



**PREDICTING SOCIAL MEDIA USE AMONG PUBLIC
RELATIONS PRACTITIONERS APPLYING
TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTANCE MODEL (TAM)**

BY

MUKHTAR EL-KASIM

**A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Communication**

**Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human
Sciences**

International Islamic University Malaysia

SEPTEMBER 2016

ABSTRACT

The emergence and diffusion of the social media have transformed the way public relations is practiced across the globe. Social media provides more opportunities of engagement between organizations and the public. Studies establish that social media has great influence and impact in shaping relationships that exist between organizations and their strategic publics. However, most of the empirical findings on social media and relationship building are carried out in advanced nations such as the US, the UK, and Canada. Still, little is known about the influence of the social media on public relations practice in developing nations. Moreover, most of the studies conducted on the relevance and influence of the social media in PR practice in those developed countries were not guided by a theory. Hence, the utmost need to investigate the relevance and influence of the social media from developing countries angle. This study therefore, investigates the social media use among the Nigerian PR Practitioners. The study utilized Technology Acceptance Model as the theoretical framework. TAM posits that a potential user of a specific Information System (IS) may use it because of its perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEU), moreover, these two determinants influence his/her behavioural intention (BI) for actual use. Hence, this study proposes a model which explains how practitioners use the social media for enhancing mutual relationships by providing two constructs which explain the actual use of social media among practitioners, namely, perceived mutual relationships, measured from three dimensions (trust, commitment and satisfaction) and perceived interactivity, measured from another three dimensions (active control, two-way communication and synchronization). Data were collected from 513 PR practitioners through self-administered questionnaire nation-wide. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was employed for testing the study's hypotheses. The study's hypotheses were broadly divided into two: at the first level were hypotheses that tested TAM as the theoretical guide of this study, and at the second level, hypotheses that tested our constructs which explained how practitioners actually use the social media for enhancing mutual relationships with their publics. From the TAM level, the findings indicate significant relationships between the variables: PEU to PU ($\beta=.88$, $p=.000$); PU to BI ($\beta=.28$, $p=.002$); PEU to BI ($\beta=.48$, $p=.000$); PU to SM ($\beta=.44$, $p=.000$) and BI to SM ($\beta=.55$, $p=.000$). The findings of the hypotheses that tested the use of the social media for enhancing mutual relationships at the second level, suggest statistically positive and significant relationships between social media use and enhancing mutual relationships: SM to TR ($\beta=.93$, $p=.000$); SM to CM ($\beta=.92$, $p=.000$); SM to ST ($\beta=.91$, $p=.000$); SM to AC ($\beta=.54$, $p=.000$); SM to TC ($\beta=.87$, $p=.000$); and SM to SY ($\beta=.82$, $p=.000$). The findings prove the proposed model of this study which explains the relevance and influence of the social media for enhancing mutual relationships between organizations and the publics. The theoretical and managerial implications of this study are also presented and discussed.

خلاصة البحث

ظهور وانتشار وسائل الإعلام الاجتماعية حولت طريقة ممارسة العلاقات العامة في جميع أنحاء العالم. وتوفر وسائل الاعلام الاجتماعية المزيد من فرص التفاعل بين المنظمات والجمهور، وخاصة لتعزيز العلاقات المتبادلة بينهما. أثبتت الدراسات أن وسائل الإعلام الاجتماعية لديها تأثير كبير وأثر فعال في تشكيل العلاقات القائمة بين المنظمات الرسمية والجمهور، ومع ذلك، فإن معظم النتائج التجريبية عن وسائل الاعلام الاجتماعية وبناء علاقة بها كان بسبب الدراسات التي تمت في الدول المتقدمة مثل الولايات المتحدة والمملكة المتحدة وكندا. و بالمقابل، لا يعرف إلا القليل عن مدى تأثير وسائل الاعلام الاجتماعية في ممارسة العلاقات العامة في الدول النامية. وعلاوة على ذلك، فإن معظم الدراسات التي أجريت عن مدى أهمية وتأثير وسائل الإعلام الاجتماعية في ممارسة العلاقات العامة في الدول المتقدمة لم تسترشد بنظرية معينة. وبالتالي، كانت الحاجة ماسة للتحقق من أهمية وتأثير وسائل الاعلام الاجتماعية من وجهة النظر الدول النامية. فلزم من هذا أيضا إجراء دراسة تسترشد بنظرية معينة لشرح سيناريو وسائل الاعلام الاجتماعية في مجال العلاقات العامة. وبناء على هذا فإن هذه الدراسة تهدف إلى التحقق من كيفية استخدام وسائل الإعلام الاجتماعية بين ممارسي العلاقات العامة في نيجيريا. استخدمت الدراسة نموذج قابلية التكنولوجيا TAM كإطار نظري. ويفترض هذا النموذج بأن مستخدما محتملا لنظام معلوماتي معين قد يستخدمه لفائدة يتوخاها أو بسبب سهولة الاستخدام فتؤثر هاتان المحددتان في سلوكية نيته في استخدامه الحقيقي. لقد اقترحت هذه الدراسة نموذجا يبين الكيفية التي بها يستخدم الممارسون لوسائل الإعلام الاجتماعية لتعزيز العلاقات المتبادلة، مقدمة اثنتين من العينات التي تشرح الاستخدام الفعلي لوسائل الإعلام الاجتماعية بين الممارسين، وهي العلاقات المتبادلة بنية قياسها من ثلاثة أبعاد (الثقة والالتزام والرضا) ويقاس التفاعل من أبعاد ثلاثة (التحكم النشط والتواصل من جانبيين والإزدواجية). وتم جمع العينات من 513 من ممارسي العلاقات العامة من خلال الإستبيانات وتولى الباحث ادارتها بنفسه على مستوى الدولة. استخدمت نموذج المعادلة الهيكلية في اختبار فرضيات الدراسة. تم تقسيم فرضيات الدراسة، إلى قسمين: في المستوى الأول، الفرضيات التي اختبرت TAM كنظرية استرشادية للدراسة، وفي المستوى الثاني، الفرضيات التي اختبرت العينات التي تبين كيفية استخدام ممارسي العلاقات العامة وسائل الإعلام الاجتماعية لتعزيز العلاقات المتبادلة مع الجمهور. وفي مستوى TAM أشارت الدراسة الى وجود علاقات ذات دلالة إحصائية معتبرة بين المتغيرات: PEU to PU ($\beta=.88, p=.000$); PU to BI ($\beta=.28, p=.002$); PEU to BI ($\beta=.48, p=.000$); PU to SM ($\beta=.55, p=.000$) and BI to SM ($\beta=.44, p=.000$). اقترحت نتائج الفرضية التي اختبرت استخدام وسائل الإعلام الاجتماعية لتعزيز العلاقات المتبادلة على المستوى الثاني علاقات إيجابية ذات دلالة إحصائية معتبرة بين استخدام وسائل الإعلام الاجتماعية وتعزيز العلاقات المتبادلة: SM to TR ($\beta=.93, p=.000$); SM to CM ($\beta=.92, p=.000$); SM to ST ($\beta=.91, p=.000$); SM to AC ($\beta=.54, p=.000$); SM to TC ($\beta=.82, p=.000$) and SM to SY ($\beta=.87, p=.000$). أثبتت نتائج هذه الدراسة صحة النموذج المقترح الذي أوضح أهمية وتأثير وسائل الاعلام الاجتماعية لتعزيز العلاقات المتبادلة بين المنظمات والجمهور. وقد تم عرض ومناقشة الأثر النظري والإداري للمقترح.

APPROVAL PAGE

The dissertation of Mukhtar El-kasim has been approved by the following:

Syed Arabi Idid
Supervisor

Mohamad Sahari Nordin
Internal Examiner

Mohammed Zin Norddin
External Examiner

Kiranjit Kaur
External Examiner

Amir Akramin Shafie
Chairman

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

Mukhtar El-kasim

Signature

Date

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

**DECLARATION OF COPYRIGHT AND AFFIRMATION OF
FAIR USE OF UNPUBLISHED RESEARCH**

**PREDICTING SOCIAL MEDIA USE AMONG PUBLIC
RELATIONS PRACTITIONERS APPLYING TECHNOLOGY
ACCEPTANCE MODEL (TAM)**

I declare that the copyright holders of this dissertation are jointly owned by the student and IIUM.

Copyright © 2016 Mukhtar El-kasim and International Islamic University Malaysia. All rights reserved.

No part of this unpublished research may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without prior written permission of the copyright holder except as provided below

1. Any material contained in or derived from this unpublished research may be used by others in their writing with due acknowledgement.
2. IIUM or its library will have the right to make and transmit copies (print or electronic) for institutional and academic purposes.
3. The IIUM library will have the right to make, store in a retrieved system and supply copies of this unpublished research if requested by other universities and research libraries.

By signing this form, I acknowledged that I have read and understand the IIUM Intellectual Property Right and Commercialization policy.

Affirmed by Mukhatr El-kasim

.....
Signature

.....
Date

This thesis is dedicated to my dearest and beloved parents,

My brothers and sisters,

My caring wives, Fatima and Aisha

and my adorable children:

Iman, Ummirahmah, Rukayya and Mohammad.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All praises are due to Almighty Allah Who in His infinite mercy allowed me to see the end of this research work. My sincere appreciation goes to my supervisor Dato' Professor Dr. Syed Arabi Idid, who despite his tight schedules always finds time to go through this work for necessary observations, corrections and suggestions for improvement. My respect and love go to my parents who always stay by my side and pray for my success consistently, May Allah reward you with Jannatul firdaws. To my wives Fatima and Aisha, I say thank you for your love, sacrifices and understanding throughout my study period. To my children: Iman, Ummurahmah, Rukayyah and Mohammed, may you benefit from the fruitfulness of this study here and hereafter, ameen.

My sincere appreciation also goes to my brothers Ashhabu and Shu'aibu for staying by my side and ensuring smooth running of my family and other affairs in my absence. My appreciation also goes to my course colleagues particularly; Dr. Mustapha Lambe, Dr. Ayyub Ilfandy and Brother Ismail Sheikh Yusuf Ahmed, your contributions for the success of my study cannot be quantified.

To my working colleagues, Malam Abdullahi Maude, Malam Samaila Balarabe and Malam Muhammad Bashir Usman Ruwan godiya, I say thank you for your support, encouragement and advices. To my friends, Barrister Falalu Abba, Engineer Mu'azu Sani, Balarabe Abba, Aliyu Usman Danladi, Sirajo Ayuba Sullubawa too numerous to mention I say Jazakumullahu bi khair for your consistent support and prayers.

TABLE OF CONTENT

Abstract	ii
Abstract in Arabic	iii
Approval Page	iv
Declaration Page	v
Copyright Page.....	vi
Dedication	vii
Acknowledgements	viii
List of Tables	xi
List of Figures	xiii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.1.1 Technology Acceptance model	4
1.2 Problem Statement.....	5
1.3 Research Objectives.....	7
1.4 Research Questions.....	8
1.5 Significance of the study	9
1.6 Scope of the Study	10
1.7 Chapter Summary	10
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	12
2.1 Introduction	12
2.2 Technology Acceptance Theories.....	13
2.2.1 Theory of Reasoned Action	13
2.2.2 Theory of Planned Behaviour	15
2.2.3 Technology Acceptance Model.....	18
2.2.4 TAM related Studies	28
2.2.5 Conceptual Framework	32
2.2.5.1 Perceive Ease of Use	32
2.2.5.2 Perceive Usefulness.....	34
2.2.5.3 Behavioural Intention	36
2.2.5.4 Perceive Mutual Relationship.....	39
2.2.5.5 Internet and Relationship Building.....	47
2.2.5.6 Social Media and Relationship Building.....	52
2.2.5.7 TAM and Relationship Management	55
2.2.5.8 Perceive and Interactivity	57
2.2.5.9 Social Media Interactivity and Relationship Building	61
2.2.5.10 TAM and Interactivity	66
2.3.1 Study Hypotheses	67
2.3.1.1 Perceive Usefulness.....	68
2.3.1.2 Perceive Ease of Use	68
2.3.1.3 Behavioural Intention	69
2.3.1.4 Perceive Mutual Relationship.....	70
2.3.1.5 Perceive Interactivity.....	71
2.4.1 Conceptual Hypothesized Model	72

2.4.2 Summary of the Hypotheses	73
2.4.3 Chapter Summary	32
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	76
3.1 Introduction.....	76
3.2 Survey	76
3.3 Population of the Study	78
3.4 Sampling Procedure	78
3.5 Survey Instrument Development	80
3.5.1 Section 1	82
3.5.2 Section 2.....	83
3.5.3 Section 3.....	84
3.5.4 Section 4.....	85
3.5.5 Section 5.....	86
3.6 Operational Definitions and Measurements	91
3.6.1 Perceived Usefulness	91
3.6.2 Perceived Ease of Use.....	91
3.6.3 Behavioural Intention.....	92
3.6.4 Perceived Mutual Relation.....	92
3.6.5 Perceived Interactivity	93
3.7 Pilot Study	94
3.8 Reliability Test.....	94
3.8.1 Perceived Usefulness	95
3.8.2 Perceived Ease of Use.....	96
3.8.3 Behavioural Intention.....	96
3.8.4 Trust	97
3.8.5 Commitment.....	98
3.8.6 Satisfaction.....	99
3.8.7 Active Control.....	100
3.8.8 Two-Way Communication.....	100
3.8.9 Synchronization	101
3.9 Data Collection	101
3.10 Data Analysis.....	103
3.11 Chapter Summary	104
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS	105
4.1 Introduction.....	105
4.2 Data Entry and Screening	106
4.3 Demographic Profile of Respondents	106
4.3.1 Demographic Information	107
4.3.1.1 Gender	107
4.3.1.2 Age	107
4.3.1.3 Educational Qualification	107
4.3.1.4 Region.....	107
4.3.1.5 Occupation.....	107
4.3.1.6 Organization	108
4.3.1.7 Position in Organization	108
4.3.1.8 Length of Service in Organization	110
4.3.1.9 Length of Service as PR Practitioners	110

4.4 Social Media Use	111
4.4.1 Types of Social Media	111
4.4.2 Hours Spent on Social Media.....	113
4.4.3 Days Spent on Social Media	114
4.5 Crosstabulation on Social Media Use by Demographic Variables.....	115
4.5.1 Crosstab Social Media Use Age by Hour	115
4.5.2 Crosstab Social Media Use Age by Days	116
4.5.3 Crosstab Social Media Use Hour by Gender	117
4.5.4 Crosstab Social Media Use Hour by Organization	118
4.5.5 Crosstab Social Media Use Hour by Position.....	119
4.6 Descriptive Statistics	120
4.6.1 Perceived Usefulness	120
4.6.2 Perceived Ease of Use.....	122
4.6.3 Behavioural Intention.....	124
4.6.4 Trust	127
4.6.5 Commitment.....	128
4.6.6 Satisfaction.....	130
4.6.7 Active Control.....	131
4.6.8 Two-Way Communication.....	133
4.6.9 Synchronization	134
4.7 Exploratory Factor Analysis	136
4.8 Reliability Analysis.....	136
4.9 Sample Adequacy	137
4.10 Normality Test	139
4.11 Structural Equation Modelling	142
4.11.1 Basics of SEM.....	142
4.11.1.1 Path Diagram and its Terminologies	142
4.11.1.2 Parameters	143
4.11.1.3 CFA in SEM	144
4.11.1.4 Path Analysis	144
4.11.2 Stages in Conducting SEM	145
4.11.2.1 Model Identification	145
4.11.2.2 Model Estimation	146
4.11.2.3 Assessing Fit of the Model	146
4.11.2.4 Model Modification.....	146
4.11.2.5 Final Presentation of Model	147
4.11.3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)	147
4.11.3.1 CFA for Perceived Usefulness	148
4.11.3.2 CFA for Perceived Ease of Use.....	150
4.11.3.3 CFA for Behavioural Intention.....	151
4.11.3.4 CFA for Trust	153
4.11.3.5 CFA for Commitment.....	154
4.11.3.6 CFA for Satisfaction.....	156
4.11.3.7 CFA for Active Control.....	157
4.11.3.8 CFA for Two-Way Communication.....	159
4.11.3.9 CFA for Synchronization	160
4.12 First Order CFA for Social Media Use Constructs.....	162
4.13 Second Order Measurement Model	165
4.14 Full Measurement Model.....	166

4.14.1 Convergent Validity	167
4.14.2 Discriminant Validity	169
4.15 Assessment of the Structural Model	171
4.16 Validating the Mediating Effect	175
4.16.1 Mediating Effect PEU → BI → SM.....	176
4.16.1 Mediating Effect PU → BI → SM	176
4.17 Discussion on the Findings	178
4.17.1 Discussion on TAM Hypotheses.....	178
4.17.2 Mediating Effect of Behavioural Intention	183
4.17.3 Hypotheses on Social Media Use.....	184
4.18 Explanatory Power of the Model	190
4.19 Chapter Summary	194
CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS...	197
5.1 Summary of the Findings.....	197
5.2 Summary of Demographic Profile of the Study	197
5.3 Summary of Social Media Use	198
5.4 Summary of Model Testing	199
5.5 Conclusion	201
5.6 Recommendations.....	203
5.7 Theoretical Contribution of the Study	203
5.8 Managerial Implication of the Study	207
5.9 Study Limitations and Future Research Direction.....	209
REFERENCES.....	210
APPENDIX: SURVEY QUESTIONNARE, FIGURES AND TABLES	224

LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table No.</u>		<u>Page No.</u>
3.1	Items for perceived usefulness construct	84
3.2	Items for perceived ease of use construct	85
3.3	Items for Behavioural intention construct	86
3.4	Items for Trust construct	87
3.5	Items for Commitment construct	88
3.6	Items for Satisfaction construct	88
3.7	Items for Active control construct	89
3.8	Items for Two-way communication construct	90
3.9	Items for Synchronization construct	90
3.10	Reliability test for PU	95
3.11	Reliability test for PEU	96
3.12	Reliability test for BI	96
3.13	Reliability test for TR	97
3.14	Reliability test for CM	98
3.15	Reliability test for ST	99
3.16	Reliability test for AC	99
3.17	Reliability test for TC	100
3.18	Reliability test for SY	101
4.1	Demographic profile of the respondents	108
4.2	Social media use	112
4.3	Crosstabulation social media use age by hour	115
4.4	Crosstabulation of social media use age by days	116
4.5	Crosstabulation of social media use hours by gender	116
4.6	Crosstabulation of social media use days by gender	117
4.7	Crosstabulation of social media use hours by position	118
4.8	Descriptive statistics for PU	120
4.9	Descriptive statistics for PEU	122
4.10	Descriptive statistics for BI	124
4.11	Descriptive statistics for TR	126
4.12	Descriptive statistics for CM	127
4.13	Descriptive statistics for ST	129
4.14	Descriptive statistics for AC	130
4.15	Descriptive statistics for TC	132
4.16	Descriptive statistics for SY	133
4.17	Reliability test for the study variables	134
4.18	Sample adequacy	135
4.19	EFA items loadings	136-137
4.20	Normality test	139
4.21	Model fit estimate	144
4.22	CFA items loadings for PU	147
4.23	CFA items loadings for PEU	149
4.24	CFA items loadings for BI	150
4.25	CFA items loadings for TR	152
4.26	CFA items loadings for CM	154

4.27	CFA items loadings for ST	155
4.28	CFA items loadings for AC	156
4.29	CFA items loadings for TC	158
4.30	CFA items loadings for SY	160
4.31	Estimates for Second Order Measurement Model	163
4.32	Convergent and Validity & Construct Reliability	167
4.33	Discriminant Validity	168
4.34	Estimates for Full-Fledged Model Items	171-172
4.35	Path Loadings within the Full-Fledged Model	173
4.36	Summary of Sobel test for mediating effect	175
4.37	Summary of TAM hypotheses and estimates	181
4.38	Summary of social media use hypotheses	187
4.39	Summary of all hypotheses and estimates	190

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Figure No.</u>		<u>Page No.</u>
2.1	Theory of Reasoned Action	14
2.2	Theory of Planned Behaviour	17
2.3	Original TAM	20
2.4	Revised TAM	23
2.5	TAM2	25
2.6	TAM3	26
2.7	Conceptualized hypothesized Model	73
4.1	CFA for PU	147
4.2	CFA for PEU	148
4.3	CFA for BI	150
4.4	CFA for TR	151
4.5	CFA for CM	153
4.6	CFA for ST	155
4.7	CFA for AC	156
4.8	CFA for TC	158
4.9	CFA for PU	159
4.10	First Order Measurement Model	161
4.11	Second Order Measurement Model	163
4.12	Full Measurement Model	165
4.13	Full-Fledge Structural Model	170
4.14	Sobal test of BI mediating effect	174
4.15	Sobal test of BI mediating effect	175
4.15	Final model (PTAM)	189

List of Abbreviations

AC	Active Control
AGFI	Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index
AMOS	Analysis of Moment Structures
ASV	Average Shared Variance
AVE	Average Variance Explained
BI	Behavioural Intention
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CFI	Comparative Fit Index
CM	Commitment
CR	Composite Reliability
GFI	Goodness of Fit Index
INT	Intention
IS	Information System
IT	Information Technology
NFI	Normed Fit Index
PEOU	Perceived Ease of Use
PI	Perceived Interactivity
PMR	Perceived Mutual relationships
PU	Perceived Usefulness
RMR	Root Mean square Residual
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
SEM	Structural Equation Modelling
SM	Social Media Use
SN	Subjective Norm
ST	Satisfaction
SY	Synchronization
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TAM	Technology Acceptance Model
TC	Two-way Communication
TLI	Tucker Lewis Index
TR	Trust
TPB	Theory of Planned Behaviour
TRA	Theory of Reasoned Action
AC	Active Control
AGFI	Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index
AMOS	Analysis of Moment Structures
ASV	Average Shared Variance
AVE	Average Variance Explained
BI	Behavioural Intention

CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CFI	Comparative Fit Index
CM	Commitment
CR	Composite Reliability
GFI	Goodness of Fit Index
INT	Intention
IS	Information System
IT	Information Technology
NFI	Normed Fit Index
PEOU	Perceived Ease of Use
PI	Perceived Interactivity
PMR	Perceived Mutual relationships
PU	Perceived Usefulness
RMR	Root Mean square Residual
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
SEM	Structural Equation Modelling
SM	Social Media Use
SN	Subjective Norm
ST	Satisfaction
SY	Synchronization
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TAM	Technology Acceptance Model
TC	Two-way Communication
TLI	Tucker Lewis Index
TR	Trust
TPB	Theory of Planned Behaviour
TRA	Theory of Reasoned Action

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The emergence of new media, particularly social media, had further boosted the notion of relationship management perspective in public relations practice. Social media provides both organizations and key publics to interact and derive meanings through their conversations for long-term and mutual relationships. Lovejoy, Waters and Saxton (2013) established that, social media has opened up new possibilities for organizations to engage their stakeholders by allowing them to send information out quickly and to receive real-time feedback. Similarly, Vorvoreanu (2006) found that, organizations may engage in a variety of relationship building strategies and tactics, but one important site of relationship building and maintenance is the organizational social media.

Social media facilitates almost free and unlimited interaction between individuals, groups and organizations. Boyd and Ellison (2011:3) defined social media as web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from one site to site.

University of Kentucky Regulations (2011) also described social media as media designed to disseminate information through social interaction, created using highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques online. Examples of social media include but are not limited to: LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, iTunes U, Second Life, and MySpace. As more forms of social media emerge, it is beneficial for the users to understand how to use these tools in relation to their jobs.

The rapid growth of social media, coupled with their increasing relevance in day-to-day interactions among people, thus makes them inevitable for organizations to leverage on them for achievement of their goals. While social media impinge on communication practices of virtually every organization, they are more fundamental in contemporary communication-centred professions such as public relations. Social media accentuate not only the practice of public relations, but the way numerous publics of the field view and interpret the current state of the field. Many studies have, therefore, been carried out with a view to explain the influence and implications of social media on public relations practice, particularly on how social media as a new phenomenon affects relationships management (Eyrich, Padman & Sweetser, 2008; Alikilic and Atebek 2012; Caers, Feyter, Couck, Stough, Vigna and Bois 2013).

For example, the studies established that public relations practitioners were adopting social media in the public relations industry (Eyrich, Padman & Sweetser, 2008). Hence, these studies found that Facebook and Twitter were the most outstanding social media platforms used in the public relations practice (Wright and Hinson 2012, Caers, et al. 2013, Lovejoy, waters and Saxton, 2013).

While social media impinge on communication practices of virtually every organization, they are more fundamental in contemporary communication-centred professions such as public relations. Social media accentuate not only the practice of public relations, but the way numerous publics of the field view and interpret the current state of the field. Many studies have, therefore, been carried out with a view to explain the influence and implications of social media on public relations practice, particularly on how social media as a new phenomenon affects organization-public relationships.

However, significant percentage of these studies were conducted in the advanced world particularly US and some parts of Europe. Caers et al. (2013) observed that with millions of users worldwide, research on social should be taken one step further, expanding research to multiple countries and settings for the purpose of integrating research findings. Similarly, Waters, Burnett, Lamm, and Lucas (2009), made the same suggestion that studies on social media influence on organization-public relationship need to be carried out in countries with different settings in order to have more bases in describing how this recent phenomenon affects public relations practice. Moreover, another advocacy was made to investigate how social media is being used to engage organization stakeholders (Lovejoy, Waters and Saxton, 2013).

Although there had been a significant number of studies on social media from the developing countries, it is observed that studies on social media in these nations had high concentration on issues such as politics and elections (Gomez, 2013, Muniandy and Muniandy 2013, MacArthur Foundation 2011), youth and socialization (Wok, Idid and Mismam 2013, Dhaha and Igale 2013, Shahnaz and Wok 2011) and education (Asabere 2012, Nasri and Charfeddine 2012, Kabilan, Ahmad and Zainol Abidin 2010). It was also observed that exploration of the relevance and influence of social media particularly from relationship management and public relations practitioners' perspective has not been given much attention in the developing nations (Waters et al. 2009, Lovejay, Waters and Saxton, 2013).

The above explanation made it imperative to investigate the role played by public relations practitioners from the developing nations on how they are using social media for enhancing mutual relationships between organizations and their

publics, since maintaining good relationships between them is believed to be a primary goal of public relations practice.

Using some key relational elements which include trust, commitment to relationship, satisfaction and interactivity, this study examined the perceptions of public relations practitioners in Nigeria on the utilization of social media for the enhancement of mutual relationships within the framework of Technological Acceptance Model (TAM).

1.1.1. Technology Acceptance Model

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) was developed by Davis (1989) as an adaption of Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). It was developed specifically to predict who is most likely to accept new technology in a workplace environment. The model suggests that when users are presented with a new technology, a number of factors influence their decision about how and when they will use it. These factors are what he termed as perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use.

Perceived usefulness was defined as “the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance” while perceived ease of use was defined as “the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free of mental and physical effort” Davis (1989:2). In addition Dillon (2001) defined technology acceptance as the demonstrable willingness within a user group to employ information technology for the tasks it is designed to support.

Technology Acceptance Model has been a robust model that explained why an information system is accepted or rejected. Numerous studies utilized TAM to investigate the relevance of social media in organization-public relationships across

the globe (Shen, Laffey, Lin and Huang, 2006; Mulero 2012; Alarcon-del-Amo, Romero and Gomez-Borja, 2012). Their studies established the applicability of TAM in explaining how organizations and practitioners were using social media in the promotion of cordial relationships with their strategic publics.

This study introduced two new constructs which are termed “perceived mutual relationships and perceived interactivity” to explain how public relations practitioners utilize social media for enhancing mutual relationships with their publics. Perceived mutual relation in the context of this study is defined as “the degree at which a public relations practitioner believes that utilizing social media in his/her work place would enhance long-term and mutual relationship between organizations and key publics”. Perceived interactivity is defined as “the degree at which practitioner believes that utilizing social media in his/her work place would enhance interaction between organizations and key publics”.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Studies on public relations practitioners and social media (Eyrich 2008, Avery et al. 2010, Macnamara 2010b, Lee 2013), Facebook and organizations (Waters et al. 2009, Gustafsson 2012, Day Good 2012, Caers et al 2013), social media and public relations (Alikilic and Atebek 2010, Treem and Leonardi 2012, Nordstrom 2012) indicated preeminence of the U.S and Europe as the locales. This no doubt leaves a huge gap in the understanding of social media influence in public relations from a global prism. Scholars have thus call for the exploration of this phenomenon from other settings, with differing geographic, psychographic and demographic variations (Caers et al., 2013; Lovejoy et al., 2013; Waters et al., 2013).

Caers et al (2013) observed that many interesting topics had been addressed by previous research on social media and that our knowledge was expanding fast. However, the review of social media research also revealed that our understanding was still quite fragmented and might lack nuances that characterize different settings, countries, and demographic variables. This is in consonance with Lovejoy et al.'s (2013) suggestion that future research needs to be conducted to analyze many dimensions of Twitter usage. For example, to examine how Twitter is used in connection with other Internet sites to build organizational communities. These scholars also suggested comparative research on social media among nonprofit, for-profit and government sectors with a view to account for variations organization-publics communication of each sector.

Currently public relations practice in Nigeria is believed to have entered information technology era, however, Otunbanjo et al. (2009) observed that there are inadequate studies documenting the influence of social media on the practice in the country. This assertion was supported by Waters et al. (2009) when they observed that public relations scholarship had discussed relationship development on traditional Web sites and blogs, but little research was published on social networking sites in both United States and elsewhere in the world.

Besides, theory-based research into adoption of social media to public relations is not only in its infancy but meager. In addition, in-country divergence in public relations practice as a whole and public relations practitioners in particular has not received attention of scholars (Wright and Hinson 2013). Being a multi-religious and multi-ethnic society, Nigeria offers a laboratory for testing how socio-demographic differences affect public relations practice and public relations professional (Ya'u 2012).