

An Appraisal of the Utilisation of Social Media for Political Communication in the 2015 Nigerian Presidential Election

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Abstract : The aim of this study was to examine the utilization of social media for political communication during the 2011 presidential election in Nigeria. The research design adopted for the study was survey; 294 copies of questionnaire were distributed to students of mass communication in three selected universities in North Central Nigeria. Simple random sampling technique was used to select the respondents for the study. The results of the descriptive statistics show that majority of the respondents choice of presidential candidates during the 2011 presidential election was influenced by the use of social media as indicated by high value of mean (1.5805). Similarly, a large number of respondents were of the opinion that the two selected presidential candidates were popular because they used social media in their political campaign (mean value of 1.5575). In addition, the respondents affirmed that their voting pattern during the 2011 presidential elections was influenced by social media usage. This was validated by a high mean value of (1.6667). Similarly, the result of the test of hypothesis indicated that voters' choice of political candidates was influenced by political communication on social media. In view of the findings of this study, the study, therefore, concludes that social media have redefined the landscape of political communication in Nigeria. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that social media should be fully integrated in Nigeria political communication system.

Keywords : communication, election, politics, social media

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