

The Utilisation Of the *Facebook* Social Media Platform to Communicate with The Public on Governance and Service Delivery Matters

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Abstract

The paper explores the usage of Facebook as an interactive platform by the eight metropolitan municipalities to inform citizens and to engage them on governance and day to day service delivery issues during the COVID-19 pandemic which limits face to face public participation. The e-government framework as well as public participation and social media theories form the theoretical backdrop of the qualitative study. A survey of the official Facebook pages of the eight metropolitan municipalities has been undertaken informed by the United Nations three-point e-participation survey scale. A content analysis is undertaken of the information posted on the pages by the municipality, the responses and comments of the followers or users of the page as well as the response of the municipality to the comments of the users. Conclusion is drawn on the manner in which the municipalities utilise the Facebook pages to communicate with citizens, which is unidirectional. Lessons are gleaned on the need for more interactive and effective usage of Facebook for two-way engagement or electronic public participation (e-participation) with the public.

Keywords: e-government, e-participation, e-service delivery, public participation, social media

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