

## **TWITTER NETIZENS' PERCEPTIONS OF NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT'S PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGIES IN RESPONSE TO THE IKE EKWEREMADU ORGAN TRAFFICKING CRISIS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This research explored the perceptions of Twitter users regarding the Nigerian government's public relations strategies in response to the Ike Ekweremadu organ trafficking crisis. The study aimed to evaluate Twitter users' awareness of the Nigerian government's PR strategies for the crisis, examine Twitter users' perceptions of the government's response, and determine Twitter users' opinions on the effectiveness of the government's public relations strategies in addressing the crisis. The researchers employed the Framing Theory as its theoretical framework, with the survey as the research design and questionnaire as the research instrument. Results indicate, among other things, that Twitter netizens consider the Nigerian government's public relations strategies in addressing the Ike Ekweremadu organ trafficking crisis as ineffective. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended, among other things, that the Nigerian government should enhance its crisis communication strategies to ensure prompt and accurate dissemination of information to the public during crisis situations, particularly through social media platforms like Twitter. Doing so can help to foster public trust and confidence in government institutions.*

**Keywords:** Twitter, Ike Ekweremadu, Netizens, Crisis, Organ Trafficking.

### **Background to the Study**

The global market for human organs is continually expanding as numerous regrettable incidents involving networks of brokers, doctors, and hospitals involved in this shady business is being reported by the media. Profitable businesses that facilitate these unregulated services take advantage of the underprivileged in resource-constrained nations and provide impoverished patients with subpar healthcare that has unfavourable results (Allain, 2007). Despite initiatives to increase philanthropic organ donation and decisions to reduce transplant tourism, their execution has been hampered (Van-Buren, Massey, Maasdam, Zuidema, Hilhorst, Ijzermans, 2010). In addition, this trade is still being supported by an increase in renal failure patients throughout the globe and a scarcity of organs (Amahazion, 2011).

Public relations is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organisations and their stakeholders (Kent & Taylor, 2016). Social media has become a critical component of public relations, as it provides organisations with a platform to communicate with their stakeholders, manage their reputation, and address crises in real-time (Veil, Buehner & Palenchar, 2011). The use of social media in crisis management has become more prevalent in recent years (Asemah, Nwaoboli & Beli, 2022). Social media can provide organisations with a tool to communicate with stakeholders and provide information quickly and efficiently (Chen & Xu, 2017).

Studies have shown that social media can influence public opinion during a crisis (Kim & Sung, 2017) and Twitter has become a popular social media platform for crisis communication because of its real-time and interactive nature (Kim & Sung, 2017). A study by Kim and Sung (2017) found that Twitter users who engage with crisis-related tweets are more likely to perceive the organisation positively if the tweets are consistent with the organisation's values and previous communication efforts.

Social media has become an essential tool for public relations (PR) practitioners to connect with their audiences. Social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram provide organisations with the opportunity to interact with their stakeholders, share messages, and manage their reputation. In the last decade, social media has become one of the most significant communication channels for public relations professionals (Kim & Sung, 2017).

The use of social media in public relations is becoming increasingly important in crisis management. A crisis is an unexpected event that can negatively affect an organisation's reputation, financial performance, and stakeholder relationships. Social media has become an essential tool in crisis management since it allows organisations to engage with their stakeholders and provide information in real-time (Coombs, 2014).

Twitter is a popular social media platform used by individuals and organisations worldwide (Asemah & Nwaoboli, 2022). Twitter has become a valuable tool for crisis communication because of its real-time and interactive nature (Chen & Xu, 2017). Twitter allows users to post short messages, called tweets, and interact with other users through comments and re-tweets. Twitter has become an essential tool for public relations practitioners to monitor public opinion and respond to crises (Kim & Sung, 2017).

The Ike Ekweremadu organ trafficking case in Nigeria generated significant controversy and criticism on social media, especially Twitter. The case involved allegations that a former Deputy Senate President, Ike Ekweremadu, was involved in the trafficking of human organs. The case generated significant negative publicity for the Nigerian government and raised questions about its ability to manage crises effectively. The Nigerian government's response to the Ike Ekweremadu organ trafficking case was aimed at managing the situation and restoring public trust. However, thorough studies have not been carried out to find out Twitter netizens' perceptions of Nigerian government's public relations strategies in response to the Ike Ekweremadu's organ trafficking case. It is based on this premise that this study is carried out.

The government's response included the release of official statements, engagement with stakeholders on social media, and the launch of an investigation into the allegations. This study aims to examine Twitter netizens' perceptions of the Nigerian government's public relations strategies in response to the Ike Ekweremadu organ trafficking case.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The Ike Ekweremadu organ trafficking case has been the subject of intense controversy and criticism on social media, particularly Twitter and this has raised questions about the Nigerian government's ability to handle crises effectively. In response to the situation, the Nigerian government employed a number of public relations strategies, including issuing official statements, engaging with stakeholders on social media, and launching an investigation into the allegations.

However, it remains unclear whether these efforts were successful in restoring public trust, as no studies have yet been conducted to determine their effectiveness irrespective of the various studies on organ trafficking such as Columb (2017) and Ambagtsheer & Weimar (2016). As a result, this study aims to fill this gap in the literature by providing insights into how Twitter users perceive the Nigerian government's public relations strategies in response to the Ike Ekweremadu organ trafficking case. An understanding of how people perceive the government's response to this crisis can help people and organisations gain a better understanding of the factors that influence public trust and confidence in government institutions during times of crisis. Ultimately, this knowledge can help us develop more effective crisis communication strategies that better meet the needs and expectations of stakeholders.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this study are to:

1. assess Twitter netizens' awareness of Nigerian government's PR strategies of Ike Ekweremadu's organ trafficking crisis
2. find out Twitter netizens' perceptions of the Nigerian government's response to the crisis; and
3. examine Twitter netizens' perceptions of the effectiveness of the Nigerian government's public relations strategies in addressing Ike Ekweremadu's organ trafficking crisis.

### **Conceptual Review**

#### **Ike Ekweremadu's organ trafficking case**

Ike Ekweremadu, born on May 12, 1962, is a Nigerian politician and lawyer from Enugu State (Imo, 2023). He served in the Nigerian Senate as the representative for Enugu West from June 3, 2003, until May 5, 2023. Ekweremadu is a member of the People's Democratic Party and served as the Deputy President of the Nigerian Senate for three consecutive terms (6th, 7th, and 8th) (Imo, 2023).

However, in June 2022, Ekweremadu, his wife, his daughter, and Dr. Obinna Obeta were charged with conspiring to arrange the travel of a 21-year-old man from Lagos to the UK for

organ harvesting. The charges alleged that the group intended to exploit the young man for his kidney, offering him up to £7,000 and a job in exchange for traveling to the UK.

On March 23, 2023, Ekweremadu, his wife, and Dr. Obinna Obeta were convicted of conspiring to exploit the young man for his kidney by the Central Criminal Court of the United Kingdom. According to prosecutors, the victim was brought to the UK in 2022 for an £80,000 private transplant at the Royal Free Hospital in London (Vanguard, 2023). The prosecutors also stated that the victim was promised a job and money in exchange for his kidney, which was intended to be removed and given to Ekweremadu's daughter. The maximum sentence for the organ harvesting case is life imprisonment, as confirmed by the prosecution.

On May 5, 2023, Ike Ekweremadu, his wife, and Dr. Obinna Obeta were found guilty for their involvement in the organ trafficking conspiracy (Vanguard, 2023). Ekweremadu received a sentence of nine years and eight months imprisonment, while Dr. Obinna Obeta received a sentence of ten years imprisonment. Ekweremadu's wife was sentenced to four years and six months imprisonment for her role in the conspiracy. The sentencing of Ekweremadu, his wife, and Dr. Obinna Obeta was a significant development in the case, as it marked the end of the legal proceedings and the beginning of their imprisonment. The severity of the sentences reflects the seriousness of the crime and the need for accountability and justice in issues of organ trafficking just as Columb (2015) avowed. More so, it is a tragic and shocking example of the dangers and consequences of illegal organ trafficking as it highlights the need for strict regulations and enforcement mechanisms to prevent such crimes and protect vulnerable individuals from exploitation.

### **Overview of Public Relations**

Public relations (PR) is a strategic communication process that involves the cultivation and maintenance of relationships between an entity be it an organisation or an individual, and its diverse stakeholders, which may include the media, customers, employees, investors, and the wider public. The principal objective of public relations (PR) is to establish and sustain a favourable perception and standing for an entity or person, utilising diverse communication media and undertakings (Egbulefu, 2018).

Omoera & Badi (2020 p. 223) see public relations as “the ability to build a reciprocally beneficial relationship between an organisation, nation or individual and different publics”. According to Asemah, Kente, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Amah (2018), public relations is the method through which businesses, organisations, and people interact with the public and the media. According to Flynn, Gregory, and Valin (2008), who were cited by Asemah, Akase, and Nkwam-Uwaoma (2018), public relations is the strategic management of relationships between an organisation and its various publics through the use of communication in order to foster mutual understanding, realize organisational goals, and advance the public good

Public relations practitioners employ diverse tactics and strategies to influence the public's perception of their clients. These may include managing media relations, overseeing social media, organising events, handling crises, and engaging in community outreach. In addition,

they endeavour to establish and uphold connections with significant influencers and stakeholders, including journalists, bloggers, and leaders within the industry.

The implementation of proficient public relations strategies can facilitate the establishment of trust, credibility, and goodwill between an entity or an individual and its stakeholders (Chiakaan, Egbulefu, Kpera & Kaigama, 2021; Asemah-Ibrahim, Nwaoboli, & Asemah, 2022b). This, in turn, can result in heightened brand recognition, customer allegiance, and commercial prosperity. On the contrary, inadequate public relations can have detrimental effects on an entity's standing, resulting in adverse publicity, customer attrition, and other unfavourable outcomes (Asemah-Ibrahim, Nwaoboli, & Asemah, 2022a).

### **Literature Review**

The demand for organs on the global market is driven by the increasing prevalence of vascular and diabetic disorders and an aging population. Within this market, kidneys are the most sought-after organ, with an estimated 200,000 individuals waiting for kidney transplants worldwide, and only 33% of patients on these lists receive a kidney each year (Shafran Kodish & Tzakis. 2014). Chronic renal failure affects 10% of the world's population, and less than 10% of the required transplants are being carried out. On average, patients wait for three to five years, and 15 to 30 percent of them die each year while waiting for a transplant (Shafran Kodish & Tzakis. 2014).

Despite the increased attention given to the issue of organ trafficking, there is limited academic research on the matter. The majority of existing studies has focused on kidney sales on the illicit market and has been linked to negative consequences (Moniruzzaman 2019). Organ trafficking is often associated with human trafficking when it involves recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of persons, and the means used to do so include threat, use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power, or use of a position of vulnerability.

Empirical studies have shown that kidney dealers are seldom identified as human trafficking victims, and they do not identify with this label either (Allain, 2007). Kidney sellers often seek out brokers and recruiters and may become recruiters or brokers themselves after selling their kidney, exhibiting degrees of human trafficking that do not entirely fit the description of a victim. As a result, sellers are inadequately protected and fall through the cracks of anti-human trafficking defenses, risking prosecution since many countries forbid the selling of organs. The lack of prosecutions is due to the trade's integration into the legal transplant business, the professional vows of secrecy, and the impunity of the medical elite (Yousaf & Purkayastha 2015).

The low number of prosecutions of organ trafficking cases has hampered research on law enforcement responses to the crime. While some cases have been prosecuted, such as the Rosenbaum case, the Netcare case, and the Medicus Clinic case, little is known about how law enforcement responds in these situations. More research is needed to better understand the challenges and obstacles that hamper investigations and prosecutions of organ trafficking cases (De Jong & Ambagtsheer, 2016). Criminal justice responses to organ trafficking are complicated by the trade's international aspects and varied charging practices. However,

further research is necessary to fully comprehend the difficulties that investigators encounter in prosecuting organ trafficking cases and to develop more effective strategies to address this crime.

The Nigerian government especially through the senate responded to the Ike Ekweremadu's organ trafficking case in several ways. In the onset, Abubakar Malami, the former Attorney General of Nigeria and Minister of Justice, had emphasized that the Nigerian government would not interfere in the legal proceedings involving former Deputy Senate President, Ike Ekweremadu and was considered by many as underscoring the government's commitment to upholding the rule of law and respecting the legal processes in place (Inyang, 2022).

However, after several rethinking, the Nigerian government took steps to provide diplomatic and consular support to former Deputy Senate President, Ike Ekweremadu, who was facing charges of organ trafficking in the UK. The Nigerian High Commission engaged the services of lawyers in the UK to defend Ekweremadu and provided some consular services to him and his family. The Senate also committed to engaging with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the High Commission in London to ensure that appropriate support was provided to Ekweremadu (NewsWireNGR, 2022).

Additionally, the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs sent a delegation to the UK to visit Ekweremadu and his wife. This visit was aimed at providing further support to Ekweremadu and his family during his trial. The Nigerian government urged all institutions that could contribute to ensuring justice prevailed in the case to do so (NewsWireNGR, 2022). The engagement of lawyers in the UK and the visit by the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs demonstrated the Nigerian government's commitment to ensuring that Ekweremadu was appropriately represented and supported during his trial.

In May 2023, the House of Representatives appealed to the Central Criminal Court of the United Kingdom for leniency in the sentencing of former Deputy Senate President, Ike Ekweremadu. Along with the appeal, the law makers also requested the intervention of the British government in the case (Okocha & Orizu, 2023). As elected officials, the members of the House of Representatives acknowledged the severity of the charges against Ekweremadu and urged the Central Criminal Court to take into account any mitigating circumstances. Additionally, they implored the British government to get involved in the matter, presumably with the intention of influencing the court's decision (Okocha&Orizu, 2023).

However, the House of Representatives' appeal may not have had any impact on the sentencing as Ekweremadu was handed over nine years imprisonment. Nonetheless, the lawmakers' actions demonstrate their engagement with the case and their desire to advocate for a just and fair outcome in tandem with the stance of the Nigerian government.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The Framing Theory was propounded by Erving Goffman in 1974 as a way to understand how individuals use language and symbols to create a frame or context for a particular situation or issue (Ajibulu & Nwaoboli, 2023). This theory suggests that the way an issue is

framed can influence how people perceive it, with different frames highlighting different aspects of the issue and shaping public opinion (Nwaoboli & Ajibulu, 2023).

The tenets of the Framing Theory can be summarized as follows:

1. Framing involves the selection and salience of certain aspects of an issue over others.
2. Frames can be activated by language, symbols, and images used in media coverage or public discourse.
3. Different frames can lead to different perceptions of an issue and influence public opinion.
4. Frames can be used strategically by individuals or organisations to shape public opinion and influence policy.

In the case of Twitter netizens' perceptions of the Nigerian government's public relations strategies in response to the Ike Ekweremadu organ trafficking case, the Framing Theory can be applied in several ways. In the first place, the government's public relations strategies can be seen as an attempt to frame the issue in a particular way, such as an isolated incident rather than a systemic problem. By highlighting certain aspects of the issue and downplaying others, the government may have been trying to influence how the public perceived the situation.

Twitter netizens may have used different frames to interpret the government's response. Some may have focused on the government's lack of action and framed the issue as a failure of leadership, while others may have focused on the government's statements of condemnation and framed the issue as a sign of progress. Additionally, the media coverage of the issue can also be seen as a form of framing, with different news outlets emphasising different aspects of the story and presenting different frames to their audiences. Twitter netizens may have been influenced by the framing used by different media outlets and incorporated those frames into their perceptions of the government's response.

Overall, the Framing Theory provides a useful framework for understanding how different frames can shape public perceptions of an issue and how those perceptions can be influenced by language, symbols, and media coverage. By analysing the frames used in the Ekweremadu organ trafficking case, researchers can gain insight into how the issue was perceived by different groups on Twitter and how those perceptions were shaped by various forms of framing.

## **Methodology**

The study focused on Twitter users in Nigeria, with a total population of 325,400 as at 2022 (Data Reportal, 2022). The Cochran formula was used to calculate the sample size. The formula was:  $n = Z^2 * p * q / e^2 * N$  where:  $n$  = sample size,  $Z$  = the standard normal deviate for the desired level of confidence (e.g., for 95% confidence,  $Z=1.96$ )  $p$  = the estimated proportion of the population that has the characteristic of interest;  $q = 1 - p$ ;  $e$  = the desired level of precision or margin of error;  $N$  = the population size. The desired level of confidence of 95% was utilised with a margin of error of 5%, and an estimated proportion of 0.5. Inputting these figures,  $n = (1.96^2 * 0.5 * 0.5) / (0.05^2 * 325,400)$ ,  $n = 368.67$ . Rounding up to the nearest integer, a sample size of 369 was arrived at.

The study used a cross-sectional survey design. A questionnaire was developed based on the research objectives. The questionnaire consisted closed-ended questions that were designed

to gather information on Twitter netizens' perceptions of the Nigerian government's public relations strategies in response to the Ike Ekweremadu organ trafficking case. The questionnaire was pretested with a small group (30) of Twitter netizens to ensure its validity and clarity. After pretesting, the questionnaire was distributed to a sample of 369 Twitter netizens in Nigeria using Google forms and the respondents were allowed a period of 7 days to respond. The sample was selected using a convenience sampling technique, where the researchers selected Twitter users who met the following criteria-- active Twitter users in Nigeria and those aware of the discourse at hand. All copies of the questionnaire were adequately filled and there was a 100% return rate.

The data collected through the questionnaire were analysed using SPSS 21. The cross-sectional survey design was chosen because it allowed the researchers to collect data from a large sample of Twitter users in Nigeria in a short period and because only those who knew about the Ike-Ekweremadu's organ trafficking case were the target group. Conversely, the convenience sampling technique was further used because it was the most practical way to access Twitter users in Nigeria while the use of closed-ended questions in the questionnaire allowed for easy data analysis and interpretation.

## Data Presentation

**Table 1: Frequency of Twitter usage**

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Every day	209	56.6
Twice a week	13	3.5
Three days a week	89	24.1
Weekends	58	15.7
Monthly	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field Survey, 2023.**

Table 1 showed that majority of the respondents (56.6%) reported using Twitter every day, indicating that it is a popular platform for daily use. Only a small percentage (3.5%) reported using it twice a week, while 24.1% reported using it three days a week. Additionally, 15.7% of respondents reported using Twitter only on weekends, suggesting it may be primarily a leisure activity. Notably, none of the respondents reported using Twitter on a monthly basis. Overall, the data suggests that Twitter is an important platform for daily use among the surveyed population, highlighting its significance for individuals and organisations seeking to engage with their audience.



**Table 2: Twitter netizens' awareness of Nigerian government's PR strategies on Ike Ekweremadu's organ trafficking crisis**

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Highly aware	121	32.8
Aware	124	33.6
Neutral	8	2.2
Slightly aware	116	31.4
Not aware	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field Survey, 2023.**

Table 2 shows that a significant proportion of Twitter netizens in Nigeria have some level of awareness of the Nigerian government's PR strategies related to the Ike Ekweremadu's organ trafficking crisis. The high percentage of respondents who are highly aware or aware of the government's Public relations efforts suggests that there may be some interest or concern among the respondents regarding the government's handling of the crisis and its communication with the public.

**Table 3: Twitter netizen's perceptions of Nigerian government's response to the crisis**

Perceptions	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
The government took effective measures to address the crisis	17 (4.6%)	13 (3.5%)	1 (0.3%)	56 (42.3%)	182 (49.3%)	369 (100%)
The government's response was insufficient and inadequate	111 (30.1%)	90 (51.5%)	20 (5.4%)	22 (5.9%)	26 (7.0%)	369 (100%)
The government's PR strategy was slow and delayed	140 (37.9%)	129 (34.9%)	7 (1.9%)	53 (14.4%)	40 (10.8%)	369 (100%)
The government coordinated effectively with international stakeholders to address the crisis	38 (10.3%)	58 (15.7%)	10 (2.7%)	166 (44.9%)	97 (26.3%)	369 (100%)
The government's response exacerbated the crisis rather than alleviating it	90 (24.3%)	79 (21.4%)	0 (0%)	109 (29.5%)	91 (24.7%)	369 (100%)
The government's response did not address the root causes of the crisis	213 (5.7%)	156 (42.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	369 (100%)
	609 (27.5%)	625 (28.2%)	38 (1.7%)	506 (22.9%)	436 (19.7%)	2214 (600%)
<b>Total</b>						

**Source: Field Survey, 2023.**

Table 3 shows that only 4.6% of respondents strongly agreed that the government's measures to address the crisis were effective, while 42.3% agreed and 49.3% were neutral. In terms of sufficiency and adequacy, a significant majority of respondents (81.6%) disagreed strongly or somewhat with the statement that the government's response was sufficient and adequate, while only 5.9% agreed. Additionally, a significant number of respondents (72.8%) agreed either strongly or somewhat that the government's PR strategy was slow and delayed. In terms of coordination with international stakeholders, while a majority of respondents (56.8%) agreed that the government coordinated effectively, a significant number (37.2%) were either neutral or disagreed. These statistics indicate that the majority of Twitter netizens were not convinced that the Nigerian government's measures at combating the Ike Ekweremadu's organ trafficking crisis were effective in addressing the issue. Moreover, a significant majority of respondents disagreed that the government's response was sufficient and adequate, and a significant number of respondents agreed that the government's PR strategy was slow and delayed.

**Table 4: Perception of the degree of effectiveness of the Nigerian government's public relations strategies in addressing Ike Ekweremadu's organ trafficking crisis**

Degree	Frequency	Percentage
Very High	23	6.2
High	35	9.5
Neutral	1	0.3
Low	209	56.6
Very Low	101	27.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field Survey, 2023.**

Table 4 shows that Twitter netizens in Nigeria have a negative perception of the effectiveness of the Nigerian government's public relations strategies in addressing the organ trafficking crisis. It shows that only a small percentage of respondents (6.2%) rated the effectiveness of the government's strategies as very high or high, while the majority of respondents (84%) rated the effectiveness as low or very low.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The results presented in Table 1 underscore the prevalence of Twitter usage in Nigeria, as a significant proportion of participants reported utilising the platform on daily basis. The present findings align with prior studies on social media usage in Nigeria, which have established Twitter as one of the most widely used social media platforms in the region (Asemah & Nwaoboli, 2022). The lack of participants indicating a monthly frequency of Twitter usage implies that the platform is predominantly employed for daily communication and could be a favoured medium for immediate news dissemination and engagement.

The findings of this study indicate that the public relations tactics employed by the Nigerian government in response to the organ trafficking crisis involving Ike Ekweremadu have garnered a degree of attention and engagement from Twitter users in Nigeria. The

aforementioned results align with prior studies on the functions of social media in crisis communication, which have concluded that social media can serve as a proficient medium for distributing information and interacting with the general public in times of crisis (Arijeniwa, Nwaoboli, Ajimokunola & Uwuoruya, 2022; Nwaoboli, 2022).

The research also underscores the perceived inefficacy of the measures implemented by the Nigerian government to address the issue of organ trafficking. The aforementioned discoveries emphasise the significance of proficient handling of crises and communication, particularly in circumstances where the trust and assurance of the public in governmental establishments may be jeopardised. The significant proportion of participants who expressed dissent towards the adequacy of the government's response implies a potential requirement for enhanced communication and engagement tactics to mitigate public apprehensions and foster confidence. The results presented in Table 4 indicate that there exists a notable lack of trust among Twitter users in Nigeria regarding the efficacy of the Nigerian government's actions taken to tackle the issue of organ trafficking in the context of the Ike Ekweremadu crisis. A significant proportion of participants expressed dissent towards the adequacy of the government's response, suggesting that the measures implemented by the government were insufficient in mitigating the crisis. Furthermore, the considerable proportion of participants who concurred with the notion that the public relations strategy of the government was tardy and postponed implies that the communication endeavours of the government were not prompt or efficacious in disseminating information to the populace regarding the crisis.

The results align with prior studies on crisis communication, highlighting the significance of prompt and precise communication in times of crisis to establish reliance and assurance in the government's reaction (Omoera & Bardi, 2018). The significance of proficient communication is especially pertinent in the scenario of the Ike Ekweremadu's organ trafficking predicament, wherein the credibility and reliance of government establishments on the public may be jeopardised.

The results additionally imply that there exists a potential for enhancement in the government's coordination endeavours with global stakeholders in order to tackle the crisis. Although a majority of the participants concurred with the notion that the government exhibited effective coordination, a considerable proportion of the respondents expressed either a neutral stance or a disagreement. This underscores the significance of efficient collaboration and communication with global counterparts in order to effectively tackle the matter.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The findings from this study highlight the significant role that social media platforms, particularly Twitter, play in crisis communication and public engagement in Nigeria. The study concludes that Twitter netizens perceive the public relations strategies by the Nigerian government to address the issue of organ trafficking in the context of the Ike Ekweremadu crisis as ineffective. Arising from the conclusion, it is recommended that:

1. The Nigerian government should enhance its crisis communication strategies to ensure timely and accurate dissemination of information to the public during crisis situations,

particularly through social media platforms like Twitter. This can help to build public trust and confidence in government institutions.

2. The Nigerian government should reassess its measures to address the issue of organ trafficking and take action to ensure that they are adequate and effective in mitigating the crisis.

3. The Nigerian government should develop and implement efficient communication strategies to disseminate information promptly and effectively to the public, particularly during crisis situations.

4. The Nigerian government should strengthen its coordination efforts with global stakeholders to tackle the issue of organ trafficking effectively. This can be achieved through enhanced collaboration and communication with international partners.

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