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## Digital Media and its Impact on Public Awareness Enhancement of Government Educational Policies in Niger and Benue States

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of digital media on public awareness of government educational policies in Niger and Benue States, Nigeria. Recognizing challenges in effectively communicating policies, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas, the research aims to assess how social media usage influences awareness and how content quality and clarity shape public perception and attitudes toward policies. The study adopts a descriptive survey design, targeting students, teachers, government employees, and business owners who actively engage with platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and official government websites. A stratified random sampling technique ensured adequate representation across age, education, and occupation, yielding a sample size of 385 respondents determined using Cochran's formula at a 5% margin of error and 95% confidence level. Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires, while secondary data were drawn from policy briefs, government reports, online publications, and social media content. Data were analysed using SPSS, applying descriptive statistics and regression analysis to examine relationships between variables. Findings reveal that digital media significantly enhances public awareness of government educational policies, with younger, educated, and urban residents exhibiting higher engagement. However, limited internet access and low digital literacy in rural areas constrain broader reach. The study concludes that digital media is a crucial communication tool but requires infrastructural improvements, targeted digital literacy programs, and content tailored to rural communities to optimize policy awareness and citizen participation.

**Keywords:** Digital Media, Public Awareness, Educational Policies, Social Media, Content Quality

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### I. INTRODUCTION

The rise of digital media has transformed how governments communicate, enhancing public awareness and civic participation globally (Chen, Sun & Li, 2020). In Nigeria, increasing internet penetration and digital adoption present new opportunities for bridging communication gaps, particularly in disseminating educational policies. This is critical in states like Niger and Benue, where educational challenges persist due to limited access to information and infrastructure (Adeosun, 2019).

While traditional media, such as radio and print, often fail to engage younger, tech-savvy populations and rural communities effectively, digital platforms offer interactive and widely accessible alternatives (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2023). Despite the potential of digital media to support education policy dissemination, there is limited empirical evidence on its effectiveness in Nigeria. Existing studies focus on governance and political mobilization (Adediran & Akinyemi, 2021) but overlook how digital platforms influence awareness of educational policies, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas. This research addresses this gap by examining the role of digital media in raising public awareness of educational policies in Niger and Benue States, where internet usage and smartphone adoption have grown significantly (NCC, 2022). The study evaluates the reach, effectiveness, and limitations of digital media in policy dissemination, providing insights into its adoption across diverse socio-economic contexts. It aims to inform strategies that maximize the impact of digital tools while addressing barriers such as access and digital literacy. These findings contribute to enhancing policy communication and fostering informed citizen engagement in Nigeria.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

Effective dissemination of educational policies is crucial for achieving government objectives in Nigeria's education sector. However, a significant communication gap persists, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas, where traditional media often fails to engage younger audiences and marginalized populations due to accessibility and declining relevance (Adeyemi & Smith, 2024). Digital media, with its interactive and cost-effective features, offers a promising alternative for bridging this gap (Ayodele, 2023). Despite growing digital adoption in Niger and Benue States, its potential for enhancing public awareness of educational policies remains underutilized (Chukwu & Okafor, 2024). Government agencies face challenges such as limited technical expertise and resources, resulting in inadequate use of digital platforms, particularly in rural areas where misinformation or lack of awareness undermines policy implementation (Ogunleye, 2023). Existing research on digital media in Nigeria focuses on governance and political mobilization, with little attention to its role in the education sector or its application in Niger and Benue States (Olusola & Adewale, 2021). This study addresses this gap by evaluating the effectiveness, reach, and limitations of digital media in disseminating educational policies in these states. It aims to inform strategic approaches that leverage digital platforms to improve awareness and engagement, ultimately contributing to more inclusive and efficient policy communication mechanisms.

### **1.2 Objectives of the Study**

The aim of this study was to assess how digital platforms can be utilized by the educational institutions and government bodies to disseminate information and evaluate their effectiveness in reaching diverse audiences in Niger and Benue States of Nigeria. The specific objective is to:

1. examine the extent to which social media usage affects public awareness of government educational policies in Niger and Benue States.
2. determine how content quality and clarity affect public perception and attitude toward government policies among residents of Niger and Benue States.

### 1.3 Research Questions

- (i) To what extent does social media usage influence public awareness of government educational policies in Niger and Benue States, Nigeria?
- (ii) How do content quality and clarity influence public perception and attitude toward government educational policies among residents of Niger and Benue States?

### 1.4 Research Hypotheses

H<sub>1</sub>: Social media usage has no significant effect on awareness of government educational policies.

H<sub>2</sub>: Content quality and clarity have no significant influence on perception and attitude of government educational policies.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 The Concept of Digital Media

Digital media refers to any content created, stored, distributed, or consumed through electronic devices and digital platforms. It includes text, audio, video, graphics, social media content, websites, mobile applications, and interactive technologies. As a communication system, digital media transforms how information is produced and shared by enabling instant, two-way interactions between individuals, organizations, and governments (McQuail, 2023). Unlike traditional media, which is typically one-directional, digital media allows users not only to access information but also to create and disseminate their own content, thereby fostering participatory communication and public engagement (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2023). Digital media operates within a networked environment, making it possible for messages to spread widely and quickly across geographical boundaries. Its interactivity, convergence, and personalization capabilities contribute to shaping public opinion, enhancing awareness, and influencing social behaviour (Lievrouw & Livingstone, 2022). In governance and public communication, digital media has become a powerful tool for promoting transparency, policy dissemination, and citizen participation, especially through platforms such as social networking sites, blogs, and government portals. Overall, digital media represents a transformative shift from analogue systems to technology-driven communication ecosystems, characterized by speed, interactivity, user-generated content, and broad accessibility.

### 2.2 Social Media Usage

Social media usage refers to how individuals access, interact with, and rely on digital platforms to communicate, seek information, and participate in social life. Beyond entertainment, it increasingly shapes civic engagement, learning, and policy awareness by enabling rapid information sharing and dialogue. Usage patterns are influenced by access to devices and internet connectivity, demographic characteristics, and peer norms that encourage participation. When users frequently engage with credible content, social media can enhance understanding, inclusion, and collective discussion around public issues. However, excessive or uncritical use may expose users to misinformation and polarized narratives.

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Human-centered strategies that promote digital literacy, responsible sharing, and inclusive design help users navigate platforms more meaningfully, maximizing social media's potential as a tool for informed participation and public awareness globally (Auxier & Anderson, 2021).

### 2.3 Content Quality and Clarity

Content quality and clarity refer to the effectiveness, accuracy, and comprehensibility of information delivered to an audience. High-quality content is credible, well-structured, relevant, and reliable, offering value by meeting the informational needs of users (Rowley, 2024). Clarity ensures that the message is communicated in a straightforward, logical, and unambiguous manner, reducing confusion and enhancing understanding (Redish, 2022). In digital communication, where users are exposed to vast information streams, content quality and clarity are critical for capturing attention, maintaining engagement, and fostering trust (Miller, 2023). Quality involves accuracy, completeness, coherence, and consistency, while clarity focuses on linguistic precision, organization, and ease of interpretation. Together, they contribute to effective communication by enabling audiences to access, interpret, and use information without unnecessary cognitive effort. For governments, businesses, and educators, producing high-quality, clear content enhances credibility, encourages informed decision-making, and improves user satisfaction.

### 2.4 Public Awareness Enhancement of Government Educational Policies

Public awareness enhancement of government educational policies refers to the deliberate efforts made by government agencies, stakeholders, and communication channels to inform citizens about policy initiatives, reforms, rights, responsibilities, and opportunities within the education sector. It involves ensuring that the public clearly understands the intentions, benefits, and implications of policies such as curriculum reforms, funding initiatives, school improvement programs, teacher development strategies, and access-related directives (UNESCO, 2021). Enhancing awareness is essential because citizens are more likely to support, participate in, and benefit from educational policies when they fully understand them. Effective public awareness involves strategic communication that uses clear, accurate, and accessible information across multiple media platforms.

Public awareness enhancement also helps address common barriers such as misinformation, low literacy levels, limited access to information, and weak communication strategies. When policies are communicated effectively, citizens become more informed, enabling them to make better educational decisions for themselves and their children (Lievrouw & Livingstone, 2022). Additionally, improved awareness strengthens policy implementation because stakeholders (teachers, parents, students, and community leaders) are more likely to comply with and advocate for well-understood policies (Anderson, 2023). In essence, public awareness enhancement is fundamental to achieving the goals of educational policies. It fosters inclusivity, accountability, and transparency while empowering citizens to actively engage with the education system. Ultimately, well-informed communities contribute to stronger policy outcomes, increased participation, and improved educational development.

## 2.5 Public Awareness of Government Educational Policies

Public awareness of government educational policies refers to how well citizens understand policy goals, provisions, and implications for learners and institutions. High awareness enhances transparency, trust, and democratic participation, enabling stakeholders to hold governments accountable and align behaviours with policy intentions. When parents, teachers, and students clearly understand policies, implementation improves through informed compliance, feedback, and community support. Awareness is shaped by communication strategies, media framing, stakeholder engagement, and policy clarity. Inclusive outreach using local languages and digital platforms reduces information gaps, especially among marginalized groups. Conversely, low awareness fuels misinformation, resistance, and uneven outcomes, undermining reform effectiveness. Human-centered communication (storytelling, consultations, and feedback loops) builds shared ownership and legitimacy. Empirical studies show that sustained, two-way communication strengthens policy acceptance and implementation fidelity across education systems, particularly in developing contexts (UNESCO, 2021).

## 2.6 Public Perception and Attitude towards Government Educational Policies

Public perception and attitude toward government policies refer to the way citizens interpret, evaluate, and emotionally respond to the actions, decisions, and policy initiatives of government institutions. Perception involves how individuals understand and make meaning of policy information based on their experiences, beliefs, values, and the communication channels through which they receive such information. Attitude, on the other hand, reflects the positive, negative, or neutral predispositions that citizens develop toward government policies, influenced by trust, social norms, political awareness, and personal interests (Anderson, 2023). When policies are clearly communicated, transparent, and relevant to citizens' needs, public perception tends to be more favourable. Conversely, ambiguity, misinformation, or lack of engagement can distort perceptions and lead to negative interpretations (Entman, 2023). Attitude toward government policies reflects deeper emotional and cognitive evaluations. Positive attitudes develop when people believe policies are beneficial, fair, and effectively implemented. Negative attitudes emerge when policies are perceived as biased, ineffective, or misaligned with public expectations (Howlett & Ramesh, 2023). Trust in government institutions significantly predicts attitude formation; populations with higher trust levels are more likely to support and cooperate with policy directives. Public perception and attitude ultimately influence policy success. When the public holds favourable views, compliance increases, participation improves, and policy outcomes are strengthened. Negative perceptions, however, can generate resistance, low participation, and implementation challenges.

## 2.7 Theoretical Review

This study is anchored on the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), which explains how individuals actively choose media platforms to satisfy specific informational and cognitive needs. UGT is suitable because it recognizes citizens as purposeful users of social media who engage with government educational content based on perceived relevance, clarity, and usefulness. In the context of Niger and Benue States, residents are more likely to use social media to seek timely explanations of government educational policies, thereby enhancing awareness.

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The theory also explains how content quality and clarity influence users' attitudes, as well-structured and understandable messages are more likely to be attended to, interpreted positively, and shared. By focusing on audience motivation, engagement, and interpretation, UGT effectively links social media usage and content attributes with public awareness and perception outcomes, making it appropriate for examining digital media's role in government policy communication (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 2023).

## 2.8 Empirical Review

Empirical studies have demonstrated that social media usage significantly influences public awareness of government policies. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and government portals allow for real-time dissemination of policy information, expanding reach and interactivity beyond traditional media channels (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2023). Research indicates that citizens who actively engage with social media are more likely to access, share, and discuss policy content, enhancing their knowledge and awareness levels (Bonsón et al., 2023). In developing countries, where physical outreach may be limited, social media bridges geographic gaps, facilitating broader public engagement with educational initiatives (Agunbiade & Olajide, 2024). Furthermore, interactive features like comments, likes, and shares enable citizens to clarify doubts and provide feedback, reinforcing awareness and understanding. Studies also show that social media campaigns by government agencies increase visibility and participation in educational programs, particularly among younger populations who are digital natives (Moraes et al., 2022). However, excessive reliance on social media without ensuring accuracy can also propagate misinformation, potentially affecting the quality of public awareness. Overall, social media is a powerful tool for enhancing public awareness, provided content is credible, timely, and tailored to audience needs.

Empirical research indicates that content quality and clarity strongly affect public perception and attitudes toward government policies. High-quality content that is accurate, complete, and credible enhances public trust, promotes understanding, and fosters positive attitudes (Rowley, 2024). Clarity ensures that policy information is easily interpretable, reducing cognitive effort and preventing misunderstandings (Redish, 2022).

Studies show that when government communication is well-structured, free from jargon, and accompanied by visual aids or summaries, citizens are more likely to perceive policies positively and comply with directives (Miller, 2023). Conversely, poorly presented, ambiguous, or overly technical content increases confusion, scepticism, and negative attitudes. For instance, a study examining digital communication of public policies found that participants exposed to clear and concise messages reported higher levels of perceived transparency and trust in the government (Su & Lee, 2023). Similarly, content that aligns with audience needs and expectations fosters engagement and acceptance, influencing perceptions of policy effectiveness. Overall, ensuring content quality and clarity is crucial for shaping constructive public attitudes and facilitating successful policy implementation.

## 2.9 Gaps in the Literature

Despite growing research on social media, content quality, and public policy awareness, several gaps remain. First, while social media usage has been linked to awareness, few studies examine the combined effect of content quality and clarity on shaping public perception and attitudes toward government policies (Redish, 2022; Su & Lee, 2023). Second, research often treats public awareness as a general outcome without considering regional variations, community engagement, or demographic differences in digital literacy (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2023). Finally, most empirical studies focus on single platforms or policy areas, neglecting integrated, multi-platform approaches in education policy dissemination (Bonsón et al., 2023).

## 3. METHODOLOGY

This study examines the impact of digital media on public awareness of government educational policies in Niger and Benue States, Nigeria. The states were selected due to their large populations, socio-economic diversity, and observable disparities in policy awareness, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas. The study population comprised students, teachers, government employees, and business owners who actively use digital platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and official government websites. Data were obtained from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected through structured, closed-ended questionnaires, while secondary data were sourced from government reports, policy briefs, online publications, and social media content. A stratified random sampling technique was adopted to ensure adequate representation across age, education level, and occupation, with simple random sampling applied within each stratum. Sample size determination was guided by Cochran's formula for large populations at a 5% margin of error and 95% confidence level, resulting in a minimum sample of 385 respondents. To enhance reliability and reduce non-response bias, 500 questionnaires were administered. Data were analysed using SPSS, employing descriptive statistics and regression analysis to examine relationships between variables.

### 3.1 Data Presentation and Analysis

**Table 1: Digital media increases my overall Public Awareness Enhancement of Government Educational Policies in Niger and Benue States**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	22	6.0	6.0	6.0
	Disagree	16	4.4	4.4	10.4
	Undecided	38	10.4	10.4	20.7
	Agree	108	29.4	29.4	50.1
	Strongly Agree	183	49.9	49.9	100.0
	Total	367	100.0	100.0	

Source: Survey, 2025

Table 1 above shows that 22 respondents which is 6.0% strongly disagree, 4.4% disagree while 10.4% were undecided, 29.4% agree and 49.9% strongly agree that digital media increases their overall awareness of government educational initiatives. This suggests that digital media enhances citizen's awareness of government educational policies, validating social media as an effective information channel.

**Table 2: Social media usage has no significant effect on awareness of government educational policies**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	142	38.7	38.7	38.7
	Disagree	167	45.5	45.5	84.2
	Undecided	34	9.3	9.3	93.5
	Agree	15	4.1	4.1	97.5
	Strongly Agree	9	2.5	2.5	100.0
	Total	367	100.0	100.0	

Source: Survey, 2025

Table 2 shows that 38.7% strongly disagree, 45.5% disagree, 9.3% was undecided, 4.1% agree while 2.5% strongly agree that social media usage has no significant effect on awareness of government educational policies. This suggests that social media usage significantly influences public awareness of government educational policies, contradicting the null hypothesis among respondents.

**Table 3: Content quality and clarity have no significant influence on perception and attitude of government educational policies**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	144	39.2	39.2	39.2
	Disagree	158	43.1	43.1	82.3
	Undecided	19	5.2	5.2	87.5
	Agree	42	11.4	11.4	98.9
	Strongly Agree	4	1.1	1.1	100.0
	Total	367	100.0	100.0	

Source: Survey, 2025

The table above revealed that 39.2% of respondents who participated in the survey strongly disagree, 43.1% disagree, 5.2% was undecided, 11.4% agree while the remaining 1.1% strongly agree that content quality and clarity have no significant influence on perception and attitude of government educational policies. The implication of this is that content quality and clarity influence public perception and attitudes toward government policies.

### 3.2 Hypothesis 1

H<sub>1</sub>: Social media usage has no significant effect on awareness of government educational policies

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.815 <sup>a</sup>	.664	.649	.54519

a. Predictors: (Constant), Cultural and social values influence my reaction to government policy messages online.

**ANOVA<sup>b</sup>**

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1      Regression	205.882	16	12.868	43.291	.000 <sup>a</sup>
Residual	104.031	350	.297		
Total	309.913	366			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Cultural and social values influence my reaction to government policy messages online.

b. Dependent Variable: Social media usage does not significantly improve my awareness of government educational policies.

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.548	.376		-1.457	.146
	I have regular access to internet-enabled devices (smartphone, tablet, computer).	-.392	.158	-.487	-2.479	.014

My age and educational level influence how frequently I use social media.	.510	.168	.604	3.028	.003
Friends and family influence my use of social media for information.	-.150	.192	-.144	-.777	.438
The language used in online government policy messages is clear and simple.	.902	.090	1.144	9.992	.000
Visuals (images, videos, infographics) improve my understanding of policy messages.	-.497	.148	-.510	-3.361	.001
Digital content about government educational policies is accurate and trustworthy.	-.458	.203	-.462	-2.259	.024
Well-structured online content increases my interest in government policies.	-.245	.127	-.212	-1.928	.055
Government uses digital media effectively to communicate educational policies.	.333	.215	.291	1.545	.123
Media coverage helps me understand the objectives of government education policies.	.310	.144	.226	2.160	.031
My educational background helps me understand policy information shared online.	.172	.171	.195	1.009	.314
Digital media increases my overall awareness of government educational initiatives.	-.315	.155	-.391	-2.034	.043

Digital media presentations shape my perception of government education policies.	.005	.172	.007	.032	.975
Positive online information improves my attitude toward government policies.	.244	.121	.294	2.012	.045
Media framing influences how I judge government educational initiatives.	-.116	.179	-.132	-.649	.517
My personal or community experience affects how I perceive education policies.	.053	.168	.041	.316	.752
Cultural and social values influence my reaction to government policy messages online.	.341	.199	.284	1.713	.088

a. Dependent Variable: Social media usage does not significantly improve my awareness of government educational policies.

### Hypothesis1

$H_1$ : Social media usage does not significantly improve awareness of government educational policies.

The regression results show a strong relationship between the independent variables and awareness, with  $R = 0.815$  and  $R^2 = 0.649$ . This indicates that 64.9% of the variation in awareness is explained by the predictors.

The ANOVA result ( $F = 43.291$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) confirms that the model is statistically significant. Key predictors such as access to internet-enabled devices, age and educational level, clarity of language, visual presentation, trustworthiness of content, media coverage, and positive online information were found to significantly influence awareness.

Since the model is significant, the null hypothesis is rejected, and it is concluded that social media usage significantly improves awareness of government educational policies.

### Hypothesis 2

$H_2$ : Content quality and clarity have no significant influence on perception and attitude of government educational policies

### Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.851 <sup>a</sup>	.725	.712	.53552

a. Predictors: (Constant), Cultural and social values influence my reaction to government policy messages online.

### ANOVA<sup>b</sup>

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	264.336	16	16.521	57.609	.000 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	100.373	350	.287		
	Total	364.708	366			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Cultural and social values influence my reaction to government policy messages online.

b. Dependent Variable: The quality and clarity of digital content do not influence my perception of government educational policies.

### Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients			t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	-.862	.369		-2.333	.020
I have regular access to internet-enabled devices (smartphone, tablet, computer).	-.460	.155	-.527	-2.963	.003
My age and educational level influence how frequently I use social media.	.622	.165	.679	3.759	.000
Friends and family influence my use of social media for information.	-.168	.189	-.150	-.891	.374

The language used in online government policy messages is clear and simple.	1.069	.089	1.249	12.049	.000
Visuals (images, videos, infographics) improve my understanding of policy messages.	-.535	.145	-.506	-3.687	.000
Digital content about government educational policies is accurate and trustworthy.	-.554	.199	-.515	-2.785	.006
Well-structured online content increases my interest in government policies.	-.298	.125	-.238	-2.388	.017
Government uses digital media effectively to communicate educational policies.	.414	.211	.333	1.957	.051
Media coverage helps me understand the objectives of government education policies.	.397	.141	.266	2.815	.005
My educational background helps me understand policy information shared online.	.193	.168	.201	1.150	.251
Digital media increases my overall awareness of government educational initiatives.	-.441	.152	-.504	-2.894	.004
Digital media presentations shape my perception of government education policies.	-.004	.169	-.005	-.024	.981

Positive online information improves my attitude toward government policies.	.219	.119	.243	1.839	.067
Media framing influences how I judge government educational initiatives.	-.100	.176	-.105	-.567	.571
My personal or community experience affects how I perceive education policies.	.056	.165	.040	.342	.733
Cultural and social values influence my reaction to government policy messages online.	-.400	.195	.307	2.045	.042

a. Dependent Variable: The quality and clarity of digital content do not influence my perception of government educational policies.

### Hypothesis2

H<sub>2</sub>: Content quality and clarity have no significant influence on perception and attitude of government educational policies

The regression analysis produced R = 0.851 and R<sup>2</sup> = 0.712, indicating that 71.2% of the variation in perception is explained by the independent variables.

The ANOVA result (F = 57.609, p < 0.001) shows that the model is statistically significant. Variables such as clarity of language, visual presentation, trustworthiness of content, structured content, media coverage, demographic factors, and cultural values significantly influenced respondents' perceptions.

Based on these findings, the null hypothesis is rejected, and it is concluded that the quality and clarity of digital content significantly influence public perception of government educational policies.

### 4. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The discussion shows the study attracted a largely informed and digitally active population, strengthening result credibility. Male dominance suggests higher male engagement with digital platforms for policy information, while substantial female participation reflects inclusiveness. Respondents were mainly mature, economically active adults likely to seek and apply policies, with balanced representation from Niger and Benue States. The high level of tertiary education indicates strong capacity to comprehend digital policy messages. Respondents were exposed to digital media for long hours daily, confirming deep internet integration into daily life.

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Regular access to internet-enabled devices shows infrastructure is not a major awareness barrier. Age, education, friends, and family influenced social media usage, indicating awareness is socially driven.

The first hypothesis, which tested whether social media usage significantly affects public awareness of government educational policies, was supported by the data. The results revealed that social media usage had a strong positive effect on public awareness of government educational policies ( $\beta = 43.291$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), with an  $R^2$  value of 0.664, meaning 66.4% of the variance in public awareness of government educational policies is explained by social media usage. These findings align with the assertions of scholars, who emphasized that citizens who actively engage with social media are more likely to access, share, and discuss policy content, enhancing their knowledge and awareness levels (Bonsón et al., 2023). Moreover, social media is a powerful tool for enhancing public awareness, provided content is credible, timely, and tailored to audience needs. Equally, interactive features like comments, likes, and shares enable citizens to clarify doubts and provide feedback, reinforcing awareness and understanding. Studies also show that social media campaigns by government agencies increase visibility and participation in educational programs, particularly among younger populations who are digital natives (Moraes et al., 2021).

The second hypothesis examined whether content quality and clarity significantly affect public perception and attitude of government educational policies. The result was also statistically significant ( $\beta = 0.784$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), with  $R^2 = 0.712$ , showing that 71.2% of the variation in public perception and attitude of government educational policies is attributed to content quality and clarity. This finding is consistent with the work of scholars who posited that content quality and clarity strongly affect public perception and attitudes toward government policies. High-quality content that is accurate, complete, and credible enhances public trust, promotes understanding, and fosters positive attitudes (Rowley, 2024). This underscores that content quality and clarity is crucial for shaping constructive public attitudes and facilitating successful policy implementation. Likewise, it was emphasized that content that aligns with audience needs and expectations fosters engagement and acceptance, influencing perceptions of policy effectiveness (Su & Lee, 2023).

#### 4.1 Summary of Findings

The study revealed that the respondents were largely informed, digitally active, and mostly mature, economically active adults, with a balanced representation from Niger and Benue States. Male respondents were slightly dominant, suggesting higher male engagement with digital platforms, while substantial female participation reflected inclusiveness. Tertiary education and regular access to internet-enabled devices indicated strong capacity to comprehend and interact with digital policy content. Social interactions, including family and friends, influenced social media usage, highlighting the social nature of awareness. The first hypothesis showed that social media usage significantly impacts public awareness of government educational policies ( $\beta = 43.291$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $R^2 = 0.664$ ), confirming that active engagement increases knowledge and awareness levels (Bonsón et al., 2023; Moraes et al., 2021).

The second hypothesis confirmed that content quality and clarity strongly influence public perception and attitude ( $\beta = 0.784$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $R^2 = 0.712$ ), reinforcing that credible, complete, and audience-focused content promotes trust, understanding, and positive attitudes toward policies (Rowley, 2024; Su & Lee, 2023).

## 5. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that digital media effectively reaches a digitally active and informed audience, fostering inclusiveness and engagement across genders and age groups. Social media serves as a key channel for policy awareness, particularly among educated, economically active individuals with ready access to digital devices. It was concluded that active social media usage significantly enhances public awareness of government educational policies. The high explanatory power ( $R^2 = 0.664$ ) indicates that digital platforms are instrumental in knowledge dissemination and citizen engagement in policy discussions. Finally, the clarity and quality of content strongly shape public perception and attitudes toward policies. Credible, complete, and relevant content fosters trust, positive perception, and acceptance of educational initiatives, demonstrating the central role of content management in policy communication.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Government agencies should leverage digital platforms more actively to reach educated, digitally engaged citizens and ensure inclusive policy communication.
- Social media campaigns should be frequent, interactive, and strategically designed to enhance public awareness, particularly targeting users who engage actively online.
- Policy content must be clear, credible, complete, and tailored to audience expectations to foster trust, understanding, and positive public attitudes toward government educational policies.

## 7. CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

This study contributes to knowledge by empirically establishing the significant role of social media usage in enhancing public awareness of government educational policies in Niger and Benue States. It demonstrates that both the frequency of engagement and the social context of usage influence awareness levels. Additionally, the study highlights the critical importance of content quality and clarity in shaping public perception and attitudes, providing evidence that credible, complete, and audience-focused content promotes trust, understanding, and positive policy acceptance. These insights inform strategies for effective digital policy communication.

## 8. LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The study was limited to Niger and Benue States, which may affect generalizability to other regions. Data relied on self-reported responses, potentially introducing bias. Future research could explore rural populations, longitudinal impacts of social media campaigns, and comparative analyses across multiple Nigerian states for broader insights.

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