



## **Analysis of Citizens' Engagement Patterns and Comments on the Nigerian Government's Framing of the 2016 Rice Policy on Facebook and X Platforms**

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### **ABSTRACT**

**Background:** The use of social media platforms by governments to communicate policy decisions and engage with citizens has become increasingly popular. In Nigeria, the government has utilized social media platforms such as Facebook and X (formerly Twitter) to disseminate information and solicit feedback on various policy initiatives. In 2016, the Nigerian government introduced a new rice policy aimed at promoting self-sufficiency in rice production and reducing dependence on imports. The policy was announced on various social media platforms, sparking intense debate and discussion among citizens.

**Objective:** This study analysed the engagement pattern and comments of Nigerian citizens on the government's framing of the 2016 rice policy on Facebook and X platforms. Specifically, the study sought to examine how citizens responded to the policy announcement, the nature of their comments and engagements, and the implications of these interactions for policy-making and democratic governance in Nigeria.

**Method:** Forty-eight posts from April to December, 2016 on government accounts - Aso Rock Villa; Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development or Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security and Muhammadu Buhari, were content analysed using a coding sheet. The analysis was done using descriptive statistics and presented using frequency tables.

**Result:** The Nigerian government's use of the social media in driving its rice policy was borne out of the desire to reach more audience about the policy. This the government was able to achieve with the use of pictures, videos and texts which were strategically designed, produced and worded to drive the policy of the government on rice. The engagement patterns, showing those who reacted to the posts of the Nigerian government on the rice policy, indicated that majority of them made use of the *Like* interactive button, then the *Share* or *Retweet* and *Comment* interactive signals.

**Conclusion:** The study concludes that the Nigerian government made use of the social media – Facebook and X in driving the rice policy. The engagement patterns, showing those who reacted to the posts of the Nigerian government on the rice policy, indicated that majority of them accepted the rice policy of the government. Also, there are more posts on the rice policy on the Facebook handles of the government than the ones on X.



**Unique Contribution:** By examining the online discourse surrounding the 2016 rice policy, this study contributes to our understanding of how social media can be leveraged to enhance citizen engagement and participation in policy-making processes.

**Key Recommendation:** Nigerian government should engage the citizens more on its social media platforms when it comes to policy advocacy. Incentivisation-for-comment could be employed in order to draw their attention to posts on such policies. More social media handlers should be engaged by the government particularly the national orientation agency (NOA) that would sustain social media interactions when a post about government policies like the rice policy is made.

**Keywords:** Engagement patterns, Facebook, Nigerian Government, Rice policy, Tweeter (X)

## INTRODUCTION

Studies such as those of PricewaterhouseCoopers - PWC (2022) estimates that rice accounts for 10% of annual household food spending in Nigeria. The importance of rice makes it an issue of food security and government policy over time in Nigeria. It is the centrality of rice to diet that makes it an issue of policy in Nigeria. Perhaps, any shift in direction of government policy on rice will definitely affect the populace. Between 2005 and 2015, the monthly import bill of Nigeria on rice alone stood at between 148 and 917 billion Nigerian Naira (Odumade, 2016).

With the policy implementation on rice ban - a policy that led to the federal government banning rice through the land borders - the local production of the commodity increased significantly (Odumade, 2016). However, the ban has led to the price of the commodity increasing as local producers tried to meet the local demand for rice. The official reason provided by the government for the ban was the need to enhance rice production capacity and increased self-sufficiency (Allen & Ogbe, 2020). Self-sufficiency in the production of local rice has inadvertently led to an increase in the price of the commodity making rice an expensive meal for many households in Nigeria (Johnson, Takeshima & Gyimpah-Brepong, 2013; Ogunleke, 2020). The price of the commodity has been on the increase as a 50kg bag of Nigerian rice goes for between 90,000 and 120,000 - based on the type of rice as at the year ending 2024 - in a country where 40% of the populations (83 million Nigerians) live in poverty. The cost of rice has led to an increase in other consumer food items (Nordhagen, Lee, Onuigbo-Chatta, Okoruwa, Monterrosa, Lambertini & Peltó, 2022). Perhaps, the rice policy of the federal government has therefore become a major issue affecting the common masses. Household food security has become precarious since the rice policy was introduced. However, the benefits of the rice policy and its effects on the population elicit opinions from the general public who have to make evaluative judgments about the policy.

The onerous task before the federal government, however, is how it would communicate the rice policy to Nigerians. Before, the government-controlled media – broadcast and print media, were largely used by the government to influence the people and inform them about a policy. With social media inventions like Facebook, Twitter (X), Instagram, YouTube, etc., now a communication force, the government can no longer claim to control media narratives. It is important for the government to take advantage of the alternatives available in the social media



to push policy discourse. The adoption of the social media as a communication strategy has become common with established political institutions that provide political contents on their platforms. Stieglitz & Dang-Xuan (2013) identify political institutions as politicians, political parties, and political foundations. It is also important to stress here that advancements in communication technology and the return to democratic system of government after years of military rule, has led to the adoption of social media as a communication strategy by political actors to promote government policies in Nigeria (Aligwe, et al., 2016; Nwafor, et al., 2017).

Vromen, Xenos & Loader (2015) note that the social media have the power to influence young people that are interested in politics to engage in political discourse. Political institutions must therefore persuade the general public that a government policy is beneficial for the welfare of the people. Available empirical literatures (Akinbode, 2013; Odukoya, 2020; Allen & Ogbe, 2020), show that there exist a lot of studies on the rice policy of the Nigerian government. But the studies have largely centred on investigating the policies of the government on rice vis-à-vis its pros and cons. The scope of these studies have touched few states in the Southwestern part of Nigeria (Lagos, Ogun, Osun and Ekiti), and the North Central as well as the South-South. The researchers are not sure why majority of the studies were hinged on discussing the policy angle to the rice policy of the Nigerian government. But it is a known fact that the rice policy of the Nigerian government is one that affects every stratum of the society. For instance, issues on rice importation and smuggling were the concerns of these existing literatures on the rice policy. However, few of the literatures were hinged on the effect of social media towards achieving the purpose of the rice policy of the government i.e. local production. Also, the studies have majorly used survey methods to elicit data from respondents (mostly farmers), about the rice policy of the government. These methods include the use of multi-stage sampling technique, use of questionnaire, as well as interview guides.

However, having identified the gaps of previous literatures on the rice policy, this study cannot ascertain the way Nigerians react to or comment on the rice policy discourse of the Nigerian government on Facebook and X platforms. Also, the researchers are not sure of the type of engagements Nigerians have with the policy on those social media platforms. It is against this background that this study seeks to examine the citizens' engagement patterns and comments on the communication of the rice policy on Facebook and X platforms.

### **Political Economy of the Rice Policy in Nigeria**

The examination of rice policy requires a resort to political economy. Rice as a staple food in Nigeria is a crucial element of food security in the Nigerian state. To unpack rice policy in Nigeria, the examination of the demand and trade of rice is situated within the gamut of policy and policy making and governance. In political economy, the concern of scholars is with the distribution of income and wealth (op. cit).

As rice production is subjected to the laws of demand and supply, rice policy reflects government interventions in the marketing of this staple food across Nigeria. Evidence abounds in literature of the interference of the government with rice production and trade with policies that seek to achieve a specific aim. In post-colonial Nigeria, the intervention of Government in the trade and production of rice have appeared in four forms:



- i. Trade policy (such as import restrictions of tariffs)
- ii. Exchange rate policy in which government restrict dollars or make it available for rice imports
- iii. Fertilizer policy in which there is a deliberate effort to make fertilizer available
- iv. Land policy in which government plays a role in allocation of land (Odukoya, 2020).

Each of these policy initiatives sought to achieve an economic and political goal. The nature of policy in general needs to be examined to provide conceptual clarity to deconstruct for analysis. Policy making in many African states, Nigeria inclusive most times do not lead to effective governance. Perhaps good governance is not necessarily dependent on the type and orientation of the people in government, it involves a strategy with broad reform and an initiative that would strengthen the institutions of civil society whose target will be to make government accountable, open, transparent and democratic. Hence, the World Bank (2018) defines governance effectiveness by using the following indicators:

- i. Voice and accountability: this is with emphasis that a country's citizens should participate in selecting their government. Others are freedom of expression, freedoms of association and a free media.
- ii. Political stability and absence of violence,
- iii. Regulatory quality: ability of the government to formulate and implement sound policies and regulations that would ensure and support private sector development,
- iv. Rule of law and control of corruption.

### **Technological Determinism Theory**

The technological determinism theory (TDT) is a reductionist theory which hold the belief that society's advancement in technology brings about the development of its social structure and cultural values. Thorstein Veblen (1857–1929), an American sociologist and economist was renowned for developing the TDT theory.

Suffice it to say that Nigeria is a developing country in Sub-Saharan Africa whose economy is dominated by oil and agriculture. It is also a statement of fact that in terms of technological advancements, the country has not achieved much. However, Nigeria has a reasonable population of citizens that are educated and knowledgeable in technology. A large number of these people are youths who are technological oriented. These youths also fit well into the post-modernism economy narrative which is largely technological-drive. This is why some studies divided Nigerians into the technological-rich and the technological-poor. This has shaped the Nigerian society.

It is in this frame that Facebook and X, which are within the scope of this study were put to test to know how they have helped shape or otherwise, the policy direction of the government on rice. The theory better explain the relationship that existed among social media users in the country



who formed the sample size for this study. Majority of them were within the age bracket of 39 and 45 years (Adebumiti, 2024). This age range suggests that most of the respondents were active users of the social media platforms like Facebook and X. Hence, they were technological-rich and such population is needed to push the policy drive of the Nigerian government on its rice policy on Facebook and X (Guanah, Obi, Egbra&Akumabor, 2018). It is also important to stress that the government's use of Facebook and X to frame its rice policy, which engagements and comments formed the scope of this study, implies that the Nigerian government, as established in many studies (Mustapha, Gbonegun& Mustapha, 2016; Aligwe, et al., 2017; Inegbedion, Inegbedion, Asaleye, Obadiaru&Asamu, 2021; Ihsaniyati, Sarwoprasodjo, Muljono&Gandasari, 2023. Guanah, Obi, Egbra&Akumabor, 2018), ~~held the~~ believe that the social media have a sizeable number of audience good enough to ensure that policies like the rice policy when properly framed, would lead to policy acceptability and sustainability.

## **EMPIRICAL REVIEW**

Akinbode (2013) in a study on access to credit: implication for sustainable rice production in Nigeria, set out with the objective to investigate the effect of access to credit facility on rice production in Nigeria. The researcher used a total of 208 rice farmers in Niger State, North-central Nigeria as sample size. The study found out that when farmers have access to credit facility, they would record higher yield and profit thereby leading to economic sustainability of the rice enterprise. Akinbode study is related to this current study because it emphasises the need for efforts that would bring about the sustainability of the rice policy of the Nigerian government.

Terwase& Madu (2014) in their study, the impact of rice production, consumption and importation in Nigeria: the political economy perspectives, set out with the objective to probe the level of production, consumption and importation of rice in Nigeria, with a view to finding out its effect on the economy. The researchers used empirical and secondary methods to obtain data from respondents. The study found out that Nigeria's rice production level is low and that the consumption is high while its importation is highly inelastic. It however recommended that the government should improve on rice production not only as a replacement for its importation and local consumption, but export as well. The study is related to this current study in terms of the methods used for gathering data.

Also, Johnson, Takeshima, Gyimah-Brempong& Kuku-Shittu (2013) in a related study, policy options for accelerated growth and competitiveness of the domestic rice economy in Nigeria, set out with the objective to assess how the Nigerian government intends to make the country self-sufficient in local rice production by 2015 under the Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA). The study found out that Nigeria's current rice import bill stood at over US\$2 billion. The researchers also found out that the import restrictions policy of the government alone are not adequate due to the cost of implementation. The study recommended that there must be adequate support to small-to-medium scale rice processors to enhance quality, more than supporting large-scale milling technologies. The study by Johnson et al (2013) is similar to this current study because it places emphasis on activities that are geared towards promoting and sustaining the rice policy of the Nigerian government.





Mustapha, Gbonegun& Mustapha (2016) on how social media are informing a sense of community among people and fostering political engagement. The researchers identified a knowledge gap in how social media usage in Africa and Nigeria in connection to political issues. Their study was anchored on social capital theory. They hypothesised that social media platforms are useful for social structure to build networks with desirable outcomes in collectives on political participation, hence, they hypothesise that social media platforms like Facebook and X used for this current research, could also be used for political information which is a strong predictor of social capital. It was also observed that social media could be used to facilitate a democratisation of capacity. Evidence had shown a huge number of social media users are youths. In political participation, social media platforms are conceived as a public sphere (Baran & Davis, 2012). The researchers utilised a descriptive survey method and distributed questionnaire instruments to 335 students. Findings by Mustapha et al (2016) revealed that WhatsApp (78.2%), Facebook (69.9%) and X (34.3%) had the most social media presence and usage. The average social media visit was four days in a week. The findings also revealed that social media usage was a predictor of social capital. ( $R^2 = 0.221$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ). Social media also predicted political participation and social media use explained 25% of variance in political participation just as social capital predicted significantly political participation. The study by Mustapha et al (2016) introduced an intervening variable of social capital in the connection between social media and political participation. What this translates to is that social media fosters social networks with social capital that consequently leads to political participation.

## **METHOD**

This study used content analysis to elicit data. Content analysis is a way of studying and analysing communication in a strategic, objective, quantitative and systemic process aimed at measuring variables. Before now, content analysis was used for analysing contents that has to do with the print media – newspapers, magazines, books, etc., contemporary development has proven that contents on social media platforms like Facebook and X, which was part of this study, can be content analysed.

The population of study was made up of all the posts (pictures, graphics, videos, texts) on rice from April, 2016, when the ban on rice through the land borders took effect (Ebosele, 2016), to December, 2016 on the Facebook and X accounts of the following select government handles - *Aso Rock Villa; Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development or Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security and Muhammadu Buhari*. The sample size was 48 posts from Facebook and X accounts of these government handles. These government handles were selected because they are the official social media platforms for disseminating government activities. Also, some of the handles belong to the ministry in charge of agriculture in the country.

Coding sheet was used to get information about the engagement patterns and comments on the rice policy on Facebook and X platforms. The content categories for the data obtained were the interactive signals of *like, retweet, share and comment*. The direction of comment was also measured with categories of *positive, neutral and negative*. The unit of analysis (the thing that was actually counted) for the content analysis were pictures, graphics, videos, and texts on rice from April, 2016 to December, 2016, on the Facebook and X accounts of the following select



government institutions: *Aso Rock Villa; Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development or Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security and Muhammadu Buhari.*

The data set were identified using explore or search button on the pages of select government institutions with the key word – Rice 2016. Bruns & Stieglitz (2014) note that the use of keyword search can show the communication and engagement patterns of user metrics or temporal metric pattern on a theme. Facebook engagements were posts, likes, comments and shares, while X engagements were tweets, replies and reposts. The data were analysed using simple percentage frequency distribution table.

## RESULT

**Tables 1 & 2: The engagement patterns on the communication of the rice policy on Facebook and X**

<b>Table 1: Interactive Signal</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Like	4051	46.9
Share	2386	27.6
Retweet	989	11.5
Comment	1197	13.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>8623</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<b>Table 2: Direction of Comment</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Positive	731	61
Neutral	179	15
Negative	287	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>1197</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Tables 1 and 2 above show the engagement patterns of the 48 posts on Facebook and X that were analysed by the researchers. The *Like* button interactive signal, representing 46.9 percent was mostly used by the users to gauge the engagement patterns of the posts from the government. Also, majority of the comments from users indicated positivity, with 61 percent of the users supporting the policy on rice through their comments. Some of the comments are reproduced below:



*Positive comment: Agric mechanization: Agric minister flags off distribution of 500 threshers to rice farmers ... this generated a comment from one of the users who asked to know the benefitting states. The handler of the account responded by listing the 12 states that benefitted from the palliative. Also, a user asked if local rice is better than foreign rice. The handler responded that local rice is better than foreign rice, as most of the foreign rice has low nutritional value while some of the rice had been kept in storage for close to 15 years before being shipped into Nigeria.*

*Positive comment by Dorcas Ukpe wrote: Hon Minister is moving at the speed of light to ensure states are serious about Agric as business. Keep on making us proud Sir.*

*Neutral comment by Gabriel Kumzhi: What is the difference between excessive consumption and eating too much rice*

*Neutral comment by Babatunde Ibrahim Jimoh: But why are pple (sic) refraining from suing media houses? Why?*

*Neutral comment by Kehinde Akiode: Sir, is that not the truth?. Do we not have other local foods that are nutritious, delicious and even more affordable than Rice? The fact remains that Rice crisis will reach its climax like that of oil to ginger us to think outside the box.*

*Negative comment by Aliyu Abubakar Gidado: Busy shouting agriculture as a most (sic) yet you still haven't paid avian flu farmers money for their birds, and the most annoying aspect of it is that the funds are world bank given.*

*Negative comment by Abimaje Paul: Running away from the truth is also corruption (sic). It is true that we eat too much rice and we prioritise (sic) it to other food. We don't stay in the rural area where it is believed that it's only the rich that eat rice especially now that the commodity is so expensive. Let us lead by example. Agriculture is about practical. Let's talk and do.*

*Negative comment by Jikan Boola: Even if you didn't say so, you are trying to fail us. This your administration (sic) needs to think twice before you will finish us trying to fix Nigeria*

## **DISCUSSION**

Findings in tables 1 and 2 show that most of the users who reacted to the posts or tweets by the Nigerian government on Facebook and X on its rice policy, made use of the *Like* interactive button. The *Like* button covers 46.9 percent of the 8,623 interactive signals identified by the researchers across 48 posts on rice between April and December, 2016 on Facebook and X. The *Share* interactive button followed with 27.6 percent, while the *Retweet* interactive button, mainly found on X, stood at 11.5 percent. Findings further show that most of the users did not use the *comment* interactive signal, as 13.8 percent was recorded.

In gauging the pattern of comments across the 48 posts, the researchers found out that 51.9 percent of the comments which totaled 1,197, were positive; while 29.5 percent of the comments were negative. 18.4 percent of the comments were neutral. The implications of the data on the engagement patterns is that most users of social media, that is, those who reacted to the posts or





tweets of the government on the rice policy on Facebook and X, made use of the *Like* interactive button, than other interactive signals, which are *Share* or *Retweet* and *Comment* buttons.

From the available data to the researchers, the *Like* button is the most accessible of the interactive buttons or signals used for social media engagements by users. This is consistent with the findings of Aligwe, et al., (2017) the the Facebook *like* in particular makes it very easy for users to participate in online discourse with just a tap on the button. It is the most convenient interactive button that is often used by them. The fact that the *Like* button is the most used by social media users for interaction on the Nigerian government's rice policy, means that the public are aware and accepted the rice policy of the government. The positive engagements in the comment section of the posts or tweets analysed for this study also points to the direction of policy acceptability from the people. Below is an example of the post that generated a comment on one of the posts framed on Facebook and X by the Nigerian government:

*Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security: June 9, 2016: Agric mechanization: Agric minister flags off distribution of 500 threshers to **rice** farmers ... (see appendix)*

This post generated a comment from one of the users who asked to know the states that were given the 500 threshers. The handler of the government's Facebook account responded by listing the 12 states that benefitted from the 500 threshers. Also, a user asked if local rice is better than foreign rice. The handler again responded that local rice is better than foreign rice, as most of the foreign rice has low nutritional value, while some of the rice had been kept in storage for close to 15 years before been shipped into Nigeria. (see appendix).

This school of thought is well supported by Goodarzi, Fahimifar& Shakeri-Daryani (2021), when they opined that the striking fact of social media in policy discourse is the level of control. On social media, that level of control is significantly higher with more influence of users on the communication process. This means the content generator – the social media handlers can easily influence the users – the public. The various social media users in political communication play roles of creating content, sharing content or sending interactive signals. An interactive signal refers to any social media enabled function that allows for reaction to a post or tweet. The content creator on social media is engaged in discursive activity while the users who receive and reacts to the information constitute an active audience. It therefore becomes apparent that in policy discourse, there is the goal of persuasion of the audience while the audience generates interactive signals (Goodarzi et al, 2021).

Findings of this study also show that Facebook, than X was more used by the Nigerian government to inform the people about its rice policy. This is because there are more Nigerians on Facebook. It also shows that the government accounts or handles that were analysed made use of texts, graphics, videos and photo stories to inform the people about the policy. This finding is line with the thoughts of Kim & Hastak (2018); Aichner, Grunfelder, Maurer &Jegeni (2021); Ihsaniyati et al (2023).Further, NapoleonCat (2023) opines that Facebook had as many mobile users in Nigeria. That Nigeria has been labelled as one of a number of countries known as Facebook mobile countries. Though, X was less used by the Nigerian government, the researchers also found the platform useful as tweets on X before the rebranding in 2023 are generally less wordy, as few words are used to cater for the transience nature of social media



users. X has become a very important social media application for political actors, policy and political communication (Stieglitz & Dang-Xuan, 2013).

Technological determinism theory (TDT), which was developed by Thorstein Veblen (1857–1929), aptly supports the above submission on the use of Facebook and X for engagements on the rice policy, which are technological innovations. Both Facebook and X were used by the government according to findings of this study to inform the people about the rice policy. TDT is related to the findings in this study. TDT assumes that the level of technological advancements in the society equates to the development of its social structure and cultural values. Suffice to say that when it comes to technological advancements, Nigeria is still at the lower strata. However, the country has a good population of educated and knowledgeable young minds and adults who have access to technological innovations. These youths who have access to technological innovations could be engaged by the government to go into rice cultivation. This assumption is significant because majority of the users on Facebook and X are in their 40s (Adebumiti, 2024; Nsude, & Nwafor, 2016), which is the average age of youths globally. More so, they have exposure to technological platforms like Facebook and X, which was used by the Nigerian government to frame its rice policy. This assumption also supports the thoughts of Guanah et al (2018), that youths who are into agriculture in Nigeria must key into the social media in order to revolutionise agricultural practice in the country.

However, Ajala & Gana (2015) in their study on analysis of challenges facing rice processing in Nigeria disagreed with the assumption that when the people are well informed and engaged about the rice policy as framed on Facebook and X, they would be encouraged to accept the policy by purchasing and consuming local rice. Ajala & Gana (2015) argue that most rice processing owners in Nigeria are yet to find appropriate means for quality rice processing, apparently due to inadequate rice milling companies. The study notes that this challenge is responsible for the low quality of rice processed in Nigeria. Hence, some Nigerians, even though exposed to the framing of the Nigerian government on the rice policy on Facebook and X, still purchase and consume foreign rice, because they are not satisfied with the quality of Nigeria's local rice.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study concludes that the Nigerian government made use of the social media – Facebook and X in driving the rice policy. The engagement patterns, showing those who reacted to the posts of the Nigerian government on the rice policy, indicated that majority of them made use of the *Like* interactive button, than the *Share* or *Retweet* and *Comment* interactive signals. The fact that the *Like* button is the most used by the users for interaction on the Nigerian government rice policy, points to the fact that the public (selected South-westerners) are aware and accepted the rice policy of the government. Findings by the researcher also show that there are more posts on the rice policy on the Facebook handles of the government than the ones on X. However, the government social media handlers were not consistent as they reported few posts about the rice policy during the period under review. With the radical nature at which the government started the rice policy in 2016, to have posts on the rice policy, as little as 48 posts on the select government handles, was not encouraging.



## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations are made:

- i. The Nigerian government should continue to make use of the social media to drive its policies, particularly policies that are geared towards impacting the life of the people. Social media handlers that are knowledgeable in the usage of user generated contents should be given this onerous task.
- ii. The engagement patterns on the social media platforms should be more interactive in nature. The Nigerian government through the ministry of information and other relevant agencies in charge of disseminating information should engage the public more by introducing at the end of each post on the rice policy, quiz or message that would encourage the users to be forced to make comments on the posts. Incentivisation-for-comment could also be employed in order to draw their attention to posts on the rice policy.
- iii. The Nigerian government should place a total ban on the importation of rice through the air and seas just like it did with the land borders. This would help the local production of rice and ensure the sustainability of the rice policy. More social media handlers should be engaged by the government particularly the national orientation agency (NOA) that would sustain social media interactions when a post about the rice policy is made. Emphasis should also be placed on the economic, nutritional and health safety values of consuming local rice.

## **Ethical clearance**

The data for the study were culled from the social media pages of the Nigerian government on Facebook and X platforms. The names of the platforms were stated in the study. Equally, the names of the people who commented on the social media platforms were also given credence as they were not omitted during analysis.

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## **Conflict of Interest**

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.



### Authors' Contributions.

Adebumiti and Ekharefo conceived the study, including the design, Adebumiti and Ekharefo collated the data, and Uchenunu and Ekharefo handled the analysis and interpretation. All authors have critically reviewed and approved the final draft, and are responsible for the content and similarity index of the manuscript.

### Availability of data and materials.

The datasets on which conclusions were made for this study are available on reasonable request.

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