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Idi Shadrach

Department of Mass Communication, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria

Oberiri Destiny Apuke

Taraba State University, Jalingo, Nigeria, apukedestiny@gmail.com

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Investigating the Effectiveness of Social Media Usage for Political Dialogue in Nigeria

Idi Shadrach

shadrachidi@gmail.com

Department of Mass Communication,
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria

&

Oberiri Destiny Apuke*

apukedestiny@gmail.com.

Department of Mass Communication, Taraba State University,
Jalingo, Nigeria

Corresponding author: apukedestiny@gmail.com.

Abstract

This study attempts to investigate the effectiveness of social media utilisation for political dialogue in Nigeria. The work is anchored on Public Sphere Theory and a survey research method taken among 300 participants across the tertiary institutions in Taraba State in northeast Nigeria. The findings suggest that there is a high usage of social media, predominantly *Facebook* and *Twitter* for political discourse among Nigerians, yet, most of the discussion carried out on this platform lacks the substance of objectivity and it is filled with attacks, counterattacks and hate speeches showing religious, ethnic and political biases which indicates that instead of contributing to the political system of the country, social media in Nigeria has generally in the political sphere enhanced division and hatred among Nigerians. The findings also revealed that though political leaders reach citizens via social media and citizens are exposed to campaign messages from political leaders, the leaders rarely respond to citizens on social media. Hence, political social media in Nigeria has not created effective two-way communication between citizens and the political leadership. Thus, the study recommends that political leaders should not only use social media to talk to citizens, but they should also talk with citizens.

Key words: Citizens, Nigeria, political dialogue, political leaders, social media.

Introduction

In recent decades, it has been shown that the mass media are key institutions for effective functioning of any political system because it provides a platform for political awareness,

mobilization, debate and political advertising which guides the citizens in making choices among political candidates (Shadrach, 2017). Supporting this view, McNair (2009) asserts that mass media educate the audience about political happenings, provide a platform for political discourse and facilitate the formation of public opinion. This suggests that any political system without robust mass media is a “malnourished” and “still “birth-birth political contraption” (Obot, 2013, p. 176). There is evidence to show that traditional mass media such as radio, television and newspaper have played significant role in the political life of Nigeria from pre-colonial days to date. The media have always been strong instruments of sensitization and mobilization of people towards the political process of the country. However, traditional media in the country have become subject to government and elitist control, intimidation, harassments and dearth logistics. This phenomenon has resulted to limited space and airtime for common citizens to air their views and ask questions regarding political happenings of their country (Chinedu-Okeke & Obi, 2016).

However, the emergence of social media is believed to have reduced the one way (top-down) political communication system orchestrated by traditional mass media in Africa and Nigeria over several years. This implies that social media such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter are revolutionary communication tools which have open up the communication landscape for citizens to take part. One singular characteristic of social media is the interactivity where users can comment or reply to post of other users, irrespective of geographical location, political and societal stratum. Consistent with this argument, Shadrach (2017) asserted that social media are gaining popularity among citizens because they pass information freely without control of government, powerful politicians and advertisers as well as free of conventional professional bottlenecks like gate-keeping. The media are also popular because they do not only disseminate information but also provide readers opportunity to engage in debate or discussion.

Interestingly, social media are affordable and accessible as one can access Facebook, Twitter and other forms of social media on small internet enabled mobile devices with the cheap internet data bundle from mobile telecommunication companies like MTN, Airtel, Glo among others. Consequently, even higher rate of poverty and economic hardship might not stop Nigerians from utilizing social media in their everyday life particularly in political discourses and information searching. On the other hand, it could be deduced social media is never taken for granted by most politicians in the country. Politicians in Nigeria have social media Assistants whose job is to help in monitoring issues trendy online.

Thus, the use of social media in political communication among Nigerians cannot be overemphasized (Ajayi & Adesote, 2015). Politicians and government use the media to appeal to citizens’ support, send mass campaign messages in different forms such as pictures, videos and text and give them an advantage of keeping in constant touch with their supporters. Citizens on the other hand, use the media to participate actively in the political discourse of the country. The media also afford the citizens a friendlier avenue of assessing candidates for political offices as well as post questions to government and politicians in order to promote transparency in governance (Adibe, Odoemelam, & Chibuwe, 2012). It is thus significant to note that substantial evidence exists to indicate that robust political discussion is obtainable online via platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. For instance, Abubakar (2012) remarked that social media are the new “political capital” where people resort to and participate in a political discourse. Therefore, social

media are the platform which the governed and the government can now discuss issues of public importance. But the big question remains, has this really been actualized over the years in developing countries and Nigeria in specific? This calls for further exploration to test the effectiveness of social media usage in the political communication landscape of Nigeria. The thrust of this contribution is to examine the effectiveness of social media in facilitating dialogue among Nigerians and between Nigerians and their leaders.

Statement of the Problem

It has been generally established that social media have enhanced communication process in the world. The media have made communication very fast, simple and cheap. Hence, social media have become a formidable force for political activities around the world. The media's greatest strength is their potential to allow the mass audience to engage in interaction. However, the media is not without some serious challenges which can serve as an impediment to its ability to serve as a platform where members of a nation can share ideas about government policies and by extension influence government agenda. In Nigeria, social media landscape is often characterised with falsehood rumors, gossips, verbal attacks, political and religious fanaticism and hate speeches with the aim to malign, intimidate and discredit opponents. Thus, instead of positively serving the political system of the country, the media seem to be enhancing the existing political, religious and ethnic hatred and division that has bedeviled the country for long. Okoro and Nwafor (2013) observed that, there is "social media war" taking place on the various social media platforms in Nigerian, which could make many the public lose confidence in social media as well as raise questions on the medium's viability as an important tool for public discussion and means of reaching government officials in the country. Therefore, it is important to look into the effectiveness of the role of social media as platforms for political dialogue among Nigerians.

The purpose of this survey is to evaluate the viability of social media as a platform for political discussion among Nigerians. Hence, the participants were students of tertiary institutions across Taraba State, northeast, Nigeria. The choice of students was made because they are mostly young people and it has been observed that social media appeal to younger generation especially students in high school and universities (Adum et al., 2016). This in the arena of data collection and sampling technique and data analysis, a questionnaire was designed by the researchers and validated by two experts in the field of communication, that applied to extract information from a sample size of 300 respondents drawn from three major tertiary institutions in Taraba State at, Taraba State University (TSU), Jalingo, Federal University Wukari (FUW) and Federal Polytechnic Bali. Hence, the researchers adopted random sampling method in the administration of questionnaires to respondents. The choice of this method is based on the fact that the selected schools are located in a different geopolitical zone in the state under investigation. Thus, 100 respondents were randomly selected from each school, and the generated data were entered into SPSS version 20 and analysed quantitatively using simple percentages and frequencies presented in Tables for easy comprehension.

And overall, this work was designed to evaluate the extent Nigerians engage in political discussion on social media; examine the attitude of Nigerians in political discussion on social

media; and to realise the extent political leaders in Nigeria response to citizens on social media. Hence, the research questions posed to enable the researchers achieve the purpose of this presentation included: to what extent do Nigerians engage in political discussion on social media; what is the attitude of Nigerians in political discussion on social media, and to what extent do political leaders in Nigeria response to citizens on social media? Hence, the two major concepts here are political dialogue and social media. These concepts need some clarifications so as to understand how it is being applied in the context of this contribution (Dogari, Apuke, & Shadrach, 2018).

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the public sphere theory, first revealed in the work of Jürgen Habermas titled “The Structural Transformation of Public Sphere” published in the 1960s and translated from German to English in 1991. According to Jürgen Herbermas, the public sphere is “that domain of our social life in which such a thing as public opinion can be formed” (Habermas, 1989). He asserts that the public sphere was a forum such as coffee houses or joint where elite thinkers from the upper classes of society meet to discuss issues of public importance and formulate public opinion. However, the Habermas idea of the public sphere was criticized. The main criticism is that the concept was an “elite concept and most probably utopian that has never existed”.

Another criticism is that Habermas created a public sphere that does not include all the components of the society such as women or representatives from the lowest class of society (Papacharissi, 2002, p. 11). However, despite the criticism, Herbamas’ idea has remained the foundation of studies on public participation in discussions about a national issue in the 20th century, especially in this era of the internet and the development of web 2.0 which enable internet users to interact with one another irrespective of class differences. Castells (2008) asserts that the Internet has enabled a global networked public sphere and that social media, which has a focus on sharing and participation, as well steadily increasing user base, could attract even more citizens to participate in a public discussion that once eluded them. This has prompted the argument that social media has brought about the return of Habermas’s public sphere. Commenting on this view, Brenne (2016, p. 273) stated that the structure of the public sphere and the conditions for the rise of a public sphere are parallel with the rise of political discussion on social media. It would appear that social media as a functional public sphere is based on geopolitical circumstance.

Under oppressive regimes with limited rights and censored news outlets, social media allows each citizen the equal access to a public sphere that is denied to them by their government. In this regard, Habermas’s model of the public sphere is useful to understand the structure of political discussion on social media which is the focus here that investigates the effectiveness of social media as tools for political dialogue among Nigerians. It is believed that social media such as Facebook and Twitter serve as platforms or Public spheres where Nigerians can debate political issues among themselves, form opinions and link up with their political leaders.

Political Activities in Nigeria via Social Media

The growth and utilization of social media in the political activities in Nigeria have continued to attract a converging body of studies which serves as the foundation for this current investigation. For example, Okoro and Nwafor (2013) examined social media use for political participation in Nigeria during the 2011 general elections using survey research method. Findings showed that many use social media to make a vital input in the political discourse, while others used them to attack opponents, spread false rumours, hate and inciting messages which were believed to have contributed in the violence and tensions witnessed before, during and after the elections in many parts of the country. This outcome suggests that social media enhance political participation among Nigerians. However, the work failed to show whether the media served as a link between citizens and political leaders.

In another related study, Oyeboode (2014) probed the use and misuse of new media in political communication in Nigeria's 4th Republic. Based on qualitative content analysis, the presentation presents a situation analysis of the nexus between new media messages and political harmony or conflict in Nigeria. Results revealed that although the new media have enhanced political awareness and interaction, they are also being used to malign, intimidate and discredit political opponents thus triggering conflicts. The study provided a deeper understanding of the strength and weaknesses of social media as an effective tool for political communication in Nigeria. Nevertheless, it did not demonstrate the effectiveness of the media in political discussion among Nigerians and their leaders. Also, a qualitative study based on secondary sources found that in spite of some advantages of traditional media, social media is better off in the aspect of popular participation. The study further revealed that, social media contributed positively in the areas of "Guaranteed meeting place" for citizens to discuss issues that affect the generality of the people or members of the society. In this regard, it was concluded that the media became a tool for political participation in ensuring transparency of the 2015 Nigeria's presidential election.

Yet, the media had an issue of credibility and recklessness (Udoka, 2015). The work sheds light on the extent social media promoted political discussion in Nigeria, which is in congruence with subsequent investigation by Okeke, Chinonye and Obi (2016) which looked at the extent of youth involvement with the social media for electioneering process in South-East, Nigeria. The findings indicate that political campaigns through social media had a significant effect on the electorate's decision-making and participation in Nigerian elections. The study also reemphasizes the significant role social media plays in political life of a nation especially during campaigning. However, the it did not show the extent citizens use the media for political deliberations and as a platform to link with political leaders. And similarly, Okoro and Santas (2017) reported the utilization of social media for political communication during the 2011 presidential election in Nigeria, with a rationale to determine whether the voters' choice of presidential candidates was influenced by their social media use. The results of the study showed that the majority of the respondents' choice of presidential candidates during the 2011 presidential election was influenced by the use of social media. The participants were of the opinion that the two selected presidential

candidates were popular because they used social media in their political campaign. Consequently, the researchers concluded that the impact of social media in political efforts or marketing is attainable if properly used by political leaders. However, the study did not examine on the effectiveness of the media in facilitating political discourse among Nigerians and their leaders. Additionally, Apuke and Apollos (2017) investigation of the public perception towards Facebook usage in the 2015 political campaigns in Nigeria using southern part of Taraba State as a case-study, demonstrated that Facebook was used in the 2015 senatorial electioneering campaigns in the southern Taraba State, and this influenced the electorate to vote a particular candidate.

However, it is the perception of the respondents that there were dysfunctions such as deliberate distortions in the information about opponents, abusive speech, distortion of the facts about personal performance, and misinformation on the Facebook pages of the electorates and candidates. The study showed the application of social media [Facebook] in politics in Taraba State, Nigeria as it is in other places. However, there was a less focus on the extent the media was used as a tool for political discussion and for linking with political leaders in the state and Nigeria as a whole.

The literature reviewed herein suggests that the use of social media in political activities in Nigeria has received substantial attention from researchers. It is clear that social media are massively used by Nigerians in political activities particularly electioneering. The media are applied to create political awareness and support for political campaigners. However, there seems to be a paucity of works that examined the extent that social media has served as an effective platform for political dialogue among citizens and between citizens and their leaders. Most studies till date only reported that social media have the potential of enhancing interaction, campaigning and that the media have been abused by reckless posts from users. This means that, there is a gap in the body of literature on social media and political communication in Nigeria. This presentation attempts to fill this gap in order to enhance our understanding as regards the utilization of social media in the political landscape of the country.

Political Dialogue

The word “political” is a derivation of the word politics. Politics means struggle for power (Anifowose, 1999). Thus, politics or political in this context are related to matters of governmental powers and activities within the sphere of the presidency, the governorship and other political positions. The word dialogue on the other hand, is a Greek word *Dia-logos* which means “flow of meaning”, “to gather together” or “self-governance”. Dialogue suggests an intimate awareness of the relationships among things in the natural world (Wierzbicka, 2006). Chang (1996) opines that dialogue involves two groups in discussion, it is reciprocal which consists of talking about a particular range of topics—usually topics of mutual interest. Wierzbicka (2006) states that dialogue is valuable and productive technique, which can align two groups with opposing views on a matter to reason together as a result, arrive at some points for the good of all. Drawing from this clarification, political dialogue as used here refers to a discussion on political issues such as government policies, elections, political parties and candidates among others. It has to do with

social media users' (i.e. citizens and the elites or politicians) comments, reply and posts that are sent and received from other users.

The key point to note here is the engagement of users in the discussion about matters. This is necessary because where there is no two-way flow of ideas of information, dialogue those not exist. It is therefore the stand of this work that political dialogue entails people in position responding to questions and worries of citizens online rather than just making post for citizens to read.

Social Media

Robust evidence suggests that there is no universal definition of the term social media, hence, various researchers have attempted an explanation of the concept. For instance, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) described social media as internet-based applications built on the technological and ideological foundations of Web 2.0 which support interactivity among users. Adibe et al. (2012) defines social media as online platforms that promote participation, openness, conversation and connectedness. Nations (2010) see them as “social instruments of communication which are different from the conventional mass media like radio, television, newspapers or magazines. Adibe et al. (2011) further reiterated that social media are online content, created by people using highly accessible and scalable publishing technologies to disseminate information across geographical boundaries, providing interaction among people. The same authors also emphasize that social media support democratization of knowledge and information, thereby making the people both information producers and consumers. Extending this notion, Apuke (2016) commented that social media are computer mediated tools that allow people to create, share or exchange info, ideas, pictures/videos in implicit communities and networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Badoo, Instagram among others.

In general, it could be deduced that social media isre a new genre of media that are Internet-based which allow users to connect with each other, share opinions, experiences, views, contacts, knowledge, expertise, as well as other things like job, relationship and career tips with greater freedom. Research has evidently shown that there are numerous types of social media sites; such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, flicker, blogs, podcast, wikis among others (Apuke, 2016). However, Facebook and Twitter are the focus of this study because of their popularity and high utilization among Nigerians (Okeke, Chinonye & Obi, 2016).

Results

All the 300 copies of the questionnaire administered in the three schools were returned valid for analysis as given below:

Table 1: Respondents' demographic data.

Variable	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Male	183	61
Female	117	39
School		
TSU	100	33.3
FUW	100	33.3
FEDPOLY Bali	100	33.3
Age Bracket		
17-24	67	22.3
25-30	128	42.7
31-35	89	29.7
36-40	12	4
41-above	4	1.3

Source: Field Survey, March, 2018

Table 1 indicates that, (n=183) 61% of the respondents are male, while (n=117) 39% represents the female. The gap between the male and female in this study, vechemence the low rate of female enrolment into formal education in northern Nigeria, Taraba State inclusive. The Table also shows that the schools selected were equally represented. Additionally, the result shows the age distribution of respondents. It was revealed that (n=67) 22.3 % of the respondents are under the age range of 17-24, (n=128) 42.7% of the respondents are 25-30years, (n=89) 29.7% of the respondents are 31-35 years while (n=12) 4 % of the respondents are between the age bracket of 36-40 and only (n=4) 1.3% were 41 and above. The analysis suggests that the majority of the respondents are youths. This confirms that most of the students in tertiary institutions in Nigeria and Taraba State are youths as such form a great part of social media users.

Table 2: Exposure to forms of social media.

Form of social Media	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Facebook	171	57
Twitter	129	43
Others	0	0
Total	300	100

Source: Field Survey, March, 2018.

The data in Table 2 shows the forms of social media, which the respondents often exposed themselves to. (n=171) 57 % of the respondents are often exposed to Facebook, (n=129) 43 % of the respondents are often exposed to Twitter while other forms of social media are not often utilized by the respondents. This implies that Facebook has more users followed by Twitter among

the respondents. This supports the findings of research (e.g. Madueke, Nwosu, Ogbonnaya, & Anumadu, 2017), which revealed that in Nigeria, social media sites, particularly Facebook and Twitter are more common among social media savvies.

Table 3: Engagement in political discussion on social media.

Items	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
How often do you read a political post on social media?		
Very often	111	37
Often	169	56.3
Rarely	20	6.7
Never	0	0
How often do you make a political post on social media?		
Very often	32	10.7
Often	189	63
Rarely	71	23.7
Never	8	2.6
How often do you reply/comment on political posts on social media?		
Very often	29	9.7
Often	201	67
Rarely	58	19.3
Never	12	4

Source: Field Survey, March, 2018.

The data in Table 3 shows that (n=111) 37 % of the respondents read political post on social media very often, more than half (n=169) 56.3% read political post on social media often while only (n=20) 6.7 % indicated that they rarely read political post on social media. The analysis, therefore, suggests a high level of respondents' readership of political post on social media in Nigeria. The Table also present results on the extent respondents make a political post on social media. Data revealed that (n=32)10.7 % make a political post on social media very often, (n=189) 63 % said they make such post often, (n=71)23.7 % indicated that they make such post rarely while only (n=8) 2.6 % alleged they never make a political post on social media. This indicates that more than half of the respondents often makes political post on social media. The researchers also seek to find the extent respondents reply to political post or comment on it. Data revealed that more than half (n=201) 67% of the respondents often reply or comment on political posts on social media, which suggests high engagement of Nigerians in political discussion on social media.

Table 4: Attitude in political discussion on social media.

Items	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
How objective are Nigerians in their political post on Social Media		
Very objective	0	0
Objective	11	3.7
Never objective	289	96.3
What do you think is common in the political post of Nigerians?		
Ethnicity	0	0
Religiosity	0	0
All of the above	300	100
None of the above	0	0

Source: Field Survey, March, 2018

Table 4 above demonstrates the attitudes of Nigerians toward political discussion on social media. A large proportion of the participants (n=289) 96.3% acknowledged that Nigerians are not objective in their discourses on social media. It was also revealed by the entire respondents (n=300) (100%) that political posts by Nigerians on social media is full of ethnicity and religiosity rather than sound or issue base deliberations.

Table 5: Political leaders' response to citizens on social media.

Items	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
How often do you follow political leaders on Social Media?		
Very often	89	29.7
Often	189	63
Rarely	22	7.3
Never	0	0
How often are you expose to post of political leaders on social Media?		
Very often	101	33.7
Often	167	55.7
Rarely	32	10.6
Never	0	
How often do you reply to post of political leaders on social Media?		
Very often	79	26.3
Often	142	47.4
Rarely	70	23.3
Never	9	3
How often do political Leaders respond to your comment on social media		
Very often	0	0
Often	0	0
Rarely	281	93.7
Never	19	6.3

Source: Field Survey, March, 2018

Table 5 demonstrates the engagement of political leaders with citizens on social media. According to the data on the Table, (n=89) 29.7 % of the respondents reported that they follow political leaders on social media very often, (n=189) 63 % indicated that they often follow political leaders on social media while only (n=22) 7.3 % specified that they rarely follow political leaders on social media. The data suggest a high followership of political leaders on social media by the citizens. Similarly, (n=101) 33.7 % alleged that they are exposed to political post of leaders on social media very often, (n=167) 55.7 % commented that they are exposed to such post often while (n=32) 10.6% remarked that they are rarely exposed to post of political leaders on social media. This means that there is high exposure to post of political leaders among the citizens.

The Table further revealed the extent citizens reply to a political post of leaders in social media. The data revealed that (n=79) 26.3 % reply to post of political leaders very often, (n=142) 47.4 % said, they reply to such post often, (n=70) 23.3% affirmed that they rarely reply to such post while only (n=9) 3 % of the respondents reported that they never reply to post by political leaders. The result indicates that more than half of the respondents comment or reply to post of political leaders. Regarding the extent political leaders respond to post of citizens on social media, almost all the respondents (n=281) 93.7% reported that they rarely received a reply to their post from political leaders while (n=19) 6.3% said they never received a personal reply from political leaders regarding their post or comment. This means that political leaders in Nigeria rarely respond to citizens' comment or questions on social media.

Discussion and Conclusion

This work provides insight into the extent Nigerians, particularly in the Taraba State, northeast region use the social media for political dialogue among themselves and their political leaders. It was revealed that there are more males than females in the sampled institutions. This is attributed to low female enrolment in formal school in the region. This supports findings of Nmadu et al. (2010) which state that in the northern region of Nigeria women enrollment in schools is very low. The data also show that youth between the age brackets of 25-35 constitute the highest number of students in the tertiary institutions in the state. Interestingly, these groups of people formed part of the highest users of social media in the country (Adum et al., 2016).

Facebook and Twitter were found to be the major social media platforms in use by the participants in the sampled area. In this regard, it was discovered that there is high application of Facebook and Twitter in political discussion among Nigerians. Most users of social media in the sampled area read political post, comment and make posts that have to do with political issues of the state. This agrees with findings of previous studies which suggests that social media have provided access to political information and participation (Abubakar, 2010; Chinedu-Okeke & Obi, 2016), and through this media, Nigerians can follow what is happening in the political sphere of the country as well as lend their voices to political issues. Furthermore, the attitude of Nigerians on social media as regards political dialogue as found in this current research, indicate that most of the citizens engaging in political discourse on social media are categorically subjective. This implies that their arguments are full of biases based on their ethnic, religious and political enclaves.

Hence, there seems to be no sound political debate or dialogue on social media landscape in Nigeria, which could contribute to the development of the country's politics. These outcome support studies which reported that even though social media have open up political landscape for popular participation in the political life of Nigerians, the media are being abused by Nigerians through careless posts and hate speeches (Apuke & Appolos, 2017; Oyebode, 2014, Udoka, 2015).

Additionally, the findings revealed that political leaders are often followed by citizens on social media and the leaders often take the opportunity of the media to reach citizens with their campaign messages and policies. However, it was indicated that political leaders do not use social media to interact with citizens to know their feelings, answer their questions and clear their worries. This goes to show that, in spite the fact that social media, unlike traditional media provide a platform for interaction, political leaders in Nigeria still approach social media with the mentality of traditional media, which is a majorly one-way flow where they only use the media to talk to people instead of to interact with the people.

Conclusively, the outcome of this study has reestablished the fact that social media have provided a public sphere where citizens engage in political discourse without restriction. In Nigeria, increasing part of the population, especially young adults move on to social media websites like Facebook and Twitter to lend their voices and opinions regarding political events as well as meet their political leaders. However, social media have not been effectively utilized by Nigerians and their leaders in ensuring sound and robust political dialogue which is necessary for effective functioning of modern democracy or society. This is because political leaders only use the media to campaign and create awareness about their activities among citizens rather than interact with the citizens to know their needs and opinions. The media have also become platforms of ethnic, religious and political attacks and hate speeches, thus, escalating the problem of disunity and conflict which the country is battling with.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings and conclusion drawn in this study, the following recommendations were made:

- Political leaders in Nigeria need to be more interactive on social media platforms. They should use the media not just to tell the voters what is in their mind, but also to share ideas with the voters on issues of importance as well as attend to voters' questions and worries. This can be achieved when public relations experts or firms contracted by these politicians and political parties encourage their clients to dedicate certain times for direct interaction or chat with voters on social media. This will not just benefit the nation as a whole, but the individual politician.
- The issue of information overload, rumor peddling, lies and other irresponsible posts common on social media in Nigeria need to be checked. Therefore, the social media users need to be sensitized about what to post. This can be actualized through institutions like religious body, traditional mass media, family and schools.
- Educational institutions also have a role to play in ensuring responsible use of social media. Thus, primary schools can incorporate the matter in subjects like social studies; secondary

schools can incorporate it in government/civil studies while tertiary institution can do that in general studies. The essence is to imbibe in the students the skills to decipher messages on social media and to be responsible and objective in making posts about politics or national issues.

- Victimization of citizens by government agents because of social media post unfavourable to the government should be condemned. Our leaders should know that this is democracy and social media is the hope of the common person to lend his or her voice. Therefore, scaring people from it or proposing laws to scare citizens from making their voices known on social media is tantamount to the growth of democracy in the country. Be that as it may be, government should work with telecom companies and other experts in information Communication Technology in order to curtail reckless posts on social media.

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