

**THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE VOTING
BEHAVIOUR OF THE YOUTH IN SOUTH EAST NIGERIA**

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RESEARCH PROJECT SUPERVISOR: DR. GREG EZEAH

TITLE PAGE

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BEHAVIOUR OF THE YOUTH IN SOUTH EAST NIGERIA**

BY

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**A RESEARCH DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF
POSTGRADUATE STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA IN
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OF MASTERS DEGREE IN MASS COMMUNICATION**

RESEARCH PROJECT SUPERVISOR: DR. GREG EZEAH

Certification

This research project is an original work of Akinlade Ajibola A, with registration number PG/MA/14/69313. It satisfies the requirement for presentation of research report in the department of mass communication, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to the Author and finisher of our faith through our Lord Jesus Christ and to the memories of my late father, Dr. N.O Akinlade. Continue to rest in peace Doctor!

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Abstract

This study titled “The influence of social media on the voting behaviour of youths in south east Nigeria” sought to find out the influence of social media on Nigerian youths voting behaviour. The Nigerian population, according to the census of 2006 has over 70% of Nigeria’s 150million people as under the age of 30years; despite this young populace the country has been having low voters turnout during elections. Guided by the diffusion of innovation and agenda setting theories, the study used questionnaire and interview to sample the opinions of Nigerian youths resident in the south east to examine if and how they utilize social media and the influence it has on their political behaviour. Using the online Australian calculator, a sample size of 400 respondents was drawn from the five south eastern states which had a combined population of 16, 395, 560. Multi level sampling which consisted of cluster sampling and purposive sampling was used to draw the respondents across the south eastern states. Findings revealed that Nigerian youths resident in the south eastern region are very active on social media and it has a positive influence on their voting behaviour. However, social media does not have an influence on their voting preferences. It is however a veritable mass medium that can be used to set agenda and diffuse ideas and programmes to the youths as it is highly regarded as a credible medium by the youth. It is recommended that the federal government should intensify its ICT drive in the education and other sectors to bring more citizens also on the information super highway. Orientation agencies, political parties, electoral bodies were advised to increase their online presence especially on social media platforms which are popular with the youths in order to reverse the voters apathy syndrome prevalent among the youths.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.2 Background to the Study

The prevalence of democracy as a political system of government among the countries of the world is indisputable. Democracy, over the years in history has come to replace other less popular systems of government like monarchy, theocracy, autocracy, military junta etc. Starting from the American Revolution of 1776, to the French Revolution of 1789, to the Russian Revolution of 1917, democracy swept across the world as the most preferred form of government.

Today, there is only a handful of countries practising monarchical/theocratic system of government compared to the vast majority of countries practising democracy. The popularity of democracy is undoubtedly attributable to its people oriented nature. As demonstrated by the French revolutionists, what the people wanted was encapsulated in their motto Liberté, Egalité et Fraternité (Liberty, Equality and Brotherhood). The French people wanted the freedom to choose their own leaders and their representatives. They sought a kind of government where everyone would be equal irrespective of their class or status in the society. Former President of the United States of America, Abraham Lincoln, puts it aptly in his classic definition of democracy as "government of the people by the people and for the people".

An online dictionary, thefreedictionary.com, defines democracy as "government by the people, exercised either directly or through elected representatives". The process of choosing representatives by the people to represent/govern them is known as "election" which is a sine qua non in any democratic setting. Elections are at the very heart of democracy, and are indeed the

very essence of democracy. However, prior to the election proper, political parties, politicians, party members and other stakeholders engage in an equally important process called 'electioneering'. Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English defines electioneering as 'speeches and other activities that are intended to persuade people to vote for a particular person or political party'. It is popularly regarded as 'campaigning' in this part of the world.

An 'election year' is like no other year in any country practising democracy. Politicians and their respective political parties go to a great length to reach out to eligible citizens with persuasive messages in order to convince the electorates to vote for them. No stratum of the society is spared from the barrage of electioneering: market women, working class, traders, artisans, students, professional bodies, youths, etc are all targeted in order to secure their votes.

The mass media is the tool of choice to reach the heterogeneous and widely dispersed electorates. Massive funds are usually earmarked by politicians and their parties for electioneering in the traditional mass media i.e. television, radio, newspapers and magazines. The popularity of the mass media is due to its wide reach/coverage. Nomadic herdsmen can be reached via their transistor radios, elites and literati can be reached via newspapers, women can be reached via magazines and town/city dwellers mostly via the television. However, a very important component of the electorates - the youth - seem to be increasingly 'unreachable' through the traditional media, as they seem to be making a shift away from the traditional media to internet based applications like social media. The decreasing influence of traditional media was noted by Thomas, Allen and Semenik (2014): as 'an important issue propelling this search for new ways to reach consumers is the slow but steady erosion in the effectiveness of traditional broadcast media'. Dominick (2011) also noted that: 'The audience for network news, newspaper,

and news magazines has been shrinking for the past 30 years. The same trend holds true for local TV news

The Nigerian youth make up a substantial part of the Nigerian populace as well as eligible voters. Ex-Finance Minister, Mrs. Okonjo-Iweala, at a conference in Lagos in 2010 cited 70 percent of Nigeria's population of 150 million as under 30 years old. She further stated that the youth population (those between 12-24 years of age) was estimated at 30 million (Kolapo, 2010). This is a significant number that cannot be ignored by any politician or political party. The media shift of youths from traditional media to internet based applications like social media is traceable to a number of factors. One is the increasing internet penetration in the country. According to the latest statistics from internetworldstats.com, there are 92, 699, 924 internet users in Nigeria as at November 15th 2015, representing 51.1% of the population. In Nigeria today, information and communication technology (ICT) is now part of secondary schools' curricula and students in their final year are required to register for their various examinations online. The results of the examinations are also accessible online. The subscriber base of GSM has grown to over 148 million representing a teledensity of about 98% according to subscriber stat 2015 report released by the Nigerian communication commission (NCC, 2015). Many Nigerian universities are now equipped with Wi-Fi which is available to students at little or no costs. Many students now own laptops/net books and other mobile devices like ipads, blackberries, iphones and other smart phones through which they access social media sites like facebook, twitter, You tube, Hi5, 2go etc on the internet. According to the Internetstats, about 15, 000, 000 Nigerians have Facebook accounts (as at November 15th 2015) with the majority of them being youths under the age of 30 years. The number of Nigerian youths signing up to

Facebook and Twitter keep increasing at an astronomical rate daily. This may be attributable to the herd instinct nature of youths wanting to belong or be current with the latest trends.

The focus of this study therefore is to examine the influence of the use of social media on the voting behaviour of Nigerian youths that are of voting age in south east Nigeria. The study attempted to examine if the social media can be a veritable tool of social control like the traditional mass media.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The Nigerian census of 2006 shows that over 70% of Nigeria's 150 million people are under the age of 30 years, (Kolapo, 2010). This makes the Nigerian populace a young one. However, youths' participation in the country's electoral process is not commensurate with the numbers. Nigerian youths are generally lackadaisical or even totally uninterested in electoral matters, resulting in low voter turnout at elections.

The former head of Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Professor Attahiru Jega made this known at a workshop in Abuja sometimes in 2011 after the 2011 general elections. He stated: "There exists voters' apathy in Nigeria and this is no longer contentious. Voters turnout in the just concluded general elections hand provided a scientific and empirical evidence of the existence of voter apathy and nonchalance of sections of the electorate in elections" (Abonyi, 2011).

This youth apathy towards election obviously does not augur well for sustenance of democracy in the country, hence the sensitization and mobilization drive by the federal government to encourage youths of eligible age to participate in the electoral process by registering and also voting for candidates of their choices. Apart from the traditional media, the social media is another medium through which the government and especially the presidential

candidates reached out to mobilize the youth in the last 2015 general elections. This study is to examine the use of social media as a veritable mobilization tool for electioneering campaigns in general elections with a focus on south eastern Nigeria. The study will x-ray how the use of social media had influenced the voting behaviour of the youth with regard to the 2015 presidential elections.

1.3 Objectives of Study

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To determine the extent to which youths (in south east Nigeria) utilize social media
2. To determine the extent of the influence social media usage on youths participation in the 2015 electoral process.
3. To ascertain the correlation between social media influence and youths' voting preference(s).
4. To determine the level of credibility youths attach to social media messages

1.4 Research Questions

1. To what extent did youths in south east Nigeria utilize Social media in the 2015 presidential election?
2. To what extent did social media influence youths participation in the 2015 presidential electoral process?
3. To what extent did social media usage influence south east based youths' voting preference(s) in the 2015 presidential election?
4. To what degree do youths regard social media messages as credible?

1.5 Significance of Study

The findings of this study will add more knowledge to the existing literature on media effect theories. It will also serve as a reference for future researchers that may want to undertake a research on a similar study.

Government agencies/parastatals/departments will find the result of this study useful, especially those that are in the business of disseminating public service announcements and national orientation messages. More often than not most of such messages are targeted toward the youths in particular e.g. 'Voter Registration', 'Cool 2 Vote', 'Anti cultism'. Anti-abortion, HIV/AIDS prevention etc.

The result of this study would be of interest to all political parties that want to sell their parties, manifestos, candidates, ideas to the youths in order to secure their votes. Political parties in the 21st century cannot afford to be technologically bankrupt in this information age.

The findings of this study will contribute to the sustainable development of democracy in Nigeria. The youth are the future and drivers of any country, therefore conducting researches/studies into their political, social behavior is of paramount importance.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study aims to examine the influence of the use of social media as a political/mobilization tool on the voting behaviour of Nigerian youths. Even though social media encompasses a lot of internet-based applications this study shall however be limited primarily to just *Facebook* and *Twitter* being the two most popular social media amongst Nigerian youths.

Only Nigerian youths resident in the south eastern states (Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, Abia and Imo) from the voting age of 18 years through 35 years that have Facebook and/or Twitter accounts shall be polled.

This study will examine the voting pattern of the aforementioned youths for the 2015 presidential elections only.

1.7 Definition of Terms

Social media: Social media includes the various online technology tools that enable people to communicate easily via the internet to share information and resources. It can include text, audio, video, images, podcasts, and other multimedia communications. (www.About.com). Some popular example of social media are: Facebook, Twitter, My Space, Hi5, Skype, 2go, You tube, Linked in etc. Social media is simply the set of web-based broadcast technologies that enable the democratization of content giving people the ability to emerge from consumers to publishers.

Youth: The period or time when someone is young especially the period when someone is a teenager (Longman dictionary). For the purpose of this study youths shall be persons from the voting age of 18 years through to 35 years only.

Voting behaviour: This has to do with youth response towards voting. There could be low voters turnout, average of large voters turnout.

Influence: The power to affect the way someone or something behaves, thinks without using direct force or order.

Twitter: An online social networking site located on www.twitter.com

Facebook: An online social networking site located on www.facebook.com

South East Nigeria: This is one of the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria. It comprises Enugu, Anambra, Abia, Imo and Ebonyi States.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Internet: Precursor to Social Media.

Before attempting to examine what social media is all about, it would be pertinent to briefly trace the history of the internet on which social media is domiciled. The internet is what makes social media and other online application possible. The internet has been described as "one of the greatest technological innovation which have had profound impact on the way human beings communicate, conduct business and process information. It has altered the face of mass communication and other contexts of communication." (Akpan & Nnaane, 2011).

According to Baran (2010), "There are conflicting versions about the origins of internet." However, the most dominant version has it that the internet is a by-product of the cold war between the United States of America and the former Soviet Republic. "The U.S Department of Defense was concerned about the vulnerability of its computers network to nuclear attack. The Pentagon did not want to lose all its computing and communication ability to one well-placed atomic bomb. Consequently, defense computer experts decentralized the whole system by creating an interconnected web of computer networks. The 'Net' was designed so that every computer could talk to every other computer ... thus, if one portion of the network happened to be disabled, the rest of the network could still function normally. "The system that the Pentagon eventually developed was called Arpanet." (Dominick ,2011)

The Arpanet was merely the precursor to the internet which was built by the National Science Foundation using the internet protocol and hooking together chains of regional networks that were eventually linked to a super computer. (Dominick, *ibid*).

The invention of the internet turned the world to a 'global village' as predicted by Marshal McLuhan, (1962) many years before its invention. At its early stage, the internet was utilized primarily by scientists and computer experts and the likes. It was used to send and receive information on researches, experiments, discoveries among the scientists (Dominick 2011).

The invention of other technologies like browser, hypertext and search engines however opened up the internet to the average man and woman on the street. Students, lawyer, architects, doctor, armed forces, civil servants, governments, schools etc all make use of the internet in their various fields nowadays. One of the most popular applications on the internet is email and it is the most commonly used. The internet also hosts websites and electronic bulletin boards where visitors can go to read information posted on those sites\boards. This era was known as the web 1.0 era because the internet was basically 'static' or 'consumatory' in nature (Duncan, 2012).

However with advances in technology, the internet has metamorphosed from a static and mainly consumatory tool to a dynamic and collaborative or exchange tool. Internet users can in addition to reading information on a website, also post their responses. Many users now generate and upload contents online in this web 2.0 era which Nwabueze (2012) observes commenced in 2004 when interactive websites merged.

As stated earlier innovations has transformed the internet from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0. Blogs, interactive web sites, file sharing, video sharing sites, picture- sharing sites social media sites are all features of the web 2.0 era (www.webopedia.com).

The internet has become an indispensable tool which is used for various purposes like information, education, commerce, entertainment, shipping, researches, etc especially in the western world. Okunna and Omenugha (2012) see the internet as òa tool for knowledge building

through communication and information exchange, which has extended freedom to participate in economic, political and social processes.

It is pertinent to highlight the innovations that fuelled the growth of the internet from an exclusive communication tool used by technocrats to a worldwide phenomenon that it is today.

The invention of the World Wide Web (www) by Sir Tim Berners-Lee, Sir Sam Walker and Robert Caillau in 1991 was a major boost for the diffusion of internet technology. The World Wide Web is pretty much a platform that makes it easy to access data on the internet. The web uses hypertext links which are pieces of code that link one site to another (www.Historyofthings.com). The www made it easy for internet users to access websites of their choice more easily.

The World Wide Web got a further boost with the invention of the first browser known as Mosaic in 1993. A browser is a computer programme with a graphical user interface for displaying HTML files used to navigate the World Wide Web. (googledictionary.com). Web pages are easily accessed and viewed with the aid of browsers. Some of the well known browsers today are Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, Opera Chrome, Safari etc. These browsers simplified the act of surfing on the internet and therefore endeared more people to the internet.

The invention of search engine Yahoo! In 1994 by Jerry Yang marked another milestone in the growing popularity of the internet. Search engines are computer programmes that search databases and internet sites for the documents containing keywords specified by a user. (www.businessdictionary.com). Prior to the invention of search engines, the internet was like an ocean of information that was not quite easy to manipulate for extraction of relevant information. Today, millions of internet users utilise search engines like Google, Yahoo, Bing, Aol, Ask,

Lycos etc to search for documents, websites, files, directories and general information daily worldwide. According to Sullivan (2015) Google alone processes over a trillion searches per annum worldwide which translates to about a billion searches daily.

Further technological advances like the invention of broadband internet, mobile devices like laptops, tablets and smart phones; multiplicity of internet service providers (ISPs) amongst other innovations brought the internet closer to more people even in the developing nations. As at June 2015, there were about 3,290, 490, 584 internet users worldwide (www.internetworldstats.com), representing roughly half the world population.

Mobile telephony and smart mobile devices like cellphones are certain to increase the numbers of internet users in the world as time goes by. As a matter of fact, the Internet Society in their annual Global Internet Report (2015) predicts that mobile internet will play a key role in bringing the next billion users online. Its optimism is based on the facts that smartphone sales are the majority of mobile handsets sold worldwide, and 192 countries have active 3G mobile networks which cover almost 50% of the global population. Presently, the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) reveal that there are over 6.8 billion cellphone subscription in the world (ITU Cellphone Report 2013); while the Internet Society estimates mobile internet penetration to reach 71% by 2019 globally.

All the aforementioned technologies/inventions and others combined to make the internet as popular as it is today. The invention of social media platforms also marked another milestone in the history of the internet. Social media encompasses a panoply of social networking sites, blogs, virtual game sites, microblogs and wikis. The first major social media platform was MySpace created in 2003 and then followed by *Facebook* in 2004. *Facebook* has since overtaken

MySpace and is indeed the most popular Social media platform in the world with over a billion members as at September, 2015 (www.statista.com).

2.1.1 Social Media as a Concept

According to Dominick (2011), 'the origin of social media on the web can be found in the mid-1990's when personal web pages became popular'. Social media could be defined as "a group of internet based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of web 2.0, which allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content". (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

These applications that make up social media are social networking sites (like *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *My Space*, *Linked in*, *Hi5*), video sharing web sites (*You Tube*, *Vimeo*, *Photo Bucket*, *Meta Cafe*) and web logs (*Blogs*) which are like personal web pages.

The Associated Press (AP) Stylebook (2013) defines Social media as 'online tools that people use to connect with one another including social networks. Adibe, Odoemelam and Orji (2012) describe social media as 'online content created by people using highly accessible and scalable publishing technologies to disseminate information across geographical boundaries, providing interaction among people'.

Carr and Hayes (2015) define social media as 'internet based channels that allow users to opportunistically interact and selectively self present, either in real-time or asynchronously, with both broad and narrow audiences to derive value from user-generated content and the perception of interaction with others'.

Communication Expert Joseph Thornley (2008) defines social media as 'online communications in which individuals shift fluidly and flexibly between the role of audience and

author. To do this, they use social software that enables anyone without knowledge of coding, to post comment on, share or mash up content and to form communities around shared interests.

Simply put, social media is an umbrella term used to describe the various types of internet based applications that lend themselves to content creation sharing, exchange, collaboration and social networking within a website.

Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) highlighted the various forms of social media as collaborative projects (eg wikipedia), blogs and microblogs (eg *Twitter*), content communities (eg YouTube, Picasso), social networking sites (eg *Facebook*, MySpace), virtual game worlds (eg world of warcraft) and virtual social worlds (eg second life).

The AP stylebook (2013) has a slightly different categorization of social media as: blogs, social networking sites, microblogging sites, wikis, content sharing sites, online forums, check-in services and all sorts of other sites.

Irrespective of the categorizations, social media platforms like *Facebook*, *Twitter*, Instagram, YouTube, MySpace, LinkedIn, Vine have really become quite popular especially among the youth who utilize them to socialise, network, mobilise, for entertainment purposes amongst other uses.

Although social media platforms can be accessed via the web (eg desktop computers, laptops) they are mainly accessed via mobile devices like cellphones, tablets, ipods. According to *Facebook's* 3rd quarter (2015) report, over 70% percent of total *Facebook* active users access it through mobile devices. The numbers are growing for *Facebook* and its from mobile. To bring it home, the same *Facebook* report reveal that 15 million Nigerians access the website via mobile devices monthly.

In essence, the compatibility of social media with mobile internet is a key advantage which dovetails neatly with the ever mobile lifestyle of the youth and working class adults. The following can be regarded as the key characteristics of social media which has made it tick.

1. **Interactivity:** The interactive nature of social media is a key characteristic that distinguishes it from the traditional mass media or web 1.0 internet. Anyone could post content online and get feedback or contributions from other members and vice versa. The interactive nature of social media has basically "democratized" the internet.
2. **Accessibility:** Social media is accessible to virtually everyone with a cellphone and internet connection nowadays. They are not bound by location or time as some of the mass media are.
3. **Reach:** The coverage of social media is quite enormous and far wider than conventional mass media as the internet is available on a global scale. Information posted on the internet will travel further than it will do on national TV or news paper.
4. **Adaptability:** Social media platforms lend themselves to great adaptability with many of their inbuilt features eg the "Retweet" function in *Twitter*, attachment of photos, short videos to tweets and *Facebook* posts, links and "favouriting" of tweets. All those features aid the diffusion of information on social media.
5. **Affordability:** Using the social media to broadcast messages is far cheaper than doing same via conventional mass media. Setting up an account is basically free on social media and many users can afford to buy data bundles which are getting cheaper due to competition among the internet service providers.
6. **Mobility;** This is perhaps the most key characteristic of social media. Although social media is accessible from the web, majority of users access it via mobile internet mainly through their cellphones.

It is a major socializing tool as it names implies; and it cuts across physical boundaries. Best of all, the social media is basically free of charge. We shall now take a closer look at the two social networking sites that are of interest to this study---*Facebook* and then *Twitter*.

2.1.2 Facebook: History and Functionalities

Facebook is a social networking site that was created by Mark Zuckerberg in 2004 while he was still a student at Harvard University. It was initially restricted to Harvard students only but was later extended to include other Universities/Colleges and then later high schools in the U.S. (www.wikipedia/en/history_of_Facebook).

The popularity of *Facebook* became worldwide and it was eventually opened up to anyone with an email address to join and create a profile.

Facebook has grown at an astronomical rate from its humble beginning as a Harvard campus networking site to a global internet giant boasting of a whopping 1.5 billion active users, making it the biggest social networking site in the world. To put it in other words, if *Facebook* were a country it would be the most populous country in the world (www.statista.com/264810).

Facebook can be accessed through www.facebook.com and all a prospective user needs' to open an account and create a profile is a valid email address or cell phone number. He or she provides some basic information about himself /herself such as name, sex, date of birth, and town of residence. A picture of the user is optional but encouraged by *Facebook*.

A profile page is created for each user that registers and it contains all the information about the user as provided by the user.

Some of the functionalities of *Facebook* available to users are Walls (where information can be posted for friends to see), Messages (for private emails), Status (to post any kind of information for the public to view), Pictures & Videos uploading links, groups of political,

social, religious or whatever leaning can be created for followers to join. Chat which is an instant messaging application is one of the major features on the website. It also comes with inbuilt search capabilities which are used to search for long lost or new friends on the social networking site by inputting their names. Online games like Scrabble, Farmville, Mafia wars etc have proved to be major attraction for users of *Facebook* as it is free of charge (www.facebook.com).

Needless to say, with all the aforementioned applications and features, *Facebook* has become a very popular "hot spot" where the youth especially "hang out" to socialize and get informed, entertained and even educated.

2.1.3 Twitter: History and Functionalities

Twitter is a free micro-blogging, social messaging service that allows people to communicate brief message (140 words) called "tweets" in real time. (Dominick, 2011).

When you sign up with twitter on www.twitter.com you can use the service to post and receive messages to a network of contacts. Instead of sending a dozen emails or text messages, you send one message to your twitter account, and the service distributes it to all friends or "followers". Members use twitter to organize impromptu gatherings, carry on a group conversation or just send a quick update to let people know what's going on. (Strickland, 2011)

Twitter was founded in 2006 by the trio of Jack Dorsey, Evan Williams and Biz Stone who were all programmers that were interested in creating a micro- blogging social network that could be updated via short message service (SMS).

Despite the fact that a "tweet" is limited to a maximum of 140 words, *Twitter* has grown at an astronomical rate since its inception. Exact numbers are hard to pin down but according to Picard (2011) there are between 200-250 million users on *twitter* while about 460,000 new accounts are opened daily, with about 140 million tweets sent daily.

Some of the reasons why *Twitter* has become a huge hit among internet users is because of its simplicity and easy-to-use format. *Twitter* is also accessible both from laptops with internet connection and mobile devices like mobile phones, PDA's, smart phones, ipad, etc. *Twitter* has really proven to be the mobile social media.

Many well known personalities have *Twitter* accounts that they use for political, social, informational, educational, mobilizing, canvassing purposes.

Upon opening an account on Twitter, a user will be allotted a profile page which will contain basic information like names of the user, the city or country where he/she is based; users are also encouraged to upload at least one of their pictures as a profile picture. Favourite quotes or sayings can also be included in the profile page.

The next step after setting up a profile page is to invite or search for friends/contacts (called "followers") to "follow". To do this there is an inbuilt 'search' application which is used to search for followers on Twitter. Those not on twitter already can also be invited to join via emails. There's no limit to the number of followers a 'tweeter' can follow and some prominent personalities like President Barack Obama are known to have over 9 million followers. (www.twitaholic.com).

The 'Timeline' is similar to the Wall application on *Facebook*, where Tweets (messages) from all of one's followers are displayed to be read. These tweets from followers can also be "Retweeted" by an individual so that the tweet is seen by other tweeters on the individual's network of followers.

Even though twitter is meant to be a micro-blogging site it nonetheless can be used to upload and post picture and also links to videos or pod casts. Many tweeters tweet and back such tweets with pictures to lend credence to it. There is also a section called Trends where the top ten

most tweeted issues on *Twitter* are listed. Usually current events taking place in the world dominate this list. Some other times it may be about natural disasters happening somewhere, while at other times celebrities in the news make the trending list. *Twitter* can be used to keep up with news by 'following' any of the several media houses that now tweet most of their stories - usually the Headlines and Leads.

2.1.4 Metamorphosis of Social Media

Having examined the history and functionalities of the two most popular social media---*Facebook* and *Twitter*-in Nigeria, it would be pertinent to examine how popular and pervasive they have become in today's world.

According to the latest statistics from [www. Internetstats.com](http://www.Internetstats.com) as at January, 2015 there are about 1.5 billion active *Facebook* users globally, of which about 15 million are Nigerians. *Twitter* is estimated to have about a quarter of a billion active users globally. These numbers continue to grow at an astronomical rate daily as more people get to know the benefits of social media.

At inception social media was regarded by professionals as a mere social platform where people meet to socialize. Today social media is that and more. There is basically no endeavour where social media is not utilized in, from entertainment, business, governance, politics, advertising, public relations, advocacy, and even Journalism to mention but a few.

According to Gunter (2011) "Social media is being used more and more in news rooms as a tool for newsgathering and verification. The Fourth Annual Digital Journalism Study Published by the Oriella PR Network Polled 478 journalists from 15 countries and found that 47 percent of them used *Twitter* as a source up from just 33 percent last year. The use of *Facebook* as a source went up to 35 percent from 25 percent in 2010."

Whereas in previous years media outlets viewed social media as an experimental platform, they now view it as a bonafide source" says Giles Fraser, co-head of the Oriella PR Network. The Washington Post Local editor Vernon Web opines "Social media are not really optional anymore; you can't do your job without them. Social media are where news often breaks first; they are a great way to cultivate, sources, track events, find experts, and to drive audiences to our journalismí You can't be a good reporter unless you are involved in the social media realm" (Pexton, 2011).

There is scarcely any national Newspaper and even Television and Radio stations that do not have and make use of *Facebook* and *Twitter* accounts. Satellite news channel Al-Jazeera has a news programme called "The Stream" which is strictly dedicated to news events being tweeted or on *Facebook* and You Tube. CNN, BBC, ESPN, New York Times, Washington Post, USA Today, and even our indigenous Punch, Guardian, The Sun, This Day and others all have social media presence and activity.

Social media is however not restricted to the traditional media practitioners alone, as many average citizens make use of it to report on news of natural disasters, upheavals, accidents or uprisings as evidenced by the reportage of the Arab uprising in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Bahrain and Yemen by ordinary citizens of the aforementioned countries. This concept of ordinary citizens turning to amateur journalists to report on news worthy events, via social media is known as "citizen Journalism".

It is usually a sign that some development has gained traction in society when it is adopted by commercial interests. Social media have become an indispensable marketing tool; and it seems every product or service has some kind of social media tie-in. (Dominick, 2011 pg 73). Online stores like kalahari.com, smartbuyng.com, Taafoo.com, buyright.biz, awoof

shop.com etc all have *Facebook* and *Twitter* accounts which they use to promote their website, and also have *Facebook/Twitter* links on their respective websites.

Politicians and government officials are not left out of the social media trend. Social media has proved to be a very cheap but useful platform for politicians to propagate their manifestos, plans, views, opinions to their electorates in order to secure their votes. "It is no surprise then that computer technology is often trumpeted as the newest and best tool for increased democratic involvement and participation" (Baran 2010:pg285).

2.1.5 Review of Related Studies

Bond, Fariss, Jones, Kramer, Marlow, Settle and Fowler (2012) carried out an experiment titled "1 million person experiment in social influence and political mobilization" and concluded that social media messages do influence people. They estimated that tens of thousands of votes eventually cast (during U.S Congressional election 2010) were generated by a single *Facebook* message.

Gromark and Schliesmann (2012) in their study of "The effects of politicians social media activities on voting behaviour" submitted that "there is evidence that the total social media activity has a positive effect on voter turnout". The result for effect of social media messages on voters' preferences was not conclusive.

Akpoveta (2015) in his study "Assessment of the impact of social media on the 2015 electioneering in Asaba, Delta State" reached the same conclusions as that of Gromark and Schliesmann by stating that "social media increased the turnout of voters by increasing information exchange and participation of the electorates". A similar study was carried out in Anambra State by Edegoh and Anunike (2015) and they also concluded that "social media platforms present unique opportunities for mobilization of youths for political participation".

In their own study carried out in Ondo State Okioya, Talabi and Ogundeji (2015) concluded that social media actually stimulated voters to participate in the electoral process in Akure metropolis. Similarly, Onyike, Ekwenchi and Chiaha (2015) in their study set in Enugu state reveal that a substantial number of respondents were influenced to a large extent by exposure to social media in the way they participated in the 2015 general elections. Sanni (2015) reported that the majority of respondents in her study set in Oyo State agreed that the use of social media as a political awareness tool positively influenced them in voting for the candidate(s) of their choice.

The role of social media in shaping public opinion of Nigerians in the 2015 electioneering was the study undertaken by Nwaolikpe and Mbaka (2015) and they concluded that the social media are influencing the public on issues that are important to them especially politically.

The verdict of Okoro and Nwafor (2013) in their study titled social media and political participation in Nigeria during the 2011 General elections: the lapses and lessons was that whereas many used the technology (social media) to make vital input in the political discourse, others used it to spread hate and inciting messages.

Acholonu, Onyebuchi & Obayi (2015) in their study of the influence of social media on the political knowledge and participation of electorates in 2015 electioneering campaigns in Nigeria concluded that there are low knowledge levels on the use of social media for political learning and use of social media has different levels of influence on electorates political participation.

Johnson & Perlmutter's (2010). "The *Facebook* Election" is a compilation of series of studies published in *Mass Communication & Society Journal* which examined the way in which Online Social Interactive Media (OSIM), more specifically social network sites, blogs, micro blogs, (like Twitter), video sharing sites, and online discussion forums changed the ways candidates campaigned, how the media covered the election, and how voters received information in the 2008 (U.S Presidential) election." The studies have revealed conflicting results as regards effects of social media. Cozma & Postelnicu (2008) study of "political uses and perceived effects of campaigning on My Space" concluded that in general social network sites may not have much influence on political attitudes and behaviour. Another study by Zhang, Johnson, Seltzer & Bichard (2010) titled "The influence of social network sites on political attitudes and behaviours" also reached a similar conclusion as that of Cozma & Postelnicu's study.

Conversely, Valenzuela, Park and Kee's study entitled "Is there social capital in a social network site? *Facebook* use and College students life satisfaction, Trust, and Participation" suggested there are positive relationships between intensity of *Facebook* use and students' life satisfaction, social trust, civic engagement and political participation.

Another study "Social networking sites and our lives" carried out by Hampton, Goulet, Rainie & Purcell (2011) for renowned research organization Pew Internet revealed that *Facebook* users are much more politically engaged than most people. According to survey conducted over the November 2010 U.S. Presidential election, it revealed that "10% of Americans reported that they had attended a political rally, 23% reported that they had tried to convince someone to vote for a specific candidate, and 66% reported that they had or intended to vote.

Bowers, Fernandez, Giurcanu & Neely's Study "The Writing on the wall: A Content Analysis of College Students' *Facebook* Groups for the 2008 Presidential Election" found that political discussion dominated the discussion between posters, as they used the *Facebook* groups to transmit important information related to the candidates' campaigns, issues, and appearances rather than for social purposes. The authors argued that the results bode well for the potential of social network sites to foster civic engagement among young voters.

A study by Hanson, Haridakis, Wagstaff, Sherma & Ponder entitled "The 2008 Presidential campaign: Political cynicism in the Age of *Facebook*, MySpace and You Tube examines the relationship between political cynicism and use of social media. The study reveals social media users tend to have lower political cynicism the more they utilize social media. The authors suggest the reason for this could be the strong interpersonal nature of social networking sites, as many people tend to regard their friends/family's/contacts opinions more highly than those from politicians or media.

Richey (2008) in his study "The Autoregressive influence of social network political knowledge on, voting behaviour" concluded that:

Social network have a large influence on vote choice. In particular, discussants' knowledge affects vote choice in a way similar to the autoregressive effect of political preference found by Huckfeldt, Johnson and Sprague. . . . Citizens embedded in networks seen to consider multiple opinions when making vote choices.

A Professor of Communications at Kent State University, Paul Haridakis, opined that:

The influence of social networking could be significant. Unlike a newspaper article or television broadcast, the information presented on sites like Facebook is filtered through a user's circle of friends and acquaintances; they may trust those people more than they would a media organization or a campaign.

Paul Haridakis is presently conducting a survey-based study on "How social networking sites influence voting behaviour" in conjunction with another colleague, Gary Hanson.

According to information obtained from National Conference on Citizenship's websites ncoc.net, they plan to finish collecting data in the coming weeks and publish their findings.

2.1.6 Social Media as Political Campaign Tools

According to Baran (2010) "The internet is characterized by freedom and self governance, which are also the hallmarks of true democracy. It is no surprise then that computer technology is often trumpeted as the newest and best tool for increased democratic involvement and participation."

Since the 2000 U.S elections, more and more Americans have begun using the internet for receiving their news and political information. As a result, Politicians as a whole have begun using the internet more and more for campaigning. (Deluca 2009). However a certain Senator Barrack Obama took it to another level entirely in 2008. Senator Obama was aspiring to accomplish what had never been achieved before in U.S politics---someone from a minority race (Afro-Americans, Hispanics, Jews,) becoming the President of the United States of America. In order to stand a chance at all Sen. Obama had to find a way to reach out to a critical segment of the electorates that were hitherto "unreachable" - --youths and minorities. He found the 'bridge' in the form of social media. Being internet -savvy, he put his skills to good use by opening and operating a *Facebook* account My Space account, *Twitter* account. He also uploaded speeches on *You Tube* and created a website mybarackobama.com which he used for mobilizing supporters and campaigning.

Obama's utilization of social media for campaigning proved to be very popular not only among the youth, grassroots and minorities but also among the majority of Whites in America. According to Twitaholic.com Obama has about 9 million followers on Twitter, while he has got about 22 million 'friends' on *Facebook*. He is credited as having 'cultivated' the largest number

of volunteers and also setting a new record of largest campaign donations in the history of D.S politics.

The 2008 D.S presidential election also witnessed an unprecedented mass participation of youths and minorities group in the electoral process which eventually led to the epoch making victory of internet savvy Sen. Obama over his internet-deficient rival Sen. John McCain .

As Deluca (2009) noted "the Obama campaign's usage of the internet and blogosphere has been a resounding success. Without the internet support, other well known and more powerful opponents within both his own party and the Republican Party would have certainly left Obama in the dust."

Back home in Nigeria, politicians, including Ex-President Good luck Jonathan, have joined the social media bandwagon for political purposes. As if seemingly taking a cue from President Obama's successful use of the internet to win his election, Ex-President Jonathan also made aggressive use of social media to connect with millions of electorates on both *Facebook* and *Twitter*. It would be recalled that Ex-President Jonathan finally declared his intention to run for the post of Presidency in the 2011 presidential election on *Facebook*---three days before formally announcing at a rally. He has about 590, 190 followers on *Facebook* as at 14th of July. He also tweet updates and reactions on his Twitter profile--- JGoodLucktweets---to his 16,486 followers as at 14th of July.

Ex-President Jonathan's utilization of social media proved to be a hit with youths in particular, and the populace in general. Igbinidu (2011) notes :

The increasing penetration of internet and telephone technology has culminated in an embrace of social media platforms by the Nigerian electorates, especially the youth who are increasingly becoming very vibrant and technology savior-faire. To connect with this target group, Nigeria politicians had no choice but to leverage on the media platform through which they could be reached easily. President Goodluck Jonathan of Nigeria joined Facebook about 10 months ago,

and was able to attract over 100, 000 fans in less than 20 days. At present, he has over 500, 000 fans on the social networking site. His current Facebook fan base number places him second only to that of United States, President Obama among other world Presidents on Facebook.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

According to Brooks (1970) as cited by Ohaja (2003) "knowledge does not exist in a vacuum. In every discipline there is a body of theories that provides the explanation for observable phenomena in that field." This study draws its theoretical framework from the following theories:

Agenda-Setting Theory

The Agenda-setting theory propounded by Maxwell Mc Combs and Donald Shaw states that the media sets the agenda for public discourse by determining which events/issues are put in the front burner at any given time. The media determine which issues are regarded as important or not for the populace. As Ben Cohen (1963) once stated "The press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about".

It is no coincidence that most times, issues/topics being discussed in offices, markets, schools and other public places are news headlines, commentaries, editorials and other editorial matters carried by the mass media that morning. This study shall .examine if the social media *Facebook* and *Twitter* are veritable tools that can be used to set agenda for Nigerian youths, especially as regards awakening their political consciousness for them to participate in the electoral process.

Diffusion of Innovations Theory

According to Rogers (1995): 'Diffusion is the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over a period of time among the members of a social

system. An innovation is an idea, practice or object that is perceived to be new by an individual or other unit of adoption. Communication is a process in which participants create and share information with one another to reach a mutual understanding'.

The diffusion of innovations theory centers on how an idea/practice/opinion disseminated to a given set of people may be adopted or rejected due to several factors. Rogers (ibid) posited "Diffusion of innovation theory predicts that media as well as interpersonal contacts provide information and influence opinion judgment." This leads to the related **Two-Step flow** theory which describes how some people with exposure to media message or information relay same to other people who have less exposure to the mass media. It was observed that the people exposed to the media messages (known as opinion leaders) were not only relaying the information to their "followers" but were also shaping and interpreting such information.

In this study's context electoral participation campaign messages IS diffused by say, National Orientation agency (NOA), through *Facebook/Twitter*. Youths of eligible age who see this message may then relay such messages to their friends, colleagues, neighbours, parents, etc who may not have *Facebook/Twitter* accounts.

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CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

According to Dominick (2011) "when it comes to gathering information about media effects, scientists have typically used two main methods: survey and experiments". Ohaja (2003) states that "generally speaking, whenever the major source of primary data for a study would be the views of members of the public or any particular group; a survey would be called for."

This study utilised the survey method using a questionnaire to solicit responses from eligible Nigerian youths resident in the south eastern states and who have *Facebook* and/or *Twitter* accounts on their voting behaviour. Oral interview was also used to solicit more indepth information from a select few that were purposively chosen. As a result of the nature of the research topic copies of the questionnaire were distributed to Nigerians between the voting age of 18years to 35years that have *Facebook* or *Twitter* accounts. The copies of the questionnaires were distributed in and around cybercafés located in the five state owned universities in the south east. This was done to increase the chances of getting young Nigerians that have *Facebook* and/or *Twitter* accounts.

3.2 Population of Study

Castillo (2009) defines a research population as "a large, well defined allocation of individuals or objects known to have similar characteristics. All individuals or objects within a certain population usually have a common binding characteristic or trait." Chukwuemeka (2002) defines population as "all animate and inanimate things of which the study is flowed."

The population studied for this research were Nigerian youths resident in south east Nigeria. The south east geo-political zone which comprises Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and

Imo state has a population of 16, 395, 560 according to the 2006 Census Report released by the National Population Commission (NPC).

Numbers are hard to pin down as regards population of youths in the country. However, a former minister of finance, Dr Okonjo Iweala citing from the 2006 census gave a hint that "about 70 percent of Nigeria population of 150 million was under 30years old." (Kolapo, 2010).

3.3 Sample Size

According to Winmmer and Dominick (2006) "in many situation an entire population cannot be examined due to time and resource constraints í the usual procedure in these instances is to take a sample from the population." They went further to define a sample as "a subset of the population that is representative of the entire population."

The sample size for this research is 400. This was derived using the online Australian calculator as provided by the National Statistical Service (NSS) of Australia. The calculator provides a simplified formula for calculating sample sizes.

Confidence level- 95%

Population size- 16,395,560

Proportion- 0.5

Confidence interval- 0.05

The full extract of the Australian calculator is as shown bellow:

To determine sample size:

Confidence Level:	95%
Population Size:	16,395,560
Proportion:	0.5
Confidence Interval:	0.049
Upper:	0.54900
Lower:	0.45100
Standard Error:	0.02500
Relative Standard Error:	5.00
Sample Size:	400

Deriving from the output of the Australian calculator, a sample size of four hundred respondents was selected to represent the population of this study.

3.4 Sampling Techniques

The online version of Merriam- Webster dictionary defines sampling as “the act, process, or technique of selecting a representative part of a population for the purpose of determining parameters or characteristics of the whole population.” Wimmer and Dominick (ibid) stressed the importance of a sample that is representative by noting that “a sample that is not representative of population, regardless of its size is inadequate for testing purpose because the results cannot be generalized to the population from which it was drawn.”

This study utilised the purposive sampling method otherwise known as judgmental sampling. Ohaja (2003) averred that “purposive sampling is used when a researcher needs certain characteristics in his sampling elements and he wants to ensure that those chosen have those

characteristics. He therefore eliminates other members of the population and works with those that meet his requirements.

The three salient criteria for electing individuals as part of the sample element are:

- i. The individual must be a Nigerian resident in South East Nigeria.
- ii. He/she must be between 18years to 35years of age.
- iii. He/she must have a *Facebook* or *Twitter* account

In essence, non-Nigerians were not polled as they are legally not qualified to vote in Nigeria. Nigerians below the franchise age of 18 years were eliminated for the same reason. Even though Nigerians over the age of 35 years are legally qualified to vote, they were however not polled as 'youths' has been operationalised as those between 18-35 years for the purpose of this study. Nigerians between 18- 35 years who do not have a *Facebook* or *Twitter* account were also not polled since the objective of the study is to examine the influence of social media on their voting behaviour. In order to get sampling elements that passes the three criteria, purposive sampling seems to be the most suitable of the sampling methods.

Sampling procedure

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents Across five south eastern state

States in the South East	Selected Universities	Number of Questionnaire
Abia	Abia State University, Uturu	400/5 = 80
Anambra	Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam	400/5 = 80
Ebonyi	Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki	400/5 = 80
Enugu	Enugu State University, Agbani	400/5 = 80
Imo	Imo State University, Owerri	400/5 = 80
Total		400

3.5 Instruments for Data Collection

Chukwuemeka (2002) states that "All data collected for a specific purpose by the researcher from the field are known as primary data. The most important methods of collecting primary data are: questionnaire, interview, observation." He went on to define questionnaire as "a data gathering instrument in which respondents are given standard or uniformed questions."

This study utilised the questionnaire instrument and interview to solicit responses from the research sample elements on their social media usage and their voting behavior.

The questionnaire is suitable since most of the sample elements were students, or at least literate individuals for them to have *Facebook* or *Twitter* accounts.

The questionnaire proper is preceded by an introductory letter explaining the purpose of the questionnaire and assuring the respondents that their responses will be kept confidential, anonymous and used strictly for academic purposes. The questionnaire is divided into two sections. Section A contains three questions concerning the demographics of the respondents. Section B contains additional fifteen questions which are related to the research objectives. The questions were set in simple conversational language that is easy to understand.

The copies of the questionnaire were administered directly and collected back after completion by the respondents on the spot. Oral interview was also used to get more indepth information from some respondents, the interview schedule had five standardised questions in all.

3.6 Validity of the Instruments

The validity of the research instruments were checked using the face validity technique by the research supervisor. This ensured that the research instruments were appropriate in

investigating the subject of research. The questions in the research instruments were checked for ambiguity and clarity.

3.7 Reliability of the Instruments

Reliability refers to the consistency between independent measurements of the same phenomenon the accuracy of precision of measuring instruments (Asika 2006: 73). In testing for reliability of the research instruments, a pilot study was conducted using twenty questionnaires. Out of the twenty questionnaires only three were not properly filled while the remaining seventeen questionnaires were properly filled.

Guttman scale of coefficient was adopted to establish the reliability of the instrument used.

$$1 - \frac{3}{20}$$

$$\frac{3}{1 - 20}$$

$$\frac{3}{20} = 0.15$$

$$1 - 0.15 = 0.85$$

Therefore, the reliability test shows that the Pilot test for the instrument was reliable, given the 85% consistency in the test.

3.8 Method of Data Collection

The researcher recruited and trained four volunteers to assist in the distribution and collection of copies of the questionnaire in the five south eastern states. The copies were administered by hand and collected on the spot to increase the chances of returning the answered copies of the questionnaire.

3.9 Method of Data Analysis

Ali (2006) describes statistics as "the appropriate treatment or analysis of quantitative measures or values obtained from observing or testing a sample."

For the purpose of this study, descriptive statistics like percentages, tables, frequencies and charts were used to analyse and present the findings.

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CHAPTER FOUR

Data Presentation and Analysis

4.1 Data Presentation

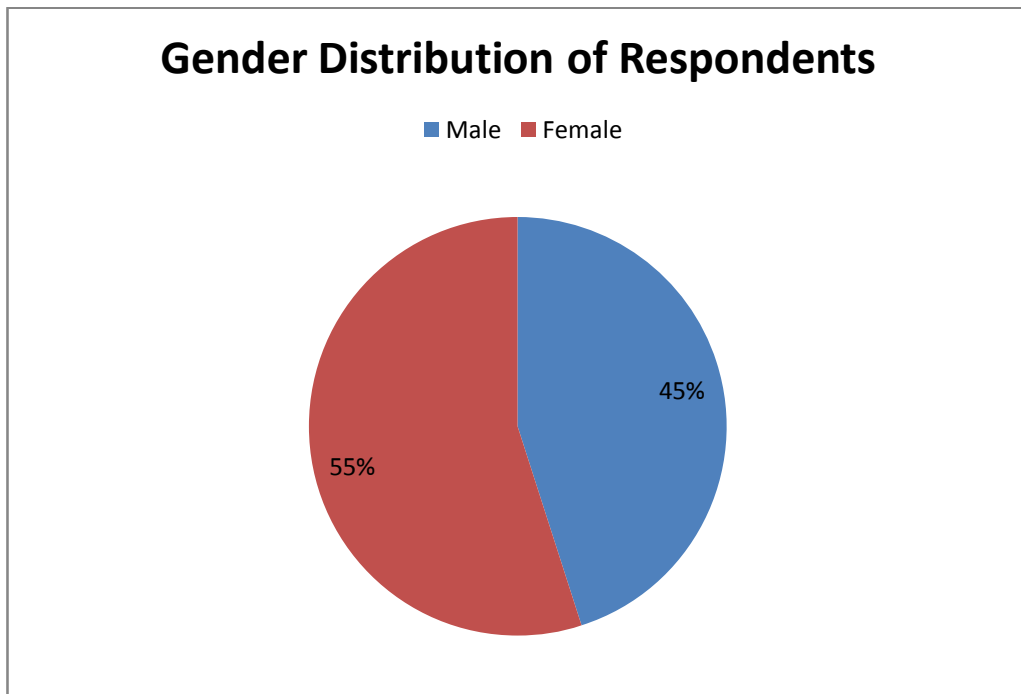
This chapter deals with the presentation of data gathered from the fieldwork using the questionnaire as the primary research instrument and interviews as a secondary instrument. A total of four hundred (400) copies of the questionnaire were distributed to Nigerian Youths resident in the south east of the country. About three hundred and eighty six (386) copies of the questionnaire were returned fully answered correctly, while nine copies were rejected due to the copies were rejected for not being completely answered while two were rejected as the respondents reported being non-Nigerian.

However, the 386 copies of the questionnaire returned fully completed out of the 400 distributed represents a response rate of 96.5 percent which is very good.

The data is presented by means of tables, frequency, percentages and charts.

Table 2: Gender Distribution of Respondents

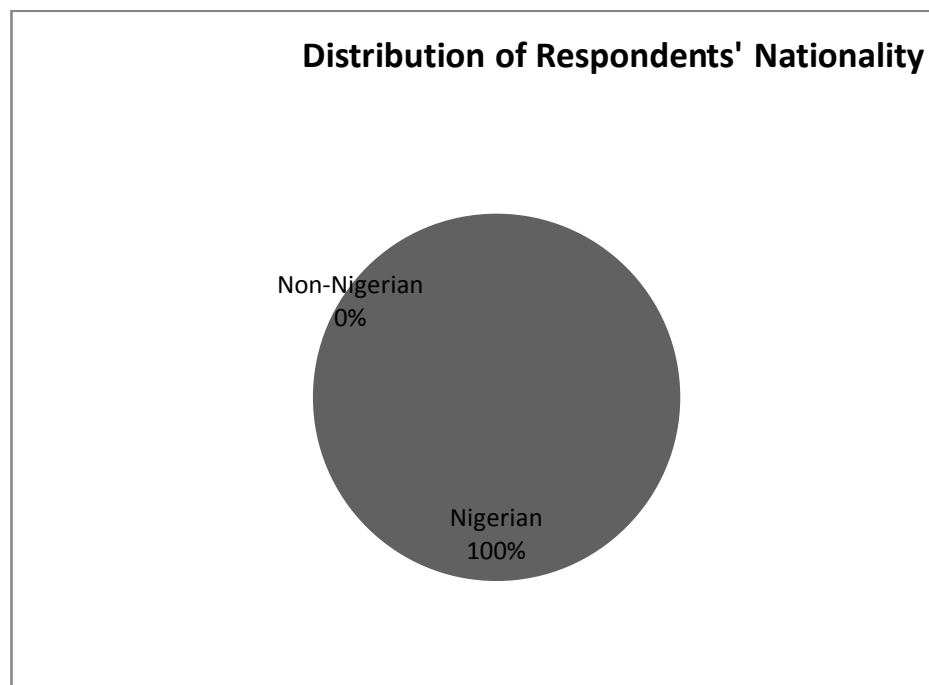
Variable	No	Percentage
Male	174	45.1%
Female	212	54.9%
Total	386	100%

**Figure 1: Gender Distribution of Respondents**

From the data obtained in Table 2 and Figure 1 above, majority of the respondents were female making up almost 55 percent (212) of the total sample size. The male folk made up about 45 percent (174) of the total respondents.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents' Nationality

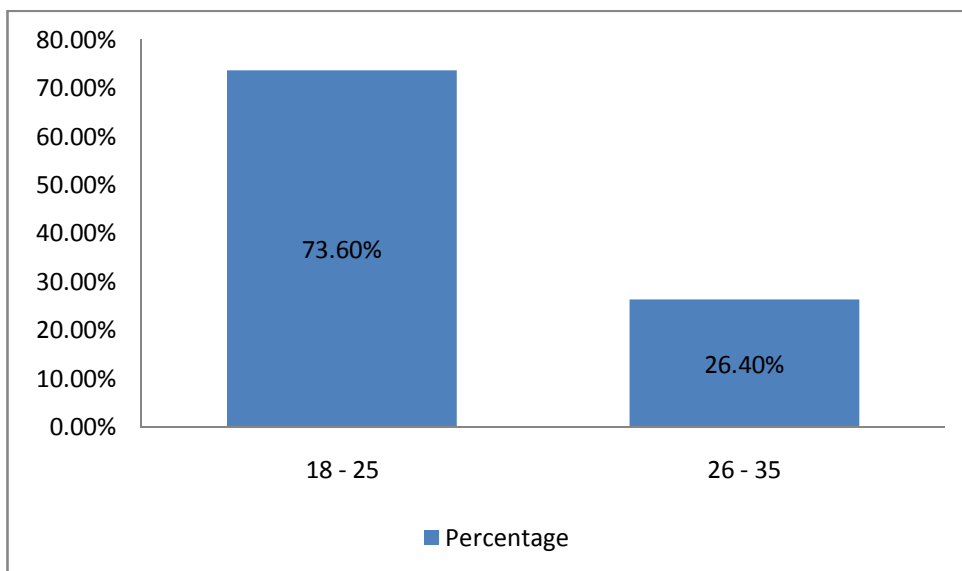
Variable	No	Percentage
Nigerian	386	100%
Non-Nigerian	-	-
Total	386	100%

**Figure 2: Distribution of Respondents' Nationality**

From the Table 3 and Figure 2 above, all the 386 respondents reported being Nigerians.

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents according to Age Brackets

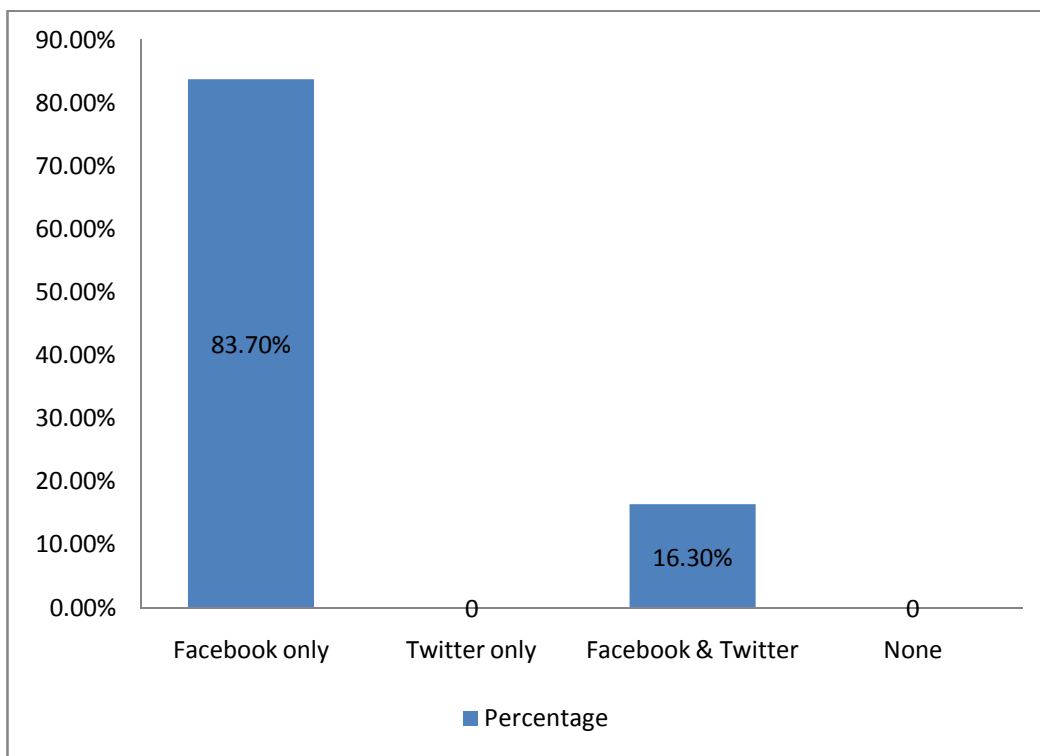
Variable	No	Percentage
18 ó 25	284	73.6%
26 ó 35	102	26.4%
Total	386	100%

**Figure 3: Distribution of Respondents according to Age Brackets**

From the data in Table 4 and Figure 3 above, an overwhelming majority of the respondents, 284, representing 73.6% of the total sample size falls within the age bracket of 18 ó 25 years. While the remaining 102 respondents, representing 26.4 percent of the sample size fall within the age range of 26 ó 35 years.

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents' Possession of *Facebook* and /or *Twitter* Accounts

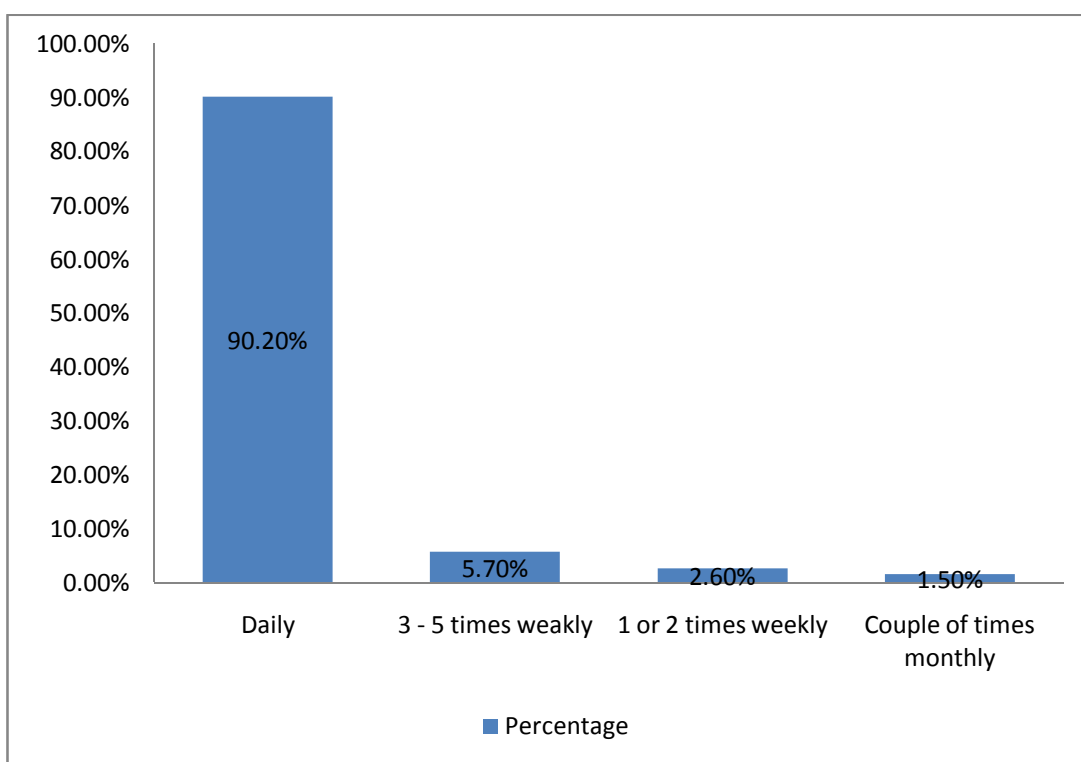
Variable	No	Percentage
<i>Facebook</i> only	323	83.7%
<i>Twitter</i> only	-	-
<i>Facebook & Twitter</i>	63	16.3%
None	-	-
Total	386	100%

**Figure 4:** Distribution of Respondents' Possession of *Facebook* and/or *Twitter* Accounts

From the data contained in Table 5 and Figure 4 above, 323 respondents (83.7%) have *Facebook* accounts only, while 63 respondents (16.3%) reported have both *Facebook* and *Twitter* accounts. No one reported having a *Twitter* account only, while everyone of the respondents has a *Facebook* account.

Table 6: Frequency of *Facebook/Twitter* usage by Respondents

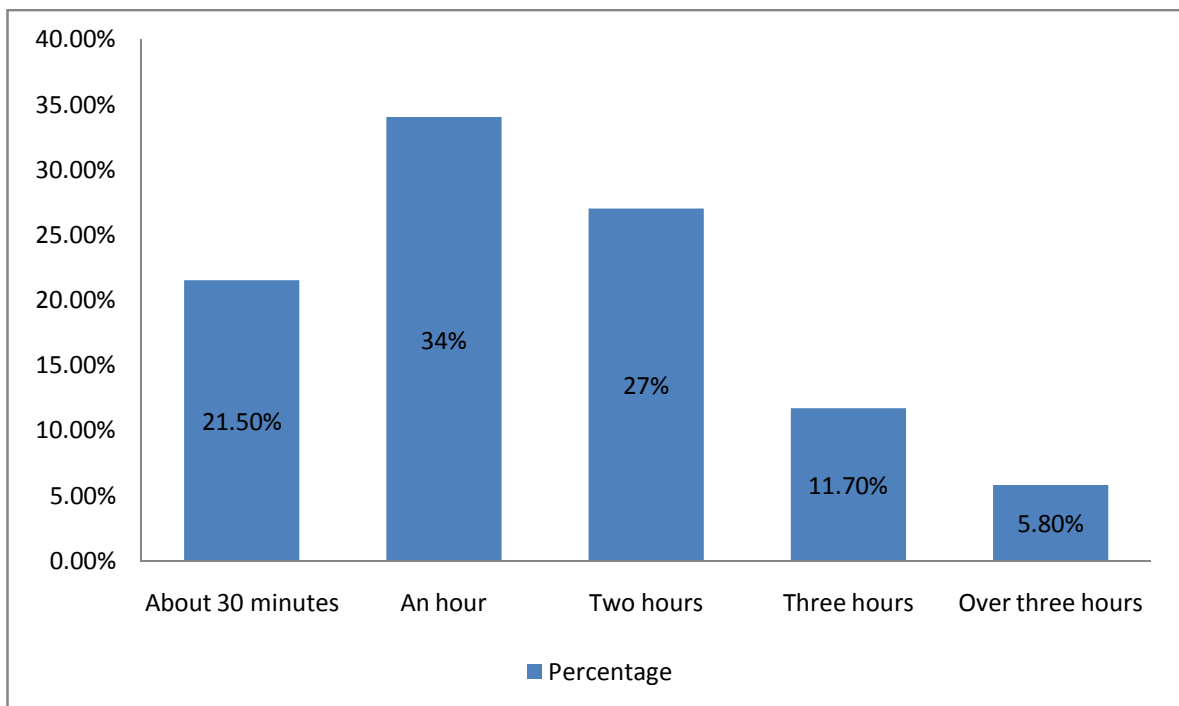
Variable	No	Percentage
Daily	348	90.2%
3 ó 5 times weekly	22	5.7%
1 or 2 times weekly	10	2.6%
Couple of times monthly	6	1.5%
Total	386	100%

**Figure 5: Frequency of *Facebook/Twitter* usage by Respondents**

According to findings presented in Table 6 and Figure 5, a very high percentage of 90.2%, representing 348 respondents reported using *Facebook* or *Twitter* daily, while twenty-two respondents (5.7%) reported using same 3 ó 5 times weekly. Ten respondents (2.6%) reported using social media once or twice weekly while only six respondents (1.5%) reported using same a couple of times monthly.

Table 7: Duration of time spent on *Facebook/Twitter* Daily

Variables	No	Percentage
About 30 minutes	83	21.5%
An hour	131	34%
Two hours	104	27%
Three hours	45	11.7%
Over three hours	23	5.8%
Total	386	100%

**Figure 6: Duration of time spent on *Facebook/Twitter* Daily**

Data contained in Table 7 and Figure 6 shows duration of time spent by the respondents on *Facebook/Twitter* daily. About 83 respondents (21.5%) reported spending about thirty minutes accessing their social media accounts daily, while 131 respondents (35%) reported accessing theirs for like an hour daily. Another 104 respondents (27%) reported spending approximately two hours daily on their social media account, while 45 respondents (11.7%) reported three

hours. Only 23 respondents (5.8%) reported spending over three hours daily on their social media accounts.

Table 8: Devices Utilised for accessing *Facebook/Twitter*

Variable	No	Percentage
Laptop	24	6.3%
Desktop	8	1.9%
Smartphone	103	26.7%
Other Mobile phones	184	47.7%
Tablet	67	17.4%
Total	386	100%

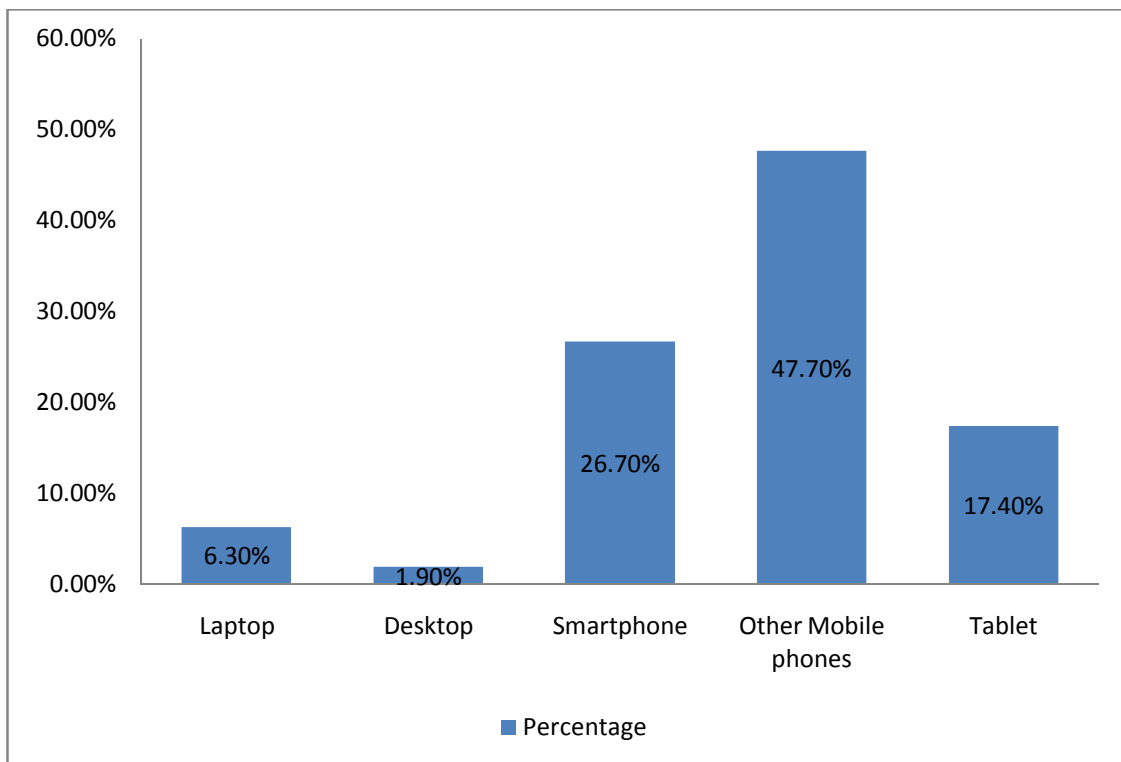


Figure 7: Devices Utilised for accessing *Facebook/Twitter*

The data contained in Table 8 and Figure 7 shows the distribution of devices that respondents use to access their social media accounts. It shows 24 respondents (6.3%) reporting that they access social media via laptop computers while eight respondents (1.9%) stated they use desktop

computers. Some 103 respondents (26.7%) and another 184 respondents (47.7%) report using Smartphone and other types of mobile phones respectively to access their social media. A sizeable number of 67 respondents (17.4%) report using tablet devices to access *Facebook/Twitter*.

Table 9: Major Information Source on 2015 Presidential Election

Variable	No	Percentage
Television	84	21.6%
Radio	158	41%
Social media	98	25.4%
Newspaper/magazines	46	12%
Total	386	100%

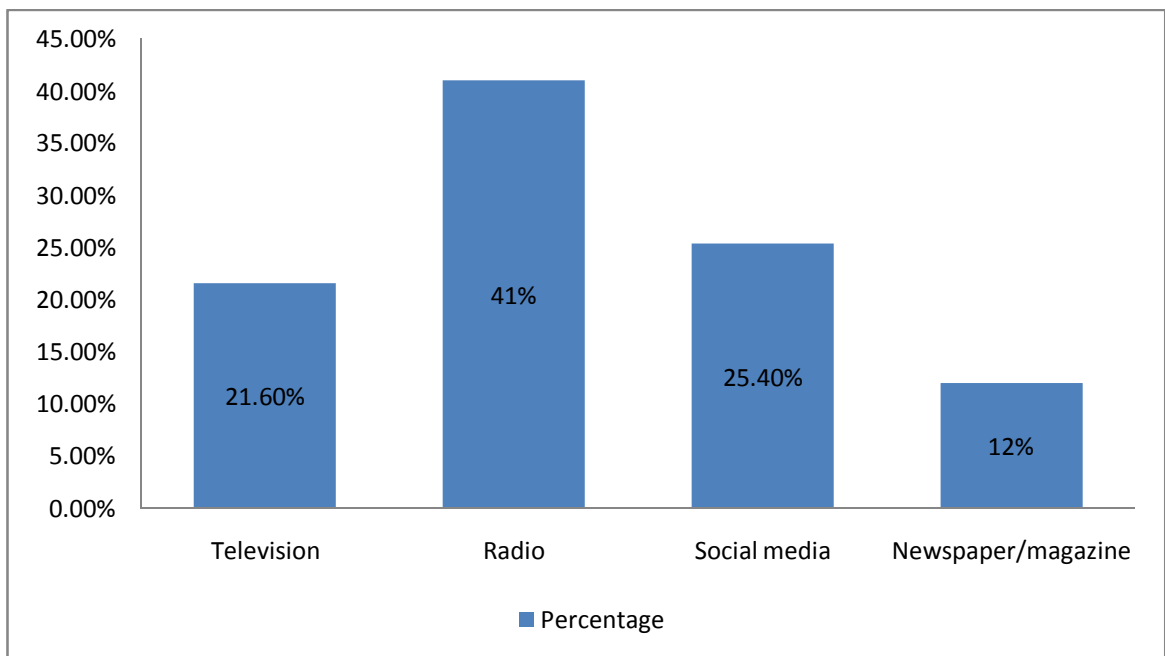


Figure 8: Major Information Source on 2015 Presidential Election

Table 9 and Figure 8 above; contain data pertaining to the respondents' major source of information on the 2015 presidential election. About 84 respondents (21.6%) stated television

was their primary source, while 158 respondents (41%) reported radio as their major source of information. Another 98 respondents (25.4%) choose social media as their primary source of information while 46 persons (12%) declared that newspapers/magazines were their primary source of information on the 2015 presidential election.

Table 10: Distribution of Respondents' exposure to voters' registration exercise messages on social media

Variable	No	Percentage
Yes	339	87.9%
No	19	4.8%
Can't recall	28	7.3%
Total	386	100%

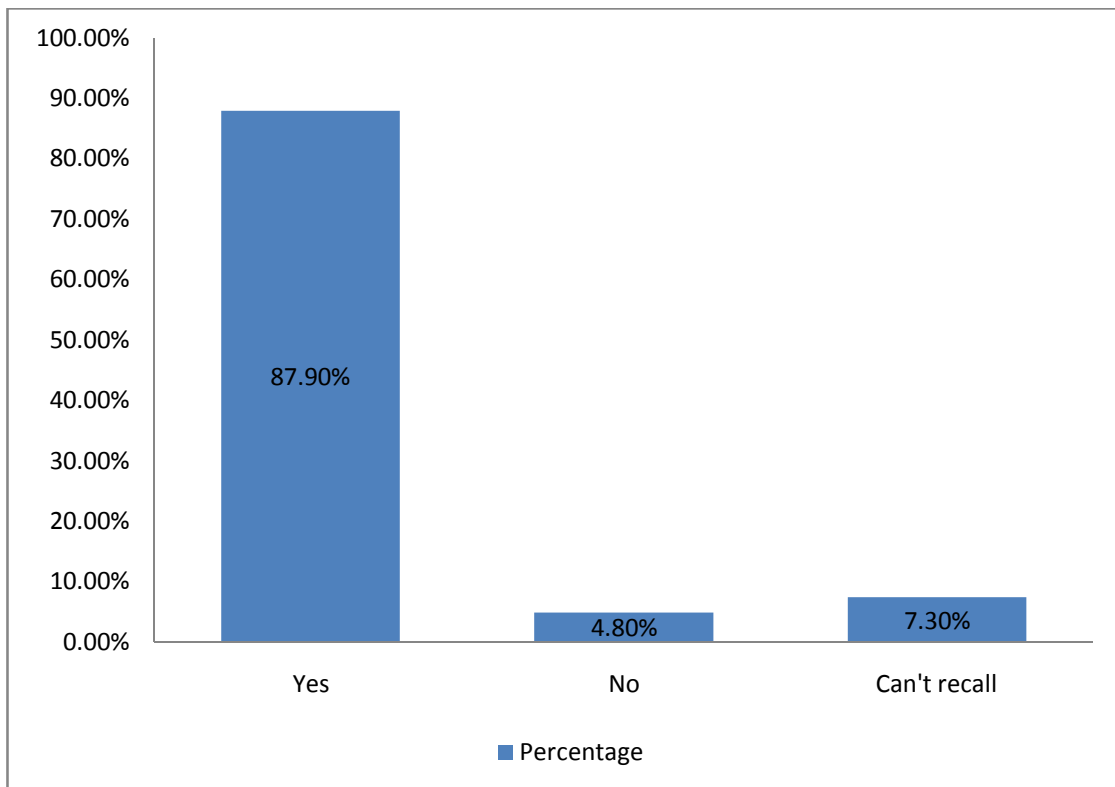


Figure 9: Distribution of Respondents' exposure to voters' registration exercise messages on social media

Table 10 and Figure 9 above contain respondents response to a question posed to them asking if they saw any messages on social media asking them to participate in voters registration exercise. A very large number (339, representing 87.9%) responded in the positive confirming that they indeed saw messages of such. Only 19 respondents (4.8%) reported not seeing such message while 28 respondents (7.3%) cannot recall if they did or not.

Table 11: Distribution of respondents' response to calls to participate in voters' registration exercise

Variable	No	Percentage
Yes I registered	208	53.9%
No I didn't	178	46.1%
Total	386	100%

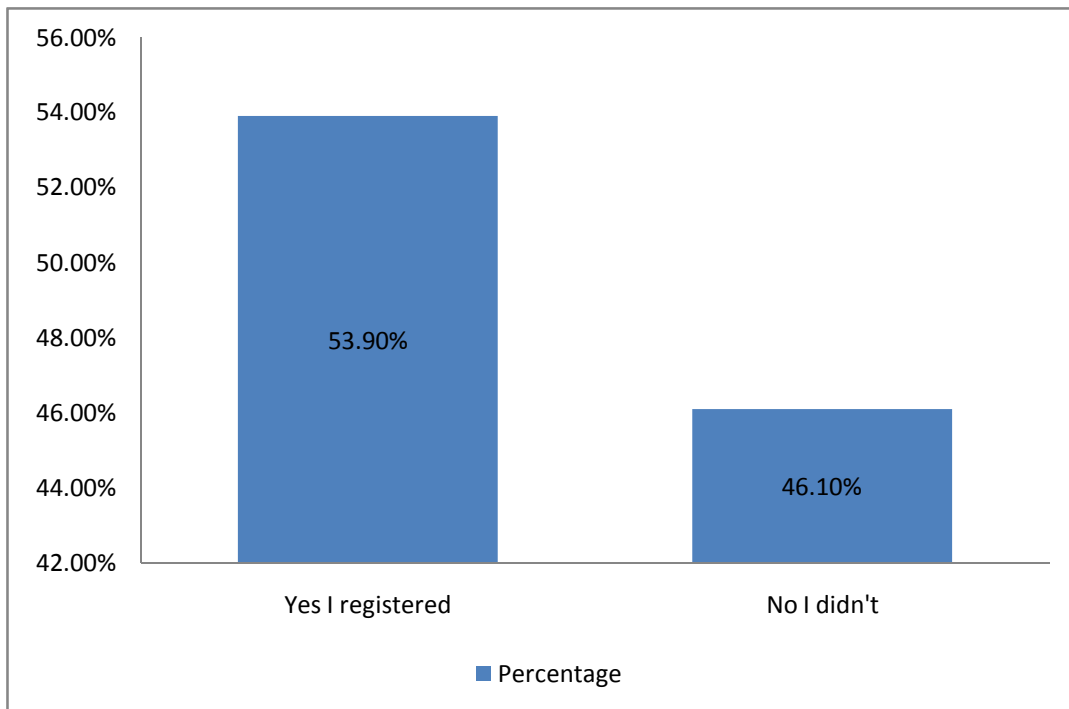


Figure 10: Distribution of Respondents' response to calls to participate in voters' registration exercise

The data in Table 11 and Figure 10 shows the response of respondents to a question asking them if they actually registered to vote after seeing messages on social media urging to about 53.9% (208 respondents) affirmed that they registered during the voters registration exercise, while 178 respondents (46.1%) reported not registering.

Table 12: Respondents' exposure to messages on social media asking them to ensure they voted.

Variable	No	Percentage
Yes	374	96.9%
No	4	1%
Can't recall	8	2.1%
Total	386	100%

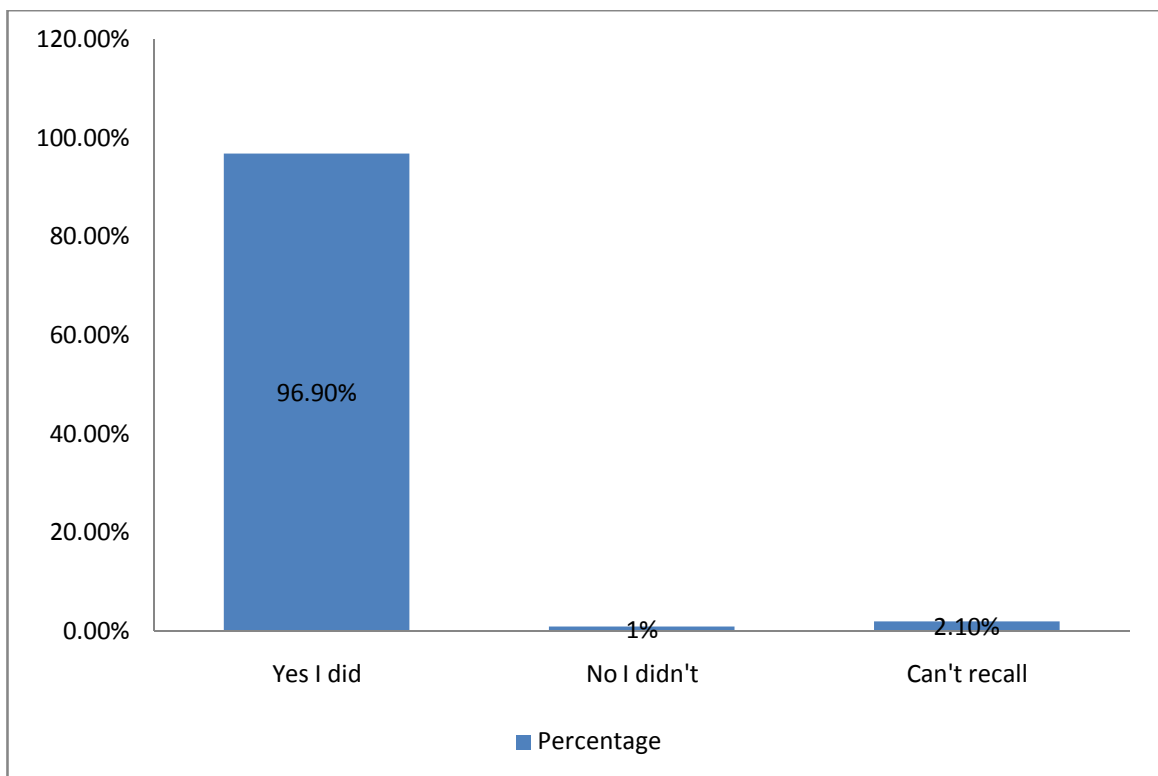


Figure 11: Did you see any message(s) on social media asking you to ensure you vote during 2015 election?

The data contained in Table 12 and Figure 11 above shows the responses of respondents to a question asking if they saw any message(s) on social media asking them to vote during the 2015 election. The majority of the respondents ó 374 ó representing about 96.9% of the sample size affirmed seeing such messages on social media while only 4 respondents (1%) and another 8 respondents (2.1%) stated that they did not see messages and òcouldn't recallö respectively.

Table 13: Respondents' voting pattern during 2015 presidential election

Variable	No	Percentage
Yes I did	143	37.1%
No I didn't	243	62.9%
Total	386	100%

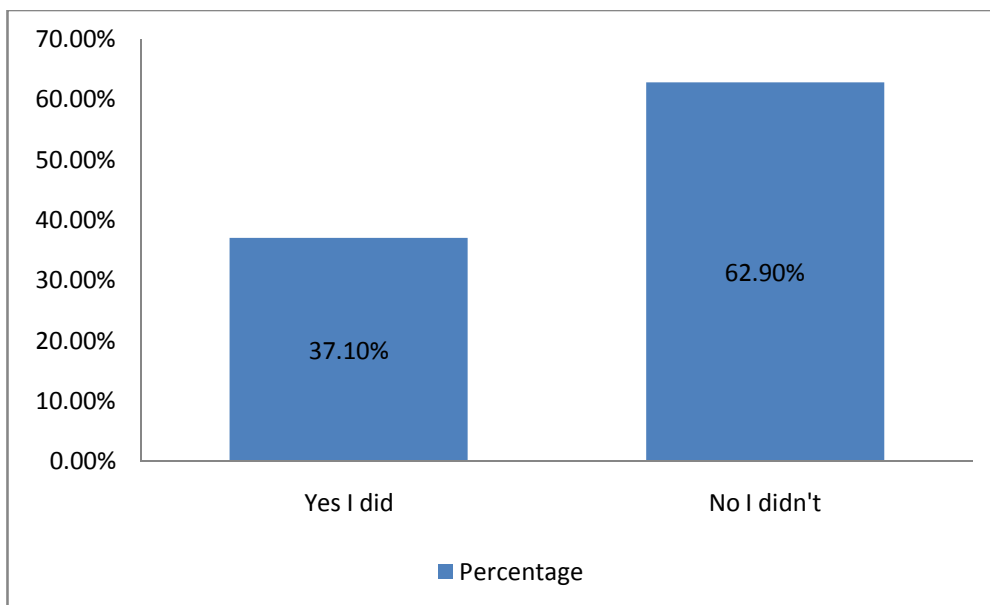
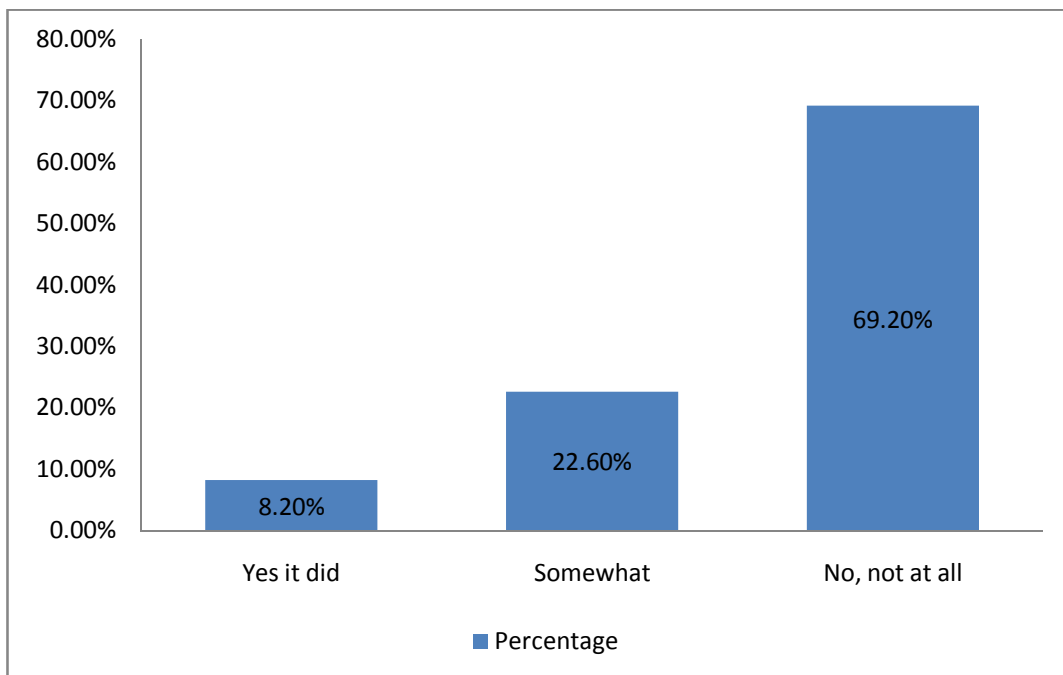


Figure 12: Did you vote during 2015 presidential election?

According to the data in Table 13 and Figure 12, in response to a question asking if the respondents voted during the 2015 presidential election, only 143 respondents (37.1%) stated that they voted while 243 respondents (62.9% replied in the negative.

Table 14: Social media's influence on respondents' voting preferences

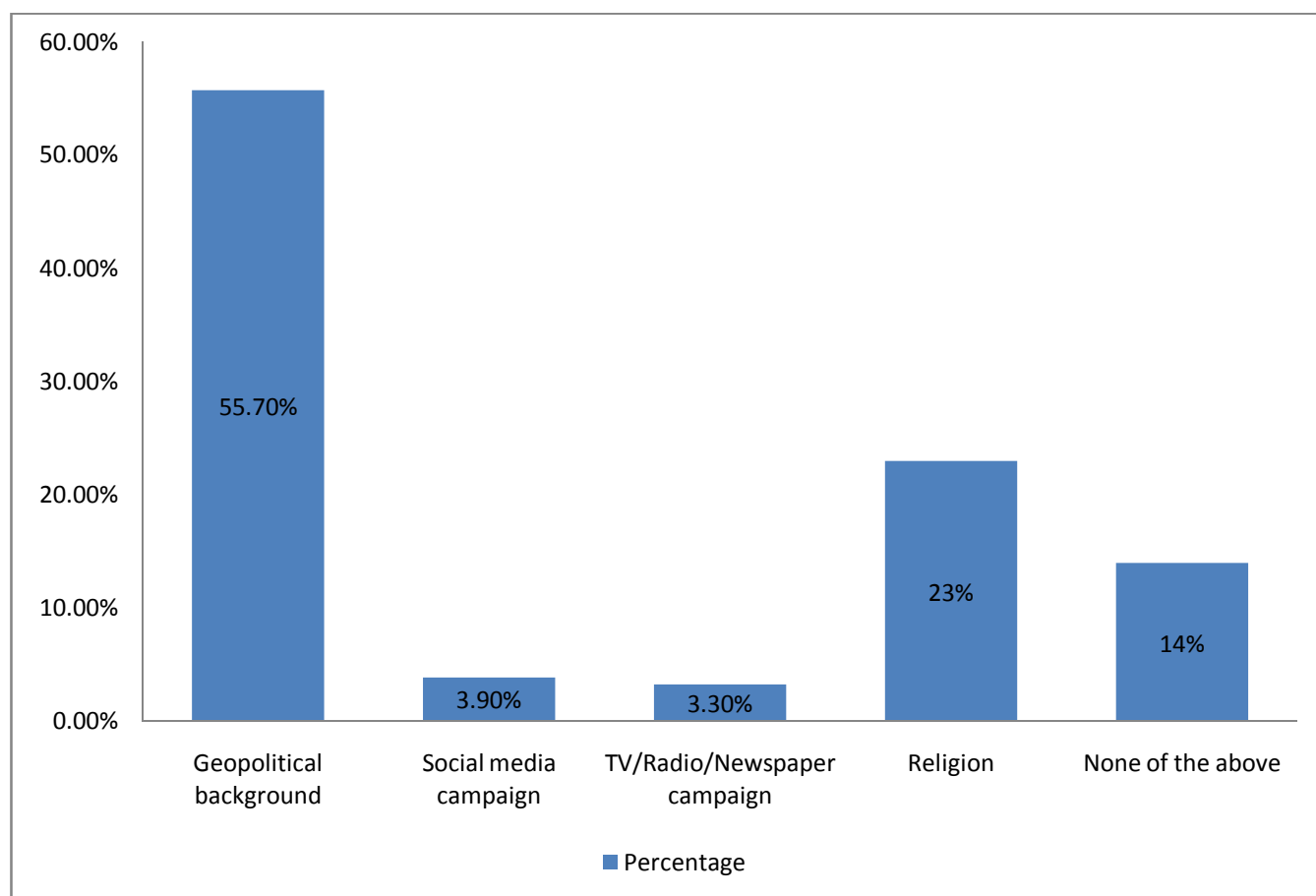
Variable	No	Percentage
Yes it did	54	8.2%
Somewhat	87	22.6%
No, not at all	267	69.2%
Total	386	100%

**Figure 13: Social media's influence on respondents' voting preferences**

The data contained in Table 14 and Figure 13 outlines the distribution of the respondents' responses to a question asking if political messages on *Facebook/Twitter* influenced their voting preference at the 2015 Presidential election. Only 54 respondents (8.2%) answered in the positive, while 87 respondents (22.6%) said "somewhat". However, 267 respondents (69.2%) reported that social media lobbying didn't influence their voting preference at all.

Table 15: Influence behind respondents voting preferences

Variable	No	Percentage
Geopolitical background	215	55.7%
Social media campaign	15	3.9%
TV/Radio/Newspaper campaign	13	3.3%
Religion	89	23.1%
None of the above	54	14%
Total	386	100%

**Figure 14:** Influence behind respondents voting preferences

Data contained in Table 15 and Figure 14 shows the distribution of the influences that motivated the respondents to vote for a particular candidate. The majority ó 215 ó respondents representing

55.7% - cited the geopolitical background of their preferred candidate as the major factor why they voted him. Only 15 respondents (3.9%) mentioned social media campaign as the factor behind their choice at the polls. Another 13 respondents (3.3%) stated mass media (Radio, TV, Press) campaigns influenced their electoral choice. Religion was another major factor as 89 respondents (23.1%) mentioned it as the influence behind their electoral choice. The remaining 54 respondents (14%) asserted that none of the aforementioned factors influenced their choice.

Table 16: Respondents' voting preference for candidate who campaigns on social media

Variable	No	Percentage
Yes I would	126	32.8%
No, doesn't matter	218	56.5%
Maybe	42	10.7%
Total	386	100%

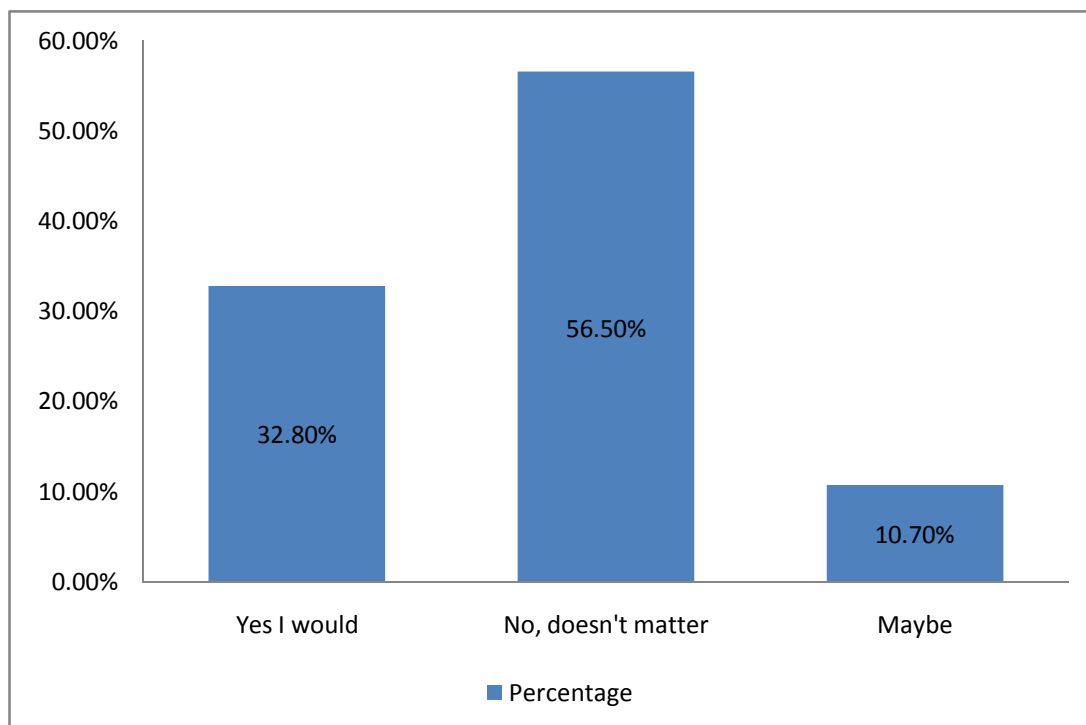


Figure 15: Would you vote for a candidate who campaigns on *Facebook/Twitter* rather than one who does not?

Table 16 and Figure 15 above contains data of respondents' responses to a question asking if they would vote for a candidate who campaigns on social media rather than one who does not. About 32.8% of the respondents (126) replied in the affirmative, while 218 others (56.5%) replied in the negative saying it does not matter. The remaining 42 respondents (10.7%) replied 'maybe'.

Table 17: Perception of Facebook/Twitter as credible sources of information

Variable	No	Percentage
Yes, they are	245	63.5%
No, they are not	119	30.9%
Don't know for sure	22	5.6%
Total	386	100%

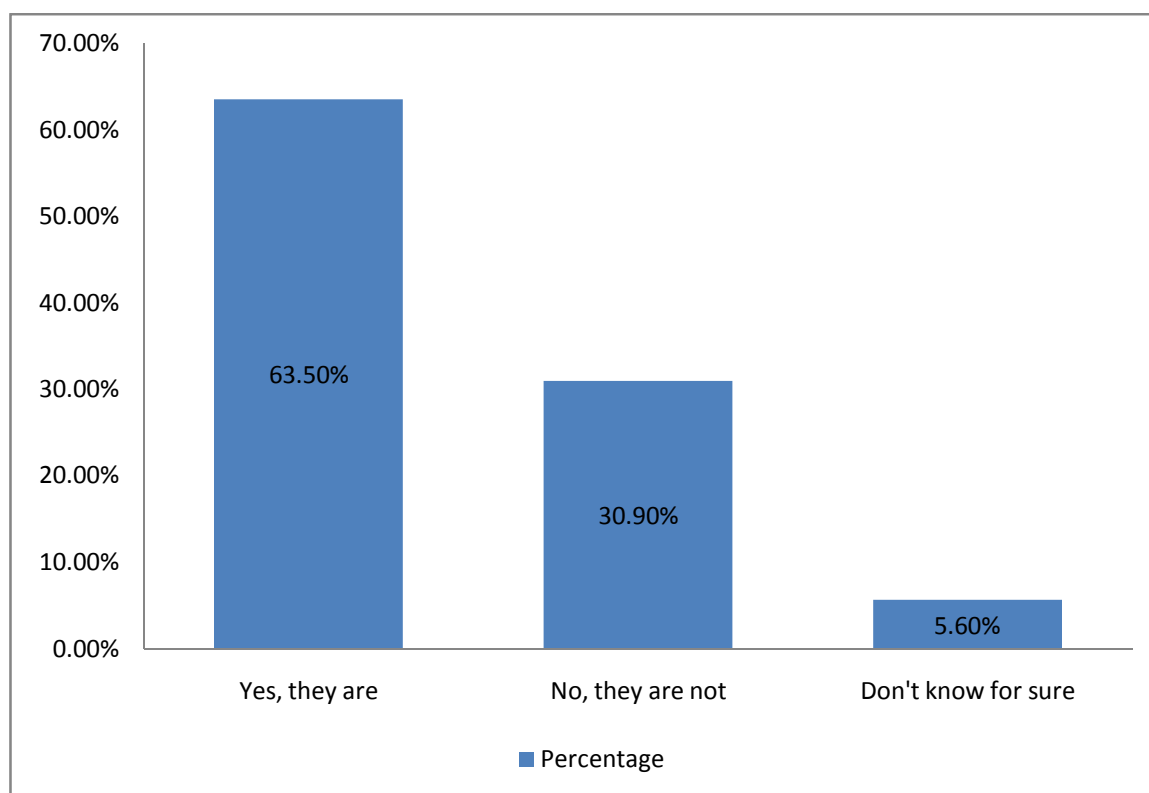


Figure 16: Do you think Facebook/Twitter are credible source of information?

Table 17 and Figure 16 details the responses of respondents to a question asking them if *Facebook/Twitter* are credible sources of information. About 63.5% (245) of the respondents think they are, while about 30.9% (119) think they are not. The remaining 5.6% (22) replied that they did not know for sure.

Table 18: Perception of social media's credibility

Variable	No	Percentage
To a large extent	133	34.5%
Moderate extent	112	29.1%
Low extent	106	27.5%
I can't say	35	8.9%
Total	386	100%

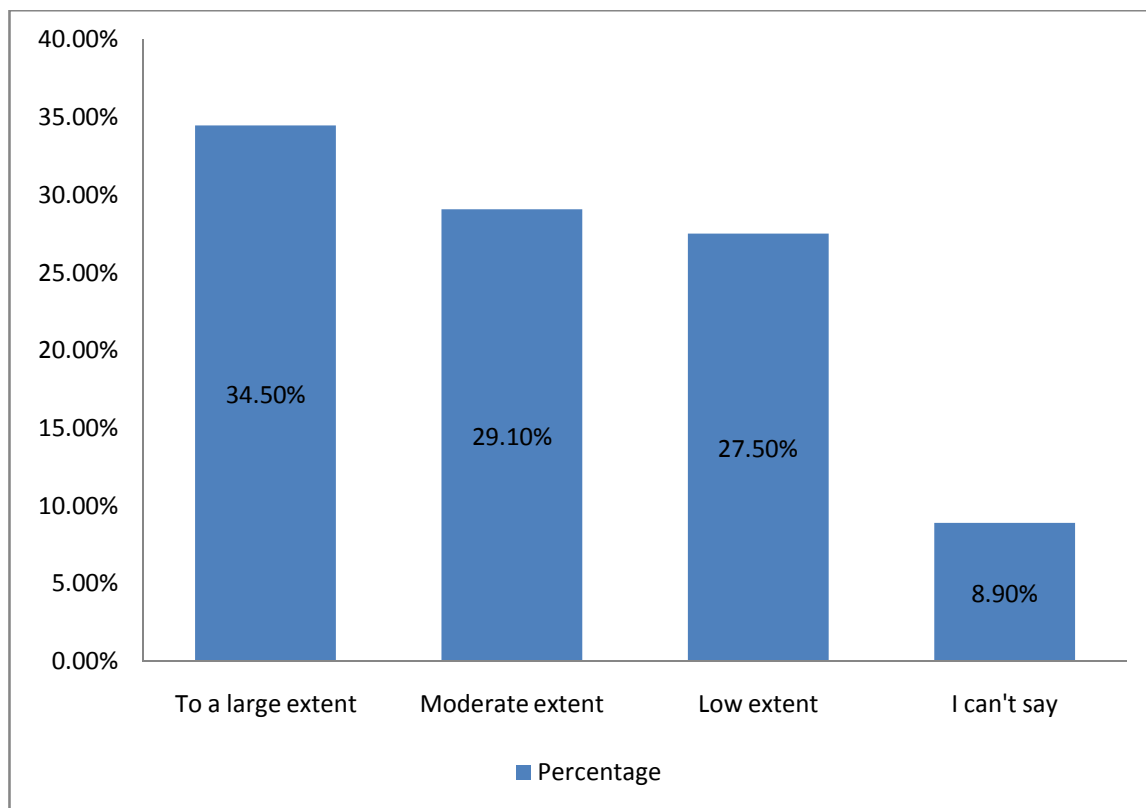


Figure 17: To what degree do you rate the credibility of social media?

According to the data in Table 18 and Figure 17, about 34.5% of the respondents (133) rate the credibility level of social media as "to a large extent" while 29.1% of them rate it "moderate extent". About 27.5% rate the social media credibility as low, while 8.9% (35) cannot say for sure.

Table 19: Distribution of Respondents' Opinions on Social Media Campaign

Variable	No	Percentage
Positive	212	55%
Neutral	79	20.2%
Negative	95	24.8%
Total	386	100%

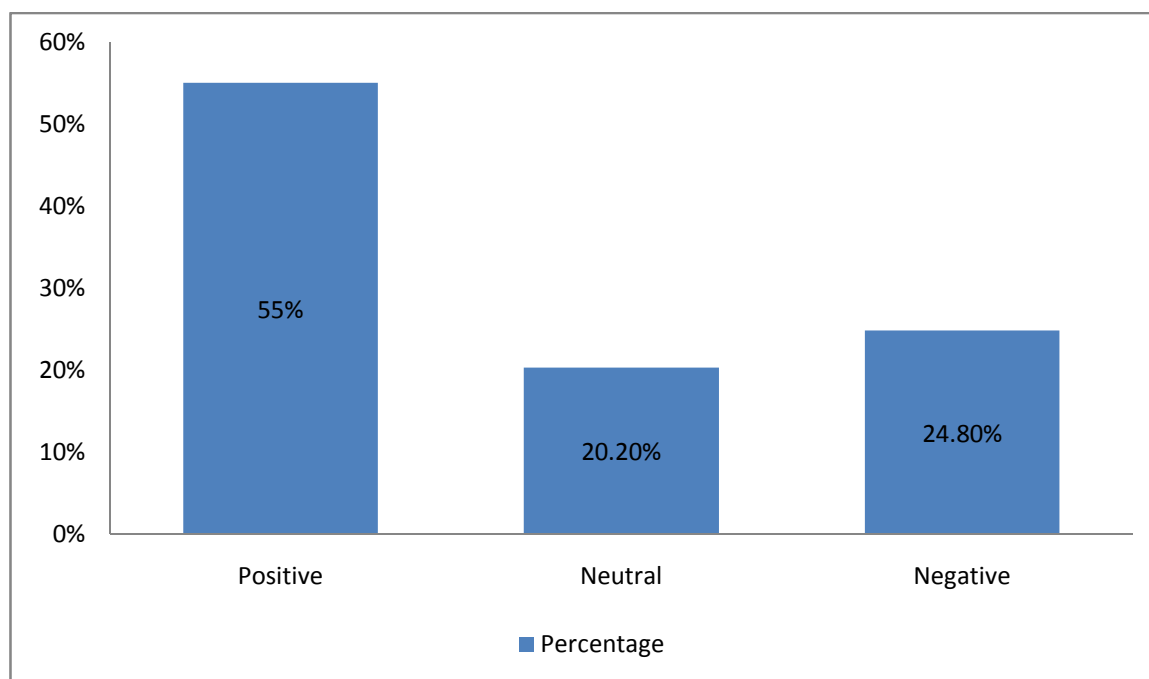


Figure 18: Distribution of Respondents' Opinions on Social Media Campaign

The last question on the questionnaire is an open ended question asking the respondents their opinions on the concept of canvassing for votes on social media. After reading through all the responses, they were classified as positive, neutral or negative. The results is what is tabulated in

Table 19 and Figure 18 above. The majority of respondents think campaigning on social media makes sense as it is cheap and has a very wide reach. About 20.2% were in different as they say they are not interested in politics anyway. The remaining 24.8% think campaigning on social media invades their privacy causes unnecessary arguments which sometimes lead to quarrels.

Qualitative data presentation

In addition to the use of questionnaire as the primary data gathering instruments, a short standardize - type of interview was conducted on the first five respondents to completely fill their questionnaire in all the five states. In essence, twenty five respondents participated in this interview and they were asked the following five questions:

Question 1: Which medium was your major source of information on the 2015 presidential elections and why did you choose it over other types of media?

When question 1 was put to the respondents, the majority of them reported radio as their major source of information on the 2015 presidential election. This finding tallied with that garnered from the questionnaire where about 41% of respondents mentioned radio as major source of information. Going through the respondents' responses to the second part of the questions, one recurring factor for the radio's popularity is its seeming ubiquity. Many of the respondents report having mobile phones that have radio applications embedded; as such they can easily use earphones to listen to radio programmes and music. Another respondent made an interesting comment that he did not consciously choose radio, rather radio chose him. He expatiated by stating that many of the taxis and shuttle buses have radios which they put on while commuting passengers to and from campus. He stated that he get exposed to radio messages at various joints on and off campus where he frequents to relax. Another respondent

says he does not even own a radio set but he gets information from his neighbour's radio set which is usually tuned loudly. Some others stated that they got exposed to electioneering campaigns on radio unintentionally. They say their primary intention of tuning on the radio is to listen to entertainment programmes and music, which are interspersed with political jingles at intervals.

Question 2: Did you participate in the electoral process in any form on social media during the 2015 presidential election? If yes how?

Sixteen out of twenty five respondents responded in the positive to question 2 above. Some of the respondents stated that they participated actively by campaigning for candidates on *Facebook/Twitter* and encouraging their followers to do the same. A couple of other respondents stated that they only participated in a non-partisan manner by liking or retweeting only neutral messages encouraging people to ensure they register as voters and also vote for candidates of their choices. Still others report following the official *Facebook/Twitter* accounts of political parties/candidates, making comments in response to official comments by the parties, retweeting such comments to other followers etc. Another respondent reported not being politically inclined but he used the photograph of a candidate as his profile picture on *Facebook* to show his support. Yet another report writing about an upcoming rally in his city on his *Facebook* status message.

Question 3: Did you register during the voters' registration exercise prior to 2015 presidential election? Why or why not?

Out of the 25 respondents, only seven respondents stated that they did not register to vote due to various reasons such as: lack of interest in politics, being too busy with academics,

massive crowds at the registration centres and not knowing the right registration centres to go to. Sifting through the responses of the 18 respondents who reported registering during the voters registration exercise, some of the respondents averred that they registered because it was their civic responsibilities. Some others stated they did just to show-off to their family and friends on social media. Still others mentioned they did so because their friends did. On the extreme side, a respondent mentioned she did because she heard rumors politicians will share money to registered voters.

Question 4: Did you vote in the 2015 presidential election? Why or why not?

Only eleven respondents reported that they voted saying they did so to exercise their civil right and demonstrate patriotism to their country. A respondent said he voted to show support for his candidate, while another stated she did just for the experience as this is her first time of voting. Yet another respondent responded she did because some of her friends did. The majority of the respondents (14 persons) reported that they did not vote due to such reasons as: not being registered voters, fear of violence, crowds at the polling units, lack of interest in politics. A respondent gave an interesting reason for not voting saying: "I don't bother to vote because I believe these politicians already know the results they will announce and any vote will not change anything". Another respondent share the same pessimism about the electoral umpire (INEC) which he believes is compromised and as such there is no point going to vote.

Question 5: Did political messages on social media influence your choice of candidate at the polls? Please explain why it did or did not.

Only nine respondents out of twenty five respondents averred that political messages on social media had an influence on their voting preference. A closer scrutiny of the reasons they

gave why it influenced their choices shows that such political messages only reinforced their pre-conceived or pre-determined choices. For example, a respondent stated that he belongs to the youth wing of a political party and therefore he is naturally inclined to be favourably disposed to messages from such party.

Another respondent averred that one of the presidential candidates share the same religion with him and also hails from the same geopolitical zone and as such he prefers him to the other and therefore is positively influenced to messages from such candidate. The remaining sixteen respondents affirm that they are not influenced by social media messages as regards their voting preferences. The majority of them reveal that they already made up their minds on who to vote for and no amount of social media could change their minds. Another respondent claim social media could be full of propaganda atimes so she could not allow herself to be influenced by such.

4.2 Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed some interesting facts based on the data gathered from both the questionnaires and interviews.

We shall proceed to discuss the study's findings in line with the objectives of the study and more specifically the research questions.

Research Question 1: To what extent did youths in south east Nigeria utilise social media in the 2015 presidential election?

To answer this research question responses to questions 4, 5, and 6 on the questionnaire were analysed. All the respondents (386) report having at least a *Facebook* account while 63

respondents had both a *Facebook* and *Twitter* accounts. In essence, *Facebook* is very popular among youths in south east Nigeria and *Twitter* to a lesser degree. This finding mirrors that of Ufuophu-biri (2013) that *facebook* is quite popular among Nigerian youths.

Over 90 percent of the respondents report accessing their social media accounts on *Facebook/Twitter* daily. In other words, the respondents are really quite active on social media platforms with about 82.5% (318 respondents) stating they spend between thirty minutes to two hours on social media daily. This shows youths in south east Nigeria are very familiar with social media and utilize same to a large extent. This finding is in tandem with *Facebook's* 2015 third quarter report which listed about 15 million Nigerians ó mostly youth ó as active users on its platform. Nigerian youths spending that much time on social media shows that they have come to depend so much on it for their various needs and it is likely to have an influence in them according to the tenets of the media system dependency theory developed by Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin Defleur in 1976.

Research Question 2: To what extent did social media influence youth participation in the 2015 presidential electoral process?

Responses to questions 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 were analysed to answer this research question. Even though the majority of the respondents named radio as their primary source of information a sizeable portion (25.4%) mentioned that social media was their primary source of information on the 2015 presidential election. This is even more significant when one considers that more youths named social media than those who choose TV as their primary source of information. To that extent, social media aided the youth participation in the electoral process as they used same as a source of information on the political scene. This finding tallies with the

findings of Akpoveta (2015), Edegoh and Anunike (2015), Okioya, Talabi and Ogundeji (2015), and Onyike, Ekwenchi and Chiaha (2015) which all agree that social media has a positive influence on youths participation in the electoral process. It contradicts the conclusion of Cozma and Postelnicu (2008) and Zhang, Johnson, Seltzer and Bichard (2010) which stated that social media generally does not have any influence on political attitude or behaviour of youths. The social media proved to be a veritable mass medium that could be used to set agenda for the youth as about 87.9% of the respondents affirmed that they saw messages imploring them to participate in voters registration on their social media accounts. Out of the 339 respondents who reported seeing messages asking them to register, 208 respondents (53.9%) stated that they actually registered during the voters registration exercise. This is no doubt commendable and was probably achieved due to the interpersonal nature of social media. As gathered from the interview, some respondents only engage in political activities like registering just because their friends have done so, or they intend to brag about it on social media. In that aspect, it is safe to say social media positively influenced youths to participate in the 2015 electoral process by registering to vote. About 374 respondents (96.9%) affirmed they saw messages on social media asking them to ensure they vote and encourage others to do same. However only 143 respondents (37.1%) reported that they actually voted. This noticeable decline in the number of youths that registered to vote and those that actually voted may be attributable to a number of factors. From data gathered in the interviews, some youths abstained from voting because of fear of violence at the polls. Others say it is due to lack of interest in politics, while yet some other respondents say they were discouraged by the chaotic situation at the polling units. Some even stated going to vote is pointless as politicians have already written the results and their votes do not count.

In any case 37.1% of the respondents who voted in response to social media messages is still a decent number. And one can safely say that social media influenced the youth to a decent extent to participate in the 2015 presidential election by voting. This finding mirrors the finding of Acholonu, Onyebuchi and Obayi (2015) which stated that "use of social media has different levels of influence on electorates political participation". Some respondents interviewed reported that they participated in the 2015 electoral process by campaigning for candidates/parties, and encouraging others too. Others "follow" or "like" presidential candidates official social media accounts and make comments when official statements are released by such candidates. Such statements are often retweeted to other followers on *Twitter* or other friends on *Facebook* are invited to join such pages. As a result, social media has influenced youths participation in civic engagement.

Research Question 3: To what extent did social media usage influence South East based youths' voting preferences in 2015 presidential election?

Responses to questions 13, 14 and 15 on the questionnaire and question five on the interview schedule were analysed to answer this research question. Almost 70% of the respondents state that social media messages did not have any influence on who they vote for. Even among the 8.2% of the respondents who reported that social media influenced their voting preferences, a closer scrutiny of their responses in the interview shows that such messages only influenced them because they were positively inclined to the candidates in the first place. In essence, social media influence on respondents voting preferences is very low. This finding contradicts the finding of Sanni (2015) which stated that social media had an influence on respondents' voting preferences.

Data gathered from the interview reveal that other primordial sentiments like religion, geographical affinity, political affiliations, ethnic affiliations play a more substantial role in determining youths voting preferences than social media messages influences.

This is corroborated by responses to question 14 where 55.7% of the respondents chose geopolitical background of the presidential candidates as the major influence in their voting preferences. About 23.1% mentioned religion while only a meager 3.9% mentioned social media as the influence on their voting choices.

Question 4: Do you think *Facebook/Twitter* are credible sources of information?

To answer this research question, response to questions 16, 17 and 18 on the questionnaire were analysed. Many of the youths (245 respondents, 63.5%) affirm that they regard social media as a credible source of information. This is hardly surprising and is in tandem with the postulations of media dependency theory and the findings of Ufuophu-biri (2013).

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

This study titled "the influence of social media on the voting behaviour of the youth in South East Nigeria" was undertaken after the 2015 presidential election in March 2015. The objectives of the study were to examine the extent of social media usage by Nigerian youths based in South East Nigeria, to ascertain the extent of social media's influence on youths' participation in the 2015 electoral process to determine the extent to which South East based youths' voting preferences were influenced by social media messages, and to measure the level of credibility youths attach to social media.

The study was guided by the diffusions of innovations theory and the agenda setting theory. The research methodology adopted is primarily the survey method with questionnaire as instrument of data gathering, backed with a standardized interview to elicit more in-depth information from the respondents. Using the online Australian calculator 400 Nigerian youths resident in the five south eastern states of Nigeria (Abia, Anambra, Enugu, Ebonyi and Imo) were drawn as the sample to represent the entire population (16,395,560) of the geopolitical zone. Using the multi-stage sampling method, cluster sampling was first used to allocate number to the five south eastern states and then purposive sampling was used to draw Nigerian youths between the ages 18 to 35 years who are resident in the south east and who have either Facebook or Twitter accounts.

Findings from the study reveal that social media does have a positive influence on youths' participation in the electoral process. However, social media's influence wanes considerably

when it comes to using it to influence youths' voting preferences. Youths also regard social media as a credible medium. This does not come as a surprise if one considers how often and how much time spend on social media.

5.2 Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were reached:

1. Nigerian youths resident in the south east of the country are quite active on social media platforms which they used almost on a daily basis and Facebook is the most popular social media platform.
2. Social media had a positive influence on the youth participation in the 2015 electoral process as many youths used it to get information about the 2015 elections and also engaged in campaigning and mobilization on social media.
3. Social media messages do not seem to influence youths voting preferences as many of them already made up their minds on who to vote based on primordial sentiments like religion, geopolitical background, ethnic affiliation and the likes.
4. Nigerian youths regard social media as a credible medium and as such they frequently access it and spend some time on it daily.

In conclusion, we foresee social media becoming more influential in the near future as more teenagers grow into adult hood and jump on the social media band wagon. Although social media is being used primarily for social/entertainment purposes now, things may change quickly as more political parties and candidates realise the power of the social media.

Adept use of social media by government orientation agencies, electoral bodies and political parties could be a panacea to the current voters' apathy syndrome amongst the youth especially.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The federal government should intensify its ICT drive in the education and other sectors of the country. The more people have easy access to the information superhighway, the more enlightened and empowered they become. The reach of the social media surpasses that of any of the traditional media and is quite popular among the youth.
2. Government agencies/departments/parastatals should increase their media/publicity budget to include placements of information on the internet via social media sites which have proved to be popular among the youth.
3. More political parties should be encouraged by Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to have a noticeable presence on the internet. A situation where only one or two political parties have a near monopoly of online presence does not augur well for the country's Democracy.
4. The National Orientation Agency (NOA), Independent Electoral Commission (INEC), political parties/candidates, civil societies/Groups, NGOs etc all need to step up their presence online, using social media. If majority of Nigerian youths can be persuaded to vote during elections then 'low voters turnout' syndrome would be a thing of the past.

5.4 Limitations of study

Considering the nature of this study the use of online survey (www.surveymonkey.com) would have been appropriate to sample the opinions of respondents but it is not yet well known in Nigeria

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APPENDIX

Department of Mass
Communication
University of Nigeria,
Nsukka.
November 2015

Dear respondent,

I am a postgraduate student of the department of Mass Communication carrying out a study on
the influence of Social Media on voting behaviour of the youth in South East Nigeria. Kindly
give your honest responses to questions contained in this questionnaire. Information supplied
will be treated with utmost confidentiality and used strictly for academic purposes.

Thanks for your cooperation.

Yours faithfully

Akinlade Ajibola

Questionnaire

Please tick against your chosen option(s) in the space(s) provided.

Section A

1. Sex: (a) Male (b) Female
2. Nationality (a) Nigeria (b) Non - Nigerian
3. Age: (a) 18-25 (b) 26-35 (c) above 35

Section B

4. Do you have a Facebook or Twitter account?
 - a. Yes I have Facebook account only
 - b. Yes I have a Twitter account only
 - c. I have both Facebook and Twitter accounts
 - d. No I don't have either
5. How often do you use Facebook/ Twitter?
 - a. Daily
 - b. Once or twice weekly
 - c. Three to five times weekly
 - d. Couple of times monthly
6. Approximately, how many minutes/hours do you spend on Facebook or Twitter daily?
 - a. About 30 minutes
 - b. An hour
 - c. Two hours
 - d. Three hours
 - e. Over three hours
7. Which devices do you normally use to access your Facebook/Twitter account?
 - a. Laptop computer
 - b. Desktop computer
 - c. Smartphone
 - d. Other mobile phones
 - e. Tablet
8. Where did you get most of the political messages on 2015 Presidential election from?
 - a. Television
 - b. Radio
 - c. Facebook/ Twitter
 - d. News paper/ magazine
9. Did you see any message(s) on Facebook/Twitter asking you to participate in voters' registration exercise?
 - a. Yes I did
 - b. No I didn't
 - c. I can't recall

10. Did you register to vote?
a. Yes I did
b. No I didn't
11. Did you see any message(s) on Facebook/Twitter asking you to ensure you vote during the 2015 presidential election?
a. Yes I did
b. No I didn't
c. I can't recall
12. Did you vote?
a. Yes I did
b. No I didn't
13. Did political messages on Facebook/ Twitter influence your choice of candidate during the presidential election?
a. Yes it strongly did
b. Somewhat
c. No, not at all
14. What informed your choice of candidate:
a. His geo-political background
b. His campaign on social media
c. His campaign strategy on TV/Radio/Newspapers
d. His religion
e. None of the above
15. Would you vote for a candidate that campaigns on Facebook/Twitter rather than one who does not?
a. Yes I would
b. No, it doesn't matter
c. May be
16. Do you think Facebook/ Twitter are credible sources of information?
a. Yes they are
b. No they are not
c. Don't know for sure
17. To what degree do you rate the credibility of social media?
a. To a large extent
b. Moderate extent
c. Low extent
d. I can't say
18. In your opinion, canvassing for votes on social media is _____

Interview Schedule

Interviewer:

Place of interview:

1. Which mass medium was your major source of information on the 2015 presidential election and why did you choose it over other types of media?

2. Did you participate in the electoral process in any form on social media during the 2015 election? If yes, how?

3. Did you register during the voters registration exercise prior to the 2015 presidential election? Why did you register or did not register?

4. Did you vote during the 2015 presidential election? Why or why not?

5. Did political messages on social media influenced your choice of candidate at the polls? Please explain why it did or did not.
