



NIGHTINGALE PUBLICATIONS AND RESEARCH INTERNATIONAL

IMPACT OF FACEBOOK AND TWITTER ON POLITICAL EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: A FOCUS ON ARDO-KOLA, LAU, AND KARIM- LAMIDO FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY

JIBRIL G. ISA, OBERIRI DESTINY
APUKE & MOHAMMED T. SALIHU

*Department of Mass Communication, Taraba
state university, Jalingo, PMB 1167.*

Introduction

Social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, as well as less popular sites, such as Google+ and Myspace, have been described as a tool that allows users to form a web-based profile that permits easy communication (Boulianne, 2015). Evidence has established that social media application has cut across diverse endeavours such as advertising, public relations, strategic communications and political communication (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Sweetser & Lariscy, 2008). In this regard, recent years have seen the connection between social media and political processes (Fontaine, 2017), suggesting that the prominence of social media, particularly in politics has the potential of positively

Abstract

This research examined the impact social media outlets (Facebook and Twitter) have on political education before the 2019 general election in Nigeria. Samples were drawn from Ardo-Kola, Lau, and Karim-Lamido federal constituency. The study is anchored on Technological Determinism Theory. Data was collected using questionnaires which were equally distributed to the three local government areas which make up the constituency. A total of 399 copies of questionnaire were administered to the respondents across the three Local governments. However, 350 copies were returned. Results from the data collected indicates that a large proportion of the respondents agreed that they accessed Facebook or Twitter. Most of them consciously viewed

The political messages as favourable and desirable. This suggests that the majority of the people subscribed to political messages on Facebook or Twitter. In this regard, it was found that most of the respondents demonstrated a high level of understanding of political messages via political education. As such, they specified that Facebook and Twitter influenced their voting behaviour. This study proposes that Facebook and Twitter should be used for constructive political education.

Keywords: *Electioneering campaign; Facebook and Twitter; Nigeria; political education; technological determinism theory.*

■ Influencing political participation (Stieglitz & Dang-Xuan, 2013).
 I Specifically, the impact of Facebook and Twitter on political education across the globe cannot be overemphasized. In recent times, social media are playing a dominant role in political education in both developed and developing countries across the globe. Facebook is a social networking site founded in 2004, by Marck Zuckerberg, with the purpose of being used by Harvard students. Rapidly, it gained worldwide popularity, and today Facebook represents the most used social networking site, with over 1 billion users worldwide (Kaplan & Heinlein, 2010: 63). While Twitter is a micro blogging platform that enables users to read and send short text-messages, keeping its service simple, by limiting the length of the updates to 140 characters. Compared to the more private environment provided by Facebook, most messages on Twitter are public and searchable, as the main feature of Twitter is the hashtag, which allows content organization by categorizing information (Kaplan & Heinlein, 2010: 67).

According to Sherman (2000) the term “social media” was in 2007 coined by Danah in Boyed of the school of information at the University of California and Nicole B. Ellison of the Department of Telecommunications, information studies and media at Michigan State University. Even though the term is usually regarded by several people to mean the same with similar concepts like new media and social networking sites, however, the two concepts are not actually the same. In order to rightly contextualize the concept of social media, it is imperative to consider what social networking sites are. Boyd and Ellison (2008, P. 21) opined that “social networking sites are web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile

within a bounded system, articulates a list of other users with whom they share a common connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system". Boyd and Ellison's definition provides us with an understanding for describing social media. According to them, social media is a medium that allows individuals to share important information with friends. Social media therefore, is a subset of information communication technologies. Corroborating Boyed and

In a democratic political system, the social media inform citizens about what is happening around them, educate the audience about political happenings, and provide a platform for public political discourse, facilitating the information of public opinion, and feeding that opinion back to the public. The introduction of social media has been embraced greatly in a political sphere. In democracies today, civil society groups and NGOs have found social media as an effective tool for dissemination of information, opinions and by extension for political education. According to Obot (2013), social media provide a link between the political party/candidate and the electorates. Olukotun (2014) also view that during elections, social media are the principal vehicles for political communication. Nigeria has witnessed an exponential growth in internet usage. For example, in 2015 general elections in Lau, Ardo-Kola and Karim-Lamido federal constituency, Facebook and Twitter was utilized in driving political messages to the electorates.

In the 2015 general election, the use of Facebook and Twitter was, among other medium responsible for the victory of Honourable Danladi Baido (PDP) as a member representing Ardo - Kola, Lau, Karim- Lamido federal constituency in the National Assembly against his political opponents, Hon. Jerry Manwe (SDP) and Hon. Zakari Musa (APC). The victory of Hon. Danladi Baido was as a result of increasing participation of the youth and the people of Ardo - Kola, Lau, Karim- Lamido federal constituency in the electoral process through the social media platform, particularly the Facebook and Twitter which was greatly utilised as a political tool for creating political awareness and building political image. However, all the political aspirants deployed this very strategy during their electioneering campaign. Hon. Zakari Musa of All Progressive Congress (APC) who was new in the political arena compared to Danladi Baido and Jerry Manwe who were old in political sphere, Zakari utilised this platform (Facebook and twitter) which made him to be popular to the users of Facebook and twitter during the general election of

2015. The power of social media really manifested in the electioneering campaign and also influenced the voting behaviour of the people of Ardo – Kola, Lau and Karim – Lamido federal constituency in the 2015.

However, the big question is how accessible are the social media platform facilities? If they are accessible and available to the electorates then how are the people able to utilise them. Does this message via the social media cut across the entire people of Ardo – Kola, Lau, Karim- Lamido federal constituency? Now that the 2019 general election has come and gone, how has the political actors utilised social media tools (Facebook and Twitter) for political education? It is upon this paradigm shift in the communication industry that this study would seek to find out the impact Facebook and Twitter had on political education before the 2019 Ardo – Kola, Lau, Karim-Lamido federal constituency electioneering campaign. The question still rises on how effective these tools (Facebook and Twitter) were utilised for political education before the 2019 general election– in Ardo-Kola, Lau, Karim-Lamido federal constituency?

Statement of The Problem

In recent years, social media are said to have an impact on the public discourse and communication in the society. In particular, social media are increasingly used in political context. More recently, micro blogging services (e.g. Twitter) and social networking sites e.g. Facebook are believed to have the potential for increasing political participation. While Twitter is an ideal platform for users to spread not only information in general, but also political opinions publicly through their networks, political institutions (e.g., politicians, political parties, political foundations, etc.) have also begun to use Facebook pages or groups for the purpose of venturing into direct dialogue with citizens and encouraging more political discussions.

While people seem to be very politically “active” and vocal on social media platforms, this does not necessarily translate into formal political action. It is of interest to examine what impact these social media sites have on electorate’s political behaviour, because social media plays such a significant role in peoples' lives.

Facebook and Twitter in Taraba State have stimulated political participation among the youth in particular the youth of Ardo – Kola, Lau and Karim-Lamido. However, review shows that there was no study that examines the

impact of Facebook and Twitter on political education in Ardo – Kola, Lau and Karim- Lamido federal constituency. Hence the need to investigate the impact of Facebook and Twitter for political education in Ardo – Kola, Lau and Karim- Lamido federal constituency becomes paramount and timely which is the crux of this study

Aims and Objectives of The Study

This research examined the impact social media outlets (Facebook and Twitter) have on political education before the 2019 general election in Nigeria This study aims at achieving the following objectives:

- To ascertain the accessibility of Facebook and Twitter to the people of Ardo – Kola, Lau, Karim- Lamido federal constituency
- To examine the perception of the people of Ardo – Kola, Lau, Karim- Lamido federal constituency on political education on Facebook and Twitter with regards to the 2019 general election.
- To examine the people of Ardo – Kola, Lau, Karim- Lamido federal constituency level of understanding political messages through Facebook and Twitter.
- To ascertain the influence of Facebook and Twitter on electorates' behaviour in Ardo – Kola, Lau, Karim- Lamido federal constituency on electioneering campaign in 2019.

Literature Review

Impact of Facebook and Twitter on Political Education

Political education is the constant flow of information in a manner that encourages critical analysis of issues regarding the political system and the concept of politics. Harber (1991) defines political education as, the attempt to create critical awareness of political phenomenon by open, balanced discussion and analysis of a range of evidence and opinions. [Political education] Has an underlying democratic ideology of political choice (Harber, 1991). It generates discourse around large domains of interests and dialogues. It provides learners with freedom of thought and speech regarding a range of issues (Crick, 1990; Jones et al., 1994). Jones et al. (1994) argue (in the light of the views of Bernard Crick, one of the prominent advocates of appropriate political education in Britain), the study of politics is crucial to the 'training of citizenship, improving effectiveness of government and

understanding of the society'. They further argue the study of politics, 'offers the chance of gaining understanding rather than power' (p.15). Social media have become an integral part of public discourse and communication in the contemporary society. The fast development of social media has caused major changes pertaining the way people find groups of individuals with similar interests, the nature of information, the available news sources, or the possibility to require and share ideas (Stieglitz, Dang-Xuan, 2012: 1). It has had major effects on fields such as advertising, public relations, communications, and political communication (Husain et al, 2014: 224).

There has been a change over the last decade in the way people access, consume and produce media: a shift away from mainstream media and toward internet -based content and social media. Thirty per cent of Nigerians use the internet – of which 70 per cent are using social media (Facebook, YouTube and Twitter all counts in the top ten most visited sites in Nigeria). This is changing the way people get their news, and learn about issues. Social media activity presents a novel way to research and understand attitudes, trends and media consumption. There are a growing number of academic and commercial efforts to make sense of social media data sets for research or (more typically) advertising and marketing purposes. From the inception of Ushahidi to collect and map reports of violence during the post-election period in Kenya in 2007, to the reliance on Twitter during Iran's 2009 elections, social media platforms have become important tools to track and map irregularities and violence, but also for communication beyond one-way messages from leaders to the people. As yet, very little analysis focuses on the impact of Facebook and Twitter on political education. Social media to mobilize the masses began in 2004 with Howard Dean's campaign and four years later with Barack Obama's presidential campaign all in the United States of America, the Internet gained popularity as a campaign tactic. Facebook, Twitter and blogs can serve as important tools to mobilize groups to action (Shirky, 2008, p. 184).

Unlike most media, the "receiver cares about the sender" (Shirky, 2008, p. 184) and seeks out information about them, increasing the likelihood for activism. New social media outlets are essential to politicians and causes, enabling them to gain support, encourage participation and have an open and continuous dialogue. Most importantly, social media allows "the highly motivated people to create a context more easily in which the barely

motivated people can be effective without having to become activists themselves,” (Shirky, 2008, p. 190) creating an environment perfect for politicians to utilize. The developing connection between emerging social media and its public and political influence has begun to transform the political process and campaign tactics. Politicians are now using social media and the Internet and, in turn are “permitting a new arena of grassroots politics” (Axford & Huggins, 2001, p. 90). Voters no longer make decisions solely based on information available through traditional media and instead seek out additional knowledge, and in some cases, additional means of activism, using their computers and mobile devices. Studies have also found that mass media use and social media use is positively correlated to an individual’s voting behaviour. Essentially, the more they look to mass media and social media for information, the more likely citizens are to vote. (Pinkleton, Austin & Fortman, 2010, p. 39) Ultimately, “social media simplifies word of mouth and facilitates collaboration” (McConnell & Huba, 2007, p. 27) in a cost-effective and impactful fashion and as research points out, is reaching individuals who are more likely to be motivated to actively participate in the political process.

In Nigeria apart from the presidential candidates, many governorship aspirants, senators and house of assembly seat contenders from the various states of the federation also embarked on aggressive use of social media platforms, especially the Facebook to disseminate their political messages, woo electorates and support groups towards the actualization of their goals. Before the advent of the new media, the old or conventional media – radio, television, newspapers, magazines, etc, ruled the world, and had directly or indirectly blocked popular participation in the electoral process. This is because there has always been a scarcity of space and airtime given by the conventional media to the citizens to have their say in politics, governance and in the electoral process. Conventional media critics such as (Graber, 1976; Fallows 1996; Blumler and Gurevitch, 1995) cited in Abubakar 2011) thus believe that voters were left with paid political propaganda containing only meaningless slogans, making them disinterested and cynical about politics. They argue that there is an absence of serious debate in the conventional media that could make people to learn the substance of issues and policy proposals as well as related arguments, and that this disallows citizens from participating actively in political discourse. The ubiquitous

access of these online devices no doubt, has democratising effects as they offer citizens opportunities for more fully engagement in the political process. This means that voters have become more than just passive consumers of digital messages; they are now creators of the messages.

Writing on this development, Kuhus (2011) in his paper “Life in the Age of Self-Assembling message” cited in Adibe, Odoemelam and Chibuwe (2012) observes that: The value of the communication experience has undergone a sea-change; from the need to share it, to the need to share in it. Technology and social media in particular have brought power back to the people; with such technologies, established authorities are now undermined and users are now the experts.

This implies that people can now consume media as wanted and needed rather than allowing media producers to schedule consumption time and content. A person can now communicate to anywhere, from any place at any time. Again, using social media is less expensive than the outrageous political advertisements on the older media. The new media are flexible, accessible and affordable. They promote democratisation of media, alter the meaning of geographic distance, and allow for increase in the volume and speed of communication. They are portable due to the mobile nature; they are interactive and open to all.

Nigeria experimented the use of this technology for political discourse during the 2011 general elections. The platform gave voice to many Nigerian politicians and electorates alike to make their voice heard in the electoral process.

Another research from the PEW Internet Research Center showed that in 2008, a record-breaking 46% of Americans used the internet, email or text messaging on their mobile devices to gain information about campaigns, share opinions and mobilize others (Rainie & Smith, 2008). Obama’s supporters made up a substantial amount of this group. A notable 39% of voters are using the Internet to get unfiltered campaign materials, including videos of debates, speeches, announcements, political position papers and transcripts. In addition, the 2008 election integrated other media that were not previously used in the campaign process. During the months leading up to the election, 35% of Americans said they had watched political videos online, 6% of Americans had made a political contribution online, and 10% said they had used social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter to

gather information about candidates and become involved in their campaigns. Internet users under 30 include an important part of this group: Two-thirds of them have a social networking profile and of those, half use their sites to engage in the political process or obtain information. For instance, the 2008 USA presidential elections remained in history for the unprecedented use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube (Paletz et al., 2011: 259). The use of social media within the presidential campaign in 2008 was also continued and even amplified in the 2012 presidential campaign, when both Obama and Romney spent a considerable amount of money on social media (in particular Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Pinterest), with the specific purpose of reaching the young generation. Potential voters extensively engaged in these social media platforms by posting, commenting, video-sharing and even the mainstream media covered the social media war between the two campaigns (Paletz et al., 2011: 276).

Furthermore, social networking sites have been used to mobilise individuals to protest all over the world. Some examples are the London youth demonstrations of 2011, due to the high level of unemployment among young adults, the 2009 Iranian protests against the re-election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (Carlisle & Patton, 2013: 883), or the Egyptian social movements augmented by Twitter and Facebook, when President Mubarak shut down the Internet for five days (Yang, 2012: 709).

More recently, the prominence of social media has been particularly highlighted in politics, given the fact that the use of social networking sites (Facebook) and micro blogging services (Twitter) are believed to have the potential of positively influencing political participation (Stieglitz, Dang-Xuan, 2012: 1).

Review of Empirical Studies

A series of studies have been conducted by scholars on the growing influence of social media during political campaigns, for instance, a study by Kushin and Yamamoto (2010) attempted to determine whether social media usage actually impacted on political self-efficacy and involvement of electorates during the 2008 US presidential election. Their findings show that there was a drastic rise in the use of social media by political candidates as well as the electorates. According to them, 27% of young people reported obtaining

political information from the social media. Corroborating their finding, Owen, Soule, Nairne, Chalif, House and Davidson, (2011) remarked that the 2008 US election marked a breakthrough year for political use of new media and social networks specifically. They further opined that social networking websites played an especially innovative and important role in political education. This study is related to the current one because it seeks to find the impact of Facebook and Twitter on political education.

Similarly, Warren (2009) investigated the use of social networking site Facebook in the 2008 presidential election in America. The study was also designed to analyse whether Facebook might be a practical campaign tool for target young voters, particularly college students. A survey research method was adopted for the study to collect data from 212 students at the University of Central Missouri to determine if Facebook was a viable campaign tool. The study concludes that college students that participated in the political activities on Facebook felt more motivated to vote in the 2008 presidential election and the students who had a Facebook account had better identified with the candidates due to their presence and the information they received on Facebook. This study also aimed at finding out the viability of Facebook and Twitter as a campaign tool.

Okoro and Nwafor (2013) conducted a study titled “social and political participation in Nigeria during the 2011 general elections: The lapses and the lessons”. The objectives of the study were to find out the role played by social media in the political participation of Nigerians, observe the lapses in the use of social media during the elections, and the lessons learnt from social media use in the course of the election. The findings of their study revealed that 93% of the respondents attested to the fact they used social media for political participation during the election. Respondents also said they used different social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, SMS calls, and YouTube to participate during the election. Their study is relevant to this one that Facebook and Twitter as a major platform for political education.

Though there were several researches carried out on the impact of Facebook and Twitter on political education in various places, however, review shows that there was no study that examines the impact of Facebook and Twitter on political education in Ardo – Kola, Lau and Karim- Lamido federal constituency. Furthermore, while most of the researches focussed on impact of Facebook and Twitter for political education either president or general

elections, this research work pays close attention to the impact of Facebook and Twitter for political education in constituency elections which largely focuses on the people at the grassroots. This is because most of the researches carried out have sidelined people from the grassroots focussing only on people in urban areas.

Theoretical Framework

There is a relationship between this research work and some mass communication theories. However, the researchers anchored this work on Technological Determinism Theory. This is a reductionist theory that aims to provide a causal link between technology and a society's nature. It tries to explain as to whom or what could have a controlling power in human affairs. The theory questions the degree to which human thought or action is influenced by technological factors. The theory states that technology shapes how individuals in a society think, feel, act, and how a society behaves as it moves from one technological age to another. Marshall McLuhan promoted this theory in his book, *Gutenberg Galaxy: The making of typographic man*, published in 1962. He argued that members of the society behave the way they do because of the influence on the society when they were invented. And as technology changes, so does the society.

Technological determinism theory is a technology-led theory of social change. It is the idea that technology has an important effect in our lives and determines social changes. For instance, in this age, the internet is revolutionizing every aspect of the society- the economy, politics, religion, social relationships etc. Technological determinists are of the view that technology is "the prime mover" in every society.

Known in Economics as technology push, the theory technological development is seen as the fundamental condition underlying the pattern of social organisations. For instance, writing, television, the computer, printing press and other communication technologies have changed the society.

There are three schools of thought in the technological determinism theory. These are the soft, hard and neutral views. In its assessment of technology effect, the soft school argues that technology is one force among others that drive social change, while the hard school argues that it is the only driving force in social change. The neutral school argues that its effect is entirely a function of social context. The term 'technological determinism' was coined

by Thorstein Veblen and this theory revolves around the proposition that technology in any given society defines its nature. Technology is viewed as the driving force of culture in a society and it determines its course of history. Karl Marx believed that technological progress lead to newer ways of production in a society and this ultimately influenced the cultural, political and economic aspects of a society, thereby inevitably changing society itself. He explained this statement with the example of how a feudal society that used a hand mill slowly changed into an industrial capitalist society with the introduction of the steam mill.

Technological Determinism and Media

New media are not only an addition to existing media, they are also new technologies and therefore do have a deterministic factor as well. Marshall McLuhan made a famous statement that “the medium is the message.” This means that the medium used to communicate influences and impact the mind of the receiver. The introduction of newsprint, television and the internet have all shown how technological advances have an impact on the society in which we live in.

Criticism of Technological Determinism

A critique of technological determinism is that technology never forces itself on members of the society. Man creates technology and chooses to use them. He invents social media and chooses how to use them. There is no imposition on the part of the technology to be used rather technology requires people to participate or involve themselves at some point or another to use a car or a microwave. The choice of using technology and experiencing its effects therefore lies in the hand of a human being.

Core Assumption of the Theory

Langdon Winner provided two hypotheses for this theory:

1. The technology of a given society is a fundamental influencer of the various ways in which a society exists.
2. Changes in technology are the primary and most important source that leads to changes in the society.

An offshoot of the above hypotheses which is not as extreme is the belief that technology influences the various choices that we make and therefore a changed society can be traced back to changed technologies.

Technological determinism manifests itself at various levels initially it starts with the introduction of newer technologies introduces various changes and at times these changes can also lead to a loss of existing knowledge as well. For example, the introduction of newer agricultural tools and methods has seen the gradual loss of knowledge of traditional means of farming. Therefore, technology is also influencing the level of knowledge in a society.

Justification of the Theory

The social media have become key players in politics today. They are used by political aspirants to canvass for supports from their electorates. It usually provides an interactive platform where electorates get to learn more about the contestants and politics entirely via online political education courtesy of the most especially Facebook and Twitter.

The theory states that technology shapes how individuals in a society think, feel, act, and how a society behaves as it moves from one technological age to another. Marshall McLuhan promoted this theory in his book, *Gutenberg Galaxy: The making of typographic man*, published in 1962. He argued that members of the society behave the way they do because of the influence on the society when they were invented. And as technology changes, so does the society.

A technological determinism theory is a technology-led theory of social change. It is the idea that technology has an important effect in our lives and determines social changes. For instance, in this age, the internet is revolutionizing every aspect of the society- the economy, politics, religion, social relationships etc. Technological determinants are of the view that technology is “the prime mover” in every society.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The study used survey research design. Surveys allow for the study of people’s opinion on a given issue of public interest. According to Onwukwe (2011), “survey research is concerned with the collection of data for the purpose of describing and interpreting a certain condition, practice, beliefs,

attitudes, etc.” The purpose is usually to describe systematically the facts, qualities or characteristics of a given population, events, or areas of interest concerning the problem under investigation.

Population of the Study

According to Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) 2015 statistics for Ardo-Kola, Lau, Karim-Lamido federal constituency was Ardo-Kola 61,485, Lau 58,219, Karim-Lamido 114,969. This comprises three Local Government Areas: Ardo-Kola, Lau and Karim-Lamido Local Government Areas respectively. The total number of the electorates according to INEC (2015) was 234,673 out of which focus was made on the active users of Facebook and Twitter on political education alone.

Sample Size

The sample size of this research was calculated by using Taro Yamane (Yamane, 1967) formula with 95% confidence level. The calculation formula of Taro Yamane is presented as follows.

Where :

n= sample size required

N = number of people in the population

e = allowable error (%)

Substitute numbers in formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{(1 + N(e)^2)}$$

$$n = \frac{234,673}{(1 + 234,673 (0.05)^2)}$$

$$n = \frac{234,673}{(1 + 234,673 (0.0025))}$$

$$n = \frac{234,673}{(1 + 586.68)}$$

$$n = \frac{234.673}{587.68}$$

$$\frac{234,673}{(1 + 234,673(0.05)^2)}$$

$$n = 399.32$$

$$n = 399$$

After calculating the sample size by substituting the numbers into the Yamane formula, the numbers of sample is 399.32 persons. In order to obtain reliable of data, researcher has increased sample size to 399 persons

The sample size of the population is 399 respondents who were administered with the questionnaire. As earlier explained, 399 people were randomly selected from the general population. The researchers adopted a simple random sampling technique that ensures an adequate, fair and accurate selection of the respondents.

Sampling Techniques

The sampling technique adopted for the study was stratified random sampling. Stratified random sampling is a useful method for data collection if the population is heterogeneous. In this method, the entire heterogeneous population was divided into a number of homogeneous groups, usually known as Strata, each of these groups is homogeneous within itself, and then units are sampled at random from each of this stratum. The sample size in each stratum varies according to the relative importance of the stratum in the population. In other words, stratification is the technique by which the population is divided into subgroup/strata. Sampling will then be conducted separately in each stratum. Strata or Subgroup is chosen because evidence is available that they are related to outcome. The selection of strata will vary by area and local conditions. After stratification, sampling is conducted separately in each stratum. In stratified sample, the sampling error depends on the population variance within stratum but not between the strata. Stratified random sampling also defined as where the population embraces a number.

The 399-sample size was divided into three (3) strata where 133 respondents were taken from each stratum of the local government areas to represent the entire population.

Instrument for Data Collection

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001), research instruments are tools used for collecting data needed to find a solution to the problem under investigation. The instrument used by the researcher was a questionnaire. Johnson and Christine (2008:170) described questionnaire as self-report data collection instrument that each research respondent complete as part of

research study. The use of questionnaire in this study is because it is relatively economical and convenient for data collection. Another good reason is because it is confidential and safeguards anonymity and so, respondent could be more honest.

Method of Data Collection

According to Adamu and Johnson (2004), data collection is an activity aimed at getting information to satisfy some decisions. The method of data collection varies depending on the kind of data to be collected which in turn depends on the kind of problem to be solved. In this study, questionnaire was administered to the three local governments in the constituency which was designed to obtain the demographic data and relevant information regarding the research topic from the respondents. All efforts were made to retrieve every questionnaire distributed to the respondents.

The questionnaire was structured in order that direct answers would be given from the respondents.

Data Presentation and Analysis

In this study, data collected was analysed using statistical instrument of frequency distribution counts and simple percentages. Therefore, the finding was interpreted and discussed by the researchers to provide a unified interpretation

Data Presentation and Analysis

Data was collected using questionnaires which were equally distributed to the three local governments which make up the constituency. 133 questionnaires were administered to respondents in each local government area. However, 49 administered questionnaires were missed and 350 questionnaires administered were returned (retrieved) which represent 87.7% of the total questionnaires administered. The findings of this research are divided into two subgroups. The first subgroup deals with the demographic information on the respondents, the second subgroup deals with the participant's responses.

Demography of respondents

With regards to gender, of the 350 respondents sampled, 247 respondents representing 70.6% are male, while 103 respondents 29.4 % represent

females. This implies that both male and female are captured in the study. Furthermore, 37 respondents representing 10.6 % are from 18 – 25 years of age, 171 respondents representing 48.9 % of the sampled population are 26 – 33 years old, while 97 respondents which is representing 27.7% are from 34 – 41 years old, age 42 – 49 are 7.4 %, also age 50 and above are 5.4 %. This indicates that respondents of different age bracket filled the questionnaires. In terms of qualification, those who stated they are SSCE certificate holders are 55 representing 15.7%, NCE/OND holders are 172 representing 49.1%, HND/DEGREE represents 22.9%, and those with a Master's degree and above represent 12.3%. Analytically result from the data collected shows that the majority of the respondents are highly literates. Results further indicates that 13.2% are students, 9.2% represents politicians, applicants 46.2%, privates' business sectors 16% and civil servants represent 15.4% respectively. This implies that the majority of the respondents are applicants.

Answering Research Questions and Discussion of Findings

Four research questions were proposed in this study to guide the researcher in obtaining results that would provide the basis for conclusion and recommendations on the problem under investigation.

Research question one: How accessible are Facebook and Twitter to the people of Ardo – Kola, Lau and Karim- Lamido federal constituency?

Result from the data collected indicates that out of 350 respondents 301 representing 86% agreed that they accessed Facebook or Twitter while, 49 respondents responded that they don't access Facebook or Twitter, the implication of the data collected in this regard is that most of the residence of Ardo-Kola, Lau and Karim-Lamido federal constituency access Facebook, Twitter or both.

The above present result obtained from the investigation, agree with the study conducted by Kushin and Yamamoto (2010) attempted to determine whether social media usage actually impacted on political self-efficacy and involvement of electorates during the 2008 US Presidential election. Their findings discovered a dramatic rise in the use of social media/ political candidates as well as the electorates. We further seeks to find out the means through which the people of Ardo-Kola, Lau and Karim-Lamido federal constituency do accessed Facebook or Twitter, it was clearly indicated that

majority of the people access the platform various means, however, most of the people accessed Facebook or Twitter through mobile phone. This affirmation concord with Utz (2009) that a social networking site provides an opportunity for politicians, electorates to participate in political discuss via different means.

Research question 2: What is the perception of the people Ardo – Kola, Lau, Karim- Lamido federal constituency on political education on Facebook and Twitter towards forthcoming 2019 general election?

We found that 251 respondents representing 71.7% consciously viewed the political messages as favourable and desirable while 99 respondents representing 28.3% viewed it as unfavourable. By implication majority of the people subscribed to political messages on Facebook or Twitter. This findings in-line with Larsson and Moe (2011) conducted a study on twitter used during the 2011 Swedish election and found that twitter serves as a channel for disseminating political information for political dialogue with the electorate. It is based on this fact that the majority of the respondents considered it as favourable and desirable (positive). This supported the assertion of Stieglitz (2012). Avers that social media has been particularly highlighted in politics, given the fact that the used of Facebook and Twitter are believed to have the potential of positively influencing political participation.

Answering research question 3: Do the people of Ardo – Kola, Lau and Karim- Lamido federal constituency understand political messages on Facebook or Twitter?

Based on the result obtained it was revealed, 209 respondents representing 59.7% expressed a high level of understanding of political messages on political education while, 141 respondents representing 40.3% expressed low levels of comprehending political messages. The majority of the people of the above-mentioned constituency understands political message via Facebook and Twitter. Titus et al. (2013) concord that in America all voters went online in 2010 for news or information about midterm elections or campaign information, are getting online. According to them most of the people vote for or against based on the information they got online. The above assertion supported the fact that, voting behaviour of an individual is based

on information they got online which in turn base on the level of understanding the political messages or information online.

In a similar vein, Hong and Nedler (2011) observed that politicians in modern democracy across the world have largely adopted social media for engaging their constituents, through direct dialogue with electorates enabling vivid political discussion for understanding of the political messages for political education. However, in respect to the extent of understanding political messages, data revealed that the majority of the respondents understood political information via Facebook and Twitter to a high extent, the extent of understanding political messages depends on the effects of the platform. This result concurs with the assertion of Husain et al (2014:224) Facebook and Twitter has had major effects in the fields such as advertising, public relations, communication and political communication.

Answering research question 4: To what extent will the Facebook and Twitter be able to influence electorates voting behaviour Ardo – Kola, Lau, Karim- Lamido federal constituency in 2019 forthcoming general election?

Results indicate that 198 respondents representing 56.6% are of the viewed that Facebook and Twitter influenced their voting behaviour, 152 respondents representing 43.4% said that Facebook and Twitter do not influence them come 2019. Utz (2009) opines that social networking sites provided an opportunity for politicians to reach individuals interested in politics. According to him, their view of the candidate's preference is strengthened by effects of social media.

Summary, Recommendation and Conclusion

Summary

In today's world of digital and networks of electronic communication, Facebook and Twitter are the most widely used social networks, it has also become a mechanism of communications, most frequently used for political campaigns around the world and have impacted even at the grassroots level, these platforms (Facebook and Twitter) are accessible and affordable because one can use devices like computers, laptops, iPhones, iPad and even the cheapest cell phone that has internet access to log in. However, as shown in this research, the people of Ardo-Kola, Lau and Karim-Lamido federal

constituency make use of Facebook and Twitter and any political message that come through it would have a significant effect on their decision-making and participation in elections. 133 copies of the questionnaire were administered to respondents in each local government area. However, 49 administered questionnaires were missing and 350 copies of questionnaire administered were returned (retrieved which represent 87.7% of the total questionnaires administered). The findings indicate that people make use of Facebook and Twitter and any political message that come through, it would have a significant effect on their decision-making and participation in elections. The study, therefore recommends the embracing of social media to both politicians and the electorates for successive political campaigns that grants the electorate the interactive. The study also concludes that there is a strong perception that Facebook and Twitter have played roles in influence citizen's participation in the electioneering campaign and should therefore be upheld for continuous political education.

The work was anchored on Technological Determinism Theory is a technology-led theory of social change. It is the idea that technology has an important effect in our lives and determines social changes. For instance, in this age, the internet is revolutionizing every aspect of the society- the economy, politics, religion, social relationships etc. Technological determinists are of the view that technology is "the prime mover" in every society.

Conclusion

However, this platform (Facebook and Twitter) has led many to deliberately distort information about opponents, facts about personal performance, and misinformation as a strategy for influencing the electorates, resulting to a positive or negative effect on the democratic electoral process. In conclusion, it could be deduced from this study that there is a strong perception that Facebook and Twitter have played roles in influencing citizen's participation in the electioneering campaign, should therefore be upheld for continuous political education especially in the forthcoming 2019 Ardo- Kola, Lau and Karim-Lamido federal constituency general election.

Recommendations

Based on the issues discovered in this study, the following recommendations are proffered:

1. Facebook and Twitter should be used for constructive political education.
2. The embracing of social media for successive political campaigns that grants the electorate the interactive opportunity with the political candidates.
3. Politicians and group administrators of social media should use language well known and understood by their audience to promote understanding.

References

- Adamu S.O. & Johnson T.L. (2004) *Statistics for Beginner*. Ibadan Evan Brothers Limited.
- Adeyanju & Haruna (2012). *Uses of SMS in campaigns: An assessment of the 2011 general elections and post-election violence in northern Nigeria*, in Des Wilso (ed.) *The media, terrorism & political communication in Nigeria*. Uyo; ACCE.
- Agbanu V.N (2013) *Mass Communication: Introduction, Techniques, Issues*. Rhyce Kerex Publishers, Enugu.
- Arthur, C. (2012). *Encouraging political participation in Africa*. Retrieved March 15, 2014, from <http://www.issafrica.org>.
- Baran, S. J., & Davis, D. (2003). *Mass communication theory*. Canada: Wadsworth
- Blumer, J. B. & McQuail, D. (1969). *Television in politics: Its issues and influence*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Boulianne, S. (2015). Social media use and participation: A meta-analysis of current research. *Information, communication & society*, 18(5), 524-538.
- Boyed, D. M., & Ellison, N. B. (2008). Social networks sites: Definitions, history, and scholarship. *Journal of computer mediated communication*. 5 (2), 210-230
- Carlisle, J.E and Patton, R.C (2009) "Is Social Media Changing How We Understand Political Engagement? An Analysis of Facebook and the 2008 Presidential Election" *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 66, No. 4 (December 2013), 883-895.
- Chijioko, O. (2013). *Social media*. In Okoro, N. (Ed.) *Contemporary readings in media and communication studies*. Enugu: St Benedette Publishers Ltd.

- Clark, J. & Aufderheide, P. (2009). *Public media 2.0: Dynamic, engaged publics*. Washington, DC: Centre for social media, America University.
- Ekine, S. (2010). *Use and abuse of social media in Nigerian elections*. Retrieved October 20, 2014 from <http://www.newint.org/blog/majority/2010/10/21/use-and-abuse-of-social-media-in-Nigerian-elections>.
- Folarin, B. (2005). *Theories of mass communication*. Ibadan: Stirling-Horden Publications.
- Fontaine, S. (2017). What's not to like?: A qualitative study of young women politicians' self-Sframing on Twitter. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 29(5), 219-237.
- Graber, D. A. & Smith, J. M. (2005). Political communication faces the 21st century. *Journal of Communication*, 55 (3), 479-507.
- Hong, S. & Nadler, D. (2011). Does the early bird move to polls? The use of social media tool "Twitter" by US politicians and its impact on public opinions. *Proceedings of the international conference on Digital research*.
- Husain, K., Abdullah, A.N, Ishak, M., Kamarudin, M.F., Robani, A., Mohin, M., Hassan, S. (2014). "A Preliminary Study of Effects of Social Media in Crisis Communication from Public Relations Practitioners" Views", p. 223 – 227, *Procedia – Social and Behavioural Sciences*
- Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media. *Business horizons*, 53(1), 59-68.
- Kaye, B. K. & Johnson, T. J. (2002). Online and in the know: Uses and gratifications of the web for political communication. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*. 46(1), 45- 71.
- Kushin, M., & Yamamoto, M. (2010). Did social media really matter? College students use of online media and political decision making in the 2008 election. *Mass communication and Society*, 13(5), 608-630.
- Larson, K. & Moe, H. (2011). *Who tweets? Tracking micro blogging use in the 2010 Swedish election campaign*. In ECIS 2011. Shangai, China.
- McConnell, Ben, and Jackie Huba. (2007). *Citizen Marketers: When People Are the Message*. Chicago, IL: Kaplan Pub., 2007.
- Nnanyelugo. O. & Nwafor. K.A (2003) Political participation in Nigeria during the 2011general. The lapses and lesson '*Global journal of Arts Humanities and social sciences*, 2, (3), 11- 26.

- Okeke. C. Faith. C. Ijeoma. O. (2006) Social Media As political Platform in Nigeria: A focus on electorates in South Eastern Nigeria: *IORS Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*. 6 (2), 11-28.
- Onwukwe, C & Okeugo, C. (2011). *The influence of new media political campaigns on the 2011 voting pattern of Abia electorates*. Paper presented at the ACCE, Covenant University, Ota. September 2011.
- Paletz, D. L., Owen, D. M., & Cook, T. E. (2011). *American Government and Politics in the Information Age*. Saylor Foundation.
- Pew Research Center (2014). *Cell Phones, social media, and campaign 2014*. Retrieved from <http://www.pewinternet.org/2014/11/03/cell-phones-social-media-and-campaign-2014>.
- Pinkleton, Bruce E., Erica W. Austin, and Kristine K.J. Fortman. (2010). Relationships of Media Use and Political Disaffection to Political Efficacy and Voting Behaviour. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 54:1 (2010): 34-49.
- Rainie, Lee, and Aaron Smith. (2010). *The Internet and the 2008 Election*” Pew Research Center’s Internet & American Life Project. 15 June 2008. Web. 8 Nov. 2010. Retrieved from <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2008/The-Internet-and-the-2008-Election.aspx>
- Riaz, S. (2012). Effects of new media on political communication. *Journal of Political Studies*.1 (2), 161- 173.
- Sherman, A. (2010). *The problem with social media: Online collaboration*. Retrieved October 16, 2014 from <http://www.gigaom.com/collaboration/the-probe>.
- Shirky, Clay. (2008). *Here Comes Everybody: the Power of Organizing without Organizations*. New York: Penguin, 2008. 180-225.
- Stieglitz, S. and Dang-Xuan, L. (2012). *Social media and political communication: a social media analytics framework*. Springer-Verlag 2012
- Stieglitz, S., & Dang-Xuan, L. (2013). Social media and political communication: a social media analytics framework. *Social network analysis and mining*, 3(4), 1277-1291.
- Sweeter, K. D. & Kaid, L.L. (2008). Stealth soapboxes: Political information efficacy, cynicism and uses of celebrity weblogs among readers. *New Media and Society*, 10 (1), 67-91

- Sweetser, K. D., & Lariscy, R. W. (2008). Candidates make good friends: An analysis of candidates' uses of Facebook. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 2(3), 175-198.
- Utze, S. (2009). The potential benefits of campaigning via social networks. *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication*. 14 (2), 221- 243.
- Warren, S. E. (2009). *The internet and politics: Facebook as a campaign tool*. Unpublished dissertation, University of South Alabama. Retrieved April 27th, 2011 from Pro quest Dissertations and Thesis Database.
- Williams, C, & Gulati, G. (2009). *Facebook grows up: An empirical role of its role in the 2008 congressional elections*. An Annual meeting of the Midwest political science Association.
- Yamane, T. (1967). *Statistics: An introductory analysis*. (2nd Ed), New York: Harper and Row.
- Yang, M. (2012). The Collision of Social Media and Social Unrest: Why Shutting Down Social Media is the Wrong Response. *Nw. J. Tech. & Intell. Prop.*, 11, xix.
- .