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A Study of Students' Perception of Internet Use in Political Campaigns in Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigates the perception of students of Internet use in political campaigns in Nigeria. Data were collected in two phases: 350 websites were content-analysed, with the unit of analysis being the first page of each website, while stage two was a perceptual survey of 350 university students. For the origins of the websites, the majority (65%) were within Nigeria, the web contents were political in nature (69%), and their domains' name (blogs or weblogs) totalled (60%). 'Society' owns the majority (91%) of the websites. However, the perceptual survey reveals that only 173(49.42%) of the respondents claimed to have 1-3 hours Internet accessibility per week, while 122(34.85%) claimed to have 4-6 hours Internet accessibility per week. This shows that the Internet accessibility is still an issue in Nigeria. The findings of the study further show that a huge number of Nigerians are either ignorant of the Internet use in political campaigns or are just disinterested. The paper argues that Internet penetration is still very low in Nigeria and that awareness is still limited to students, academics and middle-class income earners. It concludes that the current state of penetration cannot support political campaigns and use.

(Graber & Smith, 2005).

New Media Use for Voting

Several previous studies have discussed the effects of traditional media use on voters, particularly, the use of television and newspaper news (Han, 2008). However, this current study highlights the use of the new media and its implications on voting habits.

The social effects of new media adoption and use are moot issues for earlier studies. Some scholars hailed the new media as they believe that the web opens a new sphere in which people can learn to participate in the political world (Browning, 1996), which will consequently benefit democracy. On the contrary, though, some researchers have shown suspicion about the positive political implication of the new media because of the ease it allows the audience in filtering online information, which is capable of making them more disconnected from others in their communities (Kosicki & Yuan, 2001). Still others worried that the new digital technology would expand the information gap between the haves and have-nots, for example, (Graber, 1996). More scholars, because of the increasing literature, continue to discuss the two sides of the story, that is, the pros and cons of the Internet's effect on the democratic process, for example, (Scheufele & Nisbet, 2002).

The study of the relationship between voting behavior and traditional media use is a mixture of conflicting views, and so is the discussion regarding the extent to which the Internet use can promote voter turnout. The scepticism over the positive link between Internet use and the likelihood to vote seemed to be plausible. For example, Bimber (2001) found that there is no direct link between election-related Internet use and voter turnout, even though his earlier study (Bimber, 1998) reported that Internet users are more likely to vote.

Quintelier and Visser (2008) elaborated that with the

emergence of new information and communication technologies, various scholars and politicians view the Internet as a new source of political socialization and a way to bring young citizens closer to the political process. High expectations emerged concerning the Internet's potential for the political mobilization and engagement of new groups that are currently excluded from politics. Best and Krueger (2005) enumerated that the Internet is becoming an important source of political participation for young people, who are normally not attracted to politics. The potential for the Internet to attract new people, who were underrepresented in more traditional forms of participation known as 'mobilisation thesis' (Norris, 2001).

In fact, online information seeking is related positively to group membership, community involvement and political activity (Kwak, Poor & Skoric, 2006). Similarly, online information seeking has been linked to increases in online interactive civic messaging that ultimately result in higher levels of civic participation (Shah, Cho, Eveland Jr, & Kwak, 2005).

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Uses and Gratifications Theory. Sweetser and Kaid (2008) relating from several other authors, mentioned that the theory has been more recently used to determine the gratifications of entertainment media. The theory also has a long history of investigating political information seeking motivations (Blumler & McQuail, 1969; McLeod & Becker, 1974).

Blumler and McQuail (1969) found that gratifications sought from watching political broadcasts clustered into three constructs: political reason such as reinforcement or vote guidance; surveillance for keeping up with the issues; and excitement such as seeing which party would win. During the 1972 US Presidential election, McLeod and Becker (1974) reported surveillance as a primary gratification for seeking political information.

With the expansion of political information on the web, researchers have applied the uses and gratifications perspective to online political information seeking. Specifically, Garramone, Harris and Anderson (1986) found surveillance to be the key motivation for using computer bulletin board systems. Kaye and Johnson (2002) later examined gratification for seeking political information online and found the primary motivations to be guidance, information seeking and surveillance, entertainment and social utility. They also linked media use to political attitudes and behaviors. Kaye and Johnson (2002) reported that higher levels of self-efficacy are associated with information seeking and surveillance, and higher interest in politics is correlated with accessing political information online for social utility and information seeking and surveillance. The researchers reported that self-efficacy predicts guidance and information seeking/surveillance as motivations for using the Internet to find political information. The measure of blog use is consistent with previous measures of media use employed within the uses and gratifications tradition (Rosengren, 1974, cited in Kaye & Johnson, 2002), but has been expanded to include the potential for increased audience activity that is inherent to the Internet domain.

Research Questions

This study aims to provide answers to the following research questions in line with the hypotheses that followed below:

1. What is the focus of most of the information on the selected websites with domain in Nigeria?
2. What percentile quantification can be ascribed to the Internet penetration and usage as demonstrated by the respondents in the locality of the study?
3. What level of confidence is expressed by the respondents in using the Internet for acquiring political knowledge?
4. What level of confidence is expressed by the respondents in using the Internet for acquiring political participation?

Hypotheses
The following hypotheses help focus this study:
1. Ho: The majority of the websites with information that focus on political issues with origins in Nigeria and with weblog will not be positively related to political participation.
2. Ho: The total Internet penetration and usage demonstrated by the users in locality of the study if exceeded 50%, will not influence political information seeking which will eventually not contribute positively to political participation.
3. Ho: The users' confidence in the use of Internet blogs for acquisition of political knowledge would not be positively related to political mobilization.
4. Ho: The users' confidence in the use of Internet blogs for acquisition of political knowledge would not be positively related to political participation.

Assumption
Considering the complementary findings reported by Gil de Zuniga and Puig-I-Abril (2009), it is expected that the relationship between the users' confidence in the use of Internet blogs for acquisition of political knowledge would be related positively to political mobilization, likewise, that the users' confidence in the use of Internet blogs for acquisition of political knowledge would be related positively to their political participation.

Method
This study started initially with data collected by the Global Internet Usage Statistics of 2010, which was sourced and reinterpreted to reveal how Nigerians fare in the global Internet usage statistics in relation to other countries of the world and how these statistics compare with the actual situation on ground in Nigeria. Content analysis was conducted on 350 websites using a specified parameter of search phrase and a self-developed coding

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guide. The unit of analysis was the first page of each of the websites. The coding guide contained information, such as, the title of the websites, focus of the information, type of information, domain area, source of the information, and currency of the information on the websites respectively. As for the coder reliability, two coders were employed to code the websites alongside the researcher. The inter-coder reliability for coder 2 was (98%) while coder 3 was (96%). Finally, a perceptual survey was conducted on 350 respondents with a self-developed survey questionnaire. A purposive sampling method was employed to select the sample size from the population of students at University of Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. As at the time of the study, the student population was reported as 20,084 by the 2011/2012 session. Instrument reliability was determined through Cronbach Alpha Method, which yielded 0.9%, and the response rate was 87.5%.

The Global Internet Usage Statistics has catalogued the penetration of the Internet and its usage particularly in Nigeria and worldwide. It also taps into the patterns of Internet usage worldwide. This particular collection of data was selected for the analysis because it provides the richest set of measures for Internet penetration and usage all around the world. Although the data set from the global Internet usage statistics did not consider the issue of hourly, daily, weekly, etc of Internet accessibility of the population of countries that were surveyed for their Internet penetrations, the report also failed to mention for what purposes or focus was their Internet use targeted. Therefore, to fill these gaps, the content analysis of 350 websites provided relevant information to this effect. Likewise, a survey of 350 respondents highlighted on the subset of common users and their skilfulness in computer and Internet uses. The levels of hourly, daily and weekly accessibility were assessed in relation to how it influences and affects uses for their civic engagement.

Measures and Findings

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Demographics: The first control block includes three demographic variables, which scholars have associated with political participation: gender (50% males and 48% females); age (M= 1.29, SD=.47); Specialisation (Humanities = 40%, Sciences= 48%). Level of Qualification (Undergraduate= 93%, Postgraduate= 1%).

 Independent variables: These are Internet confidence, Internet usage, and political knowledge. *Internet Usage:* This was measured with an index of six items Likert scale. *Political Knowledge*: This was measured with an index of seven items.

 Criterion / dependent variables: To test the hypotheses, two criterion variables were constructed. The first variable accounts for political mobilization online, while the second assessed respondents' political participation in online discussions or chat groups about the elections, campaigns, and other related political activities online. *Political Mobilisation:* This was measured with an index of nine items. *Political Participation*: This was measured with an index of twelve items.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

	Characteristics	N	%
Sex	Male	176	50.28
	Females	168	48
Age	19-23years Old	249	71.14
	24-28 Years Old	95	27.14
	29-33 Years Old	3	0.85
	34 Years Old – Above	3	0.85
Indigeneship	Ilorin	173	49.42
	Other	146	41.72
State of Origin	Kwara	195	55.71
	Other States	154	44
Educational Level	Undergraduate	325	92.85
	Post-Graduate	4	1.14
	Missing	21	6
Specialization	Humanities/Social Sc.	141	40.28
	Science-Based	169	48.28

n=350

In this study, the respondents' demographic characteristics were classified into sex, age, indigeneship, state of origin, educational level, specialization and university, computer experience, computer skills, Internet skills and Internet access respectively. The results showed that the respondents in this study, both males and females were controlled to minimize gender biasness.

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents. According to the Table, the majority (71.14%) of the respondents were within 19-23 year-olds, who are still active and in their youthful age, good for enforcing the use of ICT in Nigerian politics. They are still in their prime time, able to learn and relearn, very adventurous, willing and receptive to new ideas and innovations in society.

In terms of the respondents background, the majority (55.71%) were from Ilorin, the seat of the University from which the data of this current study were collected. In addition, the majority of the respondents originated from Kwara State, which capital is Ilorin, while the respondents from other states were meagre in number. This shows that the Federal University is predominantly populated by the indigenes of the state, but the ratio is not too wide as compared to respondents from other States.

Concerning the respondents educational levels, majority (92.85%) were still pursuing their bachelor's degree programmes at the University, while the numbers of postgraduate students were quite small to be considered in this study. For the respondents' specialization, the majority of the respondents were from the Science-based courses as compared to those from the Social Science or Humanities.

In this regard, research has found that an individual's educational level is a strong predictor of what types of online activities a person will pursue. Sending e-mail, searching for financial, political, or government information, and banking

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online are all associated with higher education (Howard, Raine & Jones, 2001). Those with a higher education and a higher household income are less likely than those with less education and income to use instant messaging or download music, but they are more likely to seek news and product information or arrange for travel online and to use the Internet for work (Madden, 2003).

In order to answer Research Question (RQ. 1): What is the focus of the most of the information on the selected websites with domain in Nigeria? Findings from the content analysis of the website were analyzed. As shown in Table 2, the majority (69%) of the websites focused on political related information in form of news report, opinion articles, views, and others, while negligible amount (31%) of the websites focused on non-political issues. As for the type of domains that were popular among Nigerians; Blogs or Weblogs (60%) seem more common, whereas, online single application was also common (40%). For ownerships of the websites, report revealed that almost all of the websites were created and owned by society (91%), whereas a meagre number (9%) were owned by agency, government and individuals respectively.

Table 2: Website Analysis

Code Name	Code Type	Freq	Percent
Focus of Info	Politics	243	69.42
	Non-Politics	105	30
Domain Type	Web/Weblog	211	60.28
	Online	135	38.57
Ownership	Society	317	90.57
Info Source	Nigeria	229	65.42
	USA	72	20.57
Info Type	Features	205	58.57
Currency	2001	156	44.57
n=350			

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Further analyses from the web show that as the source/origin of the information on the websites, the most (65.42%) of the information originated from Nigeria, although few of the websites (20.57%) originated from the US, and the rest were from countries such as United Kingdom, India, Netherlands, Australia, New Zealand, and Germany. The type of information on the websites were feature articles (58%) which dominated the sites while 'journal' and 'research reports', news reports, and political campaign information were commonplace. Others included peoples' views, press release, research, records and list of tables. Finally, reports analyzed also suggested that most of the website contents were created and last updated in 2007.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents According to their Computer Software Skills

SKILLS	SKILLED (FREQ. %)	UNSKILLED (FREQ.%)
WORD PROCESSOR	221(63.14%)	129 (36.857%)
SPREADSHEETS OR EXCEL	199(56.85%)	151(43.14%)
DATABASES	56(16%)	294(84.28%)
STATISTICS PACKAGES (E.G. SPSS, BAS, AMOS, SAS, RASCH MODEL).	55(15.71%)	295(84.28%)
PRESENTATION SOFTWARE (E.G. POWERPOINT)	217(62%)	123(35.14%)
COPY AND TRANSFER FILES	227(64.85%)	123(35.14%)
SCAN DOCUMENT	203(58%)	147(42%)
CREATE ACROBAT PDF FILES	67(19.14%)	283(80.85%)

n=350

The following paragraphs provide answer to the research question (RQ 2): What percentile quantification can be ascribed to the Internet penetration and usage as demonstrated by the respondents in the locality of the study?

Regarding the respondents' computer software skills (Table 3), findings show that the most of the respondents can use computer efficiently to copy, transfer files, word processing and do PowerPoint, but were unskilled in using the statistical packages such as SPSS. This result shows that the percentage of the respondents, who are unskilled in using the statistical packages are

evidence of one of the areas for concentrating and focus of professional development and training. Meanwhile, levels of skilfulness of the respondents who have the skills are yet to be determined.

In terms of the database, the majority were unskilled in its use whereas many respondents claimed skilful using of scanners. Concerning skills for creating acrobat PDF files, the majority of the respondents claimed not skilful in it. However, the respondents' specific levels of skilfulness in these basic computer software tools and their usage were not determined in this study

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents According to their Internet Skills.

Skills	Skilled (Freq/%)	Unskilled (Freq/%)
Web Searching	260(74.28%)	89(25.42%)
Web Evaluating	33(9.42%)	317(90.57%)
E-Mail	307(87.7%)	42(12%)
World Wide Web (Www) Browsing	255(72.85%)	95(27.14%)
Newsgroup	117(33.42%)	233(66.57%)
Creating Homepage / Website	127(36.28%)	223(63.71%)
Chat On The Internet	284(81.14%)	66(18.85%)
Teleconferencing / Videoconferencing	26(7.42%)	324(92.57%)

n=350

Table 4 reports the respondents' skilfulness in various Internet tools. Findings revealed that for web searching tools, e-mail, browsing the World Wide Web (www), newsgroup, online chatting and creating homepages/websites the majority of the respondents were skilful in it, but many have not participated in teleconferencing and videoconferencing before.

Findings show the distributions of the respondents' computer and Internet skills trainings. Some of the respondents claimed that they had informal training, while others had formal training, yet few of them mentioned having acquired their computer and Internet training skills through both formal and informal learning modules.

Table 5: Computer Year of Experience

Year	Frequency	Percent (Approx.)
1-5 Years	290	82.85
6-10 years	22	6.28
11-15 Years	5	1.42
16 Years &Above	5	1.42
Missing	8	2.28
Total	322	99

n=350

Table 5 presents the distribution of respondents according to years of computer experience. The majority (82.85%) of the respondents claimed that they have 1-5, while few claimed having 6-10 years of computer experience, respectively. As for the distribution of respondents according to their weekly Internet access (Table 6), many (49.42%) of the respondents claimed that they accessed the Internet for 1-3 hours per week, (34.85%) claimed having 4-6 hours access, while the least range (9.14%) of accessibility was 7-9 hours per week respectively.

Table 6: Internet Accessibility per Week

Hours Per Week	Frequency	Percent(Approx.)
1-3 Hours	173	49.42
4-6 Hours	122	3.4.85
7-9 Hours	20	5.71
10 Hours And Above	32	9.14
N/R	3	1
Total	347	99

n=350

As for the Hypothesis 2: that the total Internet penetration and usage demonstrated by the users in the locality of the study if exceeded 50%, will influence their political information seeking which will eventually contribute positively to political participation, was confirmed. This is because as of 2011, there were only 45 million Internet users in Nigeria, which amounted to (26.5%) of the total population, with roughly 10 million (7.2%)

facebook users. These percentages cannot support the utilization of the Internet as an adequate channel for political information seeking and political campaign communications. Nevertheless, more efforts are needed to make the Internet usage widespread among the populace for political information seeking and political campaign communications during and after elections. Therefore, for the Internet to be considered for political campaign communications, 50% of the population must have access to the technology and use it efficiently.

This claim is evident in the statement of Singh (2010) who cited the case of Chile as a perfect opportunity for the Internet usage in politics, because as of 2008, Chile had a 50.4% Internet penetration level and 44% *Facebook* users out of the overall population, demonstrating the level of active Internet participation and hinting at all the possibilities waiting for all political organizations.

Predictors of Political Mobilisation and Political Participation
In the analyses, it was revealed that *Internet confidence* and *political knowledge* were the two statistically significant predictors of *political mobilisation* and *political participation* in this study. They both were found to be of practical importance and replicated in the estimation and cross-validation analyses. Therefore, *Internet confidence,* being significant in the study, indicates that the respondents have expressed high level of confidence for using the Internet for seeking political knowledge. These findings, therefore, provide answer to Research Question (RQ. 3): What level of confidence is expressed by the respondents in using the Internet for acquiring political knowledge?

The best predictor is determined by looking at the regression coefficient and *t* value. These results provide support for Hypothesis 3, that the users' confidence in the use of Internet blogs for acquisition of political knowledge would be related positively to online political mobilization. Also, this was

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supported by the estimated equation model below where the Beta value Internet confidence (IC), equals to 0.366, while political knowledge (PK) equals to 0.302.

The results revealed that *Internet confidence* and *political knowledge* were of practical importance to *political mobilization*. This was because their computerised thresholds were smaller than the upper and lower bounds in the confidence intervals. However, the above cross-checking was carried out in all subsequent regression analyses to assess whether there was a violation to the results of the analysis due to the effects of multicollinearity, the correlation matrices, tolerance values, and the variance inflation factors (VIF). There was no violation to the results of the analyses at all.

In order to answer Research Question (RQ. 4): What level of confidence is expressed by the respondents in using the Internet for acquiring political participation? These findings have shown that Internet confidence was found to be significant for political participation. This indicates that the respondents have expressed high level of confidence in using the Internet for political participation. Therefore, for *political participation, Internet confidence* was the best predictor with the highest Beta value of .389. In addition, these results provide support for Hypothesis 4, that the users' confidence in the use of Internet blogs for acquisition of political knowledge would be related positively to online political participation. The estimated equation model below has provided support for this finding where the Beta value for *Internet confidence* (IC) equals to 0.366, while political knowledge (PK) equals to 0.302.

However, among all of the predictors, *Internet confidence* has the highest coefficient value (B = 0.609 or *t* = 6.361). This means that provision of adequate Internet facilities for Internet users will improve their Internet confidence, which will eventually lead towards ICT influence on political participation.

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Therefore, *Internet confidence* is a very powerful and significant predictor for *political participation* as compared to *political knowledge* and *Internet usage*. This indicates that the provision of adequate Internet facilities will increase Internet confidence, which will lead ICT influence on political mobilisation. In addition, looking at the Beta value coefficient, it was confirmed and evident that *Internet confidence* was the best predictor that can influence *political participation*.

Cross-validation results show that the *Internet confidence* and *political knowledge* were of practical importance to *political mobilisation*, where *Internet confidence* was the best predictor of *political mobilisation*. However, for *political participation*, the results showed that *Internet confidence*, *Internet usage* and *political knowledge* were statistically, significantly related and replicated and they may be of practical importance to *political participation*.

Predictions of the Study

According to the above discussions, the regression results and the inclusion of the non-metric variables in the analyses all assisted in addressing the hypotheses 3 and 4. Therefore, the researcher can predict from the study that an increase in any of these two variables (*Internet confidence* and *political knowledge*) will result in corresponding increases in *political mobilisation* and *political participation*, if ICT is used as a tool for political campaign communications. The following estimated equation model has demonstrated this:

Equation 1): [$\hat{Y}$ (POLIMOB) = 8.963 + 0.366 (IC) + 0.099 (IU) + 0.302 (PK)].

These findings support Hypothesis 3, that the users' Internet use, Internet confidence and political knowledge would be related positively to political mobilization. Likewise, an increase in one point in the respondents' perceptions and opinions on *Internet confidence* will result in an average increase of at least

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0.609 percent in *political participation,* if ICT is implemented as a tool for political campaign communications. The same goes for *political knowledge,* an increase in one point in the respondents' perceptions and opinions on *political knowledge* will result in an average increase of at least 0.392 percent in *political participation,* if ICT is implemented as a tool for political campaigns. *These findings support Hypothesis 4, that the* respondents' Internet use, Internet confidence and political knowledge would be related positively to political participation.

Equation 2: [Ŷ (POLIPART) = 5.802 + 0.609 (IC) + 0.189 (IU) +0.392 (PK)].

Discussions

The main contribution of this article lies in establishing an empirical relationship between Internet use and a series of political online behaviours, including discussion, campaigning and other forms of political participation such as signing, urging people to vote or donating money to a political course.

With the emergence of blogs, the production of content and the ways in which such content is prepared are altered decisively. The introduction of citizen blogs alongside opinion leaders' blogs and journalistic blogs has the proclivity to amplify democratic discourse with the inclusion of new voices in the public realm, but it also has the tendency to alter journalistic practices that circumvent around the rational reconstruction of current affairs.

In most cases, many voices in the public sphere are understood to be a democratic gain, but in order for this to materialize, someone has to listen. In this study, the findings indicate that using blogs would lead to similar forms of democratic participation beyond the effects of traditional media use. The positive effects of the blogosphere on certain political behaviours suggest that beyond self-expressions, blog use has societal level

consequences in the form of enhanced political participation.

Therefore, this study had posited that, if 243(69.42%) of the 350 samples of websites focused on political issues and 229(65.42%) originated from Nigeria and 211(60.28%) have domain name as Weblog/Blog, with 317(90.57%) ownerships as societies, also, if the 'Information Types' on the Websites which focused on feature articles and advocating for political issues amounted to 205(58.57%), therefore, Hypothesis 1: that the majority of the websites with information that focused on political issues with origins in Nigeria and with Weblog / Blog as their domain names will be positively related to political participation could be declared as upheld. The findings have shown that the orientation of the websites that were created in Nigeria is political and their 'Information Types' are mostly feature articles that are politically oriented. However, if based on this information, initiating a weblog / blog for online political campaign communications will well support political participation by web users, but the issue of low Internet access is still very important to be considered for Internet adoption in Nigeria's politics.

In the media arena where market forces have precipitated the structure of public communication, the blogosphere can serve to enhance the interactive dimension of the public sphere, thus preventing further decline and potentially reinvigorating it. On this note, Habermas (2006) contends that for this to happen, the media system must be totally independent of its environment within which it operates and while the public sphere serves as the springboard where the political communication is realized in the presence of the civil society and the political center where cogent decisions are made. In addition, to be inclusive and democratic, the political center must engage the citizens to take part in any engendered public debate where both bottom-up and horizontal type of communications must be the norms.

Whether the blogosphere ultimately will serve these purposes remains an open empirical question, particularly

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considering the requirements placed on certain blogs that eliminate or restrict interactivity. However, the evidence presented in this article supports the notion of its importance as part of an emerging networked public sphere, related Gil de Zuniga & Puig-I-Abril (2009). In a networked public sphere, blogs do not, and cannot, substitute traditional media; rather, they complement them. They coexist, integrating issues from the periphery of the political system or serving as a springboard for the demographic deliberation of content that is produced within the media subsystem. Thus, blogs may become powerful political tools within the context of this networked public sphere, perhaps, complemented by different online tools which currently are gaining momentum.

For example, researchers have shown the useful value of *Facebook*, an Internet-based social networking site, to create and maintain certain types of social capital. As other social media or personal publication tools develop, reinforcing the importance of the new media in the political arena, it is reasonable to think that blogs will wind up having greater prevalence in the near future. In fact, the 2008 US election has confirmed to this increased importance of blogs as well as other social networking tools.

Any attentive reader(s) of this study might object to the causal logic employed in the study. However, it suffices to mention that this study is a perceptual survey of opinions and views of users on the issue of Internet in politics and, therefore, suggesting dimensionality can be considered difficult at this point, except and unless all the infrastructural logistics for an effective ICT use are in place, this may prove impossible, at least at this time. Furthermore, certain researchers suggest a relationship in which community involvement would lead to increased community-based Internet use (Dutta-Bergman, 2005). Despite this, past research, which has employed different designs, suited to test issues of causality, has established that although reciprocal causation is present in the relationships between Internet use,

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interpersonal discussion and political engagement, the more robust effect takes place from communication and information-seeking variables to participation variables. These data do not distinguish clearly between political discussion and political participation, which makes assessing a causal order between these phenomena even more problematic. This is why instead of formally testing for mediation, the data have been collected from three sources to ensure triangulation and presented it in the form of a regression which provides some sense of the contribution of different blocks, but mostly controls for the effects of other antecedent variables and shows the effect of both online information consumption and blog use on the criterion variables. Ultimately, whether the extension of this causal logic to blog use is appropriate needs to be tested empirically using subsequent waves of data collection.

Conclusions

ICT and Internet penetration are rapidly growing phenomena in Nigeria, thus strategy and confidence is growing that it will be an important element of future political and campaign communication tool, but users should not view it as a panacea to solving elections and political problems in the Nigeria.

Some of the most common obstacles to ICT adoption and implementation are the lack of confidence on the part of users, the lack of provision of adequate skills and training programme, the inadequate technology infrastructure, planning and program deficiencies, the lack of human capacity and expertise, inadequate economic resources, the lack of recognition of knowledge or educational equivalence, and the neglect of learning conditions and cultural aspects to some extent. Therefore, the theoretical framework utilised in this study provides a rich and potentially fruitful area for further research and has practical implications for users; politicians, voters, administrators of electoral activities, and vendors, who are concerned with the diffusion of ICT and Internet

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in various social institutions in Nigeria.

This study has taken a first step toward understanding the innovativeness that ICT and Internet can bring to political campaign communications, especially in a developing county, such as Nigeria. However, there are also challenges that confronted the researcher in the process of embarking on this work. The concept of the influence of ICT and, Internet in particular on political campaign communications is very wide and broad and this study has surveyed the perceptions of prospective voters on the concept of ICT use and its adoption and implementation for elections and political campaign communications. The followings are the limitations of the study:

First, the researcher did not analyze the audience response to the effects of the Internet and whether it would influence the impression of voters, rather the study tends to survey perceptions of ICT influence on political campaign communications and the likelihood that it will be adopted in future for election campaigns. Therefore, further qualitative research, such as participant observation within a campaign group in conjunction with interview may enhance future research on the use of ICT and the Internet in particular for political campaign communications in Nigeria.

Second, the paucity of resources on the concept of ICT influence and Internet in particular, on political communications in Nigeria itself and its adoption and implementation necessitated the researchers of this study to adopt an interdisciplinary view by consulting various studies on the general scope of ICT integrative uses in social sciences and humanity fields to maximize resources that were reviewed and utilized in the present study. Therefore, would be suggested that future studies only on Internet and politics focus solely on literature from ICT integrative uses in politics.

Recommendation for Further Studies

The researcher recommends the following for further studies in the area of Internet usage in politics:

First, studies should be conducted to analyse and explain the skilfulness of respondents in both computer and Internet usage to determine whether they are suitable for and can be depended on for Internet adoption in Nigeria's political environment.

Second, the study recommends that a confirmatory study be conducted to test whether the three independent variables can be evidently confirmed as predictors for the identified dependent variables. A confirmatory test would pinpoint to what extent can it be justifiably said that Internet confidence and political knowledge predict political mobilization and political participation of respondents.

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