Analysis of Routine Use and Interactivity of South West States' Governors on Twitter

[1]Badmus Idowu Rasheed, [2]Mustapha, LambeKayode, Phd and [3]Okaiyeto, Simon Ayodele

[1,2]Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Communication and Information Sciences, University of Ilorin, Nigeria

[3]Mass Communication Department, Salem University, Lokoja, Nigeria

Abstract

The study investigates the routine use and interactivity of South-west states' governors on Twitter. Within its default asymmetrical setting which set it aside from its competitors, Twitter has emerged as another influential platform of political communication in recent times and a growing body of literature has pointed to its increasing use by politicians and general public across different countries of the world, though the bulk of these studies focused on Twitter used by politicians during election campaign period. Focusing on twitter use during non-election period, tweets by these political office holders over a three-month period were investigated in this study through Twitters' Application programming Interface (API) and were content analyzed quantitatively. Findings show ample routine usage of the Internet by these governors, though the pattern of tweeting revealed a top-down communication approach and less of dialogue and interaction. Hence, it was recommended that these governors should factor in more elements of interaction in their twitter.

***Keywords**: Twitter, Interactivity, Governors, South West*

Introduction

Amongst the array of digital communication tools characterizing and redefining 21st century's media landscape, Facebook and Twitter have been largely feted as a 'politically transformative communication technology' (Hong & Nadler, 2011) with vast promises in hosting new frontier of interconnectedness among actors in a political communication triangle within national and supranational milieu . The latter, a microblogging service and social networking site which allowsfor message not more than 280 to be posted instantly with various multimedia contents, has increasingly become popular over the last few years. As at

February 2019, Twitter announced that it has 126 million daily active users (Shaban,2019). And as a result of its architecture which is seen as simulating interpersonal communication, mass conversation and deliberation, Twitter has blended seamlessly into the political communication media of many countries while also attracting hordes of politicians for variety of reasons and gratifications. And in linewith thisthis diffusion of microblogging in politics, studies have been conducted as to the use of Twitter for variouspolitical purposes such as electioneering campaign(Jungherr, 2016; Kruikemeier, 2014; Anders Olof Larsson & Moe, 2014), political sentiments and election predictions(Bermingham & Smeaton, 2011; Burnap, Gibson, Sloan, Southern, & Williams, 2016; Chung & Mustafaraj, 2011), constituency communication(Golbeck, Grimes, & Rogers, 2010; Gulati & Williams, 2010; Hemphill & Roback, 2014; Mergel, 2012), routine use by politicians(Aharony, 2012; Grant, Moon, & Grant, 2010; Kreis, 2017; Pal, Chandra, & Vydiswaran, 2016), Twitter as sources of political news(Broersma & Graham, 2013; Moon & Hadley, 2014; Verweij, 2012), and others. However, the common denominators in these studies about Twitter use in politics revolves around the microblogging service resourcefulness in promoting increased political engagement and political mobilization as well as thecontinuous adoption of Twitter by key agents of political communication (Politicians, Media/journalists, and the Citizens in communicating politics.

In advanceddemocracies, politicians having a twitter account as one of their primary means of informing and engaging with citizens and media is fast becoming a rule rather than an exception (Bursten-Marstellar, 2014; Cook, 2017). Few days after being elected as the President of the United States, Donald Trump, one of the most popular and mostfollowed political leaders on the Microblogging platform openly endorsed Twitter as a powerful means of communication by saying that 'it's a great form of Communication…it does get the word out…I think it helped me win all of these races' (Stahl in Cook, 2017, p.2). In essence, Politicians, just like the general public, in Americaand other advanceddemocracies have increasingly adopted Twitter and this is

understandable given that the traditions of digital media use in a given political system may possibly affect politicians use of such media as well(Graham, Jackson, & Broersma, 2016). However, extant studies have shown that Twitter use among these politicians isstill largely patternedalong one-way transmission of information against interactive, dialogic and engaging use of the medium(Burgess & Bruns, 2012; Glassman, Straus, & Shogan, 2009; Grant et al., 2010; Jackson & Lilleker, 2011; Larsson & Moe, 2012; D. Lilleker & Jackson, 2014; Lilleker & Malagón, 2010; Small, 2010, 2011).

In Nigeria, Twitter is queuing behind Facebook in termsof usage. However, it is arguable that the political engagement on Twitter is very high and outweighsthat of Facebook. From Political activism heralded by #Bringbackourgirl campaign to *E-protest* against policies of government, and even actions or inactions of politicians, Twitter has become a hotbed of political discussion among Nigerian netizens. In recent times, twitter based hashtags and conversations have driven climate of public opinion on political, economic and social issues of common concerns. Also, with twitter, it has become possible for ordinary Nigerians to get their message across to political office holders by tweetingdirectly at them. Within this transformative role of Twitter in citizens–politiciansrelationship, it is arguable that politicians in the country are gradually adopting Twitter not only as an election campaign tool but as one of the primary mediums of interaction with their supporters and the public at large (Opeibi, 2019). However, the bulk of the empirical studies beaming searchlight on the use of Twitter by politicians in the country focused more on the use of the Medium for electioneering purpose(Ezeh & Mboso, 2019; Ifukor, 2010).In a country where the tone of the crisis of democracy is attributable to the continuous disconnection between the political office holders and the electorates after periodic but short election-campaign imposed *romance*, there is no doubt that Twitter's successful model of connecting ordinary citizens to powerful and influential figures (Graham, Broersma, Hazelhoff, & Van'T Haar, 2013) offers a lifeline in bridging the existing cleavage between the politicians and the citizens. Invariably, if we are to say that "

to the extent that the (Nigerian) democracy needs saving, the new generation of interactive digital communication technologies (such as twitter) arrived just in time to help"(Westen, 1998, p. 56), then it is imperative that we look at the Twitter use among politicians in the country as politicians constitute one of the purveyorsof political communication and potential driversof conversations through which people cross-fertilize ideas to discover their common problem, opportunities, and concerns.

Statement of the Research Problem

Twitter, though a relatively new social media platform has become deeply immersed in the political communication of many countries as it offers a novel way of connecting ordinary citizens to political office holders. And as a result of the growing importance of this medium in politics, a number of studies have lookedat Twitter from different prismsand contextsof politics. While a large body of studies have lookedat Twitter use in electoral campaign (Jungherr, 2016; Anders Olof Larsson & Moe, 2012), a substantial number of studies(Aharony, 2012; Grant et al., 2010; N. Jackson & Lilleker, 2011; Mergel, 2012; Pal et al., 2016; Rauchfleisch & Metag, 2016) have looked at politicians use of the microblogging site.

However, these studies are mainly situated in the United States and European countries. In Nigeria, Twitter has been posited as animating politics and political communication in Nigeria (Opeibi, 2019) and that political office holders are hopping on to this microblogging service(Ayih & Ngantem, 2018). A study has also mapped the Twitterverse in the country with findings which suggest that Twitter usage in Nigeria is heavily skewed to the south western region as well as the capital Abuja(Fink, Kopecky, Bos, & Thomas, 2012) and that politicians are not the ones driving conversations in the Country Twittersphere (Portland Communication, 2018). While all these studies provide theoretical and empirical insights on Nigeria's Twittersphere, the actual use of Twitter by politicians in nonelection period in the country has not been adequately addressed. Politicians occupyan important angle in the triangle of political communication, which also include the

media and the citizen, and their use of social media is paramount to understanding how the digital media is changing the culture and norms of political communication in the country. Hence, relying on empirical insight from Fink, Kopecky, Bos and Thomas (2012) as to twitter use in Nigeria, the study investigatesthe routine use and interactivity of South-west states' governors on Twitteras a way of adding to the studies on the use of Twitter by politicians in the country.

Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. To what extent are southwestern states' governors using Twittter?
2. What are the patterns of Twitter use by the southwestern states' governors?
3. To what extent are southwestern states' governors interactive on Twitter?

Literature Review

Twitter and Politics

As an internet based digital communication technology for sending 140 characters or less (expanded to 280 characters in 2017) of short messages (known as tweets) instantly with various multimedia contents (Schmidt, 2004), Twitter has emerged as a leading microblogging and social networking service in the world with increasingly vast number of users. Created and launched to the public in 2006 by Jack Dorsey and associates, Twitter tagged itself as a conversational platform(Grant et al., 2010)and its default asymmetrical setting, in which users' tweets are publicly available and visible to all(Murthy, 2018), set it aside from its cohorts. Invariably, 'anyone can see a tweet and respond to it' (and) one does not even need to know the other user or have their permission to direct a tweet at them' (Murthy, 2018, p.18). Hence, Twitter simulation of this asymmetrical model of human relationship as a well as its 'open, transparent and low-threshold exchange of information and ideas' (Mareider&Aussrhoffer, 2014, p.305) makes it a digital communication tool with vast promises and paradigmshift in the conduct of political discourse. Not only is Twitter a digital interactive medium for instantaneous and

superfast dissemination of information, but it also supports mass discussion of issues of common concern (Ovadia, 2009). Hence, if democracy as a system of government hinges on a rich and all-inclusive communications environment that helps provide citizens with the motivation, ability, and opportunity to participate in various democratic processes including decision making(Shapiro, 2011), Twitter has started engendering such environment in many advanced democracies (Aharony, 2012; Golbeck et al., 2010). Specifically, twitter has become an important communication tool in election campaign(Jungherr, 2016; Kruikemeier, 2014), politicians-citizens relationship(Aharony, 2012; Grant et al., 2010; Gulati & Williams, 2010; Hemphill & Roback, 2014), political activism(Sandoval-Almazan & Gil-Garcia, 2013; Theocharis, Lowe, Van Deth, & García-Albacete, 2015), politicians –media interaction(Moon & Hadley, 2014; Parmelee, 2013; Verweij, 2012) as well as mass political discussion and discursive participation (Bruns & Burgess, 2011; Bruns & Highfield, 2015; M. Kim & Park, 2012; Thimm, Dang-Anh, & Einspänner, 2014; Upadhyay, 2014). Unarguably, extant literature points to widespread twitter use in politics across different countries of the world.

The growing use of Twitter in politics becomes plausible considering the different formsof communicative flow affordable by the technology and architecture of the medium. In their conceptual model of communication flows on Twitter, Brunsand Moe (2014) identified interconnected layers of communication on medium as ‘micro level of interpersonal communication; meso-level of follower-followee networks, and the macro level of hashtag-based exchanges’ (p.16)

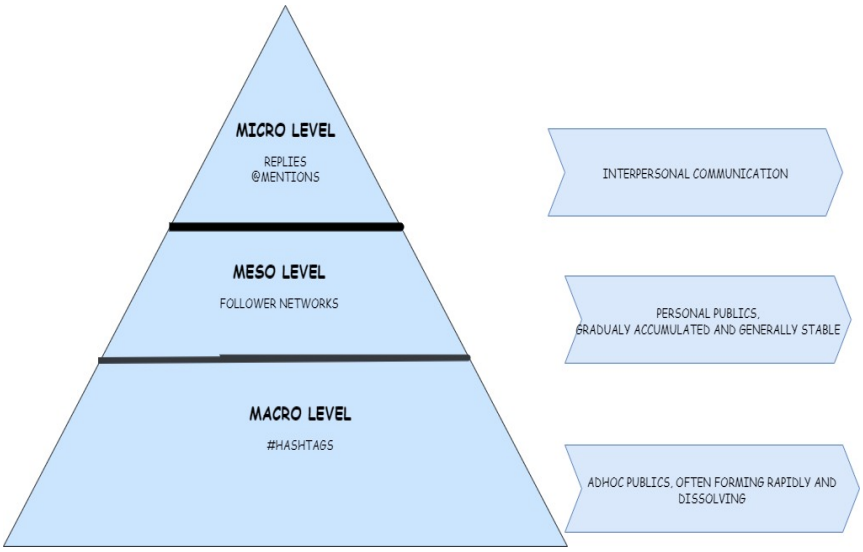

Figure 1: Layers of Communication on Twitter (source: Bruns& Moe, 2014,p.20)

As depicted in figure 1, at the micro level of communicative activities on the medium, a twitter user attemptsto initiate a conversation with another twitter user by using @mention (username of a twitter user preceded by '@' syntax). This is known as tweeting at another user and the mentioned user can respond to such tweet, 'multi-turn exchanges of can through this is one of the primary ways through which twitter facilitate 'interaction across discreet social networks' (Murthy, 2018, p. 5). This level of information flow on twitter is analogous to interpersonal communication involving two or more participants within an environment with a lot of bystanders (Bruns& Moe, 2014).

The meso level of communicative activity on twitter revolves around the follower-followee information flow and networks. Twitter architecture permitsusers to follow one another. And for a user to follow another user means the follower user is subscribing to the stream of updates emanating from the followed user. Following is not compulsorily symmetrical as one user can follow another user without the followed user following the followee user. Nonetheless, tweets posted by a user will reach other users

following the account. While tweets is public and is accessible to anybody browsing through the source's profile page on twitter, 'the primary intended audience for standard tweets posted by a regular Twitter user is constituted by the account's followers' (Bruns& Moe, 2014, p.17).

In essence, the flow of updates from a user to its followers constitute the meso layer of communication flow on Twitter and such flow is analogous to making a public statement to a gathering or network of friends, acquaintances, supporters, and admirers, all which could be regarded as the followed user's 'personal public' (Schmidt, 20104). Macro level of communicative flow on twitter involves hastagged exchange which is a form of tweeting that use a keyword or words preceded by syntax '#'to extend or narrow the range of tweet addressees (Bruns& Moe, 2014). Hasthtags represent a marker or tagger labeling tweets as being relevant or connected to a specific topic, issue or event, and such hashtag also makes a stream of tweets on these specificities discoverable to other users. Additionally, the wrapping of tweets with hashtags implies that such tweet could potentially reach numbers of users outside an originating user's network of followers. Hashtag then are 'integral part of Twitter's ability to link the conversations of strangers together'(Murthy, 2018, p. 4).

Intrinsically, hashtagged exchanges represent a wider communicative activity on twitter while also aiding assembly of ad hoc issues public contributing to the issue or topic at hand (Bruns & Burgess, 2011). It is analogous to a speech or address in a public gathering consisting of participants who may not necessarily be acquaintances but are brought together by a common idea, concern, issue or interest. It is pertinent to note that these key layers of communication on Twitter donot exist in isolation of one another as they are interconnected while the architecture of the medium also made provision for users to crisscross from one layer to another using syntax such as @reply, RT, and even '#' (Bruns& Moe, 2014).In addition to these layers of communicative activity permissible by the architecture of twitter, the medium also boastsof algorithm-driven trending topics, phrase or word customizable by

location or who a user follows. Atopic, phrase or word is trending when a backend twitter algorithm calculate such topics, words or phrases as being mentioned and tweeted about than others. Twitter trend is then analogous to major news headlines or prevailing agenda relative to a user's location and followers in the Twittersphere.

It is the ability of Twitter to facilitate these range of communicative activities that is driving the medium to the heart of political communication in many part of the world. Specifically, Twitter as a platform for public communication with a continuum of 'public-ness' (Bruns& Moe, 2014) underlined the wide range of Twitter applications in politics and political communication.

In Nigeria, Twitter is fast becoming one of the political communication media in the country as it has attracted considerable numbers of users comprisedof citizens, politicians and others(Ayih & Ngantem, 2018; Fink et al., 2012; Opeibi, 2019). According to *How Africa tweets* 2016 report, political engagement on Twitter in the country is increasing with 2015 *#nigeriadecides*hashtagged exchanges emerging as the most popular hashtag from Africa as at that time.

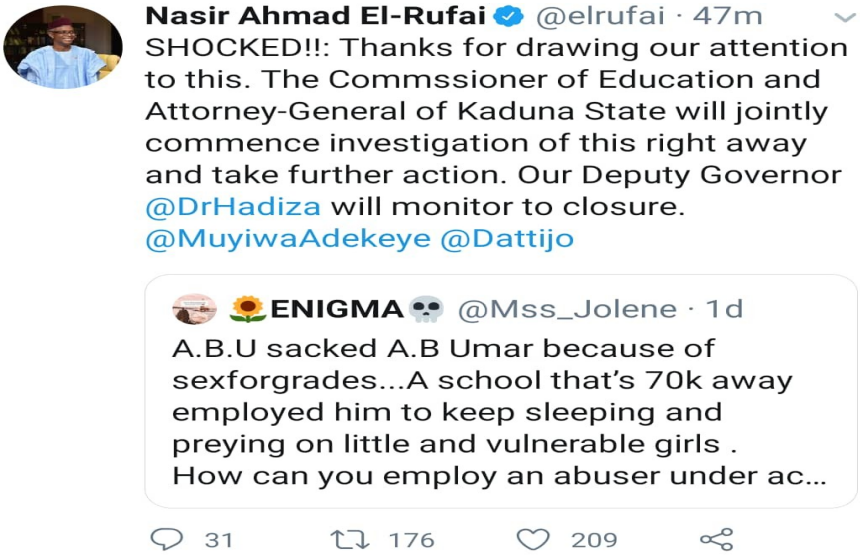

Fig 2: Example of ordinary Nigerians Contacting political office holders on Twitter (source: Twitter.com)

While it is arguable that Nigerian politicians and political office holders' main motive of hopping to the Twitter revolves around election and electioneering campaigns, the increasing use of twitter in politics by ordinary Nigerians is explainable considering that the tone of the crisis of democracy in Nigeria is attributable to the continuous disconnection between the political office holders and the electorates especially in non-election years. Hence, with its architecture through which anybody can tweet at or mention any political office holders with profile on the medium, Twitter comes with vast promises in bridging the huge cleavage between the electorate and the politic office holders in non-election years. In recent times, it is not uncommon of Nigerians tweeting and mentioning president, governors, senators and house of assembly members although, only few of such political office holders do respond to such tweets (see an example in fig. 2). Relatedly, Twitter, through hashtagged exchanges, has also facilitated mass conversation by Nigerians on issues of common concerns en-route crystallization of public opinion vociferous enough to demand action from policymakers. Amidst other topical hashtags which havemoved climate of public opinion and forceaction on the part of policy makers in the country is theconspicuous example –the globally reverberated #bringbackourgirls campaign which advocated for government in Nigeria and around the world to do more in getting the abducted *Chibok girls* released. In essence, the few available studies point to the increasing use of Twitter in Nigerian politics by key actors.

Twitter Use by Politicians: a Theoretical Perspective

In recent times, politicians have relatively taken up Twitter as an integral component of their communication strategies (Newman, 2010) and a number of studies have attested to the continuous use of twitter by politicians (Aharony, 2012; Bursten-Marstellar, 2014; Chi & Yang, 2011; Cook, 2017; Golbeck et al., 2010; Grant et al., 2010; Jackson & Lilleker, 2011; Jungherr, 2016; Pal et al., 2016; Rauchfleisch & Metag, 2016). While the increasing popularity of

Twitter in politics has mainly being attributed to its ability in linking up politicians and electorates (Grant et al., 2010; Mergel, 2012), it is pertinent to note that the use of twitter by politicians is motivated by different aims and theories such as uses and gratification theory (Katz, Blumler, &Gurevitch, 1974) and Unified theory of acceptance and use of Technology (Venkatesh, Morris, Davis, & Davis, 2003) which have certain explanatory power as to the use of Twitter by politicians.Uses and gratification theory evolved from the functional analysis school of thought (a sociological paradigm of 1950s and 1960s) and its attempt to explain ways in which individuals use communication media, among other resources in their environment, to satisfy their needs and to achieve their goals (Katz, Blumler, &Gurevitch, 1974). In other word, uses and gratification theory seeks to explain why certain individualsusecertain medium of communication and why they use those media to fulfill certain needs.The basic assumptions underlying the uses-and-gratifications model according to Katz, Blumler, andGurevitch (1974) are (1) The audience is active and its media use is goal-oriented (2) and that the initiative in linking need gratification to a specific media choice rests with theaudience member while (3) the media compete with other sources of need satisfaction. Uses and gratification theory has been found to be suitable in explaining audience use and behaviour to social media (Baran& Davis, 2010). While a number of study investigating twitter use during election have identified election-related motives as the overwhelming gratification for use of Twitter(Conway, Kenski, & Wang, 2013; Graham et al., 2013; Graham et al., 2016; Jungherr, 2016; Kruikemeier, 2014), other studies examining routine use of twitter in non-election period have identified other motives. In their study of active Swiss federal politicians' use of Twitter, Hoffman, SuphanandMeckel (2016) identified motives for social media use as promotion, information seeking and entertainment. Jackson andLilleker's (2011) study of UK members of Parliaments' use of Twitter have also identified impression management as the underlining motive for the use of the medium. Consistently, studies have shown that politicians' use of Twitter is being driven by election-related motives, information sharing and seeking motives as well as social end entertainment motives.

On the other hand, the Unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT) (Ventakesh et al., 2003) explains individual behavioral intention to use a technology and actual technology use based on four key factors (i.e., performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions) and four moderators (i.e., age, gender, experience, and voluntariness). Performance expectancy is defined as the extent to which one believes that a technology will help him or her achieve improved or advantageous performance. Effort expectancy has to do with the degree of ease associated with the use of the technology. Social influence is defined as the degree to which an individual perceives that important others believe he or she should use the technology while facilitating conditions are defined as the degree to which an individual, an organizational and technical infrastructures exist to support use of the technology(Venkatesh, Morris, Davis, & Davis, 2003, pp. 450-453).While UTAUT mainly predicted technology acceptance and use within organizational contexts, it has been found to be useful in predicting twitter use among politicians (Hoffmann, Suphan, & Meckel, 2016) andStudies have taken insights from the theory by investigating the influence of demographic characteristics and other social constructs and variables on politicians use of Twitter(Hong, Choi, & Kim, 2019; Scherpereel, Wohlgemuth, & Lievens, 2018).

In Nigeria, it is arguable that many politicians are adopting the use of social media for many communicative purpose. In 2011, former President Goodluck Jonathan became the first president in the country to appoint special adviser on new media in person of Reno Omokri, an appointment suggesting the growing importance of social media to the then President. To further buttress the increasing use of social media by Nigerian politicians, in December 2017, former vice president AbubakarAtiku announced his decision to return to his former party, PDP, via and solely through a live facebook broadcast. Also, a former senator, Ben Murray Bruce, was generally labelled a *Twitter senator* by Nigerians as a result of his use of the medium. In essence, politicians and political office holders in the country have started

blending Twitter into their public communication media as a result of varieties of gratification being sought from the medium. And it is arguable that in the years to come, factors such as social influence, performance expectancy, facilitating conditions and effort expectancy will drive more of these politicians to Twitter.

Methodology

The study uses quantitative content analysis research method to analyse tweets by the Governors of Oyo, Ogun, Osun, Lagos, Ekiti and Ondo states. We queried Twitter using its API (Application Programming Interface) and collected tweets posted by these governors from June 1st 2019 to September 30th 2019. As an exploratory study, the collected data were descriptively analyzed with tweet serving as unit of analysis. In measuring the extent of twitter use, we constructedan activity index (Anders O Larsson & Kalsnes, 2014) or average tweet per day (Aharony, 2012)by dividing the number of posts by each governor by the total number of days covered by the study. In measuring the interactivity of the governors on the medium, three content categories equivalent to the type of tweets were developed. *Replies* are tweets posted as reply to other person's tweet. Retweet representsthe sharing of other people tweet via retweet button while *Broadcast tweet* are tweets posted/broadcast to all followers. Following Larson andKalness (2014), replies category is considered interactive. Hence, interactivity was measured through the number of replies posted by each of the governors and the aggregate wasrendered as percentage of the total posts by each of the governors.

Findings

Findings show that, over the period of 122 days (June – September 2019), the governors of the six southwestern states of Oyo, Lagos, Ekiti, Ogun, Osun and Ondo tweeted 1,300 times with mean activity index of 1.9 tweets per day. As depicted in table 1, the governor of OgunState has the highest activity index by averaging 3.74 tweets per day while the governor of EkitiState has the least activity index with average of 0.8 tweet per day.

Table 1. Breakdown of tweets according to Governors

	Number of Tweets	Numberof Tweeting days	Activity Index
SeyiMakinde (Oyo)	279	122	2.29
JideSanwoolu (Lagos)	224	122	1.84
KayodeFayemi (Ekiti)	10	122	0.8
DapoAbiodun (Ogun)	456	122	3.74
GboyegaOyetola (osun)	149	122	1.22
RotimiAkeredolu (Ondo)	182	122	1.49

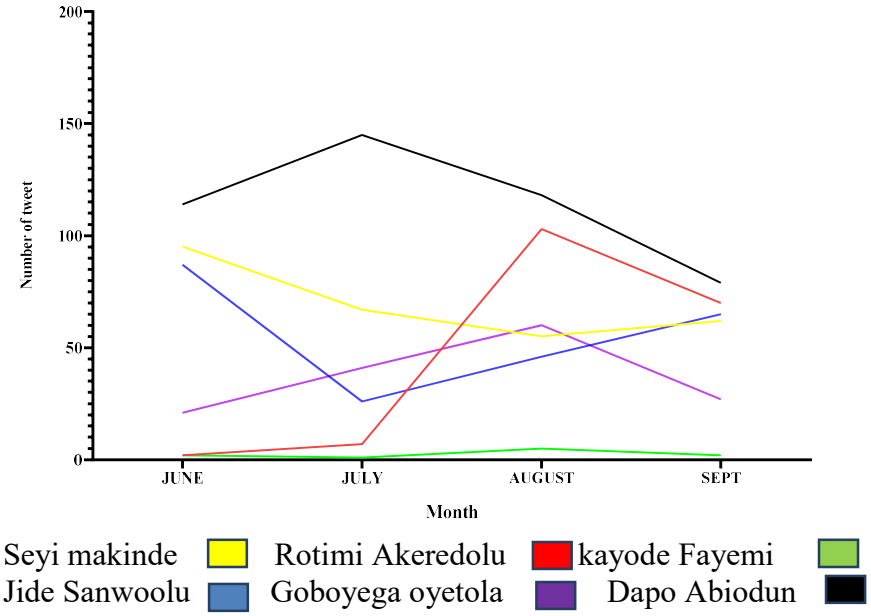

Figure 3. Trend analysis of the southwestern states' governor over 4 month periods

The pattern of tweeting over the four months period (Figure 4) reveals that the governors tweeted more inAugust (M=64.5) and June (M-53.5) than September (50.8) andJuly (M=47.8). More so, as shown in figure 5, these governors tweets more on Thursdays (M=37.17), Tuesdays (M=36.17),Saturdays (M=36.17) and Fridays (M=34.83) than Sundays (M=18.83), Wednesdays (M=24.83) and Mondays (M=28.67).

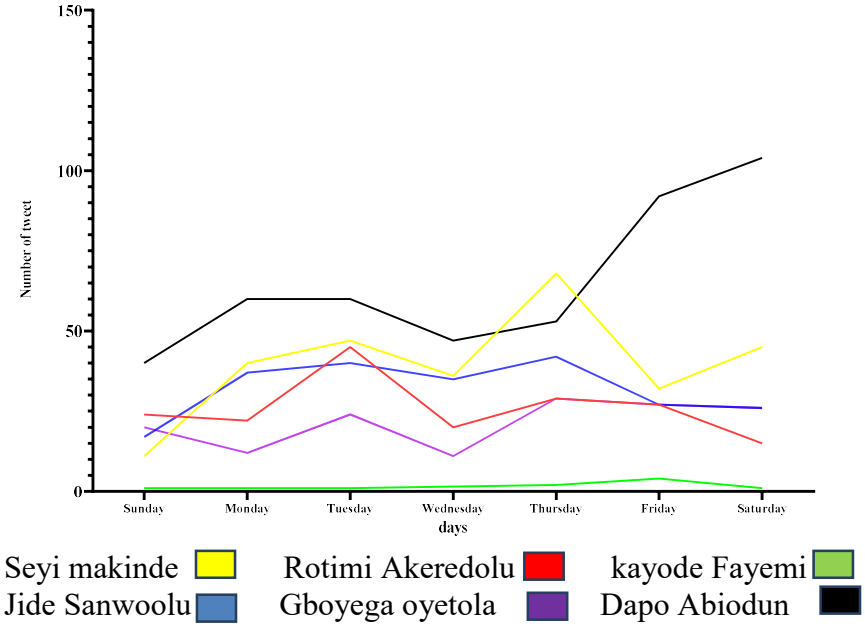

Figure 4: Tweets by southwestern states Governors according to days of the week

Findings also show that the bulk of the governors tweets with multimedia, the bulk of which are pictures (table 2), thereby suggestive that governors' tweets are more of pictorial self-promotion and image management. The pattern of usage as depicted in table 3 also reveals that the governors largely used twitter mobile apps (Twitter for androids and Twitter for Iphone) in tweeting the overwhelming majority of the tweets. Specifically the governors of Lagos, Ogun, Ekiti and Osun used mobile devices 100% to tweets over the period analyzed while the governors of Oyo and Ondo State used web clients (which could have been accessed via computer or mobile devices) for lesser percentage of their tweets.

Table 2. Type of Multimedia Tweeted

	Text only	Text with Pictures	Text with video	Total
SeyiMakinde (Oyo)	84 (30.11%)	195 (69.89%)	-	279(100%)
JideSanwoolu (Lagos)	42 (18.75%)	179 (79.91%)	3(1.34%)	224(100%)
KayodeFayemi (Ekiti)	6 (60%)	4 (40%)	-	10(100%)
DapoAbiodun (Ogun	298 (65.35%)	151 (33.11%)	-	456(100%)
GboyegaOyetola (osun)	29 (19.46%)	116 (77.85%)	4(2.68%)	149(100%)
RotimiAkeredolu (Ondo)	57 (31.32%)	115 (63.19%)	10 (5.49%)	182(100%)

Table 3. Twitter Clients (devices) used in tweeting

	Web Clients	**Mobile Clients**	**Total**
SeyiMakinde (Oyo)	97(35%)	182(65%)	279(100%)
JideSanwoolu (Lagos)	-	224(100%	224(100%)
KayodeFayemi (Ekiti)	-	10(100%)	10(100%)
DapoAbiodun (Ogun	-	456(100%)	456(100%)
GboyegaOyetola (osun)	-	149 (100%)	149(100%)
RotimiAkeredolu (Ondo)	89(48%)	93(52%	182(100%

Table 4. Level of intercativity of the southwestern states' governors on Twitter

	Reply (%)	Retweet (%)	Broadcast Tweet (%)	Total (%)
SeyiMakinde (Oyo)	131 (46.95%)	38(13.62%)	110(39.43)	279(100%)
JideSanwoolu (Lagos)	38 (16.96%)	50(22.32%)	136(60.71)	224(100%)
KayodeFayemi (Ekiti)	-	1(10%)	9(90%)	10(100%)
DapoAbiodun (Ogun	229 (50.22%)	32 (7.02)	195(42.76)	456(100%)
GboyegaOyetola (osun)	22(14.77%)	37(24.83)	90(60.40%	149(100%)
RotimiAkeredolu (Ondo)	20 (10.99%)	121(66.48)	41(22.53&	182(100%)

Using the type of tweet posted as a measureof intercativity on Twitter, findings as depicted in table 4 show that only the governor of Ogun State is averagely interactive on Twitter as 50.22 % of all his tweets are replies to other people tweets. Oyo State governor too has 46.95% of all his tweets as replies while the overwhelming majority of 4 governors' tweets are linear or top down communication comprisedof tweets and retweets

Discussion

Findings from the study provide an insight into the increasingly use of Twitter by politicians as core component of their public communication media in Nigeria. Results from the studies indicate that governors of the south western states are using twitter in their day-to-day communication outreach to the public with a twitter activity index ranging from 3.74 to 0.8 tweets and mean score of 1.9 tweets.Considering that these Governors have state-owned broadcast media as available and highly acessible means of public communication and that the period of study is a non-election period, their use of twitter is impressive. Though other studies have reported higher activities index for politicians in other climes (Aharony, 2012; Grant et al., 2010; Anders O Larsson & Kalsnes, 2014; Rauchfleisch & Metag, 2016), it is important to note that the use of Twitter by these governors suggest that politicians and political office holders are recognizing Twitter as a useful tool in political communication, though we are careful not to make any inferences based on this finding as the study is exploratory in nature. Also just like ordinary Nigerians, findings also show that the twitter use by these executives is being powered by mobile devices. As at June 2019, 122, 292,079 Nigerians subscribed to the Internet via GSM (NCC, 2019). The implcation of this mobile devices driven Twitter use lies in the ability of such hand held devices to even reinvigorate the use of Twitter by these Governors.However, findingsshow that the governors studied tend to broadcast tweets more than interacting and engaging with the public via replies. Though the governors of Ogun and Oyo are exception to this observed pattern, the overall findings paint a picture of the use of twitter in a top-down or linear approach by these governors. Earlier studies(Grant et al., 2010; N. Jackson

&Lilleker, 2011; Jackson & Lilleker, 2004; Lilleker & Jackson, 2014)have also reported similar top-down approach of the use of Twitter. Considering that Twitter and its cohorts are largely being feted for engendering real time interaction between the representatives and the represented and that 'democratic participation must involve both the means to be informed and deliberative mechanism to take part in the decision making'(Elliman, Macintosh, & Irani, 2007, p. 33), then a one-way use of Twitter by politicians is not in line with the expectation of cyber-optimists who are touting social media as embedding huge democracy-reanimating potential(Boler, 2010; Coleman & Blumler, 2009; Coleman & Spiller, 2003; Dahlberg, 2001; Kim, 2006; Loveland & Popescu, 2011; Margolis & Moreno-Riaño, 2016).

Conclusion

As time goes, it is arguable the use of Twitter by politicians in the country will increase as a result of a lot of factors. While the findings of the this studyfound an encouraging use of Twitter but not too impressive use of its interactive features by the six governors studied, we are careful not to make any inferences to the general politicians in the country considering the exploratory nature of the study. However, it is pertinent that more researches beconducted in this theme of research. While it is araguable that Nigerians, atleast those in the urban areas, are increasingly factoring in Twitter as part of their everyday media of communication and information, studying the extent to which politicians are using the same medium for public communication will empirically map out the actual place of Twitter in political communication and civic engagement in the country.

References

Aharony, N. (2012). Twitter use by three political leaders: an exploratory analysis. *Online Information Review, 36*(4), 587-603.

Ayih, L. J., & Ngantem, L. M. (2018). Use of Twitter among political office holders for public communication in

Nigeria: Prospects and challenges. *Canadian Social Science, 14*(9), 37-42.

Bermingham, A., & Smeaton, A. (2011). *On using Twitter to monitor political sentiment and predict election results.* Paper presented at the Proceedings of the Workshop on Sentiment Analysis where AI meets Psychology (SAAIP 2011).

Boler, M. (2010). *Digital media and democracy: Tactics in hard times.* Mit Press.

Broersma, M., & Graham, T. (2013). Twitter as a news source: How Dutch and British newspapers used tweets in their news coverage, 2007–2011. *Journalism practice, 7*(4), 446-464.

Bruns, A., & Burgess, J. E. (2011). *The use of Twitter hashtags in the formation of ad hoc publics.* Paper presented at the Proceedings of the 6th European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR) General Conference 2011.

Bruns, A., & Highfield, T. (2015). Is Habermas on Twitter?: Social media and the public sphere. *The Routledge companion to social media and politics* (pp. 56-73). Routledge.

Burgess, J., & Bruns, A. (2012). (Not) the Twitter election: the dynamics of the# ausvotes conversation in relation to the Australian media ecology. *Journalism practice, 6*(3), 384-402.

Burnap, P., Gibson, R., Sloan, L., Southern, R., & Williams, M. (2016). 140 characters to victory?: Using Twitter to predict the UK 2015 General Election. *Electoral Studies, 41*, 230-233.

Bursten-Marstellar. (2014). Twiplomacy: Heads of State and Government and Foreign Ministers on Twitter. New York: Bursten Marstellar.

Chi, F., & Yang, N. (2011). Twitter adoption in Congress. *Review of Network Economics, 10*(1).

Chung, J. E., & Mustafaraj, E. (2011). *Can collective sentiment expressed on twitter predict political elections?* Paper presented at the Twenty-Fifth AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence.

Coleman, S., & Blumler, J. G. (2009). *The Internet and democratic citizenship: Theory, practice and policy.* Cambridge University Press.

Coleman, S., & Spiller, J. (2003). Exploring new media effects on representative democracy. *The Journal of Legislative Studies, 9*(3), 1-16.

Conway, B. A., Kenski, K., & Wang, D. (2013). Twitter use by presidential primary candidates during the 2012 campaign. *American Behavioral Scientist, 57*(11), 1596-1610.

Cook, J. M. (2017). Twitter adoption and activity in US legislatures: A 50-state study. *American Behavioral Scientist, 61*(7), 724-740.

Dahlberg, L. (2001). The Internet and democratic discourse: Exploring the prospects of online deliberative forums extending the public sphere. *Information, communication & society, 4*(4), 615-633.

Elliman, T., Macintosh, A., & Irani, Z. (2007). A model building tool to support group deliberation (eDelib): a research note. *International Journal of Cases on Electronic Commerce (IJCEC), 3*(3), 33-44.

Ezeh, N. C., & Mboso, A. G. (2019). Twitter and election campaigns: Measuring usage in Nigeria's 2015 Presidential Election. *Covenant Journal of Communication, 5*(2).

Fink, C., Kopecky, J., Bos, N., & Thomas, M. (2012). *Mapping the Twitterverse in the developing world: An analysis of social media use in Nigeria.* Paper presented at the International Conference on Social Computing, Behavioral-Cultural Modeling, and Prediction.

Glassman, M., Straus, J. R., & Shogan, C. J. (2009). *Social networking and constituent communication: Member use of Twitter during a two-week period in the 111th Congress*.

Golbeck, J., Grimes, J. M., & Rogers, A. (2010). Twitter use by the US Congress. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology, 61*(8), 1612-1621.

Graham, T., Broersma, M., Hazelhoff, K., & Van'T Haar, G. (2013). Between broadcasting political messages and interacting with voters: The use of Twitter during the 2010

UK general election campaign. *Information, communication & society, 16*(5), 692-716.

Graham, T., Jackson, D., & Broersma, M. (2016). New platform, old habits? Candidates' use of Twitter during the 2010 British and Dutch general election campaigns. *New media & society, 18*(5), 765-783.

Grant, W. J., Moon, B., & Grant, B J. (2010). Digital dialogue? Australian politicians' use of the social network tool Twitter. *Australian Journal of Political Science, 45*(4), 579-604.

Gulati, J., & Williams, C. B. (2010). Communicating with constituents in 140 characters or less: Twitter and the diffusion of technology innovation in the United States Congress. *Available at SSRN 1628247*.

Hemphill, L., & Roback, A. J. (2014). *Tweet acts: how constituents lobby congress via Twitter.* Paper presented at the Proceedings of the 17th ACM conference on Computer supported cooperative work & social computing.

Hoffmann, C. P., Suphan, A., & Meckel, M. (2016). The impact of use motives on politicians' social media adoption. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics, 13*(3), 239-256.

Hong, S., Choi, H., & Kim, T. K. (2019). Why do politicians tweet? Extremists, underdogs, and opposing parties as political tweeters. *Policy & Internet*.

Hong, S., & Nadler, D. (2011). *Does the early bird move the polls?: The use of the social media tool'Twitter'by US politicians and its impact on public opinion.* Paper presented at the Proceedings of the 12th Annual International Digital Government Research Conference: Digital Government Innovation in Challenging Times.

Ifukor, P. (2010). "Elections" or "selections"? Blogging and twittering the Nigerian 2007 general elections. *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society, 30*(6), 398-414.

Jackson, N., & Lilleker, D. (2011). Microblogging, constituency service and impression management: UK MPs and the use of Twitter. *The Journal of Legislative Studies, 17*(1), 86-105.

Jackson, N. A., & Lilleker, D. G. (2004). Just public relations or an attempt at interaction? British MPs in the press, on the web and 'in your face'. *European Journal of Communication, 19*(4), 507-533.

Jungherr, A. (2016). Twitter use in election campaigns: A systematic literature review. *Journal of Information Technology &Politics, 13*(1), 72-91.

Kim, J.-Y. (2006). The impact of Internet use patterns on political engagement: A focus on online deliberation and virtual social capital. *Information Polity, 11*(1), 35-49.

Kim, M., & Park, H. W. (2012). Measuring Twitter-based political participation and deliberation in the South Korean context by using social network and Triple Helix indicators. *Scientometrics, 90*(1), 121-140.

Kreis, R. (2017). The "tweet politics" of President Trump. *Journal of Language and Politics, 16*(4), 607-618.

Kruikemeier, S. (2014). How political candidates use Twitter and the impact on votes. *Computers in human behavior, 34*, 131-139.

Larsson, A. O., & Kalsnes, B. (2014). 'Of course we are on Facebook': Use and non-use of social media among Swedish and Norwegian politicians. *European Journal of Communication, 29*(6), 653-667.

Larsson, A. O., & Moe, H. (2012). Studying political microblogging: Twitter users in the 2010 Swedish election campaign. *New media & society, 14*(5), 729-747.

Larsson, A. O., & Moe, H. (2014). Triumph of the underdogs? Comparing Twitter use by political actors during two Norwegian election campaigns. *Sage Open, 4*(4). 2158244014559015.

Lilleker, D., & Jackson, N. (2014). Interacting and representing: can Web 2.0 enhance the roles of an MP?

Lilleker, D. G., & Malagón, C. (2010). Levels of interactivity in the 2007 French presidential candidates' websites. *European Journal of Communication, 25*(1), 25-42.

Loveland, M. T., & Popescu, D. (2011). Democracy on the Web: Assessing the deliberative qualities of Internet forums. *Information, communication & society, 14*(5), 684-703.

Margolis, M., & Moreno-Riaño, G. (2016). *The prospect of internet democracy.* Routledge.

Mergel, I. (2012). "Connecting to Congress": The use of Twitter by Members of Congress. *ZPB Zeitschrift für Politikberatung, 5*(3), 108-114.

Moon, S. J., & Hadley, P. (2014). Routinizing a new technology in the newsroom: Twitter as a news source in mainstream media. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 58*(2), 289-305.

Murthy, D. (2018). *Twitter.*Cambridge: Polity Press..

Opeibi, T. (2019). The Twittersphere as political engagement space: A study of social media usage in election campaigns in Nigeria. *Digital Studies/Le champ numérique, 9*(1).

Ovadia, S. (2009). Exploring the potential of Twitter as a research tool. *Behavioral & Social Sciences Librarian, 28*(4), 202-205.

Pal, J., Chandra, P., & Vydiswaran, V. V. (2016). Twitter and the rebranding of Narendra Modi. *Economic & Political Weekly, 51*(8), 52-60.

Parmelee, J. H. (2013). Political journalists and Twitter: Influences on norms and practices. *Journal of Media Practice, 14*(4), 291-305.

Rauchfleisch, A., & Metag, J. (2016). The special case of Switzerland: Swiss politicians on Twitter. *New media & society, 18*(10), 2413-2431.

Sandoval-Almazan, R., & Gil-Garcia, J. R. (2013). *Cyberactivism through social media: Twitter, YouTube, and the Mexican political movement" I'm Number 132".* Paper presented at the 2013 46th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences.

Scherpereel, J. A., Wohlgemuth, J., & Lievens, A. (2018). Does institutional setting affect legislators' use of Twitter? *Policy & Internet, 10*(1), 43-60.

Shapiro, R. Y. (2011). Public opinion and American democracy. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 75*(5), 982-1017.

Small, T. A. (2010). Canadian politics in 140 characters: Party politics in the Twitterverse. *Canadian Parliamentary Review, 33*(3), 39-45.

Small, T. A. (2011). What the hashtag? A content analysis of Canadian politics on Twitter. *Information, Communication &Society, 14*(6), 872-895.

Theocharis, Y., Lowe, W., Van Deth, J. W., & García-Albacete, G. (2015). Using Twitter to mobilize protest action: online mobilization patterns and action repertoires in the Occupy Wall Street, Indignados, and Aganaktismenoi movements. *Information, Communication &Society, 18*(2), 202-220.

Thimm, C., Dang-Anh, M., & Einspänner, J. (2014). Mediatized politics—structures and strategies of discursive participation and online deliberation on Twitter. *Mediatized worlds* (pp. 253-270). Springer.

Upadhyay, M. (2014). *Political deliberation on Twitter: is Twitter emerging as an opinion leader.* Paper presented at the International Conference on People, Politics and Media (ICPPM).

Venkatesh, V., Morris, M. G., Davis, G. B., & Davis, F. D. (2003). User acceptance of information technology: Toward a unified view. *MIS Quarterly*, 425-478.

Verweij, P. (2012). Twitter links between politicians and journalists. *Journalism Practice, 6*(5-6), 680-691.

Westen, T. (1998). Can technology save democracy? *National Civic Review, 87*(1), 47-56.