

Online Engagements and Nigerian Polity: Exploring Users Reactions to Election Results on Facebook

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Abstract

Facebook commonly accessed on mobile remains the most popular and pervasive social media in Nigeria. The rapid, swift development of media technology; the global access to the Internet and the continuous online presence on social media are fundamentally changing the global political and governance experience. In the new media age of political engagement, the issue is no longer whether social media technologies help in political mobilization, but how to use social media so that the users' experience and interest will be heightened to harness development. Hinged on the Agenda Setting, Media Priming and Technological Determinism theories, this study investigated how 384 residents in three communities of Enugu state – one of Nigeria's 36 political subdivisions - reacted to the election results on Facebook plus how they were politically activated to participate in the 2015 presidential elections with regards to their social media presence and engagements. The study also explored the new relationship between Facebook, national development and election results as well as ways in which newly emerging citizen reports wavered during the 2015 election periods vis a vis the traditional media reports and updates in Enugu state. Findings show high use of Facebook on mobile for political information though; most respondent's voting decisions were not influenced by social media messages.

Keywords: Facebook, Elections, Political Participation, Mobile Communication, Enugu State.

Introduction

There has been a rapidly increasing body of research exploring the role of social media in fostering new forms of civic engagement and political participation (Morah & Uzochukwu, 2019; Duru & Morah, 2017; Oboko & Morah, 2013; Nwafor, Odoemelam, Orji-Egwu, Nwankwo & Nweze, 2013; Bennett & Segerberg, 2013; Carpentier, 2011; Dahlgren, 2013). The communication between governments and citizens is essential for the development of any country politically, economically, and socially. The rapid expansions of media technology, the universal Internet accessibility, and constant social media usage are fundamentally changing the political culture and experience, especially in Africa and Nigeria in particular as social media advent has ushered in an era of increased freedom of expression. The beginning of the third millennium comes with a technological revolution; the digital sphere immersed in everyday life of society. In 2015, for instance, there were over “seven billion mobile cellular subscriptions worldwide, up from less than 1 billion in 2000” pinpoints Brahim Sanou, director of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Telecommunication Development Bureau in his recent assessment report on ICT Facts and figures 2015 (www.itu.int). Indeed, it is obvious that new media revolution is progressing at an accelerated speed and penetrating every facet of human development as evidenced by research (Morah & Omojola, 2018; Morah & Duru, 2018; Ekwenchi, Morah & Adum, 2015; Morah & Okenwa, 2013; Morah & Uzochukwu, 2012).

Even at that, the ITU report shows that globally 3.2 billion people were using the Internet by the end of 2015, of which 2 billion were from developing countries. For every Internet user in the developed world, there are 2 in the developing while 4 billion people from developing countries remain offline representing two-thirds of the population residing in developing countries. Also, of the 940 million people living in the least developed countries (LDCs), only 89 million use the internet. This result corresponds to a 9.5% penetration rate; in Africa, as one in 5 people use the internet today, compared to almost 2 in 5 people in Asia & Pacific, and 3 in 5



people in the CIS (www.itu.int). The report evidently implies that Africans are somehow actively visibly engaged on the internet and Nigeria is not an exception.

The mass media in Nigeria, especially the privately-owned ones have been robust instruments of sensitization and mobilization of people towards democracy, even during the dark days of brutal military dictatorship (Ajayi, 2007) before the advent of social media. The older media or traditional media- radio, television, newspapers, magazine, and so on, ruled the world before the advent of the new media (Morah & Omojola, 2018; Nwafor et al., 2013). There was an over dependency on traditional media, which “directly or indirectly blocked popular participation in the electoral process” (Nwafor et al. 2013 p.65) in Nigeria before the introduction of new media. The authors argue that "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 the electoral process" (p.65). In the same mindset, Ajayi & Adesote (2015) stress that new media has genuinely transformed communication in Nigeria as: “the widening of the communication media space through improved technology information dissemination and sensitization of people now have a widespread immediacy and more diligent follow up of events” (p.48). They believe that new communication trend advances due to easy accessibility and availability irrespective of social status as “even with the cheapest mobile phones, one can still access some social media platforms at a reasonable cost for information, education, and entertainment” (p.48).

Tracing the emergences of social media in political communication, Castells (2004) and Shirky (2008) agree that claims on the civic and democratic potential of these technologies started from the onset of the internet in 1990. The authors acknowledge that present-day explosion of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter or YouTube enable greater interactivity and user participation in the creation of online political contents and has significantly renewed and intensified these (cyber)optimistic perspectives. Ajayi & Adesote (2015) surmise that recent contributions of social media in deepening the democratization of Nigeria is vast; as massive use of mobile phones' SMS, Facebook, and Twitter were witnessed in general elections in Nigeria.

The age of social media in Nigeria was heralded after the introduction of mobile telephony in 2001 during the regime of Olusegun Obasanjo with the advent of Global System of Mobile telecommunication. The adoption of the GSM opened up new vistas of communication on an unprecedented level. Mobile phone arrived at a time when the country had just come out of prolonged periods of military dictatorship and was newly experimenting with democracy. From less than 100,000 internet users in 1999, when the country returned to civilian rule, Nigeria now has 43,982,200 Internet users out of the 110,948,420 Internet users in Africa as of June 2010 representing 28.9% of the Nigerian population, per ITU (Internet World Stats, July 2010 in Morah, 2011). Morah & Uzochukwu, (2019) note that Nigeria Internet users have increased to 98 million with a 65% penetration in 2017 compared to 53% in 2016. Therefore, with a cell phone in the hands of the most Nigerians and with 135 million active mobile lines as at December 2014 (Morah & Uzochukwu, 2019) there is increased civic and political participation through social media. Research shows that the ability to express political views and opinions online play a vital role in social media use in campaigns. Social media enables users to not only seek information but also interact with others through online expression including posting political commentaries on blogs; social network sites and sharing multimedia commentary (Kushin & Yamamoto, 2010).

Historical Note

Enugu state, created officially in 27, August 1991 is one of five states that made up the South East geopolitical zone out of the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria and is the home of the Igbo of Southeastern Nigeria. The name of the state originates from its capital city, Enugu which locally implies *Enu Ugwu*- translated as ‘top of the hill’. It was formerly known as the capital of the then Eastern Region (now divided into nine states of the South-South zone) and was the capital of the now defunct Federal Republic of Biafra. Enugu state consist 17 local government areas with a census population size of 3,267,837 people, which comprise 1,596,042 males and 1,671,795 females (population.gov.ng).

The Problem

Before the arrival of the mobile phones and social media, the Nigerian press was seized by the government and the privileged few who could and were allowed to own media outfit. The principal owners of the mainstream media in Nigeria according to Udeze (2006) are government, private, religious, and professionals. Udeze (2006) notes that “unfortunately because of the stringent controls exercised by these governments over their media houses, they dish out lies which make Nigerians turn to other sources in their search for information” (p.100). The use of social media in Nigeria is, therefore, generally regarded as partial emancipation from government control and an excellent alternative information source for the society.

The position of new media in delivering campaign messages to voters during elections is not only critical to political parties and candidates but also in election campaign process as social media is believed to affect voting and political campaigns (Morah &

Uzochukwu, 2019). Social media could help in informing the public about politics, campaigns, and elections; influences what issues voters should care about in elections and even, what criteria they should use to evaluate candidates (Uzochukwu, Morah & Okafor, 2015). In the past, political communication was difficult as traditional media of Newspapers, TV, Radio, billboards and printed material, (such as pamphlets and letters) were indispensably used for delivering credible campaign messages despite their shortcomings as direct communication. The present use of social media, especially Facebook in delivering campaign messages to voters during elections is now succor. It plays a vital role in informing the public about politics, campaigns, and elections. Since social media might influence what issues voters should care about in elections and what criteria they should use to evaluate candidates, a study of the extent and influence of its application in politics is apt.

This study investigated how 384 residents in three communities of Enugu state reacted to the election results on the Facebook social network. Further, this study also investigates how they were politically activated to participate in the 2015 presidential elections with regards to their social media presence and engagements. The study also sought to explore the new relationship between Facebook and election results and how newly emerging citizen report wavered during the 2015 election periods vis a vis the traditional media reports and updates.

Objectives of the Study

Based on an understanding of political participation as a critical mechanism for a functioning democracy, the overall purpose of this paper is to examine how Facebook influences citizen's propensity to engage in political participation in Enugu State in the 2015 Presidential election. The following are the research objectives of the current study:

1. to discover how Nigerians reacted to the election results on Facebook social network;
2. to find out if the election outcome was influenced by Facebook considering the pre-election voting on online news sites on social networks and;
3. to ascertain whether the election reports by Facebook users influenced that of the traditional media during the election period.

Research Questions

The following research question, therefore, underpin the study:

- **Q1** What are the reactions of Nigerian to the 2015 presidential election results on Facebook?
- **Q2** Was the 2015 presidential election outcome influenced by Facebook considering the pre-election voting on online news sites on social networks?
- **Q3** To ascertain to the extent to which the 2015 presidential election reports by Facebook users influenced that of the traditional media during the election period.

Methodology, Population, and Sampling

The research design employed in the study is the survey method. This method is adopted because it is suitable for examining issues of new media use in politics and for eliciting the response of residents of three local councils of Enugu East, Enugu North, and Enugu South. From each of the three districts, one community was drawn and studied based on the objectives of this study. Survey research was, therefore, essential here in collecting data for a population too large to be observed directly. The instrument is a questionnaire, and the simple percentage is used for data analysis.

The population of the study comprises residents of three communities in Enugu State out of which a sample of 384 residents from Abakpa Nike (Enugu North), Emene (Enugu East) and Uwani (Enugu South) communities were drawn using Meyers(1973) sampling and purposive sampling technique to represent the Enugu population. According to the 2006 census (NPC, 2006), the population of Enugu North is 244,828; that of Enugu East is 279,089; with Enugu South having a census size of 198,723. This implies that the overall population of the study area is 722,664 residents of the three selected local government area. Considering Meyer's Table estimation, a sample size of 384 will be a proper representation of the population since the population size is found to be infinity (722,664) and above 500,000. Besides, the researchers decided to adopt purposive sampling in selecting the 384 respondents from the three LGAs. This choice was made because though there is a heavy concentration of voters who participated during the 2015 presidential election political activities in the state, it is not everyone that has a Facebook account.

Media and Elections in Nigeria

The use of the new media in delivering campaign messages to voters during elections is not only critical to political parties and candidates but also in the election campaign process as social media is now affecting political campaigns. It plays a vital role in informing the public about politics, campaigns, and elections. It also influences what issues voters should care about in elections and

what criteria they should use to evaluate candidates. Swanson and Mancini (1996) observe that election campaigns are critical periods in the lives of democracies. They select decision makers, shape policy, distribute power and provide venues for debate and socially approved expressions of conflict about factional grievances and issues. In the past, traditional media forms of Newspapers, TV, Radio, billboards and printed material, such as pamphlets and letters were indispensable for delivering credible forms of political campaign messages despite their shortcomings of direct communication. Smith in (Kushin & Yamamoto (2010) argues that the growth of online political behavior has been facilitated partly by the recent arrival of new interactive, media-rich Web sites.

The 2015 election witnessed an explosion in political participation following myriads of political campaigns from different political parties especially the two prominent ones that is the People Democratic Party (PDP) and All People's Congress (APC). Their vociferous campaigns actually, divided the political public sphere into two opposing groups; one for the APC and the other for the PDP. This division was heightened by the social media platforms which agree to the mindsets described by Elihu Katz & Paul Lazarsfeld (Shirky, 2011) that "mass media alone do not change people's mind; instead, there is a two-step process. The media first transmit opinions, and then they get echoed by friends, family members, and colleagues" (p.6). This implies that political opinions are formed in the second social step "as the internet in general and social media, in particular, make a difference at this level" (Shirky, 2011, p.6).

In the Nigerian political arena, the new media of internet and social media appeared to be playing a massive role in shaping the country's political landscape. Former President Goodluck Jonathan made history was the first Nigerian head of government to use Facebook to make his formal declaration to stand for election. The president's decision changed the political tide in election matters in the country. In the same vein, other politicians in the country also made concerted efforts to gain electoral relevance via the new media of the internet, Facebook and Twitter. Although a small percentage of the Nigerian electorate own computers, many people use mobile phones and increasingly smartphones (Ekwenchi, Morah & Adum, 2015) to go online and update themselves of happenings in the political arena. The politicians also use social networking sites to reach the younger generation which represents a new phase in the country's online revolution.

Dalhi, as cited in Camaj (2014, p.636), observes that "political engagement has been traditionally defined as citizens' participation through institutionalized channels, such as membership in the party and civic organizations, electoral engagement, and voting." While Olsson (2014) detailing on the mindset for political participation argues that:

The essential idea starts with democracy as government or rule by the people. From this, the norm of political equality is derived, which signifies that every citizen, potentially affected by a decision, should have equal opportunities to influence it. The ideal is a system which maximizes rule by and for the people (p.4).

These assertions underscored the very essence of individual participating in politics for democracy to be achieved in any society and that is what the social media is offering today. Studies reveal that citizens increasingly use information technologies such as the social media to learn about political campaigns, follow the news, and engage in political activities by volunteering, donating funds, or researching public policy options (Morah & Uzochukwu, 2019; Duru & Morah, 2017; Omojola & Morah, 2014; Oboko & Morah, 2013; Hamilton, 2011). Political parties have become more aware of these new trends, and politicians are increasingly making use of new media platforms for political campaigns, to make campaign announcements and to communicate with potential voters. This act has made the Nigerian polity to become highly active and interactive. The argument put forward, in essence, is that democracy as the rule of the people is attained through the means of maximum participation of all people as put forth by Pateman in Olsson (2014, p.4).

Facebook and Political Engagement

The advent of new media especially social media has changed how people interact with one another (Morah, 2018). For example, personal communications can occur through cyberspace; and meetings that once required face-to-face contact are increasingly being conducted as virtual meetings, with people connecting through a Web-based platform from various physical locations (Prentice & Dobson, 2014). The conventional picture of many governments worldwide, synonymous with immense bureaucratic machinery operating unresponsively and even at a high cost, is gradually fading out with the advent of ICT, new media and most especially, social media. Anim, (2013, p.11) projects that "the potentials of social media as agents of social change have been well demonstrated in the past five to ten years." Facebook Messenger, for instance, provides a stand-alone mobile application that enables messaging directly to group members' phones. This app is a great assistance for the polity especially for countries in sub-Saharan Africa, during elections and for a social movement.

The 2011 Nigerian general election as earlier stated witnessed the used of social media to announce the intention of the Nigerian presidential candidates, Goodluck Jonathan, to run for the presidential seat and to extensively campaign during the election which earned him the name 'the Facebook president'. His main challengers Muhammadu Buhari of the then Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) and Nuhu Ribadu of The Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) used the social media extensively in campaigns. Social media was even used by the Tanzanian general election presidential candidate, Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete in 2010. Goodluck Jonathan campaigned on Facebook and Twitter while using YouTube to impact visually on Nigerians online directly. Besides, he utilized the potentials of 'Note' on Facebook to explain and persuade Nigerians to vote for him. Some Nigerians had to remind him of all his campaign promises on Facebook during the January 2012 fuel subsidy strikes and protest. The adoption of social media in line with Anim (2013, p.8) is influenced by the desire of people to share experiences without borders. Anim's view corroborates McQuail (2010) that "it may be that more participatory media are equally or better suited to producing change because they are more involving as well as more flexible and richer in information (p.11). This clearly demonstrates the effects of social media on the Nigerian polity.

Theoretical Review

The Technological Determinism, Media Priming, and the agenda-setting theories formed the theoretical basis for this study. Marshall McLuhan's (1962) Technological Determinism theory states that media technology shapes how people as individuals in society think, feel, act, and how society operates as people move from one technological age to another. In essence, people learn and feel and think the way they do because of the messages they receive through the current technology (the social media) that is available these days. Just as the radio required people only to listen and develop a sense of hearing and television engaged both hearing and visual senses; Facebook has arrived to introduce interactivity and participation in the communication process. People then transfer those developed senses into everyday lives and use them again and again.

The theory further explains that when new systems of technology are developed, the culture or society is immediately changed to reflect the senses needed to use the latest system of technology. It predicts that with every new system of media technology, society will change and adapt to that technology. There is simple cause and effects analysis between the introduction of new technology and the changes in society's way of thinking, feeling, acting, or believing. Since humans do not have much free will at all, whatever society as a whole is using to communicate, they too will use to describe. Therefore, people will quickly adapt to social media which is in vogue in today's politics as it augments interactivity and more democratic participation. Hinged on the assumptions of this theory, Facebook users in Enugu are expected to readily embrace the social media as veritable media for reporting the 2015 election from their different location using their mobile and smartphones which are equally location-based media and available.

Theorists Maxwell McCombs and Donald L. Shaw in 1972/1973 propounded the Agenda-Setting Theory which states that the media (mainly the news media) are not always successful at telling us what to think, but they are quite successful at telling us what to think about. The agenda-setting process is an almost unavoidable part of newsgathering by the large organizations which make up much of the mass media. Stuart Hall points out that because some media outfits produce material which often is good, impartial and severe; they are accorded a high degree of respect and authority. The public is probably, persuaded with good radio, television and newspapers communication into an acceptance of the biased, the misleading, and the status quo. Generally, the agenda-setting literature suggests that people devote more thought to issues and objects that are more salient in the media coverage McCombs (in Camaj, 2014). Further, Camaj (2014, p.635) corroborates Kiouis and McDevitt that, - "only a small body of research has examined agenda-setting behavioral outcomes," - despite the importance of the research that expands "the boundaries of the theory to connect it with broader processes of public opinion, civic participation, and political development" (p.635). This study adds to this line of thought by examining the consequences of social media use; not only as a medium for reporting electoral activities and political participation but also for public opinion formation even as Facebook is setting agenda for the world including political agendas.

Media priming theory, closely related to the Agenda Setting theory is equally apt for this study. The priming theory believes that when the public begins to view candidates in light of a particular issue that has been brought up by the media even though it was not a consideration before its introduction, it became an example of the priming effect. Political media priming in line with Severen & Tankard (1987) is the process in which the media attend to some issues and not others and thereby alter the standards by which people evaluate election candidates. Several studies (Uzochukwu, Morah & Okafor, 2015) have demonstrated that there is a dimension of powerful media effects that go beyond agenda-setting which, Iyengar, Peters & Kinderin (1982) identified as the priming effect. The theory assumes that people do not have elaborate knowledge about political matters and do not take into account all of what they do know when making political decisions — they must consider what more readily comes to mind.

Alger (1989) argues that through drawing attention to some aspects of politics at the expense of others, the media might help to set the terms by which political judgments are reached, including evaluations of political figures. Priming theory in line with the above assumptions explains the psychological link between agenda-setting effects and the formation of political judgments, suggesting that media coverage influences the criteria people use to judge the performance of political leadership. Camaj(2014, p.637) corroborates (Kim et al.; Kim & McCombs; Krosnick & Kinder) views that priming theory explains the consequences of agenda-setting effects by offering a comprehensive elaboration on how citizens formulate their political attitudes as a consequence of media content they consume. Therefore the rate at which election results are posted on Facebook may conceal the authenticity of the reports from conventional media and even lead to agenda formation in society.

Findings and Data Analysis

The data analyzed was from copies of the questionnaire distributed among youths from three LGAs in Enugu State. Out of 384 copies of the questionnaire distributed, 349 representing a response rate of 91% were returned. Analysis of data is 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 92 of the respondents sampled representing 26.36% are adults between the age brackets of 42-52 years; 184 respondents representing 52.72% are within age brackets 31-41 years while; 47 (13.46%) of the respondents are between 20-30 years old. Other age brackets samples is a negligible 7.46% representing age brackets 52-above years. It is evident that a good proportion of the respondents are indeed youths. Out of the selected sample investigated, one hundred and eighty-six representing 53.3% are females while 163 representing 46.7% are males. Meanwhile results equally shows that a large portion of the youth sampled 41.55% (145) are single while 204 or 58.45% are married which implies that most of the youths used for the study are married. Most of the respondents are educated s findings reveals that 197 or 56.45% respondents have attained tertiary education, 29.23% secondary education, 8.60%, primary education while 5.73% indicated they are not literate.

Table 1: Respondents who have a Facebook Account

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	349	100%
No	0	0%
Total	349	100%

Information sought on respondents’ use of Facebook. From table 1 above shows that all the respondents under survey have a Facebook account. The result is an indication that the pervasiveness of Facebook might have some impact on political communication in the political sphere.

Table 2: Activities respondents use their Mobile device for in Nigeria

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Making call	153	44%
Sending e-mails	3	1%
Browsing	75	21.5%
Social networking	75	21.5%
SMS	1	0.3%
Others	42	12%
Total	349	100%

Table 2 above indicates that 153 respondents representing 44% use their mobile device for making calls. Seventy-five respondents representing 21.5% browse as well as engage in social networking with their mobile device, while only four representing 1.3% use their mobile devices for sending e-mails and SMS. Making voice calls and social networking are, therefore, predominant activities most respondents use their mobile devices to perform.

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

Variables	Respondents familiarity with social networking	Social networking frequently visited by respondents
Facebook	161 46.3%	189 54.47%
2go	12 3.45%	23 6.63%
Twitter	17 4.87%	49 14.04%
Blogging	23 6.59%	23 6.63%
MySpace	4 1.15%	7 2.02%
WhatsApp	131 37.54%	56 16.05%
Total	348 100%	347 100%

Data in Table 3 show that 161 respondents representing 46.3% indicated they are familiar with Facebook social networks followed by 101 respondents represented by 37.54% who stated that WhatsApp was their most common social network. Other responses from the table include blogging reported by 23 respondents representing 6.59%, seventeen respondents representing 4.87% stated that Twitter is their most common social network while 12 and four respondents representing 3.45% and 1.15% respectively identified 2go and MySpace as their most common networks. The findings show that among youth, WhatsApp and Facebook are their most familiar sites. Further investigation in terms of the site they often visit with their mobile devices reveals that respondents visit Facebook more than any other social network site. This observation is affirmed by 189 respondents representing 54.47%. The findings of this study are consistent with earlier studies that have indicated that youths are very familiar with and engage much in Facebook with friends and acquaintances (Morah & Uzochukwu, 2019; Ekwenchi, Morah & Adum, 2015). This result apparently holds as it is cheaper than making calls to reach out with friends. Other social networking sites used by respondents on their mobile devices to access information include twitter represented by 49 (14.04%) blogs and 2go represented by 23 (6.63%); WhatsApp represented by 56 (16.05%) and MySpace 2.02%.

- Q1 How did Nigerians react to the 2015 presidential election results on a Facebook social network?

Table 4: Respondents frequency of using Facebook for getting election reports

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Often	260	74.71%
Rarely	49	14.08%
Scarcely	15	4.31%
Can't Specify	24	6.89%
Total	348	100%

In terms of the frequency of respondents that received election report from, table 4 shows that 309 respondents representing more than 88.5% (in particular) of the sampled population identified that they regularly get information on 2015 election on Facebook with their mobile devices. Only 4.31% of the respondents indicated that they scarcely get such information on their mobile, while 6.89% of the respondents cannot specify their frequency of use of social media for such purpose with their mobile devices. This result is an indication that using Facebook on mobile devices for political communication purposes is almost taking up the communication landscape especially among the sampled youths. The media can thus target prospective voters with specific campaign messages on Facebook which further affirms tenets of the priming and agenda-setting theories.

Table 5: Respondents reactions to the 2015 presidential election results on Facebook

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Positively	237	67.9%
Negatively	86	24.6%
Neutral	26	7.4%
Total	349	100%

Table 5 shows that majority of the respondents (67.9%) indicated that they reacted positively to the 2015 election results disseminated through Facebook. This finding implies that they accepted such results ahead of the official announcements. Eighty-six respondents (24.4%) maintain a negative attitude to such reports while only 7.4% responded neutrally to the question asked, indicating that they did not get affected by the result declaration on Facebook.

- **Q2** Was the 2015 presidential election outcome influenced by Facebook considering the pre-election voting on online news sites on social networks?
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Table 6: Usefulness of Facebook in 2015 presidential elections

Variables	Respondents who were influenced through their mobile devices to vote during the last presidential election		The usefulness of Facebook social media to the success of the Nigerian election	
Yes	109	31.59%	196	57.30%
No	199	57.68%	85	24.85%
Not sure	37	10.72%	61	17.84%
Total	345	100%	342	100%

From table 6, responses sought to find out the instrumentality of social media to the success of the last presidential election in the state. 199 respondents representing 57.68% assert that they were not influenced through their mobile devices to vote during the previous presidential election; 109 respondents representing 31.59% indicated that they were affected to vote through their mobile devices, while 37 respondents representing 10.72% 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 in the success of Nigerian election indicated that 196 respondents representing 57.30% reported that Facebook commonly accessed on mobile was useful to the success of the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria. Sixty-one respondents representing 17.84% indicated they are not sure that the social media was helpful to the success of the election while 85 respondents representing 24.85% reported that Facebook was not useful to the success of the presidential election. This implies that Facebook and mobile usage has a significant correlation with political development in Nigeria.

- **Q3** To ascertain to the extent to which the 2015 presidential election reports by Facebook users influenced that of the traditional media during the election period.

Table 7: How Facebook results influenced that of the traditional media in terms of reportage

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
High Significance	164	47.53%
Not significant	68	19.71%

Low significance	78	22.61%
No opinion	35	10.14%
Total	345	100%

From table 7, responses sought to find out how Facebook 2015 election results influenced the result of the traditional media shows that Facebook result was highly significant (70.14%) concerning that of the conventional local media of radio, television, newspapers, and magazine. Sixty-eight respondents representing 19.71% indicated that results from Facebook did not influence that of the traditional press; while 10.14% could not express any opinion. This shows that the Nigerian polity can be influenced by Facebook which might likely affect their perceptions and voting patterns.

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	78	23.15%
It helps people to be abreast of information about the election	103	30.56%
It allows people to participate in the public sphere	33	9.80%
All of the above	123	36.50%
Total	337	100%

In terms of the utility of social media in the last election, 103 respondents representing 30.56% indicated that social media helped them to keep abreast of information about the poll; 78 respondents representing 23.15% stated that it motivates people to be part of the electoral process; while 9.80% of the respondents indicated that it helps them to participate in the public sphere. On the whole, 123 respondents representing 36.50% think that social media performed these various functions during the presidential election in the Enugu state. This result demonstrates the viability of social as a political communication tool for social engagement.

Table 9: Challenges with the use of Facebook in reporting election results

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
It wastes time	108	31.95%
It makes one lose focus on other things	67	19.82%
It exposes an individual's profile to the government	38	11.24%
It is costly and not comfortable for me	38	11.24%
There are poor services by service providers	74	21.89%
Others	13	3.85%
Total	338	100%

Amongst the respondents who indicated that they used Facebook on mobile devices during the last election, there was however some challenges the respondents faced as detailed in table 9 above. A reasonable proportion of the respondents 108, representing 31.95% indicated time wasting as a significant challenge. Seventy-four respondents representing 21.89% identified poor services from mobile service providers as a challenge, another 19.82% of the respondents indicated that it makes them lose focus on other things; constitute a few of the significant challenge associated with the use of Facebook on mobile devices for political communication.

Discussion and Conclusion

The result of the analysis shows that Facebook was influential as a news media during the 2015 election as mobile devices occasioned by the emergence of new media gradually takes over the political communication landscape in Nigeria. The new system of communication is possible because virtually all the respondents showed evidence of ownership of one mobile device or the other. We could also deduce from the data that one of the most used mobile devices used by most respondents in Nigeria is the mobile phone and this affirms findings of Ekwenchi, Morah & Adum (2015). These findings also support the views of (Wei, 2013; Morah & Omojola, 2018) that mobile phone is 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. Findings also show that social media political communications did not greatly influence decisions to vote among the respondents who mainly used their phones for making calls, browsing and engaging in social networks. Facebook and Whatsapp were found to be most popularly used social media among the selected respondents. Despite the popularity of mobile devices among the respondents, findings indicate that such popularity did not translate to popular usage for political news and information.

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