

The Effects of Internet Usage on Political Information Efficacy among the 18-24-year-old Students at Ilorin

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Abstract— This study investigates the effects of Internet usage on political information efficacy of 18-24-year-olds students at the University of Ilorin, Nigeria. Survey data were collected from 300 respondents with 87% response rate. Findings indicated that the majority 221(63.14%) of the respondents were skilled in word processor but were lacking other computer software skills. The majority 307(87.71%) of respondents were skillful e-mail users while another majority 173(49.42%) have internet access 1-3hr / week. PCA yielded three factors: political information efficacy, political mobilization, and political participation, while ANOVA revealed the effects of gender and area of specialization on the political information efficacy and political participation, but no effects on political mobilisation. The paper concludes that many Nigerian youth are aware of the internet usage, but they haven't the hardware, skills, and adequate access to the Internet.

Keywords- Internet politics, youth online politics, political participation, mobilization, political information efficacy

I. INTRODUCTION

The past several years had witnessed an explosion in web sites dedicated to political campaigns. This was due to the advent of electronic sources which has empowered the end-user the same way the invention of printing did 500 years ago. Many professionals saw their role changed, as books became more widespread and cheaper. The Reformation and the printing revolution were more or less coeval and books were as unstructured in the 15th century as the internet is today (Pond, 2005).

Likewise, since the last three decades, the Internet and World Wide Web have been changing society remarkably. Most political candidates and their representatives disseminate information and communicate with their constituents through the web, which was assumed to produce positive effects on politics and democracy (Park & Perry, 2008). However, the effects of the internet on political information efficacy of young prospective voters, especially, 18-24 year olds are yet unknown.

The respondents in this study, both males and females, were controlled for and they age between 18-24 year-old, which is a very active and youthful age significant for enforcing Internet use in Nigerian politics.

Respondents in this age range are still in their prime time, they can still learn and relearn, they are adventurous, willing and receptive to new ideas and innovations in society.

This analysis is important for a few reasons. First, findings, such as, Hargittai and Hinnabt (2008) reports from the Current Population Survey's Computer and Internet Use Supplement by NTIA (2004) highlighted that the most connected age group among Internet users is the segment of those between 18-24 who are in school. Also, the Pew Internet and American Life Project surveys showed growth in the percentage of young people between 18 and 29 who go online. In 2004, they reported that the majority of people in that age group went online; in 2006, they reported that even bigger majority of that same group were going online, percentages higher than for any other age group. Young adults are much more likely than their older counterparts to be online.

Second, it has long been established that the mass media have an important effect on political socialization. In this respect, some research now exists that suggests that the web may be an effective mobilization tool and serve to increase interest and participation in politics among youth (Shah, Kwak, & Holbert, 2001). For example, reports have shown that young people visited some popular web sites to fill out online voter registration forms (Kollock & Presto, 2005). And youth are increasingly turning to the Internet for their political understanding. For example, reports in 2004 showed that 44% of 18-29-year-olds claimed to have learned something about the presidential campaign from the Internet (Pew Research Centre, 2004a), and 28% of that same age group reported they got most of their information about the election from the Internet (Pew Research Center, 2004b).

Third, young people consistently vote at lower rates than do older ones and appear to be more cynical about and disengaged from politics as well. According to Iyengar and Jackman (2004) expounded that no other group is as disengaged from elections as youth who are still in their prime time. Even in the United States voter turnout trails that of other industrialized societies of the Europe, South Americas, Australia and New Zealand. Being disinterested in elections is anaemic among youth between the ages of 18 and 24, and this has been observed since eighteen year olds were enfranchised in 1972.

In Nigerian politics, youth do show and demonstrate some levels of willingness to participation, as a result of monetary gains from politicians. Also, age is associated with variations in Web access and Web use. Young adults lead the age groups with their use of communication tools, e.g., instant messaging and chatting, and they are more likely to pursue hobby or entertainment activities, e.g., downloading music or surfing for fun, and getting information about leisure time activities more than others (Hargittai & Hinnabt, 2008).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

New Media Use and Sociodemographics

In traditional media studies, demographics and socioeconomic status (SES) have been discussed as predictors of media use (Kosicki & Yuan, 2001). A series of nationwide surveys during the past decade discussed not only the significant correlation between demographics and socioeconomic status and traditional media use (Stempel & Hargrove, 1996), and a changing standard of pattern in the relationship between internet use and socio-demographics in terms of age, gender, education, and income.

In their study, Stempel and Hargrove (1996) reported that only 5% of their respondents regularly used the internet and online services in 1995. The usage increased with education and income and usage was considerably higher amongst 35 years old and above (Stempel et al., 2000). In 1999, they found that considerable number of the respondents became regular user of the Internet, and users of online services also increased tremendously in 1999. Meanwhile, men used the internet substantially more than women. However, the heaviest users were below 35 years old, while there was huge difference between those less than 35 years old and more than 55 years old (Stempel et al., 2000). Income and educations have remarkably positive correlations with the use of Internet and online media.

Pew Research Centre's (1999) reported that 23% of Americans went online in 1996 and 41% of American adults used the Internet in 1998. Generally, Internet users substantially younger (80% younger than 50), better educated (70% college educated), and more affluent than the U.S. average, and among them, men (52%) outnumber women. Most recently, Pew Internet & American Life Project (2005) surveys revealed that 26% of Americans age 65 and older go online, compared with 67% of those ages 50 to 64, 80% of those ages 30 to 49, and 84% of those ages 18 to 29. 29% of those in sub-secondary education have access to the Internet, compared with 61% of high school graduates and 89% of college graduates.

Internet users living in the highest-income households not only have the highest percentage of access to the Internet (93%) but also are most likely to have a fast connection. Survey data showed that 71% of them have a broadband connection at home.

The objective of this study is to investigate the effects of sociodemographics on internet usage and political information efficacy amongst 18-24-year-olds students in a tertiary institution.

A. New Media Use and Youth's Political Efficacy

Most political observers agree that some level of political knowledge or information is necessary for an active and satisfying participation in the political system in the US, information and knowledge about politics across the board appears to be low, but the problem is particularly acute among young citizens and women.

Low levels of political knowledge may also account for lower turnout rates among young citizens. For instance, the Millennium study of young voters' motivations for voting and not voting found that the young generation often cited the fact that they did not feel they had 'enough time or information' as a reason for not voting in 2000 (Murphy, 2000). On lack of knowledge as a barrier or 'de-motivator' to electoral participation, Kaid, McKinney and Tedesco (2004) proposed conceptual links between the notion of general political information efficacy and what they call political information efficacy. The general concept of political information efficacy is usually defined as an individual's feeling that he or she has the ability to influence the political process (Campbell, Gurin & Miller, 1954).

Whereas, Kaid, McKinney and Tedesco (2007) defined political information efficacy as the extent to which citizens are confident in their political knowledge and possess sufficient knowledge to engage with the political process, including voting. This concept is related to internal efficacy (Niemi, Craig & Mattei, 1991), but differs in that it focuses solely on the voter's confidence in his or her own political knowledge and its sufficiency to engage the political process, that it, to vote. Tedesco (2004) too demonstrated that the web interactivity can also enhance political information efficacy levels for young citizens. However, the concept has not been tested in regard to exposure to blogs.

Research has also shown that a solid relationship between the channels of communication form which information is sought and the level of political knowledge one has.

Older voters, who generally possess higher levels of political information and knowledge, watched both national and local television news and read newspapers significantly more often than younger voters of 18-29 years old in the 1996, 2000 and 2002 elections (Kaid et al., 2007).

On the other hand, younger citizens are more likely to have access to the internet and are more likely to use it for political efficacy. Political information efficacy may be enhanced for those who are exposed to political information on the internet, especially young citizens. Recent research on the exposure to political information via blogs is even more relevant to the research reported in this current research study. For instance, the Pew Internet and American Life Project (2006) reported that blog readership increased considerable in 2004, with a majority of readers being under the age of 30. Furthermore, the report stated that 'political blogs' are attributed as a key in the growing popularity of blog reading, and many readers used them to get political information about the 2004 campaign and election.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on the Uses and Gratifications Theory. Sweetser and Kaid (2008) relating from several other authors, mentioned that uses and gratifications theory has been more recently used to determine the gratifications of entertainment media, the theory 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 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.

IV. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guided the study:

- A. What computer skills are mostly reported by the respondents to be adequately possessed?
- B. Which of the internet skills are the respondents mentioned as being mostly skilled?
- C. What level of internet accessibility is being highlighted by the respondents?
- D. In what way can the respondents' computer experience be quantified as being supportive of Internet usage in Nigeria?

V. HYPOTHESES

In light of this review of the literature, the researcher has postulated three null hypotheses to test whether the Internet can increase the political information efficacy, political mobilization and political participation of young people.

H1: There are no significant effects of gender and area of specialisation on *political information efficacy* of young prospective voters.

H2: There are no significant effects of gender and area of specialisation and *political mobilization* of young prospective voters.

H3: There are no significant effects of gender and area of specialisation on *political participation* of young prospective voters.

A. Assumption

The expectation of the researcher is that blogging or participating in discussion groups, following the news, and forwarding political e-mails will have positive effects on political mobilisation, political information efficacy and political participation, whereas chatting with unknown people, looking at web sites, sending e-mails, playing interactive games, downloading music/movies, and purchasing or selling things will have no effects these variables.

The researcher expected to highlight the findings by interacting the respondents' gender and area of specialization, as the two strata in the study, with the extracted variables. The next sub-section provides the information on design, method and expectations from this study.

VI. DESIGN, METHOD, AND EXPECTATIONS

This study has investigated the level of the Internet use for political information efficacy, political mobilization and political participation among the young prospective voters of 18-25-year-olds. A self-developed survey questionnaire was used to collect data on socio-demographics and the respondents' perceptions on the subject matter. The samples were undergraduate students at the University of Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. As of November, 2010, the student population at the University stood at 20,000. Assuming 95% confidence level, Krejcie and Morgan (1970) provided a table for *Determining Sample Size for Research Activities*. Samples were plotted on the Table using this formula:

$$S = \frac{\chi^2 NP (1 - P)}{d^2 (N - 1) + \chi^2 P (1 - P)}$$

A. Interpretation of Sample Size Formula:

In which, S = required sample size; X^2 = the table value of chi-square for 1 degree of freedom at the desired confidence level (3.841); N = the population size; P = the population proportion (assumed to be .50 since this would provide the maximum sample size); d = the degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (.05).

$$S = \frac{3.841 (21827 \times 0.50) (1-0.50)}{.05^2(21827-1) + 3.841(0.50) (1-0.50)}$$

$$n_{\text{samples}} = 400 \text{ students}$$

The samples were drawn using a proportional stratified random sampling method. Two main strata were considered, namely; gender and area of specialization to even the sample.

B. Instrument Reliability

The instrument validity and internal consistency was tested by requesting senior academic staff to contribute by suggesting views and opinions for its improvement. The Cronbach's alpha formula established the reliability coefficient as 0.9, which is very good (e.g., Bryman & Cramer, 1997).

The researcher administered 400 questionnaires to the respondents, but only 350 useable questionnaires were returned, representing 87.5% response rate.

The dependent variables in this study are political information efficacy, political mobilization and political participation. Political information efficacy was defined as the extent to which citizens are confident in their political knowledge and possess sufficient knowledge to engage with the political process, including voting. Political mobilization has a limited scope in this study, in the sense that young people were asked based on their proclivity to have received or urged other people to vote by sending e-mails, phone calls or, visitation. As for political participation, a wide variety of definitions of political participation exists, but the central idea of each definition is almost always the same and can be reduced to four essential components: political participation is in essence (a) the activity (b) of citizens (c) to influence (d) political decisions. The definition of political participation, moreover, has grown in terms of activities (Van Deth, 2001) or "repertoires" (Norris, 2002).

Taking cognizance of the effect of socioeconomic status on Internet access and use, it is important to examine the effects these variables have on the hypothesized factors of the study. The researcher controlled for gender and area of specialisation, because the majority of young people in this study are all within 18 years but below 25 years old.

In view of these arguments, the researcher aimed to address the following objectives by investigating the influences of the respondents' socio-demographics of gender and area of specialization on the hypothesised factors of the study (*political information efficacy, political mobilization, and political participation*). The researcher used these socio-demographics to stratify the sample into gender (males and females) and area of specialization (Arts and Sciences). Correlation analysis was applied to examine that there was no effect of multicollinearity on the variables and overall analysis of the study, and ANOVA was applied to determine the effects of IVs on DVs and to compare the mean differences among the highlighted variables.

VII. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. Descriptive Statistics

Socio-demographic Profile of the respondents:

The respondents' demographics were gender, age, indigene, state of origin, educational levels, specialization, computer experience, computer skills, internet skills and internet access respectively. But in the analyses, only the stratified socio-demographics of gender and area of specialisation and the extracted factors were computed in the analyses.

International Journal of Emerging Technology and Advanced Engineering

Website: www.ijetae.com (ISSN 2250-2459, ISO 9001:2008 Certified Journal, Volume 3, Issue 3, March 2013)

Table 1 (below) displays the socio-demographics of the respondents. The age range of the majority 249(71.14%) of the targeted respondents was between 19-23-year olds. This is a very active and youthful age for enforcing the use of internet in Nigeria politics. They can still learn and relearn, adventurous, willing and receptive to new ideas and innovations in society. Congruently, Hargittai and Hinnabt (2008) reported that among Internet users, those between ages 18 to 24 who are in school are more connected. Also, the Pew Internet and American Life Project surveys showed substantive growth in the percentage of young people between 18 and 29 who go online. In 2004, they reported that 77% of people in that age group went online; in 2006, and that 88% of that same group was going online, percentages higher than for any other age group. Young adults are much more likely than their older counterparts to be online.

On the implications of age on youth democratic participation, Iyengar and Jackman (2004) expounded that no other group is as disengaged from elections as youth who are still in their prime time. Even in the U.S. voter turnout trails that of other industrialized societies of the Europe, South Americas, Australia and New Zealand. This attitude of disinterested in elections is particularly anaemic among youth between the ages of 18 and 24. They stressed further that the under-representation of youth voters has been observed ever since eighteen year olds were enfranchised in 1972.

On this regard, the environment in Nigeria is not different at all, youth do show and demonstrate some levels of willingness to participation, but evidently, they do so as a result of monetary gains when corrupt political aspirants use the tendency of voters' submission to their immediate rewards to solicit their votes and, eventually influencing the outcome of the elections.

Age-related imbalances have consequences in political participation, when elected officials respond to the preferences of voters, not non-voters who are young, whereas, political engagement is not a sufficient condition for political effectiveness and participation, though necessity. Age is associated with variations in Web access and Web use.

Young adults lead the age groups with their use of communication tools, such as instant messaging and chatting, and they are also more likely to pursue hobby or entertainment activities, such as downloading music or surfing for fun, they also use the medium for getting information about leisure time activities more than others (Hargittai & Hinnabt, 2008).

With regards to the respondents educational level, the majority 325(92.85%) were in bachelor degree programme.

As for their specializations, the majority 169(48.28%) were in Science-based courses as compared to the Arts majors.

Table 1
Frequency Distribution of the Respondents' Demographic Background

CHARACTERISTICS		N	%
GENDER	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
STATE OF RIGIN:			
	1 KWARA	195	55.71
	2 OYO	10	2.85
	3 OGUN	15	4.28
	4 ONDO	10	2.85
	5 OSUN	19	5.42
	6 LAGOS	15	4.28
	7 EKITI	16	4.57
	8 EDO	10	2.85
	9 KOGI	10	2.85
	10 DELTA	7	2
	11 ANAMBRA	5	1.42
	12 AKWA IBOM	5	1.42
	13 NIGER	5	1.42
	14 BAYELSA	5	1.42
	15 BENUE	5	1.42
	16 ABIA	3	0.85
	17 IMO	5	1.42
	18 RIVERS	5	1.42
	19 ENUGU	5	1.42
EDUCATIONAL LEVELS	UNDERGRADUATE	325	92.85
	POST-GRADUATE	4	1.14
	MISSING	21	6
SPECIALISATION	ARTS	141	40.28
	SCIENCE	169	48.28
	MISSING	40	8.75

n=350

On this regard, education 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 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).

Research Question One: What computer skills are mostly reported by the respondents to be adequately possessed?

For computer skills, Table 2 shows that the majority are skilled in copying and transferring files 227(64.85%), and they can use word processor software 221(63.14%) adequately, while few claimed being skilled in statistical packages (e.g., SPSS). This respondents were evidence of the areas for concentrating and focusing any development training programmes.

Table 2

Distribution of Respondents According to their Computer Software Skills

SKILLS	SKILLED (FREQ/%)	UNSKILLED (FREQ/%)
WORD PROCESSOR	221(63.14%)	129 (36.85%)
SPREADSHEETS OR EXCEL	199(56.85%)	151(43.14%)
DATABASES	56(16%)	294(84%)
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 AROBAT PDF FILES	67(19.14%)	283(80.85%)

n=350

As for presentation software (e.g., power-point), the majority 217(62%) were skilled in it, whereas for database, the majority were unskilled in it. For scanners, the majority 227(64.85%) of the respondents were very skilled in it, but for the skills for creating acrobat PDF files, the majority 283(80.85%) were unskilled in it.

Concerning these skills, Hargittai and Hinnant (2008) reported that access and ability are two issues within the digital divide, a difference some have referred to as the “second-level digital divide.” Research has endeavoured to create new ways to measure both computer literacy and online fluency together in order to more fully assess information seeking and disseminating skills. Also, ability or lack thereof, intensifies basic differences in the extent to which people across different segments of the population are able to benefit from use of the medium. Therefore, it has been argued that the way in which people utilise the Internet is at least in part driven by their online skills.

Research Question Two: Which of the internet skills are the respondents mentioned as being mostly skilled?

Table 3, displays the respondents’ skilfulness in various internet tools. The outputs revealed that as for web searching tools, the majority 260(74.28%) of the respondents were skilled in it, while the majority were unskilled in web evaluating skills.

As for e-mail, the majority (307(87.7%) of the respondents were skilled in it and they can browse the World Wide Web (WWW) easily, use the newsgroup, create homepages/websites, chat on the net, but the majority 324(92.57%) have not participated in teleconferencing or videoconferencing before.

Table 3

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(87.71%)	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

Research Question Three: What is the level of internet accessibility being highlighted by the respondents?

Regarding the respondents weekly internet access, Table 4 (below) shows that the majority 173(49.42%) have accessed to the Internet for 1-3 hrs/week, others claimed 4-6 hrs of internet access/ week. But few respondents have 7-9 hours/week.

Table 4

Internet Accessibility per Week

HOURS PER WEEK	FREQUENCY	PERCENT(Approx.)
1-3 HOURS	173	49.42
4-6 HOURS	122	34.85
7-9 HOURS	20	5.71
10 HOURS AND ABOVE	32	9.14
N/R	3	1
TOTAL	347	99

n=350

Awoloye et al. (2008) mentioned that time spent on the Internet is an important issue; they found that students spent an average of 3.5hpw online with Mean=1.43 and STD 0.7 based on categories: 1-3hpw, 4-6hpw, and over 6hpw.

Comparably, considerable improvement was recorded compared to earlier reports by Jagboro (2006) who recorded an hour per week in the same university, but incomparable to students in developed countries like England. Additionally, Luan, Fung, Nawawi and Hong (2005) highlighted that students in Oxfordshire, England spent an average of 7.9 hpw. This is likely due to the privilege of having access to the Internet at home and hostels.

Research Question Four: In what way can the respondents' computer experience be quantified as being supportive of Internet usage in Nigeria?

Table 5 (below) presents the distributions of respondents according to their computer years of experience. The majority 290(82.85%) claimed having 1-5 years of computer experience, but few claimed having 6-10 years respectively.

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 YEAR AND ABOVE	5	1.42
MISSING	8	2.28
TOTAL	322	99

n=350

Additionally, concerning students' Internet skills in tertiary institutions, Awolaye et al. (2008) reported that, the widespread implementation of Internet in tertiary institutions in Nigeria necessitates a careful investigation of level of adoption and usage among the students vis-à-vis the impact on their life. Many undergraduates use the Internet for different purposes; they realized the benefits it has, while others declared the Internet has impacted their academic and social life. Congruently, Liaw (2002) reiterated that the success of Internet utilization was very much related to the user's attitude toward the Internet.

In terms of the respondents' gender (male and female) and the extracted factors, there were statistically significant linear relationships between gender and *political information efficacy*, *political mobilisation* and *political participation*. The correlation coefficient indicates that gender has greater relationship on the respondents' *political information efficacy*, *political mobilisation* and *political participation*. These factors may be gender biased, though, to confirm on this the researcher conducted an analysis of simple effects (POST-HOC analysis).

POS-HOC Levene results showed that there was a significant interaction between gender and these factors, $F(1, 337) = .897, p = 0.344, MSE = 137.886$, and that the mean for the male respondents (69.53%), $p < 0.05$ was slightly higher as compared to the mean of the female respondents (68.33%).

Table 6
Inter-Variable Correlations of Respondents' Demographics and D.V.

	Gender	Education Level	Specialisation	Political Efficacy	Political Mob	Political Part
Gender	1.000					
Education Level	-.049	1.000				
Specialisation	-.117*	-.069	1.000			
Political Efficacy	.051	.010	-.178**	1.000		
Political Mob	.071	.031	-.084	.650**	1.000	
Political Part	.021	-.026	-.114*	.712**	.792**	1.000
M=	1.49	1.01	1.55	53.52	49.51	63.55
SD=	.501	.110	.499	11.306	10.432	15.705

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
(M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation. Alpha is significant at $p \leq 0.01$)

This slightly higher variability indicates that the male respondents in this study are more likely to be efficient in their political information seeking, more politically mobilized and likely to participate more politically.

The correlation tests between the respondents' specializations (Arts and Science majors) and the extracted factors, Table 6 (above) showed that there were statistically significant linear relationships between the respondents' specializations and the three factors, namely; *political information efficacy* ($r = -0.178, p = 0.01$), *political mobilization* ($r = 0.650, p = 0.01$), and *political participation* ($r = -0.792, p = 0.01$).

On the effects and implications of the strata groups, i.e., gender and specialization, it has been reported by Murphy and Greenwood (1998) that respondents' gender, though controversial and their areas of specialisation may influence the implementation and integrative use of Internet in various spectrums of endeavours.

B. Political Information Efficacy.

The researcher employed two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test to examine the effects of the independent variables on the dependent variables and whether there are statistically significant differences between the means of the two strata groups (gender and specialisation) and the three extracted factors.

Regarding the effects of gender and specialisation on *political information efficacy*, Table 7 shows that the Levene's tests is significant, $F(3, 296) = 1.551, p = .201$.

Therefore, the homogeneity of variance assumption has not been violated and there were equal variances among the group population. The overall F-test for the combined effects of the groups were statistically significant; $F(3, 296) = 3.819, p=0.010, MSE = 107.598$. It appears that the Mean value (57.49) for *political information efficacy* was larger among female subjects ($SD = 9.98$) majoring in Arts as compared to the Mean value (56.18) among male subjects ($SD = 9.09$) who are Arts majors.

Table 7
Mean Percentage Political information efficacy

		ARTS	SCIENCES	ALL
FEMALE	m	57.49	53.99	55.75
	SD	9.98	10.89	10.43
	n	73	72	155
MALE	m	56.18	52.40	53.89
	SD	9.09	11.05	10.43
	n	61	94	155
ALL	m	56.90	53.09	54.79
	SD	9.55	10.98	10.52
	n	134	166	300

Whereas, the Mean value (53.99) of *political information efficacy* was slightly higher among the female respondents majoring in Science ($SD = 10.89$) as compared to the Mean value (52.40) among the male respondents majoring in Sciences ($SD = 11.05$). The main effects of gender on *political information efficacy* was not statistically significant, $F(1, 296) = 1.426, p = 0.233, MSE = 107.598$. This revealed that gender has no significant influence on the respondents' *political information efficacy*. But looking at the interaction between specialisation and *political information efficacy*, the result showed that the effects of specialisation on *political information efficacy* were statistically significant, $F(1, 296) = 0.9026, p = 0.003, MSE = 107.598$. This result indicates that specialisation has a strong influence on the respondents' *political information efficacy*.

C. Test of Hypothesis

Ho1: There are no significant effects of users' gender and area of specialization on their *political information efficacy*.

Political information efficacy was defined as the extent to which citizens are confident in their political knowledge and possess sufficient knowledge to engage with the political process, including voting. Therefore, analysis of variance test of hypotheses H1 at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) and significant at $p \leq 0.01$ shows that the null hypothesis was rejected.

The findings revealed that there are significant effects of the respondents' gender and areas of specialization on their political information efficacy.

D. Political Mobilisation

Table 8 (below) shows the effects of gender and specialization on *political mobilization*, the results reveal that among the respondents majoring in Art subjects, the Mean value (51.73) for female subjects was larger for *political mobilisation* ($SD = 10.20$) as compared to the Mean value (51.15) of male respondents ($SD = 7.86$). Also, the Mean value (50.86) for *political mobilisation* was slightly higher among the female respondents majoring in Science subjects ($SD = 9.79$) as compared to male respondents majoring in Science subjects ($SD = 10.40$). The Levene's test has highlighted to us that the homogeneity of variance assumption has not been violated because it was not significant, $F(3, 298) = 1.324, p = .267$. The overall F-test for the combined effects of gender and specialization was not statistically significant; $F(3, 298) = 1.523, p = 0.208, MSE = 94.759$.

Table 8
Mean Percentage Political Mobilisation

		ARTS	SCIENCES	ALL
FEMALE	m	51.73	50.86	51.30
	SD	10.20	9.79	9.97
	n	74	72	146
MALE	m	51.15	48.76	49.71
	SD	7.86	10.40	9.51
	n	62	94	156
ALL	m	51.46	49.67	50.48
	SD	9.18	10.17	9.76
	n	136	166	302

Additionally, the main effects of gender on *political mobilisation* was not statistically significant, $F(1, 298) = 1.410, p = 0.236, MSE = 94.759$. This means that gender has no statistically significant influence on the respondents' *political mobilisation*. And the interaction between specialisation and *political mobilisation* was not statistically significant too, $F(1, 298) = 2.068, p = 0.151, MSE = 94.759$. This explains that area of specialisation has no effects on the respondents' *political mobilisation*. In terms of the interactive effects of gender and specialisation on *political mobilisation*, there were no statistically significant effects among the groups, $F(1, 298) = 0.451, p = 0.502, MSE = 94.759$. These results show that gender and specialisation have no significant effects on the respondents' *political mobilisation*.

E. Test of Hypothesis

Ho2: There are no significant effects of the respondents' gender and area of specialisation on *political mobilisation*.

Political Mobilisation was defined as the eagerness and willingness to participate and call others to participate in politics without needing to be informed to take part in politics. Therefore, analysis of variance test of hypothesis H2 at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) and significant at $p \leq 0.01$ shows that the null hypothesis was not rejected. The findings revealed that there were no significant effects of users' gender and their area of specialization on their political mobilisation. This indicates that users' gender and area of specialization will not affect their political mobilization.

F. Political Participation

Table 9 (above) shows the effects of gender and specialisation on *political participation*, the homogeneity of variance assumption was not significant, therefore, the assumption has not been violated, $F(3, 298) = 1.864$, $p = 0.136$. The overall F-test for the combined effects of the two independent variables were not statistically significant; $F(3, 298) = 1.767$, $p = 0.153$, $MSE = 211.577$. The results revealed that female respondents majoring in Arts subjects have larger Mean value (67.85) for *political participation* (SD =14.23) as compared to the Mean value (67.08) of male respondents in Art subjects (SD = 12.34). Also, the Mean value (64.82) of *political participation* was slightly higher among the female respondents majoring in Science subjects (SD =15.91) as compared to the Mean value (63.14) of male majoring in Sciences (SD = 16.04). The main effects of gender on *political participation* was not statistically significant, $F(1, 298) = .525$, $p = 0.469$, $MSE = 211.577$.

Table 9
Mean Percentage Political Participation

		ARTS	SCIENCES	All
FEMALE	m	67.85	64.82	66.36
	SD	14.23	15.91	15.10
	n	74	72	146
MALE	m	67.08	63.14	64.71
	SD	12.34	16.04	14.12
	n	62	94	156
All	m	67.50	63.87	65.50
	SD	13.35	15.40	14.60
	n	136	166	302

As for the respondents' area of specialisation and *political participation*, there were statistically significant effects among the groups, $F(1,298) = 4.244$, $p = 0.040$, $MSE = 211.577$.

As shown in these results, area of specialisation has statistically significant influence on the respondents' *political participation*. These results were consistent with the findings on *political participation* as shown in the overall where there was a slightly higher Mean value (67.50) among the respondents majoring in Arts (SD =13.35) as compared to those in Sciences with the Mean value (63.87) and (SD = 15.40). These results shows that science subjects majored are likely to be more active in their political participations as compared to Arts subjects majored.

These results showed that gender has no significant influence on the respondents' *political participation*. This finding contradicted the reports by Summers' (1990) and McMahon and Gardner's (1995) who reported that male users were less anxious about the Internet and make more frequent use of it. Although, the means and standard deviation in these results showed that female subjects had slightly larger variability for *political participation* as compared to male subject. Gender influence on internet usage was reported as being controversial by Murphy and Greenwood (1998), who highlighted that there are no significant differences between the attitudes of male and female internet users.

G. Test of Hypothesis

Ho3: There are no significant effects of gender and area of specialisation on users' *political participation*.

Political participation was defined as individual willingness to want to take part in political activities with the hope to influencing the government policies of the country. Therefore, analysis of variance test of hypotheses H3 at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) and significant at $p \leq 0.01$ shows that the null hypothesis was rejected. There were significant effects of users' gender and area of specialization on their political participation. This indicates that users' gender and area of specialization may likely affect their political participation. Congruously, Summers and Easdown mentioned that "subject specialism of users may influence the extent of Internet use. Internet users, those who specialised in geography, tended to use computers more when compared with those who had chosen history as their main subject" (cited in Murphy & Greenwood, 1998, 415).

On the notion of inadequacy of the Internet accessibility in Nigeria, Awolaye et al. (2008) highlighted that erratic power supply is a major issue, which has to be tackled. For example, in Ghana constant electricity is not a problem as it is the case here in Nigeria (Idowu, Idowu, Adagunodo, 2004). Government policy should be directed at encouraging the reliability of electric power, to avoid further deterioration.

International Journal of Emerging Technology and Advanced Engineering

Website: www.ijetae.com (ISSN 2250-2459, ISO 9001:2008 Certified Journal, Volume 3, Issue 3, March 2013)

The idea of 'Catching the Students Young' is also very important in the application of ICT, not only for educational use, but also for imparting political information seeking, political knowledge, political mobilisation and political participation.

Therefore, to achieve this, changes in education curricula may be necessary in order for the Internet to become commonplace tool that it ought to be. These policies must periodically be reviewed for proper monitoring of compliance and government should seek to increase the amount of, and access to, up-to-date ICT equipment in point of access, e.g., in all tertiary institutions, with provision of adequate resource including bandwidth relative to the country population. Adoption of effective strategies to enhance skills in the use of ICT is also very important.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The ICT and internet adoption is rapidly growing in Nigeria, thus strategy and confidence is growing that it will be an important element of future political and campaign tool, but users should not view it as a panacea to solving elections and political problems in the country, Nigeria. Common obstacles to internet adoption for politics 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.

Finally, this study provides a rich and potentially fruitful area for further research and has practical implications for users, such as, politicians, voters, administrators of electoral activities, and vendors, who are concerned with the diffusion of ICT and internet in various social institutions in Nigeria.

IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings, the study makes the following recommendations for further research:

A). Improvement on studies of online political campaign communications

It is hoped that future studies would include more variables that touch on the issue of ICT in general with specific focus on the Internet use and youth information seeking for political campaign communications in Nigeria.

B). Determining the level of computer skillfulness of the respondents

Other studies should focus on those areas where the respondents claimed not to be skilful should evidently be the areas to concentrate improvement efforts, while, the levels of skillfulness should be evaluated.

C). Longitudinal study of ICT use and users for political purpose

Longitudinal studies should be conducted over an extended period of time to assess the Internet impact on politics in Nigeria. This could be more informative and enlightened to future researchers.

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