – not determined by territory or creed. They are regarded as fundamental human rights because of their great importance for the individual, the citizen, and the state. Generally, scholars and international conventions have looked at human rights from 'virtually the same' perspectives, other than the differences in nomenclatures. To this end, [9], posits that:

"fundamental rights are those subjective rights which belong to the citizens and are essential for their life, liberty, dignity and freedom, indispensable for the free development of human personality, the rights which are enshrined in the Constitution and are warranted by the Constitution and the laws" (p. 2)."

To [10] "the expression human rights refer to the inalienable and imprescriptible rights of the human being" (p. 1). According to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights [11], "human rights are rights a person has because they are human" (p. 4). The United Nations General Assembly's Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 asserted that "All human beings are born free and equal in rights and dignity." Broadly speaking, [12], defines human rights as:

The prerogatives conferred in the domestic law and which are recognized by the international law to each individual, in his relation with the community and the state, which express the fundamental social values and are meant to satisfy the essential human needs and lawful endeavours, in the economic, social, political, cultural and historical context of a certain society.

Rule of law

The Declaration adopted on 24 September 2012 by the United Nations General Assembly at the High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law at the National and International Levels reaffirmed that "human rights, the rule of law and democracy are interlinked and mutually reinforcing and that they belong to the universal and indivisible core values and principles of the United Nations" [13]. Indeed, government responsiveness to the interests and needs of the greatest number of citizens is strictly associated with the capacity of democratic institutions and processes to bolster the dimensions of rights, equality and accountability. If considered not solely an instrument of the government but as a rule to which the entire society, including the government, is bound, the rule of law is fundamental in advancing democracy. Strengthening the rule of law has to be approached not only by focusing on the application of norms and procedures [14]. One must also emphasize its fundamental role in protecting rights and advancing inclusiveness, in this way framing the protection of rights within the broader discourse on human development.

Social Media and citizenship participation

In this age of information systems, social media plays a pivotal role in communication and organizational transformation due to social networking. The year 2000 saw the emergence of many social networking sites that facilitated interactions of people with common interests, thus affecting how organizations are run [15]. [16], also posits that with the rise in technology, and in particular mobile technologies, considerable scale interaction between individuals arose, and interactivity took centre stage in new media functions. In addition, instant feedback became possible, and citizens who used to have limited and somewhat muted voices could now share their opinions and contribute to good governance. Furthermore, social groups now exist where members share values and beliefs and can collaborate as team members, share workload, keep up-to date with the latest developments, interact with leaders and resolve conflicts, resulting in better outcomes as compared to individual effort [15]. However, [15], opine that it is not easy to quantify the gains of social media, especially in terms of good governance. They argue that despite the fact that people can take part in conversations, discuss and contribute on social media sites, users can manipulate comments, introduce errors and manipulate data for personal or business gain. Social media has contributed to the development of governments due to citizens' participation in government since it creates public awareness and interactions between people and the government [17]. In Kenya, many public officers and organizations, especially government departments, use social media. For example, the President of Kenya explained that he engages with Kenyan citizens at a personal level through his social media accounts to discuss

matters of national importance by reading and responding to comments and questions addressed through social media by citizens on various issues [18].

Social media and rule of law

One of the objects of a newspaper is to understand the popular feeling and give expression to it, another is to arouse among the people certain desirable sentiments; the third is fearlessly to expose popular defects"-Mahatma Gandhi. The foregoing statement by Gandhi explains the importance of media in upholding freedom, and in expanding education and social reforms and change. Media can inform people giving them the voice to be heard and heeded to. Democracy requires that people should have the right to know the activities of the government, especially the decision of the government that affects their life, liberty and property. Information is important for people to make choices regarding their participation in the State, the market and the civil society. Sufficient information helps people to decide rationally and take the right course of action beneficial to them. Media-both print and electronic-thus helps people to know what is happening around the world, socialize them with the values of pluralism and equip them with the elements of modernity. By publicizing information the media also make public services more responsive to the people. A responsible media equally helps in socialization of people into citizenship, democratization of the State and political society, institutionalization of civic culture through unfettered flow of information, and rationalized use of power in social relations. The relationship between media and good governance is the 2005 theme for the UNESCO World Press Freedom Day. On a day we celebrate the commitment and dedication of a particular individual to defend the right of freedom of expression, it is appropriate to examine the notion of good governance in the light of this right and its sister right, the right of access to information. The United Nations Millennium Declaration represents the strongest unanimous and explicit statement to date of UN Member States in support of democratic and participatory governance. The declaration clearly articulates that the Millennium Development Goals must be achieved through good governance within each country and at the international level. It also states that Member States "will spare no effort to promote democracy and strengthen the rule of law"

Social media and fundamental human right

The use of social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and blogs, among others, has created considerable impact on the roles of traditional mass media in the world today. According to [19], up until 2008, the world witnessed an upsurge in social media sites, which caused traditional media outlets to suffer a setback. Consequently, social media has progressively influenced how communication occurs within organizations. Thus, organizations, as well as the government, cannot ignore social media if they are to expect good results. [20], are in agreement that traditional media involves participation among a small number of selected representatives or stakeholders in governance. These participants were required to be present in a physical place at a particular time, thereby resulting in many problems, such as lack of inclusion and the inflexibility of participation. Recently, this situation has changed, and scholars, planners, and policymakers have turned their attention toward social media in order to overcome the problems of traditional participation methods and, in particular, its increasing use in planning to include citizen participation [20]. The state develops two-way interactions or digital participation systems to increase citizens' participation, improve accountability and accommodate feedback [21]. However, [22] states that as much as social media has a great potential to be used for good governance purposes, this potential remains unexploited in most contexts. He argues that many governments are using e-government strategies and disseminating information through online channels but not soliciting citizen feedback. Where there are two-way channels, it is unclear whether citizen feedback is acted upon or not. There is promising evidence that social media improves the transparency of organizations and government ministries, but there is less evidence on whether this improves accountability [22]. [23], also opines that despite the presence of various approaches by governments to social media and social media analytics in international practice, the impact of social media on public administration is of no doubt. He argues that there are still pending issues surrounding the building of mutual communication between government bodies and citizens, the role played by social media in enabling feedback between government and citizens in an e-government context, the application of social media in e-government, and the transformation of administrative mechanisms using social media channels. Governments in the East African region are increasingly using social media. In Kenya, for instance, social media have been used in government planning to gain public opinions, distribute information, and support citizen participation in planning practices. Nevertheless, few studies have been conducted in East Africa to understand the influence of social media in local contexts and the extent to which its use can enhance citizen power and inclusion in good governance.

Theoretical Framework

Agenda setting theory by [24]

This study is laid on agenda setting theory by [24], in 1922. The origin of agenda setting theory (AST) is attributed to Walter Lippmann in 1922 and popularized by McCombs and Shaw in 1972 [25]. Lippmann expressed his concern on the vital role that mass media can play in influencing the setting of certain image on the public's mind. The major assumption of the theory is that the mass media sets agenda for people to follow [26].

Under the agenda setting theory, the mass media is believed not to possess the ability to set the public agenda especially in matters of opinions or attitudes [27]. What the media does is to contribute to or influence the audience's perceptions, values, focus and priorities [25]. According to [28], influence from the mass media makes the media audiences tend to form their own opinion or focus on those issues that are considered as worthy of inclusion on their mental agendas. This is evident on the manner in which such mass media perpetuates such agenda: the priority given to events, the frequency and place of placement contribute a lot to influencing the mass media audience. The agenda that mass media influences the masses about emanates from the public and polity. In his study, [25], found that the agenda setting of mass media can be derived from the public agenda. The said agenda setting can also be set up through government's policy or by politicians. This idea was first articulated by McCombs & Weaver in 1973 [29] that explanation of an agenda-setting function of the press must have bearing with the relevant social and personal characteristics that mediate such an effect. In that 1973 study, McCombs and Weaver added a new perspective to the study of the theory; namely, need for orientation (NFO). They defined need for orientation as a "combination of relevance and uncertainty, such that low levels of relevance led directly to low levels of NFO, a high level of relevance coupled with low uncertainty led to a moderate level of NFO, and a high level of relevance coupled with high uncertainty led to a high level of NFO" [29]. In a comprehensive analysis of the psychology of agenda-setting effects, [30], conclude that NFO is only one part of the answer to the question of why agenda setting occurs. They review recent research that outlines a second way to answer the why question by describing the psychological processes that lead to agenda setting effects, including accessibility and applicability. They conclude that those who use media more passively have lower levels of NFO than those actively using media, and those with "moderate-active" NFO (high relevance and low uncertainty) use partisan media more than those with a high level of NFO (high relevance and high uncertainty). Because of this pattern, they speculate that those with a moderate-active level of NFO may be motivated by directional goals and those with high NFO by accuracy goals. Application of agenda setting theory goes beyond mass communication to other fields especially within the range of social sciences and many other public sphere discourse [31], [32], [33] and [34]. This idea seems to be supported by [29], when they assert that the widespread diffusion of social media, agenda-setting theory can be applied to a much wider array of channels and more easily to an array of content extending far beyond the traditional focus on public affairs. Also [31], opine that in a world of evolving digital media and online publics, the dynamics of issue agendas are becoming more complex. The emergence of social media has generated renewed attention to the reverse agenda-setting idea. The growth of the theory is on the exponential axis as [36], in a recent review made note of the existence of over 400 agenda-setting studies. The theory discusses how the mass media influences in making a certain issue as a public agenda. The public agenda is the main focus or prime issue which the members of the society or public concern about.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

This is the statistical presentation of the respondents' view to the research question.

Test of Hypotheses

The hypotheses were tested using the chi-square statistical tool

Hypothesis I

H0: Facebook has no significant effect in enhancing citizenship participation in Enugu Metropolis

Table 1 was used for testing hypothesis I

Effect of facebook in enhancing citizenship participation in Enugu Metroplis	Frequency	Percent
Facebook provide a platform for citizens to engage in politics and civil issues, regardless of geographical locations	87	21.75
Facebook enables rapid sharing of information, news and updates on civil issues	78	19.50
Facebook facilitate mobilization of citizens around social causes and political movement	71	17.75
Facebook groups and pages provide spaces for citizens to connect, discuss, and organize around shared interest	102	25.50
Facebook provide a platform for underrepresented groups to express themselves and reach a wider audience	62	15.50
Total	400	100

Source: Researchers' field survey 2025

Table 2: Chi Square table for testing Hypothesis I

O	E	(O-e)	(O-e) ²	(O-e) ² E
87	80	7	49	0.51
78	80	-2	4	0.05
71	80	-9	81	1.01
102	80	22	484	6.05
62	80	18	324	4.05
400				11.67

Table value = 5.991, calculated value = 11.67

Decision: Since the calculated value (11.67) is greater than the table value (5.99), the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that facebook has significant positive effect in enhancing citizenship participation in Enugu Metropolis

Hypothesis II

H0: Whatapps has no significant effect in promoting fundamental human right in Enugu Metropolis

Table 3: used for testing hypothesis II

Effect of Whatapps in promoting fundamental human right in Enugu Metropolis	Frequency	Percent
WhatsApp enables users to express themselves freely, share information, and communicate with others	98	24.50
whatApp facilitate access to news, updates and information on human right issues	83	20.75
whatApp groups and messaging enable mobilization and organization around human right causes	56	14
whatApp can be used to document human right abuses, providing evidence of advocacy and accountability	98	24.50
whatApp provide a platform for marginalized communities to connect, share and experience, and support one another	65	16.25
Total	400	100

Source: Researchers' Field Survey, 2025.

Table 4: Chi Square table for testing Hypothesis II

O	E	(O-e)	(O-e) ²	(O-e) ² E
98	80	18	324	4.05
83	80	3	9	0.11
56	80	-24	576	7.2
98	80	18	324	4.05
65	80	-15	225	2.81
400				18.22

Table value = 5.991, calculated value = 11.67

Decision: Since the calculated value (18.22) is greater than the table value (5.99), the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that WhatApps has positive significant effect in promoting fundamental human right in Enugu Metropolis.

Hypothesis III**H0: Instagram has no significant effect in promoting rule of law in Enugu Metropolis****Table 5 was used for testing hypothesis III**

Effect of Instagram in promoting rule of law in Enugu Metropolis	Frequency	Percent
Instagram can raise awareness about legal issues, rights and social justice causes	87	21.75
Instagram's visual format can effectively communicate complex legal concept and stories thereby enhancing rule of law	78	19.50
Instagram can facilitate engagement and discussion around legal issues, promoting public awareness and understanding of rule of law	71	17.75
Instagram can be used to hold institutions and individual accountable for their actions	102	25.50
Instagram can provide a platform for marginalized communities to share their experiences and perspectives on legal issues	62	15.50
Total	400	100

Source: Researchers' field survey 2025**Table 6: Chi Square table for testing Hypothesis III**

O	E	(O-e)	(O-e)²	(O-e)² E
87	80	7	49	0.51
78	80	-2	4	0.05
71	80	-9	81	1.01
102	80	22	484	6.05
62	80	18	324	4.05
400				11.67

Table value = 5.991, calculated value = 11.67

Decision: Since the calculated value (11.67) is greater than the table value (5.99), the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that Instagram has positive significant effect in promoting rule of law in Enugu Metropolis.

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The findings of this study could be summarized as follows

1. Facebook has positive significant effect in enhancing citizenship participation in Enugu Metropolis
2. WhatsApps has positive significant effect in promoting fundamental human right in Enugu Metropolis
3. Instagram has positive significant effect in promoting rule of law in Enugu Metropolis.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, the study draws the conclusion that social media has the potential to significantly enhance good governance by promoting transparency, accountability, citizen participation, and inclusivity. By leveraging social media platforms, governments and institutions can increase access to information, foster open communication, and encourage citizen engagement. Social media can also facilitate the dissemination of accurate information, support fact-checking, and promote education and awareness about governance. Ultimately, the role of social media in enhancing good governance is not a replacement for traditional governance structures, but rather a complementary tool to augment and strengthen democratic processes. By embracing social media and its potential, governments and institutions can move closer to achieving the principles of good governance, including transparency, accountability, and citizen participation.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made;

1. Government and institutions should use social media to share information, data and decision to promote transparency and accountability
2. Government and institutions should integrate the use of social media in ascertaining public opinions, and consequently provide timely respond
3. Social media platform should be accessible and usable for all citizens regardless of social, economic and cultural background.

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CITE AS: Egwuagu Uloma Bridget, Anikeze Nnaemeka Hillary and Chukwu Chinaza Emmanuella (2025). The Role of Social Media in Enhancing Good Governance in Enugu State, 2015-2023. *IAA JOURNAL OF COMMUNICATION* 11(1):78-86. <https://doi.org/10.59298/IAAJC/2025/1117886>