

TRENDS IN SOCIAL MEDIA ADOPTIONS IN NIGERIA: EVALUATING YOUTH'S PARTICIPATION IN 2015 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

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Abstract

The global surge of social media accessed on mobile technologies especially among youths has brought about extraordinary opportunities in the society and have enabled a new trend in political communication. Today, social media networks are agents of sudden surge of virtuous public sphere dynamics with political campaigns thriving online; and through the smart mobile devices, making access easier and plausible. In Nigeria a public sphere of connectedness and discussion has also been in the making particularly since the advent of GSM in 2001 and social media penetrations in 2006. The political participation of the Nigerian youth vis-a-vis their presence on social media via mobile technologies must therefore, be put on the scholarship radar in order to determine how much influence it exerts on the polity. Hinged on the Diffusion of Innovation and Technological Acceptance Model, this study investigated how young people in three states Enugu, Anambra and Ogun states were politically activated to participate in the 2015 Presidential Elections with respect to their social media presence accessed on mobile technologies. A total of 600 youths were purposively selected from three LGAs in the three selected states and surveyed. Results indicated that the numerous mobile text messages and social media updates sent by politicians during the campaign influenced voting decisions with a minimal effect. Therefore, it is recommended that the polity be educated on the essence of mobile technologies in governance so that they can utilize it as an effective political communication tool for national development.

Key Words: Mobile Technology, Political Participation, Nigerian Youth, Social Media, 2015 Election

INTRODUCTION

Social media is now regarded as a harbinger of modernity because of its intrinsically pervasive nature and centrality in human communication. "As social media are ubiquitously used, they become increasingly interwoven with various sectors in society" (van Dijck & Poell, 2015, p.1). They further noted that first decade of social media has given rise to an online infrastructure that is profoundly shaping the way in which societies are organized and publics are shaped (p.1). One area of great impact is that of civic and political participation. In addition, development in the world of cell phones has helped in harnessing the potential of social media in the society as Smartphone is in vogue today and impacting on lives and communities. Drula (2014) opines that the development of mobile technology has created new possibilities for the provision and consumption of multimedia information. In the past the public used to be passive observers but not anymore. According to *ThisDay* newspaper (Okonji 2015) Nigeria has no fewer than 135 million mobile subscribers, "the rate at which GSM was embraced led to its rapid growth in subscriber number that jumped from a paltry 400,000 lines before 2001, to whopping 135 million active lines as at December 2014"

Today, all the mobile products are equipped with functionalities like Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs), touch screen, camera and apps, paired with more and more sensors. Research has shown that mobile devices enable quick and easy access to information as more people use their mobile devices to access sites and to read news (Drula 2014; Bosomworth 2013 (a) in Drula 2014, p.48). In 2011, social media and mobile devices featured prominently in the general elections in Nigeria. They were veritable tools of civic vitality and political mobilization. Omojola and Morah (2014, p. 2) opines that "strong relationships exist between the media and politics", but the "media can only impact positively or negatively when its target audience has consumed media content" (p.4). Therefore, the polity as well can be mobilized to participate in electoral activities through social media accessed on mobile format if they have access to mobile device like cell phone (that is very handy and affordable), social networks or even Smartphone that allow high interactive.

Nigeria has a large young population. About 32.4 per cent of the total population is below the age of 18 years amidst a total population of 140 million people (NPC 2006). The Nigerian National Youth policy (2001, sec 1.2), defines youth as comprising all young person between the ages 18 and 35 years who are citizens of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The Federal Ministry of Youth Development in a report termed: 2012 National Youth Baseline Survey Report, the population of youths (15 – 35years) in Nigeria was estimated to be 64.1 million. The Nigerian general election of 2015 was in fact the 5th quadrennial election to be held in the country since the end of the military rule in 1999. The elections were initially scheduled to be held on 14 February 2015 but were later postponed to march 28, 2015 mainly due to the poor distribution of permanent voter cards and also to curb ongoing Boko Haram insurgency in some north-eastern states in the country. However, an APC candidate, Muhammadu Buhari won the presidential election by more 2.5million votes.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND RATIONALE

Mobile technologies present a fresh dimension to political communication in Nigeria. Social media are already changing the way political aspirants attract supporters. These days, most Nigerians have mobile phone and there is an increasing access to the internet. According to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Broadband Commission Report titled *The State of Broadband 2014- Broadband for All*, Nigeria, in 2013, had mobile broadband penetration rate of 10.1 per cent occupying the 93rd position in global ranking and equally, ranked the 101st position in worldwide percentage of individuals using the Internet. Also, for the percentage of individuals using the Internet in developing countries, the country's ranking increased to the 54th position at 38.0% (ITU Report 2014) against 63rd position (32.9 percent) of 2012 (ITU Report 2013).

The increasing visibility of social media accessed on mobile systems and the link with political participation present a platform for intellectual exploration. Considering the fact that Nigeria on 28th March, 2015 held its presidential election that elected President Muhammadu Buhari of the APC party into power after months of political media campaign, it became imperative to examine the role of mobile and social media in the 2015 election.

This study aims to find out how the political participation of the Nigerian youth on mobile social media contributed to voting decisions and how much influence those decisions exerted on the polity. Specifically, the study set out to investigate the usage profile of social media on mobile devices and determine if these devices influenced Southern Nigerian youth participation in political activities. The following research questions help to signpost the study: Which GSM network service is most preponderant to the youth on mobile devices? How many social media do youth subscribe to on mobile and which one of them is most popular? How popular are social media accessed on mobile technologies as a political public sphere among Southern Nigerian youth? How instrumental are social media on mobile devices in youth's response to political messages and activities in the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria? What is the area of concern in the use of social media on mobile devices by youth as instruments of civic vitality in the political sphere?

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Diffusion of innovation theory predicts that media as well as interpersonal contacts provide information and influences opinion and judgment. Diffusion is concerned with the spread of messages that are perceived as new ideas. An innovation is an idea, practice, or object that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption. The characteristics of an innovation, as perceived by the members of a social system, determine its rate of adoption. Studying how innovation occurs, Rogers (1995) argued that it consists of four stages: invention, diffusion (or communication) through the social system, time and consequences. The information flows through networks. The nature of

networks and the roles opinion leaders play in them determine the likelihood that the innovation will be adopted. Innovation diffusion research has attempted to explain the variables that influence how and why users adopt a new information medium, such as the internet, mobile technologies and social media. Opinion leaders exert influence on audience behavior via their personal contact, but additional intermediaries called change agents and gatekeepers are also included in the process of diffusion. Relating diffusion of innovation to this study, social media and mobile technology is relatively a new invention in Nigeria and the novelty of social media accessed on these mobile has redefined the internet access experiences among youths. So, this convergence has become a veritable tool for political communication as everyone seems engulfed in the new trend.

Also relevant to this study is the Technological Acceptance Model (TAM) originally proposed by Fred Davis in 1986 which explains how users come to accept and use a technology. 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. Davis (Chuttur 2009) suggests that users' motivation can be explained by three factors: perceived ease of use; perceived usefulness and attitude toward using the system. He argues that the attitude of a user towards a system is a major determinant of whether the user will actually use or reject the system. The following statement by Davis, Bagozzi and Warshaw (1989, p.997) corroborates:

People's computer use can be predicted reasonably well from their intent; perceived useful is a major determinant of people's intention to use computers; and perceived ease of use is a significant secondary determinant of people's intention to use computers. (p. 997)

In this context, TAM transposes to how young people in Anambra, Enugu and Ogun states used mobile devices to access campaign messages on social media during the presidential 2015 election as a result of their perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness and as generally accepted communication and media devices.

MOBILE TECHNOLOGIES

The 2014 ITU Commission reports states that "over 50 per cent of the global population will have Internet access within three years' time, with mobile broadband over smartphones and tablets now the fastest growing technology in human history." It states further that more than 40 per cent of the world's people are already online, with the number of Internet users rising from 2.3 billion in 2013 to 2.9 billion by the end of 2014. There are speculations in the report that over 2.3 billion people will access mobile broadband by end 2014, climbing steeply to a predicted 7.6 billion within the next five years. There are now over three times as many mobile broadband connections as there are conventional fixed broadband subscriptions. The popularity of broadband-enabled social media applications continues to soar, with "1.9 billion people now active on social networks." (ITU Report 2014, p.11)

Mobile device can be seen generally as a personal, interactive, internet-enabled and user-controlled portable platform that provides for the exchange and sharing of personal and non-personal information among users who are inter-connected (Wei 2013). Reaching the polity through mobile device is referred to as mobile media-supported communication which Wei (2013, p.52) describes as communication via a mobile platform for the exchange of information between and among a small number of identified and connected users.

Additionally, the mobile device provides a means to access much information on the internet as a result of media convergence. Yet Wei argues that the consumption of mobile news is highly personalized, subject to the preferences and whims of mobile device owners. When people access the Internet with their phones, unsurprisingly, they often use social media (Donner & Gitau 2009). Thus political campaign messages can as well flourish through mobile social media communications on mobile devices. Young people tend to acclimatize easily with technological trends especially mobile devices as millennial. Describing further, McMahon and Pospisil (2005) opines that millennials have been heavy users of cell phones and related mobile technology devices for texting, e-mailing, and accessing the Web and interactive media since childhood.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The political sphere has witnessed significant transformation with the advent of mobile and social media. Political aspirants can reach prospective voters through phone calls, mobile text messages, social media texts and online post and updates. Research from Pew's Project for Excellence in Journalism suggests that people are increasingly accessing news through mobile social media (Mitchell, Rosenstiel, and Christian 2012, cited in Humphreys 2013). Even at that, Donner & Gitau (2009) in Humphreys (2013) points out that in places like South Africa, it's cheaper to send a message via mobile social media, like Mxit, than it is to send an SMS. In Nigeria, some mobile social media apps (Whatsapp, Facebook) are free and cheaper than sending an SMS. This implies that mobile social media apps can be effectively deployed by political candidates to reach many people due to its reduced cost.

Studies on patterns of political participation in Africa reveal that political participation in Africa is highly gendered, as men are significantly more politically active than women (García-Peñalosa and Konte, 2013; Isaksson 2010). They argued that it is "conceivable that traditional gender attitudes see only men as entitled to have political opinions, implying that women would not have a view on the desirability or not of democratization" (p.8). But new media technologies now favour equal participation with easy media access, making more women to be interested in politics thereby culminating to online political participation. Jensen (2013, p. 348) corroborates this by saying, "more than ever, the Internet has the potential to contribute to civic engagement and democracy."

Political engagement implies citizens' participation through institutionalized channels, such as membership in party and civic organizations, electoral engagement and voting (Camaj 2014, p.636). Still, Shah, Rojas, and Cho (2009) go on to argue in Camaj (2014) that media help individuals organize their

thoughts about their 'imagined community' while also providing the basis for political discussion that can lead to civic action. Today, social media is an active media and the youth has remained enthusiastic about its use which has motivated politicians to employ mobile social media in reaching the polity.

Humphreys (2013) describe mobile social media as software, applications, or services accessed through mobile devices that allow users to connect with other people and to share information, news, and content. He asserts further that as the world moves from mobile phones to smart phones to tablets, net books etc. it is changing in both mobility and computing power not categorically, but in terms of degrees. Mobile social media is also forceful according to Humphreys (2013) since the means of media production, distribution, and consumption are on the same device. Photos or video can be taken with phones and circulated to so many people in the same mobile environment. Through mobile social media like Facebook, Twitter, or YouTube, it can spread faster than just texting a message to contacts. Social media can help spread political messages due to its potential and ubiquitous nature. Therefore, media use and political participation have an indirect mediated relationship Camaji (2014). McLeod, Scheufele, & Moy, (1999) in Camaji (2014) argue that communication plays a critical role in either motivating participation or making it possible.

SOCIAL MEDIA USE AND NIGERIA ELECTION: THE ELECTORAL REGULATIONS

The Nigerian Electoral Act No.6, 2010 (amended in 2015 as the Principal Act) which is the legal framework that governs the conduct of elections in Nigeria Act did not provide specific guidelines on the use of social media in elections, though it contains a number of sections that made references to the use of electronic media in the conduct of elections. According to Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre placng.org Factsheet (2015, 2010) the provisions of the Act include:

- Section 100(4) of the Electoral Act 2010 which allows for the use of public electronic media for electioneering campaigns.
- Section 101(1) which prohibits the broadcast, publication, advertisement or circulation of any campaign material over the "radio, television, newspaper, magazine, handbills, or any print or electronic media whatsoever called" during 24 hours to the opening of polling.
- Section 154 which empowers INEC to make use of electronic media to conduct civic education and public enlightenment.
- Section 34 which requires INEC to "publish by displaying or causing to be displayed at the relevant office(s) of the Commission and on the Commission's website, a statement of the full names and addresses of all candidates standing nominated", at least thirty days before the day of the election.

- Section 71 which require INEC to “cause to be posted on its notice board and website, a notice showing the candidates at the election and their scores; and the person declared as elected or returned at the election”.
- Section 56(2) which states that INEC “may take reasonable steps to ensure that voters with disabilities are assisted at the polling place by the provision of suitable means of communication, such as Braille, large embossed print or electronic devices or sign language interpretation, or off-site voting in appropriate cases” and;
- Amended Electoral Act 2015 Section 52(2) which removes the prohibition on e-voting. states that voting shall now be in accordance with the procedure determined by INEC.

The 2010 and 2015 amended Electoral Acts (placing.org) stipulations implies that social media is not clearly included as a medium of political communication, but scholarly definitions of social media (van Dijck & Poell, 2015, Baran, 2010) shows that it is indeed electronic. Therefore, in the present digital age, it is not surprising that Nigerian politicians equally engulfed in the euphoria of smart mobile devices advancements, took to social media as means of political campaign to communicate their manifestoes and garner votes. ‘The 2011 general elections witnessed a remarkable use of social media as a political communication tool in Nigeria’ (PLAC, 2012, p.2).

PLAC (2012, p.3) highlighted that three major issues underline the tremendous use of social media tools during the 2011 elections. Firstly, the use of social media in Nigeria’s 2011 elections reflects a global trend towards “internet elections” or “e-electioneering” (Macnamara 2008) in PLAC (2012, p.3). Another reason was the tendency of some Nigerian politicians to tap into the opportunities offered by the social media for on-line campaigning. This is because, during the 2011 general elections, many politicians, particularly the presidential aspirants, used social media tools to connect with voters and constituents. Facebook and Twitter appear to be the most widely used social media platforms by the politicians. For example, in December 2010, it was estimated that Goodluck Jonathan had nearly 300,000 fans on his Facebook page Ekine 2010) as cited in (PLAC, 2012, p.3). In addition, other presidential aspirants like Dele Momodu, Ibrahim Shekarau, Nuhu Ribadu, Atiku Abubakar, and Ibrahim Babangida, all had Twitter and other social media accounts. Political parties like the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), and Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) also maintained Facebook accounts (PLAC, 2012, p.3).

This shows that even before the 2015 Nigerian politicians have been accustomed to the use of social media for election purposes. The third issue that underscore the use of social media in Nigeria’s 2011 elections in line with PLAC (2012, p.3) is the tendency of Nigerian civil society and the electorate to take up social media as a tool for improving the efficiency of election observation. Prior to the conduct of the 2011 elections, elections in Nigeria have been largely flawed by vote rigging and other electoral malpractices. The cause is palpable as the 2003 and 2007 elections were particularly marked by dissatisfaction by candidates, voters and observers. Ibrahim & Ibeanu (2009) in (PLAC, 2012, p.3) argue that

the elections were trailed by complaints of irregularities such as disenfranchisement of prospective voters, snatching of ballot boxes from election officials and stuffing of the boxes with invalid ballot papers, as well as allegations of collusion between election officials and politicians to alter election results and subvert popular mandate. The flaws that characterized the conduct of the 2007 elections severely dented the integrity of elections in Nigeria's, and triggered demands for freer, fairer, and more transparent elections (PLAC, 2012, p.3). The convenience, interactivity and participatory nature of social media on mobile was therefore, seen as a great succor to combating past ugly electoral precedents. Therefore, by 2015, Nigerian political terrain has starting accepting social media and mobile technology as a political communication tool.

METHOD, POPULATION, SAMPLING AND INSTRUMENTATION

The study adopted the survey research method to investigate how young people in the rural communities of Anambra state comprising 4,055,048 residents; Enugu state with a population size of 3,267,837 and Ogun state with population of 3,751,140 residents (NPC, 2006) – three of Nigeria's 36 political subdivisions – were politically activated to participate in the April, 2015 presidential elections on the instrumentality of social media connected via mobile devices. Three Local Government Areas in the selected state comprising of Awka South, Enugu East and Sango Ota with a total population size of 631,921 residents were therefore studied using purposive random sampling method to investigate mobile device utility during the election period. The three LGAs were chosen because they houses three universities that is: Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka; Caritas University, Emene and Covenant University, Ota which has a predominant youth population which is apt for this study. The LGAs selected were equally, predominately populated by other young artisans and business people who are active mobile social media users.

Therefore, the population of study comprises residents of three communities in the three selected states out of which a sample of 600 residents of Awka South comprising Okpuno, Amansea and Ifite Awka; Enugu East comprising Iji Nike, Owo and Emene and Ado Odo/Ota comprising Owu, Awori and Sango were drawn using Meyers (1973) sampling and purposive sampling technique to represent the entire population. According to the 2006 census (NPC, 2006), the population of Ota is 163,783 residents; that of Enugu East is 279,089; while Awka South has a population of 189,049 residents. This implies that the overall population of the study area is 631,921 residents of the three selected local government areas. Therefore, in line with Meyer estimations, a sample size of 600 will be a proper representation of the population since the population size is found to be infinity (631,921) and above 500,000. In addition, the researchers decided to adopt purposive sampling in selecting 600 respondents from the three LGAs. This choice was made because though there is a heavy concentration of voters who participated during the last presidential election political activities in the state, it is not everyone that has a mobile phone and a social media account. Purposive sampling means using your common sense and the best judgment in choosing the right habitations, and meeting the right number of right people for the purpose of your study. Drawing from the calculations of Meyer (1973), the suggestion is that a sample of 600 could do for

a population size of 5000 and above.

Primary data were collected by means of a questionnaire that was especially developed for this study. The questionnaire was developed and piloted before distribution in order to validate the content of questionnaire in terms of validity, logic and accuracy. The final version of the questionnaire which was distributed using face-to-face technique consisted of two parts. The first part of the questionnaire was designed to identify the demographic characteristic of the respondents such as gender, age, sex and educational background. The second part contains a series of questions about the major research question guiding the study.

FINDINGS, DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

The data analyzed was from copies of questionnaire distributed face to face among youths from the three states Local council areas of Awka South comprising Okpuno, Amansea and Ifite Awka; Enugu East comprising Iji Nike, Owo and Emene and Ado Odo/Ota comprising Owu, Awori and Sango. Out of 600 copies of questionnaire distributed 498 representing a response rate of 83% was completed and returned. Analysis of data was presented on the thematic and demographic variables underlying this study using SPSS data analysis software.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

In terms of the age of the respondents, results from the study indicated that 378 of the respondents sampled representing 77.8% are youths between the age brackets of 18-22 years; 92 respondents representing 18.9% are within age brackets 23-28 years. Other age brackets samples is a negligible 3.3% representing age brackets 29-40 years. It is obvious that a good proportion of the respondents are indeed youths. Out of the selected sample investigated, two hundred and fifty six representing 54.2% are females while 216 representing 45.8% are males. Meanwhile results equally shows that majority (390) of the youth sampled of 81.3% are single while 90 respondents represented by 18.7% are married which implies that most of the youths used for the study are single. Most of the respondents are educated as findings reveals that 336 respondents used in the study have attained tertiary education, 7.4% secondary education, 7.0%, primary education while 2.0% indicated they are not literate

RQ1 Which GSM Network Service Is Most Preponderant To The Southern Nigerian Youth On Mobile Devices?

Analysis of data from findings shows that 390 respondents representing 78.6% make use of mobile phones more than all other mobile devices. Thirty eight respondents representing 7.8% make use of laptop computers, also 30 respondents representing 6.0% use pagers most while 22 and 6 respondents representing 4.4% and 1.2 respectively indicated that they use tablets and PDAs mostly. The implication of this finding is that more than three-quarter of the respondents used mobile phones more than other devices.

Table 1: Mobile Service Provider Used By Respondents on Their Mobile Device

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
MTN	338	68.2%
GLO	12	2.4%
Airtel	74	14.9%
Etisalat	72	14.5%
Total	498	100%

Source: Field Survey 2015

Also, Data from table 1 above indicates that 338 respondents representing 68.2% make use of MTN services, 74 and 72 respondents representing 14.9% and 14.5% respectively use Airtel and Etisalat services while only twelve respondents representing 2.4% use GLO services. This finding indicates that MTN is the most preferred service used by respondents. This further goes to show the popularity of MTN service over other service providers.

RQ2 How many social media platform do southern Nigerian youth subscribe to on mobile and which one of them is most popular?

Table 2: Activities Respondents Use Their Mobile Device For

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Making call	186	37.3%
Sending e-mails	6	1.2%
Browsing	110	22.1%
Social networking	110	22.1%
SMS	2	0.4%
Others	84	16.9%
Total	498	100%

Source: Field Survey 2015

Table 2 indicates that 186 respondents representing 37.3% use their mobile device for making calls. One hundred and ten respondents representing 22.1% respectively browse as well as engage in social networking with their mobile device, while only 8 representing 1.6% use their mobile devices for sending e-mails and SMS. Making voice calls is therefore the predominant activity most respondents use their mobile devices to perform.

Table 3: Respondents' familiarity and visit to social networking sites through mobile device

Variables	Respondents familiarity	Social networking frequently
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	with social networking		visited by respondents	
Facebook	202	40.7%	292	59.1%
2go	10	2.0%	40	8.1%
Twitter	16	3.2%	58	11.7%
Blogging	24	4.8%	46	9.3%
MySpace	4	1.4%	6	1.3%
Whatsapp	242	48.9%	52	10.5%
Total	498	100%	494	100%

Source: Field Survey 2015

However, data in Table 3 shows that 242 respondents representing 48.9% indicated they are familiar with WhatsApp social networks followed by 202 respondents represented by 40.7% who indicated that Facebook was their most familiar social network. Other responses from the table include blogging indicated by 24 respondents representing 4.8%; sixteen respondents representing 3.2% indicated that Twitter is their most familiar social network while 10 and 4 respondents representing 2.0% and 1.4% respectively identified 2go and MySpace as their most familiar networks.

This shows that among youth in Anambra, Enugu and Ogun states, WhatsApp and Facebook are their most familiar sites. Further investigation in terms of the site they visit often with their mobile devices reveals that respondents visit Facebook more than any other social network site. This is shown by 292 respondents representing 59.1%. The findings of this study are in congruence with earlier studies that have indicated that youths are very familiar with and engage much in Facebook with friends and acquaintances. This may be because it is cheaper than making calls to reach out with friends. Other social networking sites respondents use their mobile devices to access include Twitter represented by 58 (11.3%) blogs represented by 46 (9.3%), 2go represented by 40 (8.1%), WhatsApp represented by 52 (10.5%) and MySpace 1.3%.

Table 4: Respondents frequency of using social media with their mobile devices

Variables	Frequenc y	Percentage
Often	380	80.2%
Rarely	48	10.1%
Scarcely	10	2.1%
Can't Specify	36	7.6%
Total	474	100%

Source: Field Survey 2015

In terms of the frequency of use of social media with mobile devices, Table 4 shows that 380 respondents representing more than three-quarter of the sampled population identified that they regularly access social media sites with their mobile devices. Only 2.1% of the respondents indicated that they scarcely use mobile devices for social media purposes, while 7.6% of the respondents cannot specify their frequency of use of social media with their mobile devices. This is an indication that using mobile devices for social media purposes is almost taking up the communication landscape especially among the youths.

RQ3 How popular are social media accessed on mobile technologies as a political public sphere among Southern Nigerian youth?

Table 5: Most popular Social media respondents use with mobile devices

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook	304	63.6%
2go	12	2.5%
Twitter	16	3.3%
Blogging	20	4.2%
BBM	14	2.9%
Whatsapp	86	18.1%
Instagram	26	5.4%%
Total	468	100%

Source: Field Survey 2015

As shown in table 5 below, information regarding the most popular social media respondents' access with mobile devices indicates that Facebook ranked highest with a percentage of 63.6%. This is followed by Whatsapp with a percentage of 18.1%. Other social media as shown from the table indicate that 2.5% use 2go, 3.3% use Twitter, 4.2% use blogs, 2.9% use BBM while 5.4% use Instagram. It could be deduced from this analysis that Anambra, Enugu and Ogun states youths are familiar with and use their mobile devices for Facebook and Whatsapp more than other social media sites.

Table 6: Respondents Use Of Mobile Devices For Political Activities

Variables	Respondents who received political information through mobile devices		Respondents who use their mobile devices during last election		Respondents who participated in the last election with their mobile devices	
Yes	236	49.2%	222	49.3%	164	33.3%
No	244	50.8%	228	50.7 %	328	66.7 %
Total	460	100%	450	100%	492	100%

Source: Field Survey 2015

Table 6 shows that more than half of the respondents (50.8%) indicated that they did not receive political campaign information through their mobile devices. While a little less than half of the respondents (49.2%) indicated that they did receive such information. This shows more of the respondents did not receive political campaign information through their mobile devices. Also, more than half of the respondents (50.7%) did not use their mobile devices during the last election while less than half of the respondents (49.3%) did. Again, 328 respondents representing 66.7% indicated that they did not participate in the last election with their mobile devices while 164 respondents representing 33.3% did. The implication of these findings is that even though respondents had earlier indicated interest in making use of mobile devices and social media, in terms of its usage for election matters, there is a clear indication these mobile devices were not effectively and actively put to use in the 2015 presidential election.

RQ4 How instrumental are social media on mobile devices in youth's response to political messages and activities in the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria?

Table 7: Usefulness Of Social Media In The Success Of The 2015 Nigerian Presidential Election

Variables	Respondents who were influenced through their mobile devices to vote during the last Anambra election		Usefulness of social media to the success of Nigerian election	
Yes	178	37.9%	272	58.6%
No	198	42.1%	70	15.1%
Not sure	94	20.0%	122	26.3%
Total	470	100%	464	100%

Source: Field Survey 2015

From table 7, responses sought to find out the instrumentality of social media to the success of the last election in the three selected states indicated that 198 respondents representing 42.1% assert that they were not influenced through their mobile devices to vote during the 2015 presidential election; 178 respondents representing 37.9% indicated that they were influenced to vote through their mobile devices, while 94 respondents representing 20% were not sure their mobile devices played any significant role in influencing them to vote in the 2015 election. Further investigation to find out the usefulness of social media to the success of Nigeria election indicated that, 272 respondents representing 58.6% indicated that mobile devices were useful to the success of the last general election in Nigeria, 122 respondents representing 26.3% indicated they are not sure that social media was useful to the success of the election while 70 respondents representing 15.1% indicated that it was not useful to the success of the general election.

Table 8: Ways social media was useful to the success of the 2015 presidential election

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
It motivates people to be part of the electoral process	122	25.7%
It helps people to be abreast of information about election	170	35.9%
It helps people to participate in the public sphere	20	4.2%
All of the above	162	34.2%
Total	474	100%

Source: Field Survey 2015

In terms of the utility of social media in the last election, in table 8 a total of 170 respondents representing 35.9% indicated that social media helped them to keep abreast of information about the election, 122 respondents representing 25.7% indicated that it motivates people to be part of the electoral process, while 4.2% of the respondents indicated that it helps them to participate in the public sphere. On the whole, 162 respondents representing 34.2% are of the opinion that social media performed these various functions during the 2015 presidential election in the states.

RQ5 What is the area of concern in the use of mobile devices by the selected youth as instruments of civic vitality in the political sphere?

Table 9: Challenges With The Use Of Mobile Devices In Election

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
It wastes time	196	42.4%
It makes one lose focus on other things	80	17.3%
It exposes individual's personal profile to the government	36	7.8%
It is costly and not comfortable to me	36	7.8%
There is poor services by service providers	108	23.4%
Others	6	1.3
Total	462	100%

Source: Field Survey 2015

In as much as respondents indicated they used their mobile devices during the last election, they were however without some challenges as indicated in table 9. A reasonable proportion of the respondents 196, representing 42.4% indicated time wasting as a major challenge. one hundred and eight respondents representing 23.4% identified poor services from mobile service providers as a challenge, another 17.3% of the respondents indicated that it makes them lose focus on other things when they use mobile devices.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The 2004 American Presidential election campaign initiated a new trend and political advancement for the Internet. Some 63 million Americans used the Internet for political information and, probably more striking, 43 million discussed politics via e-mail or other online platforms (Williams & Tedesco 2006). Barack Obama in the 2008 election campaign pioneered the use social media for political mass mobilization, which attracted young voters during the primary campaign. This was also the case during the 2011 election in Nigeria where most of the electorates were politically mobilizes through mobile phone and social media. This study which examined the utilization of mobile in the Nigeria 2015 presidential election has shown that most youth (66.7%) did not vote as a result of the messages they received in their mobile as anticipated, though most of them (81.7%) utilize their mobile device for social media activities mostly especially on *Whatsapps* and *Facebook* for social interactions and networking.

The result of the analysis has shown that mobile devices occasioned by the emergence of ICT is gradually taken over the communication landscape as virtually all the respondents showed evidence of ownership of one mobile device or the other. This finding is a justification of the Technological Acceptance Model adopted as a theoretical foundation in this study which suggests that when users are presented with a new technology, their decision about how and when they will use the technology is dependent on their perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness of the device. Also we could deduce from the data that predominant mobile device that most of the respondents have used for a considerable length of time is the mobile phone among others. This supports the views of (Wei, 2013) that this device is personal, interactive, internet-enabled and user-controlled portable platform that provides for the exchange and sharing of personal and non-personal information among users who are inter-connected. Findings also show that the social media are used mainly for making calls, browsing and engaging in social networks majorly *Facebook* and *Whatsapp* which youths are very familiar with. However, despite the popularity of mobile devices among the youths, findings indicate that such popularity did not translate into its use for political activities as a little above half of the respondents did not receive political information through mobile devices, nor use their mobile devices during 2015 presidential election nor participated in the last election with their mobile devices. Implicitly, Nigerian youths use mobile devices for other activities apart from political activities, even though they assert that social media was useful in the Nigeria election. One therefore wonders what could be the reason for the apathy in the Nigerian election.

There were nevertheless, lots of challenges as a reasonable proportion of the respondents 42.4% indicated time wasting as a major obstacle; 23.4% identified poor services from mobile service providers as a challenge; while another 17.3% of the respondents indicated that it makes them lose focus on personal desires when they use mobile devices. However some of the respondents (1.3%) could not understand the meaning or reason for the mobile texts. From the data obtained and analyzed for the study, the following conclusions can be drawn: that youths are adopting the mobile devices as a means of communication through social media such as *Facebook* and *Whatsapp* which is more prevalent among youth and that these youths on the other hand, did not employ their mobile devices as expected during the Nigerian 2015 presidential election.

Therefore, it is recommended that the polity be educated on the essence of mobile in governance so that they can utilize it as an effective political communication tool. The Nigerian Communication Commission should also help maintain standard among mobile network providers in Nigeria to overcome the incessant cases of poor network reception in the telecom industry. The Nigerian electoral body, INEC should establish a social media tracking centre to monitor, collate, and interpret trends and reports during elections to further intensify efforts at eGovernance and eDemocracy as practiced in other parts of the world. They should also establish guiding principles for the use of social media as a political communication tool in Nigeria. Most importantly, INEC, CSOs, and security agencies should establish modalities to systematically verify information reported by citizen observers through the social media during elections. More studies should be conducted on the use of mobile devices in subsequent elections in other parts of the country.

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