USE OF THE INTERNET FOR POLITICAL COMMUNICATION IN ABUJA MUNICIPAL AREA AND SHENDAM LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: CASE OF NIGERIA 2011 GENERAL ELECTIONS

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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES, AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA
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DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION
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AUGUST, 2016

DECLARATION

I declare that the work in the thesis entitled USE OF THE INTERNET FOR POLITICAL COMMUNICATION IN ABUJA MUNICIPAL AREA AND SHENDAM LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: CASE OF NIGERIA 2011 GENERAL ELECTIONS has been performed by me in the Department of Mass Communication under the supervision of Dr. Mahmud M. Umar, and Dr. Ladi Adamu. The information derived from the literature has been duly acknowledged in the text and a list of references provided. No part of this thesis was previously presented for another degree or diploma at any university.

NWAGU ODINAKA FRANCIS

_____	_____	_____
Name	Signature	Date

CERTIFICATION

This Thesis entitled, "Use of the Internet for Political Communication in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area: Case of Nigeria 2011 General Elections" meets the regulation governing the award of the degree of M.Sc. Mass Communication of the Ahmadu Bello University, and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to God Almighty. To Him be praise forever and ever, Amen.

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ABSTRACT

The study is on use of the internet for political communication in Abuja municipal area of Abuja federal capital territory and Shendam local government area of Plateau State: Case of Nigeria 2011 general elections. This study has three major purposes: (1) determine the usefulness of internet-based political campaigns to voters' decision making during the election, (2) identify the problems associated with the use of internet-based political campaign during the election, and (3) ascertain the level of contribution of internet-based political campaigns in addressing challenges associated with the use of traditional media for political campaign during the election. Sample for the study was selected using quota and purposive sampling techniques. The respondents for the study comprised voters in Abuja Municipal Area, and Shendam Local Government Area, who were 18 years old before the 2011 Nigeria general election and had registered for voting in the election; as well as web consultants, and campaign managers of political parties. Data for this study were collected using both questionnaire and interview schedule. Findings from the study indicated that majority of voters did not access or come in contact with internet-based political campaigns during the election. The problems associated with the use of internet as a medium for political campaign during the election for political parties were illiteracy among voters, technical challenges, and inadequate electricity to run computers, among others. In terms of the usefulness of internet based campaigns to voters' decision making among voters who access internet-based political campaigns, the study found among others, that internet-based campaigns helped them to make up their minds on choice of candidates. Internet-based political campaign was relatively successful in addressing challenges associated with the use of traditional media for political campaign for candidates and voters. Based on these findings the study recommended that urgent improvement of the internet infrastructure in Nigeria is needed. Factors that drive up cost of internet use should be addressed by internet operators and the government to bring down cost. Candidates and political parties should raise more competent internet campaign management teams to improve effective use of the internet for political campaigns during future elections.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Study Background

One of the common complaints by opposition parties especially during elections in Nigeria is that they are not given equal airtime as the ruling parties to air their campaigns on government owned media, which is the dominant media in Nigeria to reach voters. Opposition parties often see this as deliberate attempt by the ruling parties to reduce the oppositions' influence and chances of winning elections. Nigerian broadcast law forbids ownership of the mass media by political parties. This therefore, means that political parties are left to use government or privately owned traditional media for political campaigns. With this comes the difficulties of access and high cost of use of these media for opposition parties.

Perhaps do to some of these challenges and other perceived benefits, in recent times; there has been a growing trend with political parties in Nigeria incorporating the internet for political campaigns.

The incorporation of the internet in political campaigns is assumed to have given campaign groups whether government or opposition parties unprecedented opportunities for political campaigns to reach voters. Ownership and use of the internet for political campaigns is open to all campaign groups and gives them the opportunities to greatly use the media to reach out to voters and supporters alike. Relatively, the cost of operating a website or using the internet is far cheaper than traditional media. Political campaigners in Nigeria are now adopting the internet for political communication aimed at mobilizing public participation in elections.

Though, there was an observed growth in use of internet-based political campaigns during the 2011 general election, questions remain about the usefulness of internet-based political campaigns to voters' decision making during the election in areas where they were used such as in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area of Plateau State. Also, the body of evidence as regards problems associated with the use of internet for political campaigns as well as how the internet addresses the challenges associated with the use of traditional media for political campaigns during the election are very few and evolving.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In Nigeria, recent elections have been characterized by an unprecedented use of the internet for political campaign by many political parties, particularly by parties in the opposition who often face hurdles in their attempts to have equal access to the traditional media for political campaigns. In Nigeria, it is not unusual to hear about accusations of unequal or limited access to the media by political parties in opposition as they seek to reach voters. There are more government controlled media in Nigeria than private owned media. It is generally assumed that within a democratic political system citizens should have sufficient opportunities to communicate their preferences toward political decision makers. Of equal importance, however, is the mobilization aspect, citizens have to be mobilized and recruited in order to be able to participate. It is in this regard that limiting access to the media for political campaigns for political parties hurt their ability to recruit or gain supports of voters and enable the parties realize their objectives.

The 2011 Nigerian elections witnessed an increased use of the internet for political campaigns by political parties. Though it assumed that the use of the internet for political campaigns may hold a lot promises for political parties, challenges likely to be faced by citizens in the area of

accessing the internet for political information during political campaigns in Nigeria may pose a challenge to the relevance of internet use for political campaign. Other issues that raise concern are likely challenges inherent in the use of the medium for political campaigns. There are also questions concerning voters' dependence on the medium for decision making as it relates to choosing of candidates and parties during elections as well as role the internet could likely play in addressing challenges associated with the use of traditional media in political campaigns during elections; and the impact it has on voters during the election. These identified issues are important in that they could greatly impact on the challenges that could arise in the use of the internet for political campaigns. This study intends to address these questions.

1.3 Research Questions

The research questions of the study are as follows:

1. To what extent did voters in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area come in contact with internet-based political campaigns during the 2011 Nigeria presidential election?
2. What were the problems associated with the use of internet as a medium for political campaign during the 2011 presidential election in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area?
3. To what extent did internet-based political campaigns aid voters' decision- making during the 2011 presidential election in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area?
4. What was the level of contribution of the internet in addressing challenges associated with the use of traditional media in political campaigns during the 2011 presidential election in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area?

5. What were the similarities in the wordings of the internet-based political campaign massages used in the 2011 Nigeria presidential election?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

This study sets out to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. Determine the extent, voters in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area came in contact with internet-based political campaign during the 2011 presidential election.
2. Ascertain the problems associated with the use of internet as a medium for political campaign during the 2011 presidential election in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area.
3. Find out the extent to which internet-based political campaigns aided voters' decision making in the 2011 presidential election in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area.
4. Determine the level of internet contribution in addressing challenges associated with the use of traditional media in political campaigns during the 2011 presidential election in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area.
5. Examine the similarities in the wordings of the internet-based campaign massages used in the 2011 Nigeria presidential election.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Studies on the use of the internet as a tool for political campaign in the 2011 Nigeria general elections are few and thus, have necessitated the need for this study. In view of the growing use of the internet as a medium for political campaign in Nigeria, this study is thus timely as it offers opportunity for empirical enquiry on the use of the internet for political campaigns in Nigeria with specific reference to determining the relevance of internet-based political campaigns to voters' decision making during the 2011 general election in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area in Nigeria; identify the problems associated with the use of internet-based political campaign during the 2011 general elections in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area and also, determine the contribution of internet-based political campaigns in addressing challenges associated with the use of traditional media for political campaign during the 2011 general election in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area and determine the impact of internet-based political campaigns on voters during the 2011 Nigeria general election in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area.

Furthermore, this study is important in that its findings will fill the knowledge gap that exist in the body of knowledge on the suitability of use of the internet as a medium for mobilizing society towards political causes in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area; determine the relevance of internet-based political campaigns to voters; determine the contribution of the internet in addressing challenges associated with the use of traditional media in political campaigns particularly in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area, as well as examine the impact of internet-based political campaigns on voters in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area.

It is assumed that the findings of this study will be of interest to political campaign managers, web consultants, political parties, media scholars and the general public who may have interest in internet-based political campaigning.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This research intends to examine the use of internet for political campaign during Nigeria 2011 presidential election in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area.Unlike other Nigerian elections, the 2011 presidential election was characterized by a significant use of the internet in political campaigns. This particular reason influenced the choice of the 2011 Nigeria presidential election as the case study for this research.

1.7 Limitation of the Study

It was difficult to authentically verify if all members of the sample of the study had actually registered for voting in the 2011 Nigerian General elections. Criteria for being part of the population for the study were that voters should be of voting age (18 years old) before the 2011 Nigeria general elections and should have registered for voting in the election

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This section reviews literature which is relevant to this study. The research looks at the conceptual, theoretical and empirical aspects of the various subtopics considered in this review. Also, the theoretical framework for the study- Technology Acceptance Model is also discussed.

2.2.1 Background on New/Social Media

Arthur (2011) explains that the term social media broadly referred to internet-based tool and services that allow users to engage with each other, generate content, distribute, and search for information online. It is this interactive or collaborative nature of these tools that makes them 'social'. The interactive nature of these web-based tools marks a paradigmatic shift in web-based communication. Wohlin, Jenkins, and Arthur (2011) analyzing the concept of social media described social media as new generation of (Web 2.0) Internet and web-based applications. Web 2.0 applications emphasize the importance of user participation, openness and network effects. Social media aims to use the collective and self-organizing intelligence present in a social network, a network which is open to new participants, and their specific experiences, knowledge, and ideas.

Evidence pointing to the potential of social network sites to serve in the arena of political discussion is emerging, indicating a need for further exploration into the political aspects of social network. For example, a survey conducted in 2008 by the Pew Internet and American Life Project found that 10 percent of all Americans who use social network sites use them "for some

kind of political activity. The report states that, of adults under 30 who have a social network profile, half use social network sites to get or share information about the candidates and the campaign. A prior study by Pew conducted in December 2007 found that seven percent of all respondents and 27 percent of young adults reported using social network sites to get information about the 2008 Presidential election campaign. Comparison of these studies demonstrates the growing political use of social network sites over the course of a few months, especially in the lives of young adults. (Kushin and Kitchener, 2009:1). Considering the consequences of online campaigns and the political uses of the Internet, Anduiza (2009:12) notes:

> Academic discussion regarding the importance or effects of election campaigns has a long tradition. Since the work by Lazarsfeld and his team in the 1940s, the prevalent position within political science has been that campaigns do not have a great effect on converting citizen preferences but usually reinforce previously existing predispositions, something which, on the other hand, can be decisive for the electoral outcome when it's highly competitive. In spite of the erosion of party loyalties and the in-crease in floating voters, this argument has not varied substantially in the last comparative contributions to the issue.

Toulba, El-Ammari, Alamil, Hasnaoui and Benjelloun (2011), in their study titled *Social Networks as a Tool for Social Mobilization to Achieve Political Change*, found that technological advances have enabled Internet users to evolve from consumers of internet-based content to also produce content. These technological advances have led to the development of many different forms of social media platforms. Victor, Rebecca, and Arthur (2011) outlined the following as web-based tool: Internet forums, weblogs, social blogs, micro-blogs, wikis, podcasts, photographs, videos, rating and social bookmarking. The internet has become an increasingly important vehicle for political communication.

Unlike traditional media (e.g. newspapers and television), the Internet allows its audience to select and choose the extent of their exposure to political information. Its potential for

interactivity between audiences and sources, and its wealth of information are all thought to facilitate widespread political change (Song-In, 2007). The internet's unique transmission capability has altered the flow of information throughout society and consequently has impacted the political behaviour of the general public (Eva, Marta and Aina, 2009).

Given the rapid diffusion of the Internet as well as the increasing use of the medium for political purposes, certain uses of the Web might shape activism beyond traditional factors (Tsang, 2012). Research has confirmed the crucial roles of political discussion in predicting various forms of civic and political participation (e.g., McLeod, Daily, Guo, Eveland, Bayer, and Yang,Wang 1996; Sotirovic and McLeod, 2001). However, research on the role of Internet-based political discussion is only beginning to develop (Tsang, 2012). Marc, Sara, Dietlind, Valérie-Anne (2010), in their study on the internet and political mobilization, found that political mobilization via the Internet can be extremely low-cost compared with other methods such as face-to-face or telephone contact, given that the marginal cost of sending one more e-mail or subscribing an additional person to a bulletin distribution list is practically zero**.** Bennett (2003), in particular, suggests that the Internet could be beneficial to resource poor organizations that do not traditionally have access to mass media outlets. ICTs help reduce the cost of distributing information as well as the cost of participation. ICTs offer inexpensive means to disseminate information via activist organizations' Web sites.

Heaney, Newman, and Sylvester (2011) however argue that the low costs of Internet communication only matter for campaigns if the Internet actually allows them to reach potential supporters. Consistent with this need, recent surveys show that the Internet's audience is expanding. According to a 2009 survey conducted by the Pew Research Center, nearly three-

quarters of Internet users in the United States (representing 55 percent of the adult population) went online to get information about or to discuss the 2008 election. Although traditional media outlets are still the dominant sources of political news, an increasing proportion of voters are learning about politics through the Internet. Indeed, the audience is there—but can campaigns connect with it?

Marc, Sara, Dietlind and Valérie-Anne (2010) indicate that in advanced industrial societies, the Internet now plays a major role in political communication and various forms of political campaigns; especially with regard to transnational forms of political mobilization, it can be argued that the Internet has dramatically changed preexisting patterns of mobilization and participation. Studies in the United States of America indicate that it has become virtually mandatory for candidates to have a campaign website. In 1998, only 35% of major-party House candidates and 72% of major-party Senate candidates posted campaign websites (Kamarck 1999: 100). By 2004, these numbers had jumped to 81% and 92% respectively (Goldsmith 2004; Foot and Schneider 2006:7-11).Various scholars assume that the use of new technologies could potentially lead to a more intensive and more inclusive form of political communication throughout society (Davis and Owen, 1998). It has also been shown that Internet use is associated with higher levels of political engagement.

Arthur (2012) further asserts that social media have great potential for encouraging collaborative political participation. Social media offer ordinary citizens the opportunity to interact more directly and actively with their political systems. A study by Pew Internet and America Life Project (2008) on the American Presidential election of 2008 showed that voters increasingly took an active role in the political process by contributing their own thoughts or comments to the

online debate. In 2008, nearly one in five internet users posted their thoughts, comments or questions about the campaign on a website, blog, social networking site or other online forum. These feedback loops help candidates use the Internet to mobilize more supporters by giving their initial supporters the tools to go and recruit more support. The extent of these mobilizing features has been absent from previous mobilizing technologies until the Internet.

Social media tools offers opportunities for Diaspora communities to get involved in social-political processes back home. Online activities forge connections between people that might actually increase levels of political participation. Krueger (2002) as cited in Quintelier and Vissers (2008), for instance, has found that the Internet has the potential to draw new people to offline political participation or at least increase political awareness. The mobilization hypothesis will be especially successful when the internet is able to increase interest in politics. However, the time-replacement hypothesis is inconsistent with the hypothesis that Internet use can increase political participation. The time-replacement hypothesis argues that the time people spend on the Internet, or on television, cannot be devoted to other activities.

Quintelier and Vissers (2008) note these authors argue that all media use has a negative influence on social and political participation (Kraut, Patterson, Lundmark, Kiesler, Mukopadhyay and Scherlis, 1998; Nie and Erbring, 2002; Norris, 1996; 2006; Putnam, 2000) and cite three reasons in support of these findings. First, time spent on the Internet cannot be devoted to other, more social, leisure activities (i.e., time-replacement hypothesis). Second, online interaction does not involve the face-to-face contact necessary to build social trust, which can be instrumental in stimulating political participation (Putnam, 2000). Kraut et al. (1998: 1019) attested to the Internet's inhibition of live interaction, arguing that "like watching television, using a home

computer and the Internet generally implies physical inactivity and limited face-to-face social interaction".

Research into the effect of Internet use on voting behaviours is scarce. Some studies do not find any significant effect based on survey data (Anduiza, Cantijoch, and Gallego, 2009, Bimber and Davis, 2003 as cited in Anduiza 2009),while other authors, using aggregate data, detect a certain impact on the part of candidate websites (not necessarily direct, given the low number of visits) on election results, taking other relevant factors into account (Gibson and McAllister, 2006, Sudulich, 2009 as cited in AnduIza 2009).Studies are still few and come up against the methodological difficulties already mentioned: it is very complicated to isolate the specific causal effect of Internet use and separate it from other possible causes related to the election campaign of the parties and candidates (resources, innovation), as well as it being difficult to estimate possible indirect effects (such as the effect of stimuli originating online but that are afterward passed on face to face) (Anduiza, 2009:9).

Arthur (2012) analyzing the challenges of social media use in political mobilization, warns that although social media provide the potential to facilitate political mobilization and in particular, electoral participation, there is a need to be cautiously optimistic in touting this potential, as a number of challenges exist in the context within which the platforms are being used. He identified that various factors impinge on participation depending on the specific context in which the platforms are being utilized. These include countries' historical experiences, institutional arrangements and socioeconomic and political conditions. These factors have an impact on the nature of the political participation that can be facilitated via social media**.**

2.2.2 The 2011 Nigeria General Elections

Odion (2012), identifies election is an act of choosing or selecting candidates who will represent the people of a country in the parliament and in other positions in the government. Election is a form of procedure recognized by the state or an organization, whereby all or some of the members of the organization choose a smaller number of persons or one person to hold office of authority in the organization. Elections are important and highly organized media of popular expression. This implies that it is through the system of elections that the masses express their wishes (Akindele, 2011). Uwagboe (2009) maintains that elections are at best, means by which the people choose and exercise some degree of control over their representatives. Elections are further seen as formal decision-making process by which a population chooses an individual to hold public office.

Democracy as a political system imposes responsibility on officials to be accountable to the people, and they must return to the voters at prescribed intervals to seek their mandate to continue in office. For this reason, when elections are called, politicians and supporters will begin to oil the political machines in other to influence policy by competing directly for the votes of the electorates in what are called campaigns. The essences of elections, according to Ejeba (2012) as cited in Odion (2012), are to: ensure that voters freely choose those who will represent them; enable voters to make choices among the parties, candidates' and programmes; ensure that elected officials are accountable to the electorate; promote citizens sense of belonging in government; promote public confidence, trust and support for government and its programme; and also, provide the mechanism for collective efforts towards the development of the country.

Ejue and Ekanem (2011:287), further states that in Nigeria, the constitutional right to vote for every Nigerian citizens who has attained the age of eighteen (18) years are contained in sections

and subsections of 77 (2); 117 (2), 132 (5) and 178 (5) of the 1999 constitution. This right exists as embodied in the universal declaration of human right and the entire body of international human rights law. These rights are recognized at least in principle by most countries and form the heart of several national constitutions. These authors stress that one of the most critical means through which individuals can influence governmental decision-making is through voting. Voting is a kind of formal expression of preference for a candidate for a particular office or for a proposed resolution of an issue that concerns one state or country.

Jinadu (2011), in his studies on elections in Nigeria, states that the first major election in Nigeria can be traced to the 1964 general election which was the first after the end colonialism by the British colonialists. The election was contested between Nigerian National Alliance (NNA) and Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA). Since then few elections have been held which were subsequently followed by military dictatorships. After 13 years of absence of democratic system of government, in 1999, Nigeria finally returned to democratic rule. Since then government has transited democratically through elections. Examples of such elections were the 1999, 2003 and 2007 general elections.

The 2011 elections included elections into the National Assembly, which consists of a Senate and a House of Representatives. The Senate has a total of 109 members elected from single-member constituencies and the House of Representatives has 360 members, also elected from single-member constituencies. Members of both houses of the National Assembly are elected for a four-year mandate. There were elections into gubernatorial offices in the 36 states that make up the federation, State Houses of Assemblies in the 36 states of the federation and for the position of office of the president of Nigeria. The 2011 Nigeria's general elections were held from April 9 – May 6, 2011(Common Wealth Observer Group, 2011).

The Common Wealth Observer Group (2011), in its reports on the 2011 general elections held in Nigeria, stated that of the 63 registered political parties that participated in the April 2011 elections, 54 fielded candidates for the federal and/or state elections, and 20 for the presidential poll. The political parties that participated in 2011 election include:

Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN): Nuhu Ribadu; African Democratic Congress (ADC): Peter Nwangwu; African Renaissance Party (ARP): Yahaya Ndu; All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP): Ibrahim Shekarau; Better Nigeria Progressive Party (BNPP): Ifeanyichukwu Nnaji; Congress for Progressive Change (CPC): Muhammadu Buhari; Fresh Democratic Party (FDP): Chris Okotie; Hope Democratic Party (HPC): Ambrose Awuru; Liberal Democratic Party (LDP): Chris Nwaokobia; Mega Progressive Peoples Party (MPPP): Rasheed Shitta-Bey; National Conscience Party (NCP): Dele Momodu; National Majority Democratic Party (NMDP): Akpona Solomon; National Transformation Party (NTP): John Dara; People for Democratic Change (PDC): Mahmud Waziri; Peoples Democratic Party (PDP): Goodluck Jonathan; Peoples Mandate Party (PMP): Nwadike Chikezie; Social Democratic Mega Party (SDMP): Pat Utomi United National Party for Development (UNPD): Ebiti Ndok. 21 parties, led by the All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) had opted for a working alliance with Goodluck Jonathan under Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) platform.

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in its 2011 reports on the elections indicated that total voter registration in 2011 was 74 million with 40 million valid votes and 1.3 million invalid votes. Gberie (2011) observed that the 2011 elections were deemed to be the most organized, free and fair in the country's history, though, they were far from flawless. International observers such as Common Wealth observer group described the votes as a 'significant improvement' over previous ones which were generally characterized by mass

electoral irregularities, making the processes not to be deemed as free and fair as well as resulting in voters losing confidence in the electoral process.

2.2.3 The Internet and 2011 Nigeria Presidential Election

The 2011 general elections witnessed a remarkable use of social media as a political communication tool in Nigeria. During the election, many political parties and candidates incorporated internet in a significant way, into their electoral campaigns. It had been noted that three major issues underlined the tremendous use of social media tools during the 2011 elections. Firstly, the use of social media in Nigeria's 2011 elections reflects a global trend towards "internet elections" or "e-electioneering". Around the world, rapidly expanding access to internet, increased availability of internet ready smart-phones and other communication devices, as well as the evolution of web-based new media – personal websites, social networking sites, blogs, e-newsletters, have redefined methods of political communication, leading to a significant shift towards the use of social media in the electoral process. Previously, network television and newspapers dominated coverage of electioneering and were the primary sites of election-related information. But today, the social media has become a major election information sharing platform globally.

The second issue that underlines the use of social media in Nigeria's 2011 elections was the tendency of some Nigerian politicians to tap into the opportunities offered by the social media for on-line campaigning. During the 2011 general elections, many politicians, particularly the presidential aspirants, used social media tools to connect with voters and constituents. Facebook and Twitter appear to be the most widely used social media platforms by the politicians. The third issue that underscores the use of social media in Nigeria's 2011 elections is the tendency of

Nigerian civil society and the electorate to take up social media as a tool for improving the efficiency of election observation. (Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre, 2011:1:3)

Study conducted by Internet World Stats (2012), placed Nigeria as having above 45 million internet users in the year 2012, topping all other African countries. techloy.com (2012), as cited in Iwokwagh and Okworo (2012:385), in its study on the growth of social networks in Africa, recorded that Facebook users in Nigeria had crossed the 4 million mark, having experienced a rapid growth rate in 2011 which made it the 15th fastest growing country on Facebook globally, and the 35th country in the world ranking of countries on Facebook. Nigeria is the third Twitter nation in ranking, in Africa after South Africa and Kenya, with 1.67 million tweets, while South Africa reportedly generated over 5 million tweets, and Kenya 2.48 million tweets (*Punch Newspapers*, February 7, 2012). Iwokwagh and Okworo (2012:385) then concluded that it was not surprising therefore, that Facebook was extensively engaged by Nigerians who actively participated in the political process and the 2011 Presidential Election in particular.

It is worth noting that prior to the use of the internet as a tool for electoral campaigns in Nigeria, political rallies, personal contact and speeches; and political adverts on the mass media, were popularly used for mobilizing electorates' support for elections. Campbell (2011) found that although the 2011 general election was the first to include widely available social media, Nigeria now holds the continent's record for most tracked reports of social media use during an election, with nearly half a million examples cataloged by the proprietary software at the Social Media Tracking Centre in Nigeria. Social media facilitated the transmission and exchange of information during the elections. Four ways by which the social media were used were: through

the massive use of blackberry messenger; YouTube, Skype, Facebook, twitters, GSM, SMS (Oladimeji, Olatunji and Nwogwugwu, 2013).

In the 2011 presidential election, a few of the candidates in the presidential elections made use of the internet to reach out to supporters and voters. Many candidates in the presidential election had Facebook, YouTube and Twitter pages. Many candidates created very functional and attractive websites that kept their supporters informed. It was a clear indication of the popularity of social networking sites as integral campaign tools in the 2011 presidential election (Sesan, 2011). Goodluck Jonathan, one of the contestants in the presidential election, campaign's website included information on his candidacy, information on his perspectives on campaign issues, donation opportunities from supporters and other campaign materials. Arthur (2012) observed that Dr Goodluck Jonathan's social media accounts such as Facebook and twitter offered had many fans. Dr Goodluck Jonathan's social media accounts offered opportunities for supporters and voters to interact with him on issues of importance to them. It also offered opportunity for interaction among voters on campaign issues and the candidate's positions on campaign issues in the election.

Dr Goodluck Jonathan's presidential campaign was more than a major social media milestone because it ushered in a new relationship model among voters and their supporters. Due to social media, an unprecedented number of individuals had a new kind of active, direct role in Dr Jonathan's campaign. The internet campaign site, Goodluckjonathanfor2011.com, was designed to enable supporters to help Goodluck Jonathan to get elected, so its features supported relevant

Political discussions through its online communities. That tool was important in serving people by designing a digital environment that helped them to do what they wanted (Eledan, 2010).

Another contestant in the 2011 presidential, General Muhammadu Buhari used his website and social media to engage supporters and voters alike. His campaign sites offered information on his candidacy, party manifesto, opportunity for questions and answers on campaign issues and other issues that bother on his candidacy. It also offered continuous news on the candidate's campaigns and on other election issues. Sections of the sites offered opportunities for visitors to leave comments on the sites, as well as also interact with other visitors on the sites. It also offered voters opportunity to join the campaign efforts and the official fan page of the candidate.

A few of the presidential candidates in the 2011 Nigeria presidential election, use of the internet dwelt mainly on the use of social networking sites such as Facebook and twitter to engage voters, providing important opportunities for engagement with the public. While there can be said to be a marginal increase in the use of the Internet in the 2011 presidential election, citizens, however, may have not been massively mobilized by new media. Hence, Internet may have had a reinforcement effects, rather than being a mass mobilizing tool in the campaigns. In the 2011 presidential elections, there was a greater move towards a down-top or horizontal communication strategy by political parties that had used new technologies in their electoral campaigns as they generally developed the participatory potentials of these tools.

Candidates and political parties in the 2011 Nigeria general elections used new technologies in a more organized and innovative way compared to previous elections. Citizens, on their side, increased the use of the Information Communication Technology (ICT) to follow the political

campaign, changing their patterns of media consumption and possibly influencing the degree and forms of their political involvement and participation (Iwokwagh and Okworo, 2012).

2.2.4 Brief History on Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) was established in 1998 by General Abdulsalam Abubakar's administration. Since its establishment, it had been responsible for conducting national elections in Nigeria. The body organized all transitional elections that ushered in the 4th republic on May 29 1999. It was also responsible for conducting the 2011 Nigeria general elections. The origin of Electoral bodies in Nigeria can be traced to the period before Independence when the Electoral Commission of Nigeria (ECN) was established to conduct 1959 elections. The Federal Electoral Commission (FEC), established in 1960 conducted the immediate post-independence federal and regional elections of 1964 and 1965 respectively (http://www.inecnigeria.org, 2011).

The electoral body was however, dissolved after the military coup of 1966. In 1978, a new Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) was constituted by the regime of General Olusegun Obasanjo. FEDECO organized the elections of 1979, which ushered in the Second Republic under the leadership of Alhaji Shehu Shagari. It also conducted the general elections of 1983. In December 1995, the military government of General Sani Abacha, which earlier dissolved NEC in 1993, established the National Electoral Commission of Nigeria (NECON), which also conducted another set of elections; Local Government councils to National Assembly. These elected institutions were however not inaugurated before the sudden death of General Abacha, on June 1998 aborted the process. INEC has presence in all the 36 states, the Federal Capital

Territory as well as in the 774 Local Government Areas of Nigeria. The Commission is made up of a Chairman, and 12 National Commissioners (http://www.inecnigeria.org, 2011).

The functions of the Commission as stipulated in Part I of the Third Schedule to the 1999 Constitution among others, include: Organize, undertake and supervise all elections to the offices of the President and Vice-president, the Governor and Deputy Governor of a state, and to the membership of the Senate, the House of Representatives and the House of Assembly of each State of the Federation. Register political parties in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution and an act of the National Assembly. Monitor the organization and operation of the political parties, including their finances. Arrange for the annual examination and auditing of the funds and accounts of political parties, and publish a report on such examination and audit for public information. Arrange and conduct the registration of persons qualified to vote as well as prepare, maintain and revise the register of voters for the purpose of any election under this Constitution. Monitors political campaigns and provide rules and regulations, which shall govern the political parties ((http://www.inecnigeria.org, 2011).

2.3 Conceptual Review

This conceptual review examines themes and concepts drawn from the research questions of the study so as to aid greater understanding about them.

2.3.1 Internet-based Political Campaign

The mainstreaming of the Internet has sparked a lively debate among political analysts about the implications of this communications revolution for the political system. Some argue that the

Internet has the potential to transform the democratic process in significant ways, making citizen involvement more egalitarian, informed, and participatory. Others are negative about the impact of the Internet on the political process, arguing that it will be politics as usual, simply played out in a new media arena (Jansen, 2004). Numerous studies have concluded that politics on the Internet is simply politics as usual. It has failed to alter the conduct of political campaigns (Harpham 1999; Sadow and James 1999; Margolis and Resnick 2000; as cited in Stanley and Weare, 2008). It is used predominantly by individuals and organizations already active in politics, and easier access to information does not appear to lead to greater participation.

Debates over the effects of the Internet, and other information and communication technologies (ICTs), on political participation has been broadly cast as a competition between reinforcement and mobilization hypotheses (Dutton et al. 1982, and Norris 1999 as cited in Stanley and Weare, 2008). The reinforcement hypothesis holds that ICTs support the existing distribution of political power because influential individuals and organizations already active in the political process are able to control the diffusion, design, and use of new technologies to support their entrenched interests. In contrast, the mobilization hypothesis contends that despite the efforts of elites, new communication technologies will decrease the costs of communication and information acquisition and create new, more compelling opportunities for participation thereby empowering new groups, increasing democratic participation, and opening up otherwise difficult to penetrate policy networks. (Stanley and Weare, 2008:3:4).

Lately, there have been an increasing number of contributions which offer evidence to support the thesis of new mobilisation (Krueger, 2002; Tolbert & McNeal, 2003; Quintelier and Vissers, 2008; Anduiza, Cantijoch, and Gallego, 2009; DiGenaro and Dutton, 2006; Gibson, Lusoli &

Ward, 2005 as cited in Borge and Cardenal, 2010). For example, Anduiza, Cantijoch, and Gallego (2009), finds that use of the Internet increases unconventional participation activities (such as protests or boycotts of certain products) and that this increase in unconventional forms of participation is due not only to the participation of critical individuals who are Internet users but also to that of individuals who have traditionally participated in conventional activities and, due to the effect of the Internet, now participate more in unconventional activities.

Other studies, such as those by Quintelier and Vissers (2008); DiGenaro and Dutton (2006); Gibson, Lusoli and Ward (2005), Mossberger, Tolbert and McNeal, 2008; as cited in Borge and Cardenal, 2010), have highlighted the fact that use of the Internet is mobilising groups that have traditionally participated at a lower level than other groups, such as young people and women. Also, the studies by Best and Krueger (2005), Gibson, Lusoli and Ward (2005) and Anduiza, Cantijoch, and Gallego (2009) also offer support for the new mobilisation thesis in that they highlight the fact that the resources which account for online participation are no longer only the traditional ones such as time, money and civil skills, but Internet skills as well.

Recent researches have focused on how party websites, candidate websites, weblogs have become the major source of election campaigns and citizens are actively seeking and participating in these interactive sites for election information (Bimber and Davis, 2003; Davis, 1999; Grönlund 2001; Kluver 2007). Added to these sites, the latest trends have been in the use of social networking sites like Facebook, You Tube, MySpace and Friendster for election campaigning. Along with these, the use of mobile phones as a tool of social communication is saturating the political communication process.

Political campaign communication has seen major changes over time. Norris (2001:137) describes the transformations with a typology consisting of three stages; the pre-modern, the modern and the postmodern stage. The pre-modern campaigns were local, ad-hoc and inter-personal. The partisan press was the primary intermediary between the political parties and the citizens, and the electorates were characterized by stable social and partisan alignments. Strandberg (2006); Farrell and Webb (2000) indicate that the modern stage is characterized by campaign activities being increasingly coordinated at the central party level with the help of professional consultants. Television takes center stage as the primary campaign medium and the electorate becomes detached from their traditional social and partisan ties.

Baringhorst, Kneip, and Niesyto (2009) in their study on political campaigning on the web, identified that that concerning the third stage of campaign communication, the postmodern stage, the trends of the modern stage are further amplified. The role of political consultants in political campaigns increases, the news media is fragmented into several channels, outlets and levels, and the electorate is even further de-aligned in their voting choices. In sum, these trends have resulted in a situation which, in the words of Swanson and Mancini (1996:17), is characterized by "a weakening of political parties and emergence of a powerful role for the mass media…" Berman and Witzner (1997) state that however, the postmodern stage has seen the rise of a communication tool which has been described as a possible "remedy" vis-à-vis the trends described above – the internet. The internet, it has been argued, has provided new opportunities for citizen participation in political life. They state that the internet is a 'democratizing technology'.

Some of the earliest works of Kraus and Davis (1976) and Rice and Paisley (1981) on political campaigns have studied the effects of mass and interpersonal campaigns, where partial successes and partial failures were reported. The Pew survey found that roughly a quarter of the American public are regularly turning to the World Wide Web for election news, less than television but still the number doubled from 2004 and tripled from 2000. Similarly, a study by Williams and Gulati (2007) looked into how another popular social networking site, Facebook, played a big role in the 2006 congressional and gubernatorial campaigns in the US, when each candidate was given an account on the website. Personalization of the entries was then undertaken by the candidates themselves or their aides and this allowed Facebook members to view entries and make their support for candidates known. The authors concluded that Facebook has indeed played a significant role in affecting the electoral process.

Anstead and Chadwick (2007) also studied how politicians in Britain tried their hands in social networking sites following the 2005 elections. The warming up to the Internet for politics in Britain resulted in the founding of the MpURL Membersnet, which serves as a social networking site and provides each Labour Party member with a blog, allowing constituents to participate in discussion forums. At the end of their article, Anstead and Chadwick suggested that more needs to be done in examining the differences between political systems when it comes to the use of the Internet, specifically why Democrats are better than Republicans in the US in the use of the Internet, and the gradual institutional changes in Britain.

Strandberg (2006) in his studies on politics on the internet acknowledged that other scholars have stressed the medium's potential to empower new voices in the political field and to engage new citizens in political activity. The internet has also been predicted to offer political parties new

opportunities for retaining control of their communication with the voters and to provide new opportunities for party-voter interaction. The internet could enhance both the top-down and bottom up information and communication flow surrounding political actors. Davis (1999); Kamarck (1999); Margolis & Resnick (2000) as cited in Norris (2001:91-92) identified that though the internet has become more commonplace in society, some scholars have questioned whether the internet will have such a 'distinctive' impact on traditional political life.

Strandberg (2006) in his studies identified that two core arguments merit attention: firstly, when traditional political organizations employ the web, there is little reason to believe that the 'new politics' will be that much different from 'politics as usual. Secondly, scholars have argued that politics on the internet could fail to vitalize the citizens' political participation. The internet, they say, will primarily be used by citizens who are already politically interested and active, resulting in a situation where the political actors are so-to-speak simply 'preaching to the converted' on-line

Internet politics can be divided into three general area: intra-net politics, which exists within the net with no connection to the real world, politics that affect the net referring to actions taken off-line which regulate the on-line environment, and political uses of the net containing the online activity, with the purpose of affecting off-line politics, of traditional political actors such as parties, candidates, government and interest groups (Margolis and Resnick (2000:8:21). The focus of this thesis is clearly within this third area of internet politic. It is primarily centered on the on-line activity of traditional political actors. Bimber (1998); Foot & Schneider (2002a; 2002b); Norris, (2001:239) as cited in Strandberg (2006), in their various studies on the use of the new media in politics, offered results that showed that non-traditional actors have been

potentially willing to use the internet to activate, communicate and mobilize around political issues of an ad-hoc nature. Mascaro and Goggins (2010) identifies that the need for political candidates to mobilize support is a fundamental aspect of any successful election campaign. The manner in which candidates mobilize their supporters and attempt to garner support is the subject of widespread academic research.

Furthermore, Margolis and Resnick (2000), observed that, in the United States of America, presidential candidates had employed state of the art communications technology to mobilize individuals and disseminate information dating all the way back to the first elections. In many countries, candidates are using the internet and other technology in innovative ways to mobilize voters and raise money. The powers of the Internet is such that some lesser-known candidates have become recognized on the national political scene and challenge the traditional methods of fund-raising and mobilization and has also allowed individual citizens to play a more active role in the political process (Eva, Marta, and Aina, 2010). Karan, Gimeno and Tandoc (2008), conducted a study which explored the strategies used by the Gabriela Women's Party in Philippines in positioning itself as a force in the Philippines political system and how the party introduced new media technologies. Results from the study indicated though these technologies were yet to reach the grassroots in the country, they were successful in garnering international support and votes for the party.

Bimber and Davis (2003), Gibson, Margolis, Resnick, and Ward (2003); in their studies on online campaigning, results from the studies showed that the problem of disseminating information to voters on a large scale had now been solved as new technology makes information dissemination to a widespread audience easier and less expensive. Technology that

is able to reach a large number of people at once has been utilized for many years in elections. Until recently, this technology was not as dynamic as it is now and was often times too costly and difficult to specifically target individuals of interest. Although technology has not always been as advanced as it is currently, politicians have still been able to use the technology of the day to turn voter mobilization into campaign success on Election Day

Olujide, Adeyemi and Gbadeyan (2010) have opined that the use of the internet in elections in Nigeria is relatively a new phenomenon. Despite the opportunities identified in the use of internet technology for political campaigns, it is only just being recently used in a tangible scale in political campaigns in Nigeria. The increase in internet connectivity and access by the a few voters, especially young voters had caught the attention of politicians. Internet World Stats (2011) study showed that the increase in internet access had been facilitated by the provision and expansion of internet services by mobile telecommunication operators in Nigeria. Many Nigerians especially youths belong to many social networks sites like Facebook and Twitter. The internet offers them the opportunities to raise issues that affect the political process and exchange views on political issues.

President Goodluck Jonathan of Nigeria utilized Facebook to engage with Nigerian citizens during his campaigns in the 2011 presidential elections. He further used the medium to announce his presidential candidacy on Facebook. By Election Day on 16 April 2011, Jonathan had over half a million followers. Arthur (2012) acknowledged that in Nigeria's electoral process; social media tools were not only employed for political campaigns. Various institutions involved in the elections also conducted their own social media initiatives. Institutions such as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), different political parties, candidates, media houses and

civil society groups engaged with citizens on various platforms. During the month-long election process in April 2011, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) posted almost 4 000 tweets, many in response to voter queries.

The success of the 2011 general elections was partly due to the influence of the internet and the social media. Similarly, during the election, Nigerian mainstream media struck a relationship with social media platforms that enhanced both citizens' participation and professional journalistic practices. Journalists from various media organizations engaged with citizens on Facebook and the citizens' contributions informed the journalists' questions during interviews with political players in institutions such as INEC (*Business Day Online*, 2011).

Despite the opportunities offered by the Internet for political campaigns, it is important to note that it has its limitations. Eva, Marta, and Aina (2010); Dalton (2008) assert that many scholars have shown that access to the internet is not equal among the population, but is concentrated among young people and more privileged groups; this is what is known as the digital divide. Anderson et al (1995) were among the first to highlight the potential of inequality in Internet access to limit people's opportunities to find jobs, obtain education, access government information, participate in political dialog, and build networks of social support. By "digital divide," we refer to inequalities in access to the Internet, extent of use, knowledge of search strategies, quality of technical connections and social support, ability to evaluate the quality of information, and diversity of uses. Although some speculate that current intergroup differences will evaporate as the Internet diffuses (DiMaggio, Hargittai, Neuman and Robinson, 2001 as cited in Karan, Gimeno, and Tandoc, 2008). Dalton (2008) further argues that in addition, even

in the case of access to political information, there is a risk of segmentation, given that the possibility of focusing the selection of subjects to be accessed reduces plurality.

Iyengar, Hahn, and Prior (2001) indicates that the internet has enabled candidates and political organizations to regain their ability to communicate directly with voters, thus renewing opportunities for voters to exercise selectivity on a partisan basis. The internet enables individuals with specific interests to select only the information which strengthens their position. This behavior can polarize opinions about certain social conflicts since it radicalizes attitudes and impedes contact and deliberation between opposing standpoints. The structure of the Internet has been found to offer conditions particularly conducive to selective exposure to media content. Kushin and Kitchener (2009:1) indicate that:

> Research has found that individuals favor news and information that aligns with their own views. Along this vein, some evidence indicates that selective exposure also occurs in online political discussion arenas which may lead to political polarization. For example, scholars have noted that virtual communities are fairly homogeneous in terms of values and viewpoints. Participants in online discussions often hold comparable political perspectives.

A Pew Internet and American Life Project (2008) study which focused on selection bias amongst voters in term of their consumption of online political information showed that, fully a third of online political users (33%) now say that when they get online political information most of the sites they visit share their point of view up from 26% who said that in 2004. This rise in partisan information -seeking matches a decline in the number of online political users who say most of the sites they visit do not have a particular point of view. In 2004, 32% of online political users said most of the sites they visited had no particular point of view and that percentage dropped to

25% in 2008. There was no difference between 2004 and 2008 in the number of online political users who said most of the sites they visit challenge their point of view.

2.3.2 Problems associated with Internet-based Political Campaigns

Norris and Curtice (2005) observe that literature on the role of the Internet in politics has flourished during the last decade. Much of it has concluded that, despite its considerable potential to transform political campaign and democracy, the Internet has so far had only limited impact on 'politics as usual among the mass electorate (Margolis and Resnick, 2000). Two reasons are often offered to support this observation. On the demand-side, few people usually use resources such as party and candidate websites, while the minority that do so often comprises those who are already amongst the most engaged. As a result, political websites often 'preach to the converted' rather than expand the pool of engaged citizens (Norris 2006). Many experts argue that the Internet benefits active citizens more than politically inactive and disinterested citizens (e.g**.** Emmer, Seifert and Vome, 2006 as cited in Baringhorst, Kneip and Niesyto, 2009).

On the supply-side, party and candidate websites commonly replicate materials that are already published offline while the interactive feature of the new technologies is often neglected. the Internet has gone mainstream, succeeding elections have seen a revival of journalistic hype that new technologies will transform the campaign as we know it, only to be followed by another wave of academic skepticism as a result of empirical research about the actual role of the Internet (Norris, 2006).

Studies in the United Kingdom report that so far the Internet has not had much impact on British general election campaigns. Two main reasons are: First, campaign managers and candidates

seem to have reacted fairly cautiously to the new technologies. Studies examining the contents of British party websites in a series of general and European elections have generally concluded that these represented 'politics as usual' rather than a radical break with traditional channels of party communications or the introduction of innovative new forms of interactive participation (Gibson, and Ward, 1998; Yates and Perrone, 1998; Gibson and Ward, 2000; Gibson, Margolis and Resnick, 2003; Lusoli and Ward, 2005). Hence, during the 2005 election, as in 1997 and 2001, the major parties used their official websites mainly to distribute their manifestos, press releases, and leaflets, along with some supplementary information.

Furthermore, irrespective of what parties do, on the demand-side, studies of previous election campaigns have concluded that few use the Internet as a major source of political information. For example, in the 2004 European elections, Lusoli and Ward (2005) report that only 7% of the British electorate used the Internet to acquire electoral information. A small minority of political anoraks engages enthusiastically in political blogs and chat-rooms, and so far the Internet is not widely used by the broader electorate to follow election campaigns.

Another challenge to the use of Internet for political campaigns is the differential levels of access. ICTs have become increasingly important for the encouragement of participation. In mainstream social, economic and political life and the differential levels of access to these technologies can be a significant source of inequality, forming a digital divide between those that have access and those that do not. The digital divide was coined to describe this technological inequality. This more evident in developing countries particularly in Africa where many people still do not have access to the internet (Eva, Marta, and Aina, 2010).

Papacharissi (2008) have found that while the internet and surrounding digital technologies provide a public space, they do not necessarily provide a public sphere. Greater access to political information, enabled by online political campaigns, does not directly lead to increases in political participation, or greater civic engagement, or trust in political process (Bimber, 2001; Kaid, 2002). Online political conversations can be as easily dominated by elites as offline ones. Access to information does not guarantee that information will be accessed. Similarly, access to information does not render an electorate more active or efficacious (Grossman, 1995).The advantages of the internet as a public space can be enjoyed only by the select few who have access to it, thus harboring an illusion of an open public sphere (Pavlik, 1994; Sassi, 2005; Williams and Pavlik, 1994; Williams, 1994).

With the global digital diffusion presently at 17% (North America: 70%, Oceania: 54%, Europe: 39%, Asia: 10.7%, Africa: 3.6%, Latin America: 17.3%, Middle East: 10%) it might be more appropriate to discuss local, regional or national public spheres over a global public sphere. Moreover, while digitally enabling citizens (Abramson, Arterton, and Orren, 1988; Grossman, 1995), online media simultaneously reproduce class, gender and race inequalities of the offline public sphere (Hill & Hughes, 1988). Finally, the information access the internet provides also typically results in entertainment uses of the medium (Althaus and Tewksbury, 2000; Shah, Kwak, and Holbert, 2001), the public sphere relevance of which is arguable (Moy, Manosevitch, Stamm, and Dunsmore, 2005; Dahlgren, 2005 as cited in Papacharissi, 2008).

Hill and Hughes (1998) found that though, online media enable conversations that can transcend geographic boundaries, they also allow for relative anonymity in personal expression, which could lead to empowered and uninhibited public opinion. Still, the technological potential for

political communication does not ensure that people from different political divide will also be more understanding of each other. Furthermore, online discussion of politics can connect citizens sharing similar motivations but may also reproduce and magnify political disparities (e.g., Mitra, 1997a; 1997b; Schmitz, 1997).

Scholars routinely point to online political discussions that are too amorphous, fragmented, dominated by few, and too specific to live up to the Habermasian ideal of rational accord. While relative anonymity enables political expression online, that expression does not always result in discussion of greater substance or political impact (Schement and Curtis, 1997). Online communication typically takes place among people who already know each other offline. Norris (1999) and Davis (1999) found that the internet reinforces existing patterns of political participation, which primarily serve traditional activists and/or citizens active beyond the norm. Average voters and politically disinterested citizens employ the internet in a less goal-directed manner. Typically, online media succeed in mobilizing political expression and serving as complements or alternatives to traditional media (Shah, Cho, Eveland, and Kwak, 2005).

Study conducted by Jankowski and Selm (2000) indicated that online discussions seemed to be dominated by elites and seldom extended to the offline sphere of interaction. Online political discussions that feature politicians do enjoy greater participation, but are frequently dominated by politicians who employ them to advocate for their agendas (Jensen, 2004). Uses of digital media by politicians and the media tend to be one-directional and do not sustain feedback channels for the digital public or enable substantive citizen involvement. Gibson, Ward and Lusoli (2007) found that despite the enthusiasm for the Internet, minor parties were less likely to be online. According to Norris's (2001) study moreover, in terms of accessing their sites in both

the UK and the US they are clearly less visible-they are less linked to other sites and are less visible through search. The Internet provides minor parties, therefore, with a presence but not necessarily with equality of access. There was not, however, a huge divide between the bigger parties and their minor rivals in terms of basic information and participatory content.

Given the previous discussion of minor parties' stronger enthusiasm for the Internet compared with other forms of media, one can speculate that this may have pushed them to devote time and effort to keeping pace with their larger counterparts. Olson and Nelson (2001), have found that for strategists charged with managing political campaigns or leaders of political parties, this shift in the power structure resulting from the use of the internet for political campaigns has significant repercussions. These include: It has become increasingly difficult if not impossible – to have total control over narrative and messaging. While the amount and access to political information has increased exponentially the ability of individuals to consume political information has not increased to the same extent. The pace at which information moves, and thus the speed at which political debate occurs has increased exponentially.

Also, the capacity of individuals who share a common set of values to acquire information and self-organize creates opportunities and challenges for political organizations. Once a piece of information has reached the worldwide web it is in the public domain forever. Also, there is always the potential that any document, action or event – positive or negative – could end up on the worldwide web and thus be accessible to anyone with an Internet connect. Finally, and potentially most importantly for political strategists, the Internet empowers individuals to take direct action outside of traditional political structures, which requires political parties to rethink how they respond to organic political action.

2.3.3 Influence of Internet-based Election Campaigns on Voters

KnowhowNonprofit (2012:1) defines Internet-based political campaign as organized actions around specific issue seeking to bring about changes in the policy and behaviours of institutions and/or specific public groups through the use of the internet. It can also be seen as the mobilizing of forces by organisations and individuals to influence others in order to effect an identified and desired social, economic, environmental or political change through the internet.

Olujide, Adeyemi and Gbadeyan (2010), emphasize that Internet-based political campaigns seek to offer information, and also seek to gain acceptance for causes, services, certain principles and often mobilize for a particular political action like voting for a particular candidate or party, becoming a member of an organization or donating resources to an organization. Internet- based political campaigns are usually analyzed as strategic communicative activities on the politics dimension of the political, as they are launched to position actors in processes of political competition, interest or value-oriented conflicts (Baringhorst, Kneip, and Niesyto, 2009:10). These scholars identify three minimal goals are shared by all Internet –based political campaigns: gaining public awareness for a particular cause, service, organization or person; generating credibility for a person or organization; and generating cognitive, evaluative and behavioural changes in a targeted group of people.

Brady, Johnstons and Sides (2006), in their study on election campaign, outlined two conceptually but empirically linked, ways of looking at a campaign. One focuses on institutional condition. The second considers campaign as periods of uncommon intensity in the political order, which can either broaden the period identified as a campaign or narrow it. They however, point out that one may learn more by considering that campaigns, whatever their formal institutional definition, are usually characterized by heightened intensity. These scholars state

that minimally defined, a campaign is the period right before citizens make a real political choice. This common knowledge typically heightens citizens' attention to politics in direct relation to the proximity of the event. As a result campaign activity is more likely to register on voters' minds as Election Day draws near.

Hansen (2011) identified that it was possible to divide the influence of internet –based political campaigns into six broad and somewhat overlapping campaign effects:

Civic engagement; Priming; Minimal effect; Memory based models; Online based models; and the Shortcut based models.

The first effect is concerned with the democratic potential of internet-based political campaign, the second with the campaign's agenda setting power. The four latter ones are all directly concerned with the effect on the political preferences of the voters.

Civic engagement

It can be said that effects of civic engagement come as increases in political interest, awareness, knowledge and the likelihood to vote. Freedman, Franz, and Goldstein (2004) in their study on campaign effects, found that exposure to internet-based campaigns increase political interest, awareness, knowledge and the likelihood to vote. In this sense internet-based campaign is important, as it brings voters closer to a normative ideal of an informed and political engaged public. Craig, Kane and Gainous (2005) found that voters increase their knowledge of the candidate's positions during the campaign, but also the gap between the most knowledgeable and less knowledgeably tend to increase during the campaign. Freedman, Franz and Goldstein (2004) however suggest that the knowledge gap tend to decrease during campaign. Also Norris, Curtice, Sanders, Margaret, and Hollia (1999) in their study, showed how voters learn moderately during the election campaign. That is, even though there is strong evidence that the campaign increases

voters' political knowledge there is still a controversy on increasing or decreasing knowledge gap of the campaign.

A way of capturing and conceptualizing the effect on civic engagement is to use the well-known concept of political efficacy split into internal and external efficacy. Internal efficacy is concerned with the political competence and possibility to relate to the political system (e.g. knowledge), whereas external efficacy is concerned with the voters' trust towards the political system and the extent to which voters feel that the system is responsiveness (Hansen, 2011).

Priming

Priming hypothesis states that the agenda during campaigning affects the issue saliency of the voter. Scholars identify that the parties which according to the voters perform best on the salient issues will experience an increase in the number of vote, as well as an increased party sympathy during the campaign and vice versa. Batels (2007:86) observes that many studies have focused on the internet-based political campaign's agenda setting power. One of the questions posed by some of these studies includes: to what extent does the campaign, prime the individual by telling them what issues they should evaluate the candidates on?

It is worth noting that several studies have shown how the agenda of the campaign affects the voters' issue saliency. Apparent priming effects have been identified in a variety of political setting using both experimental data (Iyengar and Kinder 1987) and survey data (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee 1954; Mendelberg, 2001; as cited in Bartels, 2007). In presidential campaign settings**,** Petrocik (1996) has argued that candidates consciously strive to prime specific issues that, for historical or structural reasons, favour their cause. More generally, Gelman and King (1993) suggest campaign priming of political and economic ‘fundamentals as

one possible source of increasing congruence between trial heats and eventual election outcomes (Bartels, 2007).

Togeby (2007) notes that the priming effect is an indirect effect as priming studies seldom study the vote choice directly, but rather how issues increase their saliency in the voters' evaluation of parties and leaders and only secondly try to capture how this priming of issues effects the vote choice. In this way priming analyzes, not what we vote, but what issues we evaluate the parties and candidates on. Priming can also occur even as many people's vote preference remain constant; as voters learn about the candidates and focus on certain consideration, the underlying structure of these preferences may change. Priming is not only a process with consequences for voters. It can also affect the balance of partisan forces and, ultimately, the election as a whole. As voters come to weight certain consideration more heavily, the probability of their choosing a candidate who benefits from those considerations will increase (Brady, Johnston and Sides, 2006).

Minimal effect

Schmitt-Beck (2007: 753) drawing from the conclusion of the early pioneer studies in campaign effects, concluded that Internet-based political campaign has very limited effect on vote choice. Present scholarly consensus on campaigns is that they have minimal effects mean in essence minimal persuasion. He states that due to existing information and prejudice that voters possess, campaigns rarely change their minds. Internet-based political campaigns only reinforce an initial choice by mobilizing the predisposition and the strong party identification. Hansen (2011) in their studies on campaign effects found that party identification, and predisposition were quite stable factors so was the vote choice regardless of the campaign. In this sense the campaign only reassured the voters of their choice by activating a stable set of dimension, in the vote choice. It

is important to note that other studies have drawn attention to the selective nature of voters' perception and recollection of the campaign tending to reinforce the intermediated choice (Berelson, Lazarsfeld and Mcphee, 1954; Campbell, Philip, Warren and Donald, 1960; Lazarsfeld et al. 1944).

In the past three decades, scholars have begun to move away from minimal effects" hypothesis and renewed efforts to understand the impact of campaigns on the electorate. Therriault (2011:1) states:

> In studies of issue voting and campaign strategy, the focus has largely been on priming, the raising of favorable issues' salience by campaigns in order to maximize their influence on voters' choices. Only recently have others begun to look as closely at alternative roles for campaign messages, in providing information to voters about the candidates and in shaping the voters' own policy preferences. The evidence for these effects has so far been mixed: while it does appear that voters update both their estimates of the candidates' positions and their own preferences over the course of campaigns. It is still unclear how these changes occur and whether they make a substantial difference in the voting booth.

In summary, the minimal effect hypothesis states that internet-based political campaign reinforces initial party choice by mobilizing predisposition, party identification and this mechanism is reinforced by the voters' selective attention and perception of politics.

Memory based models

Price and Zaller (1993) assert that memory based models argue that the vote choice is based on sampling of the available information filtered through the voters' predisposition in light of their political awareness and sophistication. That is, when the voter is exposed (which is a function of political awareness) to the message she will try to recollect how this message fits her predisposition (which is a function of the political sophistication to recall memory) and then provide an evaluation of the party or candidate. Sciarini and Kriesi (2003) in their study on

internet based political campaign effects; found that the voter will resist messages that are inconsistent with their predisposition, but only if the voters have the knowledge and sophistication that allow them to access this message in light of their predisposition.

Hansen (2011) however observes that the difficulty with this model is that voters forget a lot and very quickly within days after exposure to internet-based campaign message. Many voters cannot recall basic campaign messages (Lodge et al. 1995) and many studies have shown that voters perform badly when their political knowledge is surveyed (Althaus 2003; Delli, Michael and Keeter 1996). In summary, the memory based model states that the internet based political campaign affects the voters as a function of their, political awareness, predisposition and political knowledge.

Online based models

Hansen (2011) in his study on internet based campaign effects, stressed that the online based models argue that voters continuously incorporate the political discourses in their vote choice and then soon forget these discourses. Internet-based political campaign messages are processed as soon as they are encountered and then forgotten. Whereas the voters forget remarkable quickly the campaign messages the voters' overall evaluations of the candidate are very stable. In a study, Matthes, Werner, and Schemer (2007) tried to differentiate between on-line processing and memory-based models simply by asking the respondents how they think when they give an answer in the poll. They find that voters with primary on-line judgment provide more polarized opinions, provide faster answers, and have stronger opinion confidence than voters with memory-based judgment. In summary, the online based model states that voters' memories of the campaign messages fade out quickly, but as the messages are processed continuously their effect can be measured on voters' political preferences.

Shortcut based models

Shortcut based models, highlight the many cues or shortcuts to political choice. Examples are politicians' trust, credibility and charisma or simple affective likes and dislikes. Popkin (1991) highlights that the shortcuts are often identified as political heuristic such as the candidate's party affiliation or ideology. Lefevere (2008) explains that heuristics are information shortcuts that allow voters to deal with the overload of information they are faced with. The application of the concept in political science was developed in the works of Popkin (1991) and Sniderman, Brody and Tetlock (1991), but it originates from psychology, where Tversky and Kahneman (1974) used heuristics to explain the biases they found in simple decision making tasks.

Hansen (2011) identifies that another shortcut to political choice is endorsements or recommendations such as from the trade union, trusted newspapers, interest organization or recommendation from friends, colleagues and family. The voters can rely on stereotypical understanding, of parties and candidates and are not learning what each candidate or party specifically propose during the campaign or in their manifesto. The voter could also rely on the various opinion polls as basic information in their vote choice or simply the candidates' appearance.

2.3.4 The Internet and, Challenges associated with Political Campaigns on Traditional Media

Prior to the emergence of internet and its application to political campaign, politicians had depended on traditional media such as Television, Radio, and newspapers to sell themselves to the electorates. The use of traditional media for political campaign has its challenges. Compared to the new media, the traditional media posed challenge of high cost of political advertising.

Unlike the traditional media, the Internet is a political resource multiplier – it enables political parties and political campaigns to utilize the resources at their disposal more effectively, at great speeds, to larger audiences, at lower costs. The Internet has offered all political actors new chances to differentiate their strategies and achieve their aims at lower costs. (Baringhorst, Kneip and Niesyto, 2009; Olson and Nelson, 2001; Street and Scott, 2001).

Gibson and Römmele (2001) found that the internet increases the scope of direct communication. The mass media are increasingly criticized for excessively focusing on conflict and persons instead of putting issues and substance into the forefront of their coverage (Thelen, 1996). Online campaigns carry the promise of a more rational campaign discourse. The proliferation of the internet as a new powerful tool to directly communicate with the voting population is a major reason for this. Political interests furthermore parallel this innovation in media technology and support its proliferation. Political parties are less and less able to rely on party organization as a vehicle for election campaigns in most established democracies. Because of declining party membership, less and less people are available to distribute campaign material and to interact with voters on a face to face basis. This development creates the need for new tools and strategies to directly communicate with the voting public on the part of party elites (Zittel, 2007; Margolis and Resnick, 2000).

The internet campaigning enables parties to bypass traditional intermediaries such as the mass media and party organization to communicate with voters. Candidates are now often able to bypass traditional media outlets and connect directly with citizens through new media like Twitter, YouTube, Facebook and MySpace (Rosenstiel, 2009). Even more important, direct-mailing allows parties to tailor their message to particular groups of voters in light of a more and

more fragmented voting public (Baringhorst, Kneip and Niesyto, 2009). Smith (2011) found that the ability to express political views and opinions online plays an important role for social media in campaigns. ―Social media allow users to not only seek information but also interact with others through online expression such as posting political commentaries on blogs and social network sites and sharing multimedia commentary (Kushin and Yamamoto, 2010).

Unlike political campaigning on the traditional media, internet political campaigns could be used to extract resources from the voters through fund raising activities, and it could lend itself to market oriented research methods through the conduct of public opinion polls. Internet-based campaigning facilitates the information function of political campaigning. While the adaptation to a competitive commercialized mass media culture has reduced the incentive to explain campaign issues in long statements and favoured a campaign culture of sound bites and strong visuals, the Internet has significantly reduced transaction costs of political information and mobilization due to its speed and the outreach of its communication. It offers opportunities to overcome traditional spatial limitations and contributes to a decentralization as well as trans-nationalization of political campaigning. Many authors share their assumption that most of all resource poor political actors like protests actors and small political parties benefit from digitalized communication (Diani, 2001; Zachry, 2010).

Unlike campaigning on the traditional media, Internet communication offers political organizations significantly more power in defining and framing images of candidates and organizations as well as controversial issues. Unfavorable print and TV news can be confronted with an organization's own views in instant rebuttals and with low costs via organizational meso-media like campaign websites and micro-media like emails (Street and Scott 2001: 46).

Regarding other campaigning functions like informing and framing, mobilizing through the Internet is not replacing but rather supplementing traditional organizational and mass media (Baringhorst, Kneip and Niesyto, 2009).

The Internet is an ever-evolving platform whereby new political tools can be created and utilized to achieve strategic political objectives and to reach strategic goals. Success on the Internet in politics is not only about using the tools that have worked in the past, but also about identifying new tools, or even building them, that achieve strategic political objectives. As the Internet has developed as a political tool it has crossed over from being primarily a messaging/communications tool to one that is part of every structural division of a political party or a campaign. The most important changes resulting from the Internet's emergence, as a political tool may be how it impacts the internal workings of political parties and campaigns, rather than how it impacts they campaigns and party's interact with voters. Capitalizing on the power of the Internet often times requires devising ways in which its power can be harnessed to improve how parties or campaigns work internally to achieve external objectives (Olson and Nelson, 2001).

2.3.5 Canvassing Voters

Green Party (n.d) defines canvassing as the systematic initiation of direct contact with a target group of individuals commonly used during political campaigns. Canvassing may be performed to achieve a combination of the following objectives:

- Identifying supporters (ID voter) to get out the vote
- Promoting the candidate
- Winning individuals by persuasion
- Identifying issues of concern
- Fundraising

- Signing up new members
- Secure lawn sign locations
- Signing up new volunteers
- Encouraging voter registration
- Identifying opposing voters
- Data collection for other campaign functions
- Build on already established supporter base

Garber and Green (2000) state that there are different means of canvassing during political campaigns to get out votes; these among others include face-face, phone call and direct mail. However, Norris (2005) observes that how a party canvasses is influenced by the party's communication environments, which are determined by a number of factors: the structure of the mass media, including the composition of the newspaper market and readership; the range of private sector and public service audiovisual channels; the size of the audience reached by newspapers, television, and radio; and the diffusion of new information and communication technologies, such as the Internet and even mobile telephones. The context is also determined by communication policies—which set out the legal regulation of political communications, especially during election campaigns—exemplified by the rules concerning party fundraising and expenditure, campaign advertising, political broadcasts, and freedom of the media. Questions of social structure also bear importantly on how parties communicate. Literacy rates and levels of access to mass media, for example, influence whether parties must rely on face-to-face meetings or can reach electors via newspapers, television, or radio.

Norris (2000:1), analyzing the evolution of campaign communications, identified three stages of the evolution of campaign communication in his campaign communication evolution model:

Pre-modern campaigns are understood to display three characteristics: the campaign organization is based upon direct forms of interpersonal communications between candidates and citizens at

local level, with short -term, ad-hoc planning by the party leadership. In the news media the partisan press acts as core intermediary between parties and the public. And the electorate is anchored by strong party loyalties. During this era, local parties selected the candidates, rang the doorbells, posted the pamphlets, targeted the wards, planned the resources, and generally provided all the machinery linking voters and candidates. For citizens the model is one that is essentially local-active, meaning that most campaigning is concentrated within local communities, conducted through more demanding political activities like rallies, door -step canvassing and party meetings.

Today these direct forms of campaigning have essentially been supplemented, not replaced. The traditional campaign, built on personal networks of volunteers and face -to-face candidate -voter communications, continues to be common when mobilizing voters in no -frills contests for local, municipal and state -level elected office, for minor parties without generous financial resources, as well as in countries like Britain where mass-branch party organizations maintain networks of active party members. Electoral systems where politicians compete in multi-member seats with others within the same party often emphasize the importance of local campaigning to maintain support. This pattern is evident in Ireland as well as in Japan where some politicians, traditionally relied upon a local association, acting as an election machine maintaining contact with voters (Norris, 2000).

Modern campaigns are defined as those with a party organization coordinated more closely at central level by political leaders, advised by external professional consultants like opinion pollsters. In the news media, national television becomes the principle forum of campaign events, supplementing other media. And the electorate becomes increasingly decoupled from

party and group loyalties. Politicians and professional advisors conduct polls, design advertisements, schedule the theme de jour, leadership tours, news conferences and photo opportunities, handle the press, and battle to dominate the nightly television news. For citizens, the typical experience of the election becomes more passive, in the sense that the main focus of the campaign is located within national television studios, so that most voters become more distant and disengaged spectators in the process (Norris, 2000:3).

In most postindustrial democracies the critical shift towards the modern campaign developed with the rise of television, as well as the publication of regular opinion polling, during the 1950s. This process gradually shifted the primary location of political communications, from the print media towards broadcasting, particularly the mainstream national evening news on the major television channels. The printed press remains politically important, particularly in newspaper - centric systems. Nevertheless there is evidence to suggest that many countries have experienced a de-alignment in traditional press -party linkages, as newspapers have become increasingly politically independent, selecting news on the basis of the commercial logic to maximize sales rather than following the political logic of party support. The rise of the modern campaign was also related to major changes in the electorate. Many studies highlighted how de-alignment had eroded traditional social cleavages and partisan loyalties, produced a more instrumental electorate supporting parties on a more contingent basis based on their policies and performance. The familiar cleavages of class and religion, which had long anchored the European electorate, proved weaker predictors of voting behaviour in many countries as party competition over issues; images and leadership became increasingly important (Norris, 2000:3:4).

Lastly post-modern campaigns are understood as those where the coterie of professional consultants on advertising, public opinion, marketing and strategic news management become more co-equal actors with politicians, assuming a more influential role within government in a 'permanent' campaign, as well as coordinating local activity more tightly at the grassroots. The news media fragments into a more complex and incoherent environment of multiple channels, outlets and levels. And the electorate becomes more de-aligned in their voting choices. For some citizens, the election may represent a return to some of the forms of engagement found in the pre -modern stage, as the new channels of communication potentially allows greater interactivity between voters and politicians.

The post -modern campaign symbolizes a return to some of the more localized and interactive forms of communication that were present in the pre -modern period this is exemplified by new technology which allows forms of political communication that can be located schematically somewhere between the local -activism of the pre-modern campaign (with direct town hall meetings or political rallies) and the national -passive forms of communication characteristic of the modern television campaign. The development of political discussion user -groups on the net, party intranets, interactive political sites by government agencies, community associations or interest groups, and the political use of email or list -serves to mobilize and organize, as well as 'traditional' news media on the web, represents a mid -way point in the model. These formats continue to evolve, along with the political uses of the web. As observed, at present access to the Internet varies widely across post-industrial societies. Nevertheless as political use of the Internet expands, the post -modern campaign does seem destined to add yet another distinctive layer of communications to the process, supplementing existing channels (Norris, 2000:5:7).

However, Norris (2000) further explains that the essential features of this model can be expected to vary from one context to another. Rather than claiming that all campaigns are inevitably moving into the post -modern category, this view emphasizes that contests can continue to be arrayed from the pre -modern to the post-modern, due to the influence of a range of intermediary conditions such as the electoral system, campaign regulations and organizational resources. And instead of a specifically American development, with practices like negative advertising, personalized politics, or high campaign expenditures which are subsequently exported to other countries, it seems more accurate to understand the changes in campaigning as part of the modernization process rooted in technological and political developments common to many post-industrial societies.

Anyarat (2010:72) found that in Thailand, vote-canvassers play an intermediary role in linkages of political communication between candidates and local voters. They are local notables with influential economic, political or social positions, and are well connected with local voters through kin and friendship ties. Vote-canvassers in Thailand vary "by type and by level, ranging from a village teacher with limited influence to a wealthy tycoon with business interests and employees spread throughout an entire region". Vote-canvasser networks are the most important electioneering mechanism in every Thai candidate's election campaign at all electoral levels. Votes in Thai elections have long been mobilised from the bottom up through the extensive webs of vote-canvasser networks. Mainly, vote-canvassers are responsible for distributing gifts and vote-buying cash to voters, managing speaking opportunities for candidates, obstructing other candidates' campaigns and even rigging election results. Also, it is common for vote-canvassers to transport voters in faraway areas to polling booths and instruct them to vote for a particular candidate. In some cases, a group of networking vote-canvassers can control the election

outcome in a particular district by switching their canvassing services from one candidate to another.

Anyarat (2010:73) observes that vote-canvassers are the candidate's indispensable informants about local affairs. For example, they inform the candidate about what local voters want. The candidate then devotes his or her financial and human resources to respond to voter demands, which range from, for example, the provision of pesticide to community infrastructure-building. The candidate's ability to satisfy voters in particular villages is an important factor in the diffusion of his or her popularity throughout the constituency. The density of each politician's vote-canvassing networks is different depending on the level of one's influence in local communities. Some networks are able to mobilise more votes and/or influence larger campaign areas than others. Yet, it is not necessary to have an extensive vote-canvassing network covering a large campaign area to get elected. Small but dense vote-canvassing networks often work more effectively than the large but loose ones, particularly in constituencies with low voter-turnout.

Direct channels of communication for canvassing are those that party organizations control. Examples include local branch meetings, regional or national party conferences, local campaign rallies, candidate debates, town hall meetings, traditional leadership speeches, and whistle-stop tours. Parties also use a range of publications bearing official symbols, logos, and slogans—such as newsletters, pamphlets, banners, stickers, badges, posters, flags, and yard-signs—as well as periodically issuing longer policy documents and, at the outset of election campaigns, official party manifestos. Parties may also use local canvassing operated by members, volunteers, or paid activists seeking to contact voters—an especially common technique when contests are held in single-member or small multi-member districts.

The use of political advertisements—such as billboards, paid newspaper, radio, or TV advertisements, and unpaid party political broadcasts— where legally allowed, is also important. Newer forms of information and communication technologies are playing growing roles, as well—especially Internet and intranet websites, activist weblogs ("blogs"), and e-mail networks. In general, direct channels are usually most effective at connecting with and mobilizing party activists, supporters, and sympathizers, all of whom are relatively highly predisposed toward the party to begin with. Direct channels are also effective at reaching the more attentive sectors of the general public, media professionals in particular (Norris, 2005:4).

To reach broader audiences, including undecided, wavering, or floating voters, political parties rely heavily on indirect (or "mediated") channels—so named simply because parties do not control them directly. Indirect channels include regular press conferences, press releases or news briefs, leadership interviews, participation in leadership debates, opinion and editorial commentary, write-in campaigns to newspapers and phone-in campaigns to talk radio, and the development of periodic policy launches. These techniques are all designed to get party messages out through newspaper coverage, magazines, radio or television news, current affairs programs, and documentary films. Parties also try to shape their messages on websites controlled by the media, policy advocacy networks, and public interest groups.

Indirect communication channels for political canvassing are indispensable, since they reach a wider audience beyond parties' smaller circles of supporters and activists. Journalistic coverage, for example, provides a filtering mechanism that is often regarded by the public as a more

trustworthy, reliable, and authoritative source of information than more partisan channels. In using the mass media, however, parties are obviously more restricted in their control, since they have to work with journalists, broadcasters, editors, and news executives, who process party messages according to independent frameworks of presentation and analysis. Together, direct and indirect channels of communication link party organizations internally (or vertically) among their members, activists, and officials, as well as externally (or horizontally) by connecting party leaders and representatives with the electorate and other political groups. Parties communicate with the aim of informing, persuading, and mobilizing public opinion. They provide the public with information about their policies, leadership, activities, and principles and also seek to persuade the public and thereby influence favorable attitudes toward their issue concerns, records, and policy proposals. Parties aim to mobilize members, activists, and electors, as well, to "get out the vote" and to generate support through fundraising, recruiting volunteers, and expanding memberships (Norris, 2005:6).

The role of traditional people-intensive forms of party campaign communications, such as local rallies and door to- door canvassing, has come under debate. Many accounts have noted a decline in the use of these techniques in postindustrial societies and a simultaneous growth in reliance on television news. Studies suggest that these changes have been accompanied by a weakening of the role of party members and activists, and a growing professionalization of campaign communications through the use of media managers, press officers, marketing and advertising experts, survey analysts, and political consultants. Recent developments include parties' widespread adaptation to newer information and communication technologies— notably party websites, which started to develop in the mid-1990s, alongside the growing use of mobile

phones, fax machines, text messages, e-mail, and, most recently, activist weblogs. Accounts have interpreted these developments as representing a "rise of political marketing," whose techniques have been borrowed from the private sector, or the "Americanization of campaigning," emulating patterns originating in the United States (Katz, 1997).

Many parties today, at any rate, use all these forms of communication simultaneously, with newer, interactive technologies providing some of the traditional advantages of people-intensive campaigns. How rapidly these communications have been adapted varies substantially among parties, even within the same country; among campaigns held at local, regional, and national levels; and among older and newer democracies (Katz, 1997).

	Traditional People-Intensive Channels	Modern Broadcasting Channels	Internet Channels
Predominant Era in Established Democracies	Mid-19th century–1950s	Early 1960s–late 1980s	1990s+
Party Campaign Organization	Local and decentralized party volunteers	Nationally coordinated with greater professionalization	Nationally coordinated but with decentralized targets, use of volunteers and paid party workers
Direct Channels	Local rallies and public meetings, whistle-stop leadership tours, candidate debates, hustings and speeches, posters and billboards, leaflets, flags, stickers, badges/rosettes	Daily press conferences, controlled photo opportunities, paid TV ads and party political broadcasts, targeted direct mail	E-mail, online discussion groups, party intranets, activist weblogs
Indirect Channels	Partisan newspapers and election radio broadcasts	Television broadcasting through news and current affairs programs on the major channels	Television narrowcasting through more specialized channels (for example, CNN, C-SPAN), talk radio, media and policy advocacy websites
Campaign Preparations	Short-term, ad hoc	Long campaign	Permanent campaign with the extension of news management to routine politics and government
Central Coordination	Party leaders	Central party headquarters, some specialist advisors, more professional news management	Party "war rooms" and greater use of professional consultants, pollsters
Public Feedback	Doorstep canvassing and local rallies	Occasional opinion polls	Regular opinion polls, focus groups, e-mails, and interactive websites
Costs	Low budget	Moderate	Higher costs for professional consultants

(Source: Norris, 2005.)

What is the Impact of Different Communication Channels?

The effects of communication efforts depend on the audience as much as on the channels themselves. Generally, messages—particularly if they are in tension with existing attitudes and opinions—will be disregarded unless they are repeated, delivered by trusted leaders, and in a context in which there is a concrete opportunity to act. It also makes a difference whether the target audience is composed of isolated individuals or groups, and whether parties want to change the views of opinion leaders or encourage potential supporters to vote.

Interpersonal, or "direct," communications are most effective for changing attitudes and mobilizing support.

Media-based, or "indirect," communications can be used to establish the credibility of messages delivered directly and to extend their reach to larger audiences.

- ***Newspapers and print media*** provide the most information and are best used for conveying complex messages or introducing new issues. Generally, those who read newspapers are most likely already to be politically active; newspaper and print media consumption is positively associated with voting. Newspapers in particular can be very effective in changing the views of opinion leaders and thereby in laying groundwork for interpersonal communication campaigns.
- ***Television*** has the advantages of providing visuals, being virtually instantaneous, and personalizing issues. Television is, however, limited in its ability to mobilize voters. Often, television news stories are taken from print news stories.
- ***Radio*** can be used to target specific groups and provide for extended discussions of issues that interest those groups. It can also amplify debates on public issues.
- ***Internet*** communications have been found to assist, in particular, isolated individuals who already hold relatively intense views but are unaware of others who share them. It can also be used to great effect in organizing such people.

While some believe interpersonal communications have become outdated, recent research measuring the impact of voter contact techniques on individual voter turnout in U.S. political campaigns found that door-to-door personal contact remains the "gold standard," over direct mail, phone calls, door hangers, and e-mails. Donald P. Green and Alan S. Gerber of Yale University conducted more than 20 rigorous scientific experiments between 1998 and 2002. See *Get Out the Vote! How to Increase Voter Turnout* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2004).

(Source: Norris, 2005.)

Door canvassing was once the bread and butter of party mobilization, particularly in urban areas. Ward leaders made special efforts to canvass their neighbourhoods occasionally, calling in favours or offering small financial incentives to ensure that their constituents delivered their votes on Election Day. Petty corruption was rife, but turnout rates were high, even in relatively poor neighourhoods. With the decline of patronage politics and the rise of technologies that sharply reduced the cost of phone calls and mass mailings, shoe leather politics gradually faded

away. The shift away from door-door canvassing occurred not because this type of mobilization was discovered to be ineffective, but rather because the economic and political incentives facing parties, candidates, and campaign professionals changed over time (Green and Gerber, 2000:26).

Although, local parties still tend to favour face-to-face mobilization, national parties typically prefer campaign tactics that afford them centralized control over the deployment of campaign resources. The decentralized network of local ward heelers was replaced by phone banks and direct mail firms whose messages could be standardized and whose operations could be started with very short lead time and deployed virtually anywhere on an enormous scale. National parties and their allied organizations have invested more resources in 'ground operations' in recent years, but these activities still account for a relatively small share of total campaign outlays (Green and Gerber, 2000:26).

Candidates, too, gradually drifted away from door-to-door canvassing lured by the short lead times and minimal start-up costs of impersonal campaigning. Furthermore, the ability to translate campaign funds directly into voter mobilization activities through private vendors selling direct mail and phone bank services meant that candidates with money but without much affection for or experience with their party could run credible campaigns without many supporters, even in large jurisdictions (Green and Gerber, 2000:26:27). However, campaign.com notes that door-to-door canvassing allows candidates to interact with voters on a more personal level, allowing candidates to establish a relationship with individual voters. In the early stages of a campaign, door-to-door canvassing provides invaluable information about voter preferences directly from voters; while in the later stages of a campaign, door-to-door canvassing has been proven to increase voter turnout.

Garber and Green (2000) in a study found that face-to-face interaction dramatically increases the chance that voters will go to the poll. In the study, personal canvassing had a greater influence on voter participation than mail canvassing. Less effective than direct mail were calls from professional phone banks. The magnitude of the canvassing effect coupled with the limiting influence of direct mail and telephoning lended credence to the study's hypothesis that falling rates of voter turnout reflect a decline in face-to-face political activity.

2.4.1 Empirical Review

Debate over the political consequences of the Internet for politics began not among political scientists, but among activists, politicians and law professors. As the Internet began to change during the 1990s from an obscure network connecting universities and research institutions, it became embroiled in political controversy. As the Internet snowballed, politicians were not sure whether to take credit for it or to deplore its potential excesses. What they were quite certain about was that it needed to be regulated. Hence, early debates about the political consequences of the Internet saw it, for good or bad, as a threat to established political rules and norms (Margolis and Resnick, 2000; Hill and Hughes, 1998).

Bimber (1998), in a succession of articles against utopian claims that the Internet was about to precipitate a profound political transformation, suggesting that it would instead make the formation of political groups easier than it had been in the past. A second wave of literature began in the mid-2000s. As US politicians began to move beyond simple campaign websites and the like (Gibson and Ward, 2000, Bimber and Davis, 2003), and use the Internet actively to raise money and organize supporters, American political scientists began to pay more attention to it.

Karan, Gimeno and Tandoc (2008) observe that recent researches have focused on how party websites, candidate websites, weblogs have become the major source of election campaigns and citizens are actively seeking and participating in these interactive sites for election information (Bimber and Davis, 2003; Davis, 1999; Grönlund 2001; Kluver, 2007). Added to these sites, the latest trends have been in the use of social networking sites like Facebook, You Tube, Myspace and Friendster for election campaigning. Along with these, the use of mobile phones as a tool of social communication is saturating the political communication process.

Observably, the Internet, web-based campaigning, and other new media technologies are increasing the speed and quality of political communication (Albrecht, 2006; Foot and Schneider, 2006; Han, 2007; Kluver, 2007). In a study, Bentivegna (2006) explored the use of information communication technologies and found that it has had significant changes in ways where citizens have refocused their political attention outside the formal political arena (Karan, Gimeno and Tandoc, 2008).

Norris and her colleagues had previously worried that a digital divide" might develop between those who had sufficient skills to master these new technologies and to use them to participate in politics and those who did not (Norris, 2001; Schlozman et al., 2010). This debate spilled out into wider arguments about economic development, and the question of whether countries in the developing world would fall behind because of poor infrastructure, or create their own models of knowledge-based growth (Boas et al., 2005), but also took on a new significance in the US and other advanced industrialized democracies as social media began to take off.

It is worth noting that blogs and related forms of communication (Twitter, YouTube, to a lesser extent Facebook), provided individuals with the potential opportunity to communicate with large

numbers of other people, at little or no cost. Some (especially bloggers themselves) argued that this dramatic increase in ease of access would lead to the unseating of traditional elites and the democratization of public debate. Others (Shirky, 2003; Farrell and Drezner, 2008) pointed out that these forms of media carried their own inherent inequalities - the distribution of blogs' hyperlinks and readership numbers was heavily skewed, so that a small number of elite blogs received the lion's share of attention, and the vast majority of blogs had very few readers. The distribution of Twitter authors' followers and YouTube video views is similarly skewed.

As the Internet's novelty has diminished, broad debates over the general implications of the Internet for democracy have given rise to a set of more specific inquiries into particular ways in which the Internet might shape politics. It is increasingly possible to break down broad questions (such as the consequences of the Internet for citizenship) into specific lines of inquiry regarding e.g. effects on political knowledge, on political participation, and exposure to different opinions. A thriving comparative literature is starting to examine how the Internet shapes democratic politics in a variety of national contexts (Chadwick, 2006; Vaccari, 2008a; Gibson and McAllister, 2011; Gibson, Rommele, and Ward, 2003; Tkach-Kawasaki, 2003).

It is worth noting that since the rise of Internet campaigning, researchers have tried to measure, analyze, and report the role of the Internet during a modern political campaign. Anstead and Chadwick (2008) note that since the mid-1990s, it has been widely predicted that the Internet will have a decisive influence on election campaigning (Cairncross, 1997; Ferdinand 2000; Buchstein 1997). The lack of comparative institutional research on Internet campaigning is perhaps best explained by the terms of reference that have dominated discussion of Internet politics more generally.

Remarkably, since the net's early days, analysis of its political impact has been dominated by two distinct schools of thought: the normalizers, who claim that current political relationships and power distributions will ultimately be replicated online, and the optimists, who claim that the Internet will reform politics and radically redistribute political power. These two camps are descendants of an older debate between sociological and technological determinisms: between those who claim that the impact of technology is shaped by social and political institutions and those who believe technology has the power to shape society and politics. Debate between normalizers and optimists has been useful in creating much of the significant early analysis of the Internet; it has also proved limiting (Bimber and Davis 2003; Davis 1999; Gibson, Margolis Resnick and Ward, 2003; Margolis and Resnick, 2000).

Both sides have generally paid insufficient attention to the complex interaction between technology and political institutions. While institutions have often been neglected by the normalizers and the optimists, they have at least had an implied significance. Normalization theory argues that the broader resources available to political actors, such as money, bureaucracy, supporter networks, or an interested mainstream media, will heavily condition their ability to make effective use of the Internet for campaigning (Davis, 1999; Margolis and Resnick, 2000). Online advantage accrues to the strongest offline actors. In their influential book, 'Politics as Usual', Margolis and Resnick (2000: 2) argue that cyberspace "will be molded by the everyday struggle for wealth and power.

Anstead and Chadwick (2008) have found that the results of systematic study of Internet effects tend to be rather pessimistic about its potential as a mobilising force. Bimber (2001) update of earlier work in the United States (US) using 1998 and 1999 data confirmed the lack of any strong

relationship between a wide range of traditional forms of participation and Internet use. Scheufele and Nisbet (2002) offer a similarly uninspiring conclusion from their telephone survey of New York residents which examined the effects of different types of Internet use on a range of political behaviours and levels of factual knowledge. None of the modes of Internet use, Including political information seeking, was found to have any significant effect on individuals' proclivity to engage in politics, either in a conventional sense (i.e., voting, contacting) or in more participatory forums. In terms of the basic question of whether exposure to information online can affect people's vote choice, evidence from the Pew Center gathered during the 2000 US presidential election would suggest that this is the case (Bimber and Davis 2003; Gibson et al. 2003).

2.4.2 Gap in Literature

This review has examined the use of internet in political campaigns in Nigeria 2011 general election and lays emphases on the problems associated with the use of internet-based political campaign during the 2011 general election in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area; as well as on the usefulness of internet-based political campaigns to voters' decision making during the 2011 general election in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area; and on the level of contribution of internet-based political campaigns in addressing challenges associated with the use of traditional media for political campaign during the 2011 general election in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area. The use of internet-based political campaigns in elections in Nigeria is a phenomenon that dates back to the 2011 Nigeria general election. The overall goal of the use of internet-based political campaigns by political parties and the candidates in the election was to convince voter to vote in

favour of the parties and the candidates. Despite the opportunities being offered by the use of internet-based political campaigns during the 2011 general election, challenges may abound.

Though, there is growing use of the internet for political campaigns in Nigeria especially during the 2011 general elections, review of literature indicates empirical studies are scanty to determine the usefulness of internet-based political campaigns to voters' decision making during the 2011 general election in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area ; also, no study had been done to identify the problems associated with the use of internet-based political campaign during the 2011 general election in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area and also to determine the level of contribution of internet-based political campaigns in addressing challenges associated with the use of traditional media for political campaign during the 2011 general election in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area.

Furthermore, review of literature shows that some empirical studies that had been carried out in Nigeria had focused on the use of social media by voters during election. Other studies had looked at information contents and political orientation of Nigerian websites.

This study therefore, tries to fill the gap by identifying areas that have not been studied on the use of internet for political campaigns in elections in Nigeria particularly as it applies to Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area. Available empirical studies have not examined include, the usefulness of internet-based political campaigns to voters' decision making during the 2011 general election in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area; the problems associated with the use of internet-based political campaign during the 2011 general election in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area

and also, the level of contribution of internet-based political campaigns in addressing challenges associated with the use of traditional media for political campaign during the 2011 general election in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area have not also been examined. These constitute the gap in literature in this area of study that the study seeks to explore.

In conclusion, this study hopes to determine the usefulness of internet-based political campaigns to voters' decision making during the 2011 general election in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area; ascertain the problems associated with the use of internet-based political campaign during the 2011 general election in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area and also, determine the level of contribution of internet-based political campaigns in addressing challenges associated with the use of traditional media for political campaign during the 2011 general election in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area

2.5.1 Theoretical Framework

In line with the objectives of this study, the study holds relevance to Technology Acceptance Model. The Model is hereby explained below.

2.5.2 Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

Due to the growing technology needs in the 1970's, and increasing failures of system adoption in organization and among individuals, predicting failures of system use became an area of interest for many researchers. However, most of the studies carried out failed to produce reliable measure that could explain system acceptance or rejection (Davis, 1989).

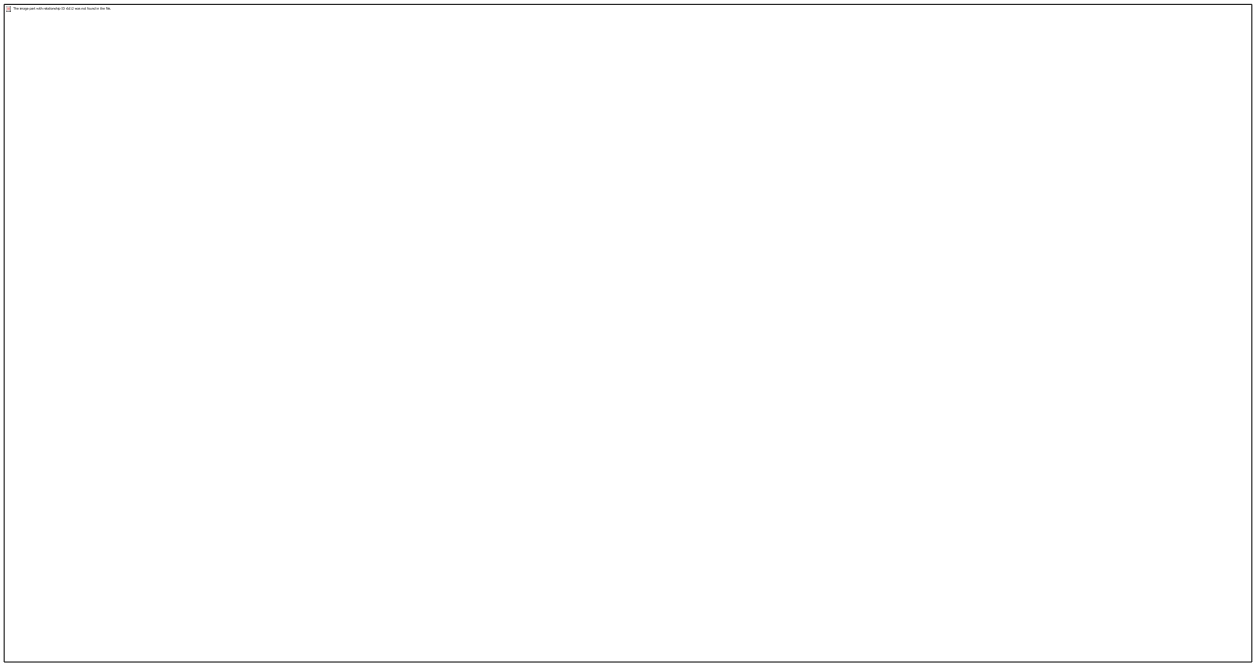
Fred Davis proposed the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) in his doctoral thesis at the MIT Sloan School of Management in 1985. He proposed that system use is a response can be explained or predicted user motivation, which, in turn, is directly influenced by external stimulus consisting of the actual system's feature and capabilities. However, by relying on prior work by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), who formulated the Theory of Reasoned, and other related research studies, Davis further refined his conceptual model to propose the Technology Acceptance Model (Chuttur, 2009).

Davis (1986) suggested that users' motivation to employ information technology can be explained by three factors: perceived Ease of Use, Perceived Usefulness, and Attitude toward using the system. He hypothesized that the attitude of a user toward a system was a major determinant of whether the user will actually use or reject the system. The attitude of the user, in turn, was considered to be influenced by two major beliefs: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use, with perceived ease of use having a direct influence on perceived usefulness (Chuttur, 2009).Hung-Pin Shih (2003) defines Perceived usefulness as the degree to which a person believes that a particular information system would enhance his or her job performance i.e., by reducing the time to accomplish a task or providing timely information, while Perceived ease of use is the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free of effort.

King and Jun (2006) indicate that two other constructs in TAM are attitude towards use and behavioral intention to use. Attitude towards use is the user's evaluation of the desirability of employing a particular information systems application. Behavioral intention to use is a measure of the likelihood a person will employ the application. TAM's dependent variable is actual

usage. It has typically been a self-reported measure of time or frequency of employing the application.

Saadé, Nebebe, and Tan (2007) observe that some authors have considered additional relationships. Some have ignored intention to use or attitude and instead studied the effect of ease of use or usefulness directly on usage. Findings about the effects of attitude and intention have not always been significant. In prior Internet technologies related behavior studies, many researchers dropped attitude from the structural model of TAM, because of its weak strength in mediating beliefs' impact on behavioral intention to use the target system. Attitude towards the system has been identified as an essential determinant to behavioral intention, as described in the theory of Reasoned Action. After several studies, Davis dropped the attitude construct.



Original TAM proposed by Fred Davis

Source: (Davis, 1986, p. 24)

Prior to the works of Davis (1986), several studies had highlighted the importance of perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness in predicting a person's behaviour. Such works include: Bandura (1982), Swanson (1982).

2.5.3 Applicability of the Model

This theory is relevant to this study because the theory sheds light on factors that were likely to have motivated the adoption or non-adoption of the internet for political campaigns by political parties and candidates during the Nigeria 2011 election as well as the use or non-use of the internet to seek internet-based political campaign information by voters during the election.

Technology Acceptance Model suggests that users' motivation to employ information technology can be explained by two major factors: perceived Ease of Use and Perceived Usefulness. Thus, it can argued that political parties and candidates adoption of the internet for political campaign as well as voters adoption of the internet to access internet-based campaign information during the election were influenced by their perceptions on the Ease of Use and Usefulness of the internet.

It is likely that positive perceptions on usefulness and ease of use of the internet for political campaigns may have influenced the significant use of internet-based political campaigns by political parties and the use of the internet to access internet-based political campaign information by voters during the 2011 Nigeria election. Eva, Marta and Aina, (2009) suggest that in terms of usefulness, internet-based political campaigns offer political parties opportunity to market their candidates, manifestos and to influence voters' choice of candidates in elections. Political parties can use the internet to give themselves some campaign opportunities in their

competition with other competing political groups. It can offer political parties and candidates greater control of conveyed messages.

Bennett (2003) opines that the internet could be beneficial to resource poor organizations that do not traditionally have access to mass media outlets. ICTs help reduce the cost of distributing information as well as the cost of participation. ICTs offer inexpensive means to disseminate information via activist organizations websites.

Arthur (2012) suggests that other opportunities that the use of the internet for electoral campaigns offers political parties and candidates during elections include: opportunity for the politicians and political campaign groups to communicate instantaneously with voters. Voters have the opportunity to interact with politician on campaign issues that matter to them. This offers opportunity for reactions and feedback from the public and gives insight into public expectations on campaign issues. Furthermore, political campaign websites can provide rich ground for interaction among voters to discuss issues bothering on the electoral campaign. This offers opportunity for healthy rivalry among different political groups. The new media offers opportunities for fund raising for politicians. For example, Barack Obama raised hundreds of millions online over the course of his presidential run in 2009 and 2011. Political campaign sites offer opportunity for campaign news and other electoral and political updates concerning events that impact on the election.

In addition, Heaney, Newman, and Sylvester (2011) opine that in terms of the ease of use of the internet, the internet has advantages such as it does not require much technical skills and higher level of literacy to use the internet. Access to the internet is unrestricted. It costs less to receive

political campaign information via the internet. There are many channels or media that can be used to access the internet, such as phones, tablets, computers etc.

However, the use of the internet for political campaigns during election by parties and candidates as well as its use to access political campaign information by voters can be hindered by some factors which may result in low or negative perception of ease of use and (or) usefulness of the internet-for political campaigns .Ahiakwo (2000) identified these factors as: unavailability or poor internet connections, high cost of internet subscription, poor or insufficient technical know-how/awareness to use the internet for political campaigns or access political campaign information; poor power supply, high rate of illiteracy among voters; and high poverty level of the citizenry

In conclusion, Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) gives insight into the underlining factors that likely influenced the adoption or non-adoption of the internet for political campaigns by political parties and candidates as well as use or non-use of internet-based political campaign information by voters during the Nigeria 2011 elections.

2.5.4 Critique of the Model

Bagozzi (2007) argues that Technology Acceptance Model fails to take into account, the role of group, cultural, and social aspects of technology acceptance. The TAM is conceived largely as a framework for explaining decision making by individual persons. However, much of human behavior is not best characterized by an individual acting in isolation. But perhaps more often than not we act interpersonally, or as agents of organizations, or jointly with others, or in a holistic sense as members of collectivities. Decisions with regard to technology acceptance and

actual usage are often done collaboratively or with an aim to how they fit in with, or affect, other people or group requisites.

Also, the role of emotions in technology acceptance has been treated in a rather ad hoc way in extensions of TAM and in other treatments of affect in Information Systems. For instance, intrinsic motivation, affect toward use (joy versus sadness emotions), affect (liking for a particular behavior), and anxiety toward performing a behavior have been proposed as direct predictors of effort and/or performance expectancies and, therefore, are claimed to be indirect determinants of intentions (Bagozzi, 2007:247-8).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methods used in conducting the research study. The chapter contains the research design, the study area, the study variables, population, sampling technique, sample size, method of data collection, data analysis and measurement technique and the pilot study.

3.2.1 Location of Study

The study was conducted in Abuja municipal area council of Abuja Federal Capital Territory, and Shendam Local Government Area of Plateau State. Abuja Municipal Area measuring about 8000 square Kilometres comprises of the following ethnic groups: Gbagyi, Gwandara, Koro, Gade, and other Nigerians. Abuja Municipal Area is delineated into twelve electoral wards namely: City centre Wuse, Gwarinpa, Garki, Kabusa, Gui, Jiwa, Gwagwa, Karshi, Orozo, Karu, and Nyanya constituencies (fctacss.org.ng). Abuja municipal area council, due to it cosmopolitan set-up, was chosen for the study as it was highly likely to have greater access to internet facilities.

Shendam Local Government is located in Shendam, Plateau State, which is almost 254 kilometres to the South east, and on the foothills of the Jos highlands. It is uniquely recognized as the lowland because of its geographical low attitude. Its humid weather can be equated to those of neighbouring area like Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory. Shendam local government area has a total land area of 2,437 square kilometers and a population of 270, 000 persons, based on the 2006 National Census, (NPC, 2006). The Local Government Area is divided into four

administrative districts of Shendam, Dorok, Derteng and Dokan Tofa; with Angas and Monrol as the major languages. The major occupation of the people is farming, trading, craftwork like pottery and weaving, woodcarving blacksmithing, hunting and fishing. Plateau State.gov.ng (2010). The choice of Shendam local government area for the study was based on the location's rural/semi urban setting, for it offered a comparatively bases for analyses with Abuja Municipal area.

3.2.2 Research Design

Due to the nature of this study, the study combined quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. These methods had been chosen because they were the most appropriate methods required to generate needed data for the study. Descriptive survey method of data collection was used in collecting data that was used to answer research questions one and three of the study. This was because data type needed to answer research questions one and three could easily be gathered by the use of descriptive survey method.

Wimmer and Dominick (2003: 167-168) explain that the survey method presents the universe of the study and by appropriating or reducing the universe, it provides the opportunity to check on the incident, distribution and interrelation of variable (demographic, information, attitude, motives, Intentions and so on. Kerlinger (1973) supported this approach because the survey method enables the study of a relative population needed to provide primary information for the research. Descriptive survey method was particularly useful to this study as offered opportunity for the study of a representative sample from the population of Abuja Municipal Area of Abuja Federal Capital Territory and Shendam Local Government Area of Plateau State.

For the qualitative method, interview research method of data collection was used to gather data which was used to answer research questions two and four of the study. This is because data type needed to answer research questions two and four could easily be gathered by the use of interview research method. McNamara (1999) identifies that interviews are particularly useful for getting the story behind a participant's experiences. Interview research method was particularly useful to this research in that it sought to draw data from the experiences of internet campaign managers of political parties and web consultants use of the internet for political campaigns in Nigeria's 2011 general election. This data collection method allows the interviewer to pursue in-depth information around the topic.

3.3 Population

The population of the study had all inhabitants of Abuja Municipal Area of Abuja Federal Capital Territory and Shendam Local Government Area of Plateau State, who were of voting age (18 years old) before the 2011 Nigeria's general election and had registered for voting in the election. The limiting of the age of participants from Abuja Municipal area of Abuja Federal Capital Territory and Shendam local government area to 18 years was to ensure that participants were of age and eligible to participate in the 2011 general election. The Independent National Electoral Commission of Nigeria records of registered voters in the 2011 Nigeria general elections indicated that there were 476,428 registered voters in Abuja Municipal Area of Abuja Federal Capital territory, while for Shendam Local Government Area; there were 46,241 registered voters (The Independent National Electoral Commission, 2011).

The population of study also included the campaign managers of political parties that participated in the 2011 Nigeria general elections, as well as web consultants. There were 63 registered political parties in the 2011 Nigeria general elections (The Independent National Electoral Commission, 2011).

3.4 Sampling Techniques

According to Asika (2001:74), 'the sample is precisely the part of the population.' It is small part of the population intended as a representative of the whole. Quota sampling technique was used to draw sample from the inhabitants of Abuja Municipal Area of Abuja Federal Capital Territory and Shendam local government area of Plateau State, who were of voting age (18 years old) before the 2011 Nigeria's general elections and had registered for voting in the election. Quota sampling technique was used for the study because it ensured that the major characteristics of the population of the study were proportionally represented in the sample. According to Asika (2001), this sample technique enables the researcher of the study to represent the major characteristics of the population by sampling a proportional amount of each.

Purposive sampling technique sampling technique was used to identify and select the campaign managers of the political parties that participated in the 2011 Nigeria's and also web consultants, for the study.

3.4.1 Study Variables

Central to the study are two variables; dependent and independent variables. Usually, the dependent variables rely on the independent variables to occur. In this study, the independent

variable is the use of the internet for political campaign. On the other hand, the dependent variable is the Nigeria 2011 general elections.

3.4.2 The Independent Variables

As identified, the independent variable in this study is the use of the internet for political campaigns. The use of the internet for political campaigns refers to the application of the new media (internet) for political campaign purposes.

3.4.3 The Dependent Variables

As already stated, the dependent variable is the Nigeria 2011 general elections. For the purpose of this study, the study limits itself to the presidential election and seeks to examine the use of the internet for political campaigns in the election.

3.5 Sample Size

Part of the sample for this study was drawn from residents of Abuja Municipal Council area of Abuja Federal Capital Territory and Shendam Local Government Area of Plateau State who were of voting age (18 years) before the 2011 general election and had registered for voting in the election. In order to get a relatively reliable figure of this part of the population, the Independent National Electoral Commission's record list of registered voters of the areas in the 2011 Nigeria's general election was obtained by the researcher. Based on the record, there were a total number of 476,428 registered voters in Abuja municipal area council (INEC, 2011). Break down of registered voters in Abuja municipal council area showed the following number of voters in each of the districts that make up the area :

Distr -icts	City centre	Wuse	Gwarin -pa	Garki	Kabua	Gui	Jiwa	Gwagwa	Karshi	Orozo	Karu	Nyanya
Total	76,277	64,060	60,349	45,080	23,412	22975	21,070	23,130	38,033	27,986	23,981	50,075

Source: The Independent National Electoral Commission, 2011

For Shendam local government area, there was a total of 46, 241 registered voters (INEC, 2011). A breakdown of numbers of registered voters in the four districts that make up the area showed that the each had the following number of registered voters:

District	Shendam	Dorok	Derteng	Dokan Tofa
Total	16,345	12,005	8,589	9,302

Source: The Independent National Electoral Commission, 2011

Using Quota sampling, the sample size for the study was determined, firstly by drawing ten percent (10%) of voters each from the populations of voters of both Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area.

For Abuja Municipal Area = $\frac{476,428}{100}$ * 10% = 47643

For Shendam Local Government Area = $\frac{46,241}{100}$ * 10% = 4624

Sample Size = 47643 + 4624 = 52267

However, to reduce this sample size to a manageable size, Cochran Formula was used. For populations that are large, Cochran (1963:75) developed the Equation below, to yield representative sample or proportions:

$$n_o = \frac{(t)^2 * (p)(q)}{(d)^2}$$

Where n_0 is the sample size, t^2 is the abscissa of the normal curve that cuts off an area α at the tails (1 - α equals the desired confidence level, e.g., 95%) [1], e is the desired level of precision, p is the estimated proportion of an attribute that is present in the population, and q is 1-p. The value for t is found in statistical tables which contain the area under the normal curve. Therefore for this study, p=.5 (maximum variability). Furthermore, the desired confidence level is 95% and ±5% precision. **The resulting final sample size for this study is 384.** Wimmer & Dominick (2000) observe that for large population such as that in this study, the size of the sample is important because the larger the sample size, the more representative it is of the total population and therefore a sample size of above three hundred and fifty is a fair representation of the population.

Using purposive sampling technique, four areas were selected from the twelve districts that make up Abuja Municipal Area. The selected areas in Abuja municipal area were chosen because of their perceived diversities in terms of ethnic groups and better access to internet connection. The numbers of respondents for Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area were allotted based on the percentage ratio of voter population of the areas which is equivalent to 91% for Abuja Municipal Area and 9% for Shendam Local Government Area.

District	**Nyanya**	**Wuse**	**Gwarinpa**	**Karu**
Size	87	87	87	88

Sample Size allocated to each selected district in Abuja Municipal Area.

District	Shendam	Dorok	Derteng	Dokan Tofa
Size	9	9	9	8

Sample size allocated to each selected district in Shendam Local Government Area.

6. Respondents for the in-depth interview were selected using purposive sampling technique. Selected respondents included the campaign managers of two political parties that participated in the 2011 Nigeria's general elections, as well as two web consultants. The two political parties selected were People's Democratic Party (PDP) and Congress for Progressive Change (CPC). These parties were chosen because they greatly made use of the internet for political campaigns during the Nigeria's 2011 general elections.

3.6 Methods of Data Collection

Survey method and interview method were employed for this study. Through survey method, a large amount of data was collected with relative ease from a variety of people or the target population through the use of questionnaires thereby subjecting the data to statistical analysis (Babbie, 2001; Wimmer and Dominick, 2000). The survey method was ideal for this study because survey is chiefly used for descriptive purposes and at the same time where individual people constitute the unit of analysis. Babbie (2001) observes that, "survey is the best method available to a social researcher who is interested in collecting original data for describing a population too large to observe directly". Surveys are also excellent vehicle for measuring attitudes and orientations in a large population. This method will therefore, allow the researcher to examine different variables – demographics, lifestyles, information, attitudes, motives and intentions with respect to the research topic (Wimmer and Dominick, 2000).

Through interview method, data which were particularly useful for the study were also gathered, particularly data that could not be adequately captured using the survey method. McNamara (1999) identifies that interviews are particularly useful for getting the story behind a participant's experiences.

3.7 Instruments of Data Collection

(I) This study employed questionnaire as the instrument used to gather data from selected residents of Abuja municipal area of Abuja federal capital territory and Shendam Local Government Area of Plateau State, who were of voting age (18 years) before the 2011 Nigeria general election and had registered for voting in the election. The questionnaires have both open-ended and closed ended questions. The questionnaires have been divided into sections and were targeted at answering relevant research questions suited for this instrument of data collection.

Copies of the questionnaire were administered using purposive sampling technique. The use of this sampling technique in the distribution of copies of the questionnaire was to ensure that only individuals who met the criteria of being part of the population of the study were given the chance to supply data for the study. The researcher personally administered the instrument and collected data with a view to answering research questions one and three of the study. A total of three hundred and eight-four questionnaires were distributed among respondents in districts in Abuja Municipal Area and respondents in Shendam Local Government Area of Plateau State.

(II) This study also employed Interview schedule as the instrument for gathering the qualitative data. Interview schedule was used to gather data from selected campaign managers of two political parties (People's Democratic Party (PDP) and Congress for Progressive Change

(CPC) that participated in the 2011 Nigeria's presidential election and two web consultants, all of whom had been selected for this study.

3.8 Validity and Reliability

A pilot study was conducted for the study. This is to enable the researcher improve on the validity and reliability of the instruments. It is also to correct any ambiguity in the instrument. The pilot study was conducted using 10 residents drawn from Zaria Local Government Area of Kaduna State. Face validity was used to examine the appropriateness of the instruments in order to ascertain the degree to which questions or indicators in the data gathering instruments adequately represents the variables measured. Ambiguous questions observed from respondents given were corrected by the researcher before going to the field to gather data for the study.

The test-retest method was used to measure the reliability of the instrument. The researcher administered the questionnaire to the same group of residents at different times, summing up the number to 40 copies. Using the test- retest method, the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient reliability test yielded 0.89. This figure shows a high positive correlation. Thus suggesting the instrument has an acceptable level of validity and reliability. The Interview Schedule was subjected to face validity; a draft copy was given to the researcher's supervisors and experts in the area of the new media and political campaign for vetting. Their advice and corrections were incorporated into the final instruments for the data collection for this study.

3.9 Methods of Data Analysis

The data collected from copies of questionnaire administered was statistically analyzed using descriptive statistical methods. The descriptive analysis included the use of frequencies,

percentage, and charts. These methods had been used to ensure that data generated in the study was properly analyzed and clearly interpreted. The qualitative data collected from the in-depth interview was analyzed using qualitative method. This method had been used to ensure that data generated was properly analyzed and clearly interpreted. Data analyzed was presented in narrative form.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATIONANDANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This research was guided by six objectives from which six research questions were generated. Drawing on the foregoing description of our research data, we will now proceed to present the data and its analysis.

4.2.1 Data Presentation

A total number of 384 copies of questionnaire were administered and retrieved. Data collected were analyzed and presented below.

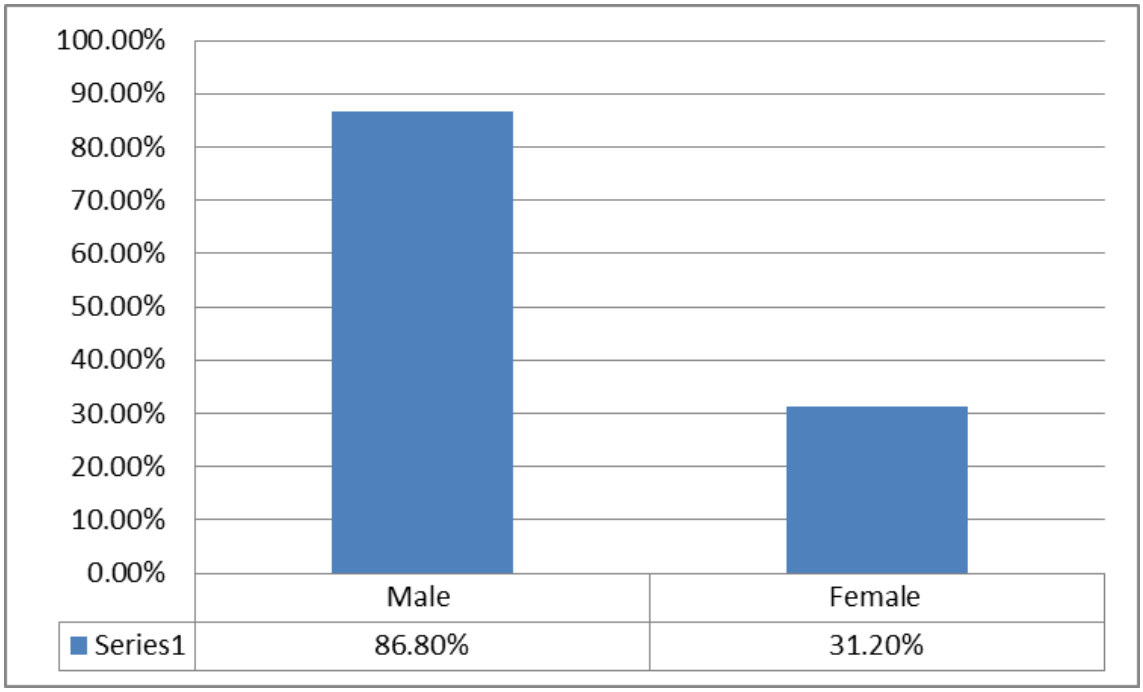
Figure 1: Age Distribution of Respondents



(Source: fieldwork, 2013.)

Figure 1 shows that most respondents were between the ages of 21 - 30 years making up 72.4%. Next in order of magnitude are the 31-40 and 41-50 years groups with 23.4% and 4.2% respectively. Thus majority of the respondents were less than 40 years old.

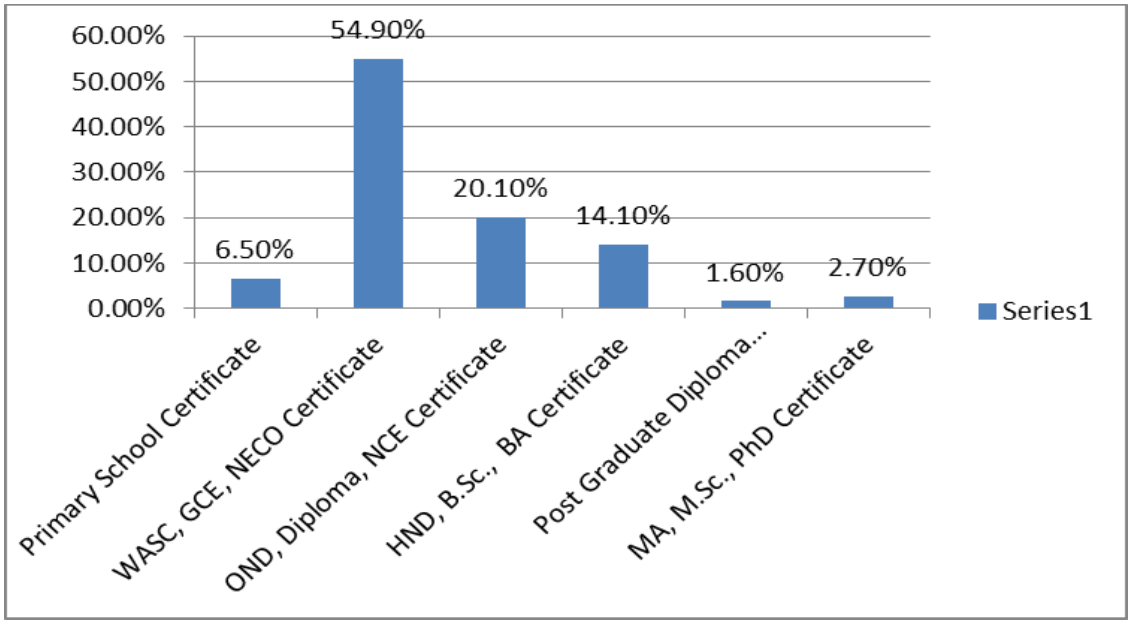
Figure 2: Sex Distribution of Respondents



(Source: fieldwork, 2013.)

Figure 2 indicates that majority of respondents are male, thus, making up 68.8% of respondents of the study while female respondents make up 31.2%.

Figure 3: Educational Status of Respondents



(Source: fieldwork, 2013.)

Figure 3 shows that majority of the respondent have at least secondary school level education. Only 6.5% have primary school level education. The respondents are all educated, thus, knowledgeable enough to answer the questionnaire items reasonably well.

Table 1: Major source of campaign information for respondents during the election

Medium	Frequency	Percentage
Television	**110**	**28.6**
Radio	**139**	**36.1**
Family and Friends	**27**	**7.1**
Newspaper	**29**	**7.6**
Magazine	**0**	**0**
Internet	**48**	**12.5**
Billboard	**17**	**4.4**
Out Door Political Campaign/Speeches	**8**	**2.1**
Pamphlets, Posters	**6**	**1.6**
Total	**384**	**100**

(Source: fieldwork, 2013.)

Table 1 shows that majority of respondents identified radio and television as their major sources of political campaign information during the 2011 Nigeria's presidential election thus making up 36.1% and 28.6% respectively. Only 12.5% of respondents identified internet as their major source of political campaign information during the election. Overall, these data particularly those that identify television and Radio as the main sources of information for Nigerians conforms to data from other studies which has identified television/radio as themost prevalent single source of information among Nigerians. Factors responsible for the low use of internet for accessing internet-based political campaigns information during the election have been identified by this study.

Figure 4: Respondents' accessibility to the Internet during the election



(Source: fieldwork, 2013.)

Figure 4 shows that majority (58.6%) of respondents in the study had internet access during the election, thus, many respondents had the opportunity to access internet-based political campaign information during the election. This data indicates that there was a divide in internet access among respondents during the as a great number of respondents (41.4%) did not have access to the internet. This data conformed to the result of a research finding on internet penetration in Nigeria carried out by the *Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC)* in 2013 which reported that only 34, 471, 520 subscribers out of 114,172 million active subscribers on the global system for mobile communications network in Nigeria use data. The data showed that 79,700,920 subscribers were yet to use data on the internet as at the first quarter of 201

Table 2: Respondents who accessed Internet-based political campaigns sites

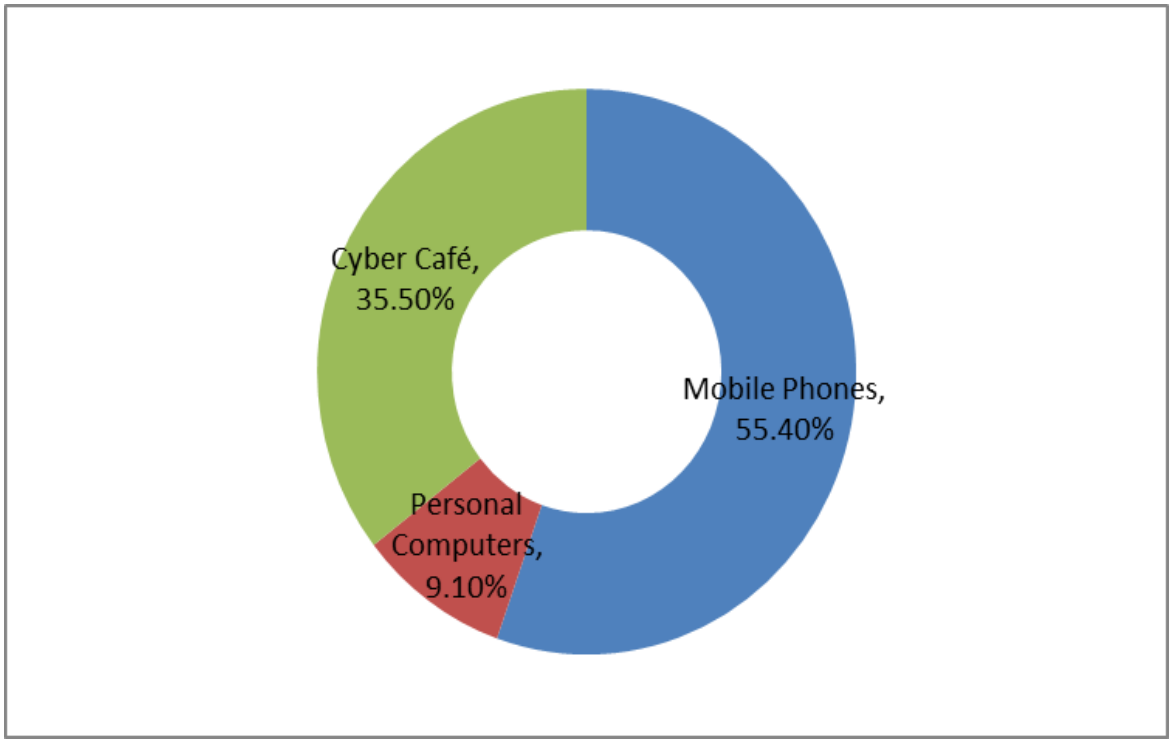
Response	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Respondents who accessed internet-based political campaign sites	**110**	**28.6**
Respondents who did not access internet-based political campaign sites	**274**	**71.4**
Total	**384**	**100**

(Source: fieldwork, 2013.)

Table 2 shows that majority did not access internet-based political campaigns sites during the election. Only 28.6 % of respondents accessed internet-based political campaigns sites during the election. Thus, very few respondents utilized the internet to access internet-based political campaigns during the election. In contrast to the data from this study, data from studies carried out in the United States by PEW research internet project in 2009 found that the proportion of Americans going online for election-related news and information has more than doubled since

the end of the 2000 general election. Six in ten internet users went online in 2008 for campaign news, up from 52% at a similar point in 2004 and 33% in 2000. Moreover, because the total population of internet users has also grown over that time, the overall size of the online political news consumer audience has grown from 18% of all adults in 2000 to 44% of adults today.

Figure 5: Major medium of accessing the internet for respondents who accessed Internet-based political campaign during the election

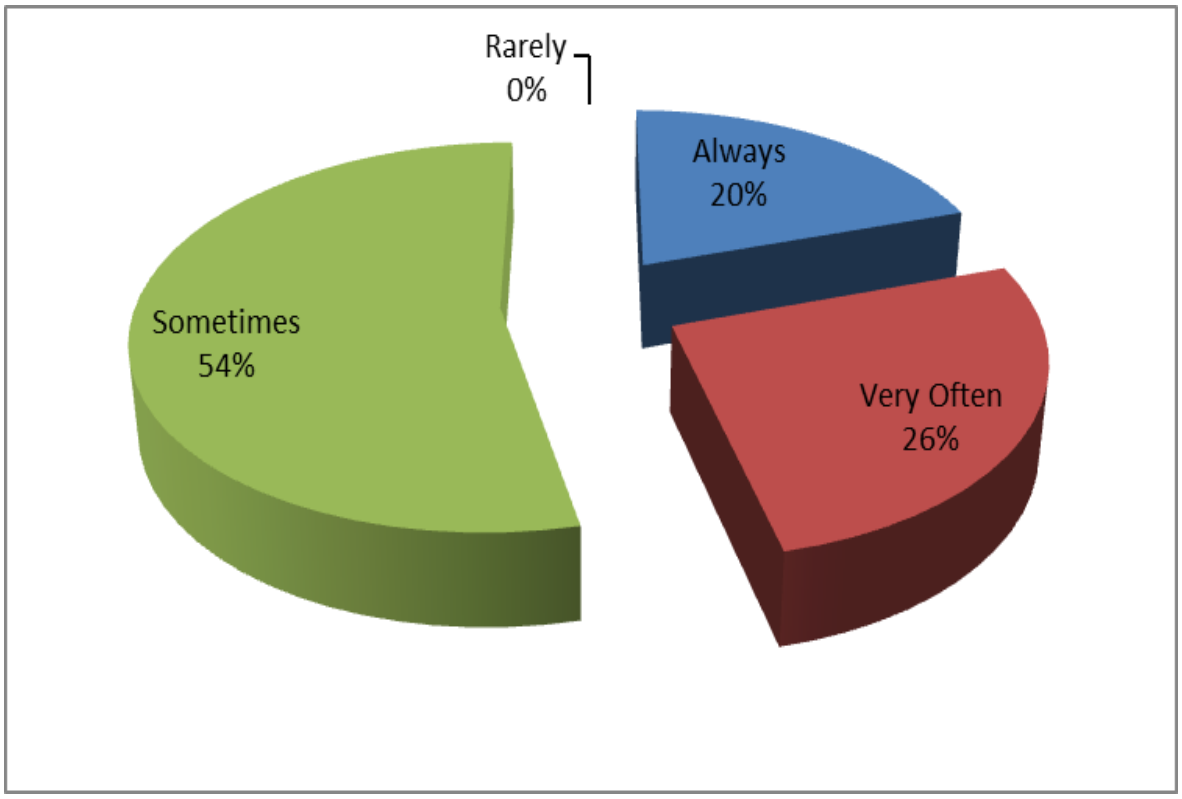


(Source: fieldwork, 2013.)

Figure 5 shows that mobile phone was the most used medium for accessing internet-based political sites of candidates during the election, thus, making up 55.4% of respondents. The least used medium for accessing internet-based campaign sites during the election was personal computer with 9.1%. The identification of the use of mobile phones by this study as the major

medium of accessing internet-based political campaign information by respondents during the election confirmed result from a study carried out by *Technology and Emerging Markets* in 2010 in Nigeria which found that internet usage in Nigeria was driven primarily by mobile phone. The implication of this is that campaign contents have to be adapted to mobile phone browsers.

Figure 6: Frequency of accessing internet-based political campaigns by respondents who accessed internet-based political campaigns during the election



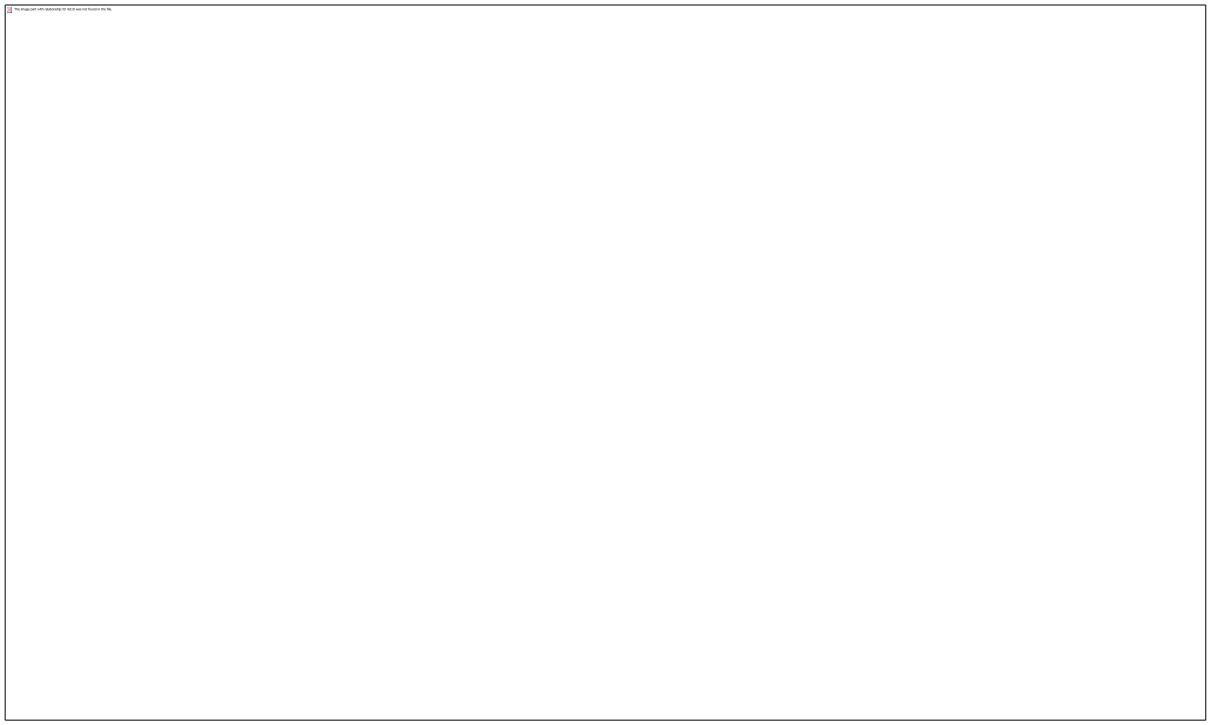
(Source: fieldwork, 2013.)

Figure 6 shows that majority of respondents did not visit the internet-based political campaign sites very often during the election. Only 46.4% of respondents reported that they visited the campaign sites either always or very often during the election, while 54% of respondents

indicated that they accessed internet-based political campaign sites only sometimes. This data indicated that respondents of the study who accessed internet-based campaign sites of candidates during the 2011 presidential election spent did not spend much amount of time visiting the campaign sites.

Interestingly, findings from a study by Miller (1996) found that in some cases, priority determines number of visit to the internet and the length of time spent surfing. Just as data from this study has determined, the study by Miller (1996) found that younger internet users have more time at their disposal than those in their 30s and 40s who could not use much of the time for social activities online. Those aged 50 and other have more free time than the middle age and therefore can also use it for online social activities.

Figure 7: Online activity majorly carried out by respondents who accessed internet-based political campaign sites during election



(Source: fieldwork, 2013.)

Figure 7 shows that majority (48.2%) of respondents visited the internet-based campaign sites of candidates during the election to seek information on the views of the candidates of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and Congress for Progress Change (CPC) political parties in the election. In relation to the PDP and CPC parties' websites and Facebook campaign sites, respondents among others, listed campaign issues on education, economy, politics, infrastructure, corruption and others as issues on which they sought the candidate's views for on the party and candidates' websites. The PDP and CPC campaign websites had the party's manifesto on it which expressed the views of the party on various campaign issues. Respondents equally referred to viewing the parties' manifestos to get a better understanding of the overall views of the parties on various campaign issues.

Other than this, the respondents also viewed the profiles of the PDP and CPC candidates in the election or posted views/comments on the candidates' walls or read news on the campaigns. Thus, this showed that respondents partook in one online activity or the other when they visited the internet campaign sites of candidates during the election.

Similarly, a study conducted by PEW internet research center in America in 2012 found that 66% of social media users (39% of America adults) have engaged in one of eight civic or political activities with social media: 38% of those who use social networking sites or Twitter 'like' or promote material related to politics or social issues that others have posted. 35% have used social networking sites to encourage people to vote. 34% have used the tool to post their own thoughts or comments on political and social issues. 33% have used the tools to repost

content related to political or social issues that were originally posted by someone else. 31% have used the tools to encourage other people to take action on a political or social issue. 28% have used the tools to post links to political stories or articles for others to read. 21% belong to a group on a social networking site that is involved in political or social issues 20% have used the tools to follow elected officials and candidates for office. All these highlighted the various activities voters engage in on various internet campaign sites of candidates during election.

Figure 8: Major difficulty in accessing internet-based political campaign information faced by respondents during the election



(Source: fieldwork, 2013.)

Figure 8 shows that majority of respondents identified poor internet services as the major constraint that hindered access of internet-based political campaign information from the campaign sites of PDP and CPC during the election. Break down of the data showed that 23.6% of respondents identified high internet browsing data cost as a major constraint faced in accessing internet-based political campaign information during the election while 30% of respondents reported that electric power failures were the major factor that hindered use of the internet to access internet-based political campaign information during the election. Furthermore, 30.9% of respondents identified poor internet services from network service providers as the major factor that affected their ability to conveniently access internet-based political campaign information. 12% of respondents stated that poor internet use skill affected their ability to effectively use the internet optimally access internet-based campaign information. Only 4% of respondents noted that they did not encounter any significant challenges when accessing internet-based political information during the election.

Analysis of the above data showed that respondents were obviously faced with variety of challenges that affected their access to internet-based political campaigns information during the election. Similarly, Ahiakwo (2009) in a study, found that barriers to internet connectivity in Nigeria include: lack or inadequate technical know-how/awareness as computer literacy in Nigeria is very low and use of internet facilities depends on one's technical know-how on the computer, next is lack of adequate telecommunication infrastructure, and finally the poverty level of the citizenry affects internet use as connectivity of individuals to the global village (internet) is very expensive for the average Nigerian.

Table 3: The major way difficulties in accessing internet-based political campaign information affected respondents during the election

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
It poorly affected knowledge about the parties and candidates	**8**	**7.3**
Could not fully follow activities and events in the election	**51**	**46.3**
Depended less on the internet for political campaign information	**32**	**29.0**
Could not participate in the election as a result of the challenges	**7**	**6.4**
Did not significantly affect my ability to use the internet to access campaign information	**12**	**10.9**
Total	**110**	**100**

(Source: fieldwork, 2013.)

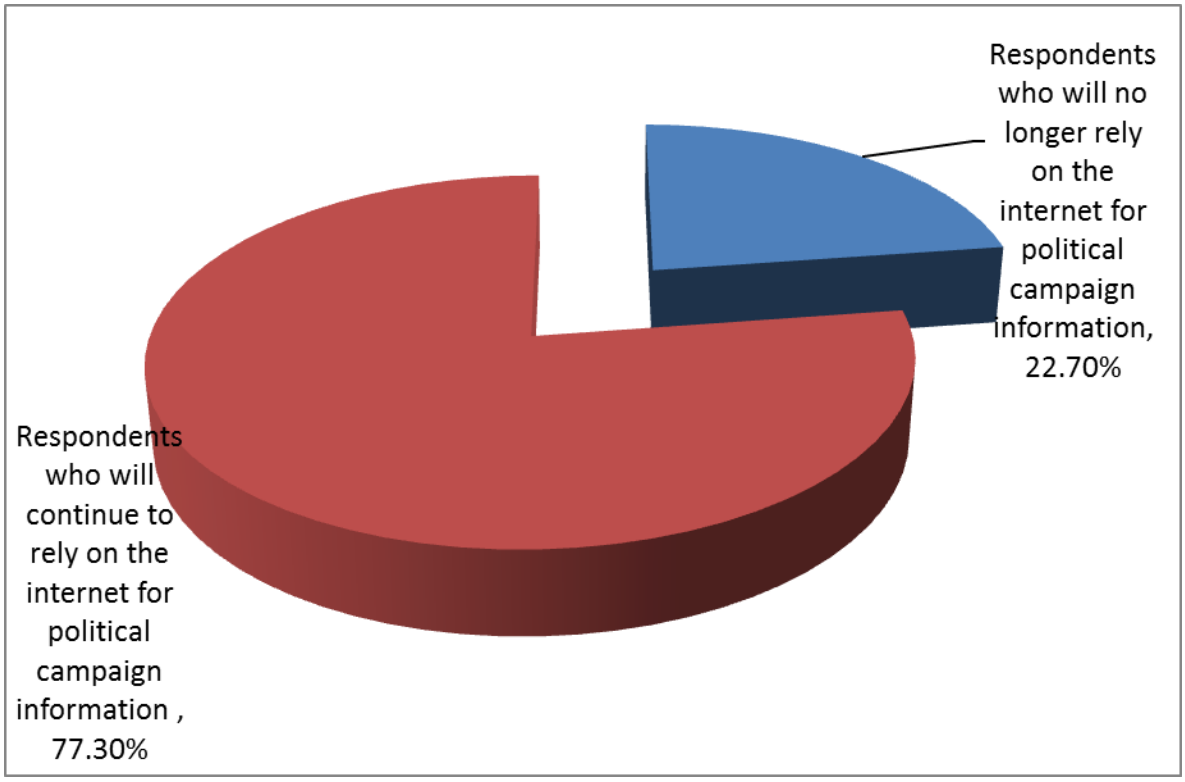
Table 3 shows that majority of respondents reported that they could not follow activities and events in the election on the internet like they would have liked to due to the challenges faced in accessing internet-based political campaign information during the election. While 7.3% of respondents reported that the difficulties faced in accessing internet-based political campaign information resulted in them having poor knowledge about the parties and candidates in the election, 46.3 % reported that the challenges associated with accessing internet-based campaign hindered them from following activities and events in the election online like they would have liked.

Further 29% of respondents indicated that the difficulties they faced in accessing internet-based political campaign information during the election forced them to depend solely on other media rather than on the internet for political campaign information.

Only 6.4% of respondents reported that they did not participate in the election as a result of being unable to access information from the internet-based political campaign sites due to challenges associated with accessing internet-based political campaign information during the election. Lastly, 10.9% of respondents reported that the challenges associated with accessing internet-based political campaign information did not significantly affect their ability to fully utilize the internet to access internet-based political campaign information during the election.

The analysis of the above data showed that the challenges as well as the impact of the challenges experienced by respondents in accessing internet-based political campaign information during the election clearly highlighted the drawbacks of use of internet-based political campaigns in the areas during the election. The nature of these draw backs include: lack of skills on the part of voters in the area to access online political information, inability of some voters to afford browsing data to access online campaign sites, network challenges often from poor internet services, inadequate electricity to use the internet, inability to afford computer devices to access online campaign sites, among others. The nature of the impact of these draw backs on voters have being highlighted above.

Figure 9: Dependence on the internet for political campaign information during future elections



(Source: fieldwork, 2013.)

Figure 9 shows that majority of respondents reported that despite the challenges faced in accessing internet-based political campaign information during the election, they would continue to rely on internet for political campaign information during future elections. Break down of the data showed that 77.3% of respondents reported that they would still rely on internet-based political campaign information during future elections. Only 22.7% of respondents reported that they would not rely on the internet for political campaign information during future elections but would rather depend on other media.

The analysis of the above data showed that internet-based political campaigns hold relevance to respondents, and would continue to have a place in future elections for respondents who depend on internet-based political campaigns for campaign information.

Table 4: Major way internet- based political helped overcome difficulties faced in getting political campaign information from traditional media

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Able to receive instant feedback on campaign issues	**25**	**22.7**
Greater opportunity to interact with other voters and the candidates	**23**	**20.9**
Access to political campaign information anytime one wanted	**25**	**22.7**
Cheaper to access political campaign information from it	**26**	**23.6**
Use of the internet did not make much difference	**11**	**10.0**
Total	**110**	**100**

(Source: fieldwork, 2013.)

Table 4 shows that internet-based political campaigns helped respondents overcome difficulties faced in getting political campaign information from traditional media in diverse ways. 22.7% of respondents reported that internet-based political campaign enabled to receive instant feedback on political campaign issues from candidates of PDP and CPC during the election while 20.9% respondents indicated that internet-based political campaign offered them greater opportunity to interact with other voters and the candidates in the election as the campaign sites of both PDP

and CPC were interactive and as such offered voters and candidates opportunities to interact. Furthermore, 46.3% of respondents reported that internet-based political campaigns enabled them to access political campaign information from PDP and CPC campaign sites at any time and cheaply. Only 10.0% of respondents reported that the use of the internet did not make much difference in overcoming difficulties associated with getting political campaign information from traditional media.

The analysis of the above data showed that the internet in many ways impacted positively in resolving challenges associated with the use of traditional media for political campaigns during the election.

Figure 10: Level of agreement on whether accessing political campaign information on the internet was better when compared to information on other media

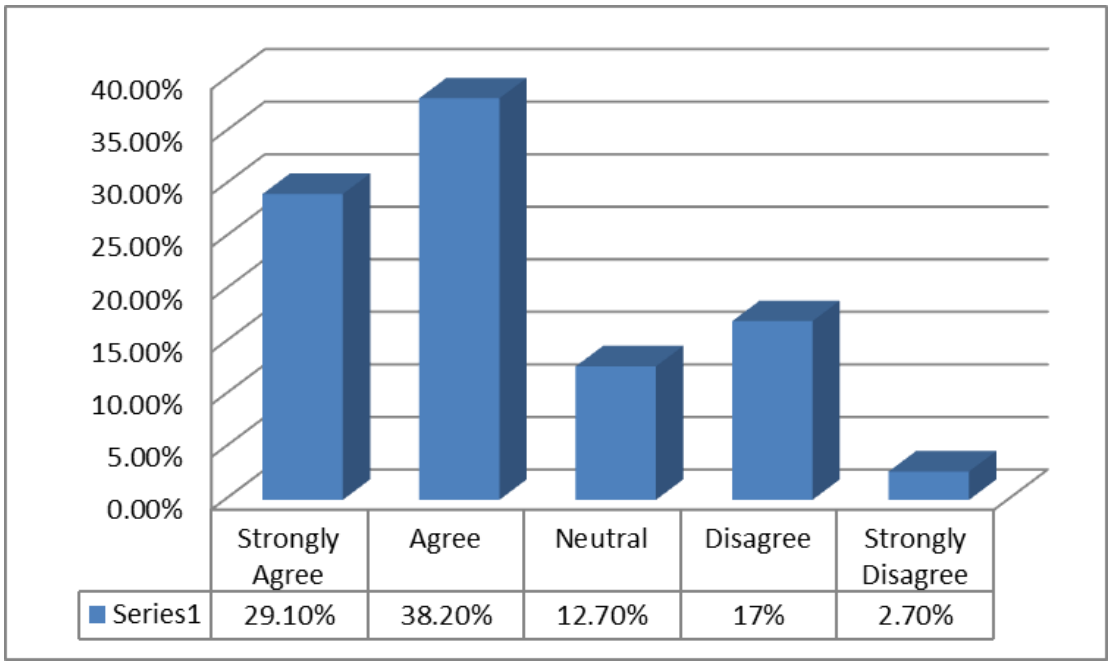


(Source: fieldwork, 2013.)

Figure 10 indicates that majority of respondents are of the view that accessing internet-based political campaign information is better when compared to information on other media, thus, 71.8% of 110 respondents indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed. These respondents made reference to the volume and quality of information on the PDP and CPC campaign sites which considered as being relevant to their information needs than what they get from the traditional media. Contents of the online campaign sites of these political parties include: the parties' manifestos, profile of the parties' candidates in the election, voters' comment page, posts by candidates on various campaign issues, news on campaign activities of the parties, volunteer page, donation page for the candidates etc.

Similarly, Larson (2004) found that preference for online political campaign information among voters was because internet as a form of communication technology incorporates the audio-visual dimensions of television and print media with the speed of telephone and cable delivery systems. It not only facilitates greater access to the news but provides a simple path to active participation in political campaigns. Also, Tolbert and McNeal (2003) their study, concluded that internet provided the public with political information in a more convenient, detailed and low cost form.

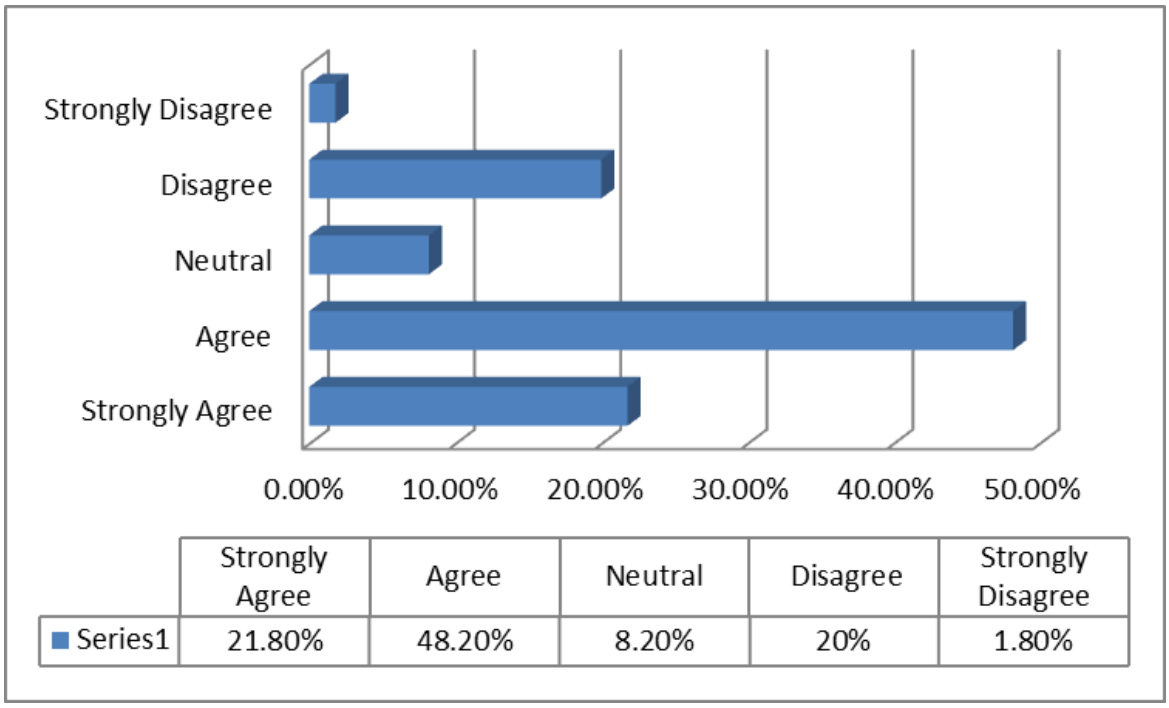
Figure 11: Level of agreement on whether information on internet-based political campaign sites influenced respondents' opinions of candidates



(Source: fieldwork, 2013.)

Figure 11 shows that majority of respondents were of the view that information on internet-based campaign sites influenced their views about the candidates in the election. 67.3% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that information on these campaign sites influenced their views about the candidates. Analysis of data showed that the respondents made reference to the parties' manifestos, the candidates' views on campaign issues on the campaign sites, online debates among voters on the campaign sites as significant factors that influenced their opinions about the candidates of the political parties. Only 20% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that information on the internet campaign sites of the candidates did not significantly influence their views about the candidates in the election. Thus, the study concludes that a large proportion of respondents accept that information on internet-based political campaign sites influence voters' opinions of candidates.

Figure 12: Level of agreement on whether exposure to internet-based political campaign aided respondents' decisions on choice of candidates



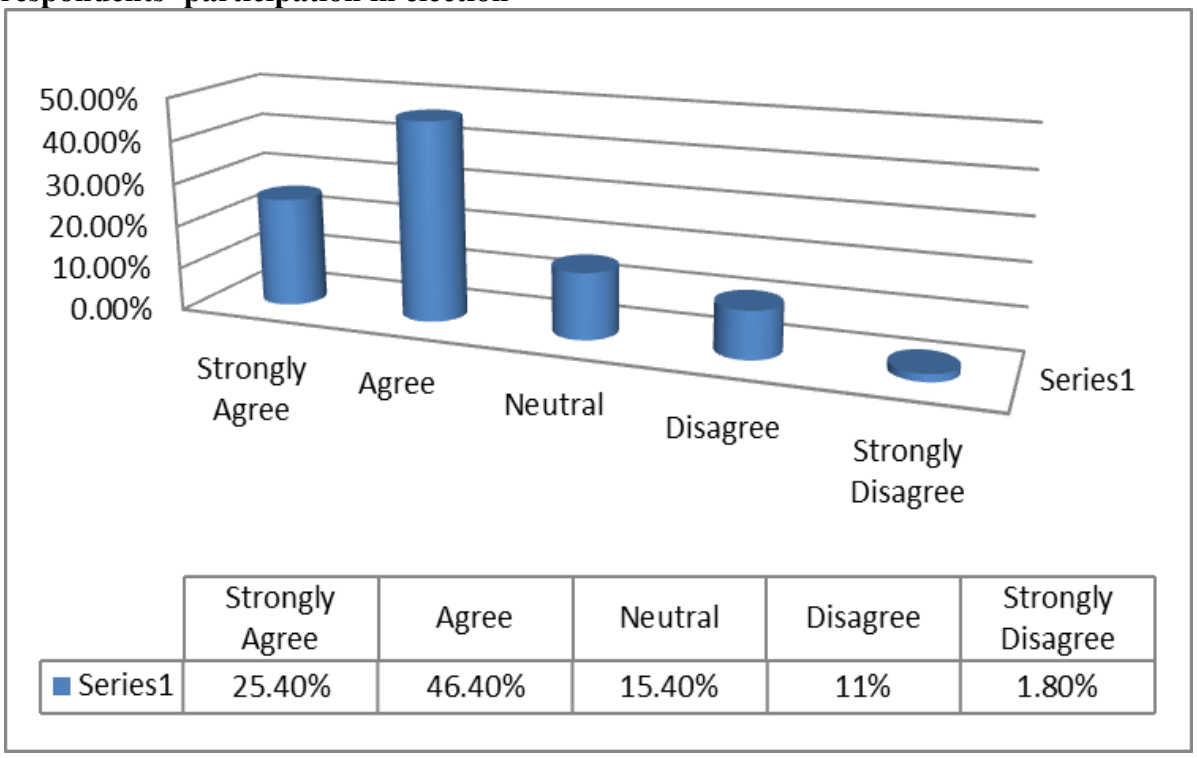
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Series1	21.80%	48.20%	8.20%	20%	1.80%

(Source: fieldwork, 2013.)

Figure 12 shows that majority of respondents reported that exposure to internet-based political campaigns aided them on choice of candidates in the election. 70% respondents agreed or strongly agreed that exposure to the internet campaign sites of candidates in the election aided their decisions on choice of candidates in the election. Respondents reported that the parties' manifestos, profile of the parties' candidates in the election, voters' comment page, posts by candidates on various campaign issues, news on campaign activities of the parties, and becoming a volunteer via registering on the volunteer's page on the online campaign sites were elements in the online campaign that aided respondents' decisions on choice of candidates. Only 21.8% respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that exposure to the internet campaign sites did not have significant influence on their decisions on choice of candidates in the election.

Similarly, a study by Pinkleton, Austin and Fortman (2010) also found that voters no longer make decisions solely on information available through traditional media but instead seek out additional knowledge, and in some cases, additional means of activism, using their computers and mobile devices.

Figure 13: Level of Agreement on whether internet-based political campaigns increased respondents' participation in election



	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Series1	25.40%	46.40%	15.40%	11%	1.80%

(Source: fieldwork, 2013.)

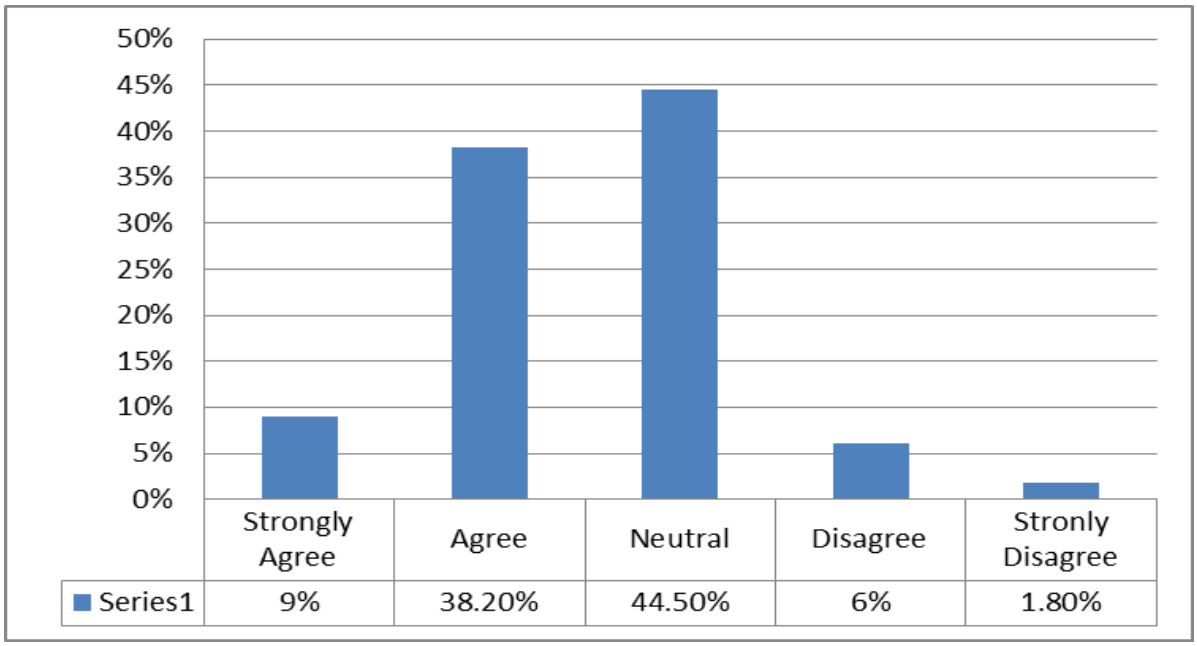
Figure 13 shows that majority of respondents were of the view that exposure to internet-based political campaigns during the election increased their participation in the election. 71.8% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that exposure to internet-based political campaign increased their participation in the election. Analysis of the data showed that respondents

identified that the information acquired from the online campaign sites increased their understanding of many campaign issues during the election hence enabled them to engage fully in the election. The volunteer page and donation page on the online campaign sites of the parties enabled respondents to actively participate in the campaigns of the parties during the election

Only 12.7% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that exposure to internet-based political campaigns did not have influence on their level of participation during the election. Thus, exposure to internet- based political campaign can influence an electorate's level of participation in an election.

Other studies have found similar findings regarding how internet impact on political participation. Shah, Kwak, and Holbert (2001) found that individuals who use the web for information and news exchange are likely to be motivated politically than those who use the internet for entertainment purposes. Furthermore, Tolbert and McNeal (2003) found a positive correlation between internet usage and both voter turnout and campaign contributions. The study concluded that internet provided the public with political information in a more convenient, detailed and low cost form which motivates political participation.

Figure 14: Level of Agreement on the usefulness of internet-based political campaign to voters' decision making during the election



(Source: fieldwork, 2013.)

Figure 14 shows that majority of respondents, rate internet-based political campaigns as useful to their decision making on the election. 47.2% of respondents rated the usefulness of internet-based political campaigns to them as high or very high, while, 44.5% of respondents rated the usefulness of internet-based political campaigns as moderate. Only 8.2% of 110 respondents rated the usefulness of internet-based political campaigns to them as low or very low.

Qualitative Data

This sub-section presents the qualitative data gathered from the study. The data were gathered via interviews. The interviews were with campaign managers of political parties in the 2011 Nigeria general election and web consultants. The findings were presented below:

Data from Campaign Managers of Political Parties

Reasons for the use of internet-based political campaigns by political parties and candidates during the 2011 presidential election.

The internet, particularly social media provided opportunity for a larger coverage in terms of reaching of voters during the election; even people from diaspora had the opportunity to participate in the online campaigns and other political activities of the party. It provided the opportunity to the party to present the parties' manifesto in a comprehensive form to the general public, which the public was also able to download. The constitutions of the parties were also placed on the internet and people were able to download them and read to understand the nitty-gritty of the missions and visions of the parties. It also offered a two-way communication which made communication easier. By this, it was easy to get people's opinions through the internet. Feedbacks were returned in good time and the party depended on them to make some decisions. Also, it was really a cheap means of getting ideas around the globe.

The Internet based political campaign sites of the parties offered voters the opportunity to share their thoughts on important campaign issues. It also offered answers to many of the questions posted by visitors on the sites. Internet-based political campaign ushered in a new relationship amongst voters, supporters and the parties. It brought the presidential candidates closer to

Nigerians both at home and abroad in contributing directly to the political process and developments in the country. The use of social media made it easier to penetrate many homes because a sizeable number of Nigerians were hooked onto hand held devices, Internet, email and other mobile services. The internet campaign site utilized innovative communication video, media and other web channels which enabled the party to fully engage voters and supporters.

The problems the parties experienced with their use of internet based-political campaigns during the election in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area.

One of the challenges faced was the problem of anonymity of the persons or people using or visiting the internet campaign sites of the parties. Sometimes it difficult to discern the intentions of some of the visitors to the campaign sites and as a result the campaign managers could not give the right analyses to whatever expression some users of the sites were able to make. Another problem was that some of the visitors to the campaign sites were people who could not communicate effectively by writing and as a result, it was difficult getting the right or intended feedback from them. Next was the problem of illiteracy amongst a great number of voters in Nigeria. The bulk of people in the voting population in Nigeria were those that were not literate, these were market women and their like. It was not all of them that were able to use the parties' e-campaign sites. Another problem faced was the problem of stable internet connection or technical issues which had to be resolved quickly.

Also, the use of the medium consumed time as managers had to constantly respond to questions and comments of visitors to the sites. There was also the problem of electricity required to effectively run the internet-based political campaigns as electricity supply was unstable

Those internet-based political campaigns were targeted at during the election in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area.

The internet-based political campaigns were targeted mainly at youths. Many voters visited the Facebook pages of the candidates and 'liked' the page. Many voters also visited the Twitter page and even the parties' websites.

Ways internet-based political campaigns aided in addressing challenges associated with the use of traditional media for political campaign in the election in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area.

The internet-based political campaigns ensured that political campaign messages of the parties were available to voters at all times during the election and was not limited by time as it was the case in traditional media such as television and radio. The internet-based political campaigns helped the parties overcome the challenge of voters' apathy among young people as campaign messages via the internet greatly engaged young voters when compared to the poor response of young voters to political messages on the traditional media.

Data from Web Consultants

Reasons behind the use of internet-based political campaigns during the 2011 Nigeria general election.

Events in North African countries such as Egypt and Tunisia highlighted the power of the internet, particularly social media in politics. In political campaigns, every single vote matters,

the internet affords politicians the opportunity to reach many more voters, particularly those that use the internet. The use of internet-based political campaigns by political parties in the 2011 election facilitated easy and effective contacts between the parties and their targeted voters during the political campaigns.

The cost of using the internet for political campaign is low compared to other medium. With the internet, political parties could reach target audiences within a fraction of a second. Prior to the internet era, politicians used to travel (though they still do) by road to reach each and every location of Nigeria to meet party faithful and supporters and convey their political messages through mass meeting and address them on soap box. But politicians can now write motivational political speeches via the internet to reach out to target audiences in an easy way.

The use of the internet for political campaigns in the election by political parties help cut down campaign management cost, facilitated communication with millions of party supporters and voters across the country.

The opportunities available in the use of internet in political campaigns in the election in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area.

Besides the advantages of low cost of campaign and quick reach of voters and supporters that the internet offered; it also offered in-depth information about the activities and goals of the political parties than other media. The cost to the voter accessing the information about the parties was low. The internet-based political campaign also offered opportunity for instant feedback from voters and supporters on the policies and goals of the parties.

The internet offered opportunity for further campaigning even after the election period was over. Online political campaigns offered politician and parties an easy avenue to test their popularity. The internet enabled Nigerians from different remote locations to comment on the policies and goals of the political parties. The type of comments that people pass has serious impact. Internet-based political campaigns enabled people to know more about the parties even in places that radio could not take the messages of the political parties to.

Internet-based political campaigns offered opportunity for political interactions between males and females, which were somewhat hindered due to religious, and other cultural reasons.

Problems associated with the use of the internet in political campaigns in the election in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area.

The issue of poor internet connection was a problem not just for the political parties but also for voters and supporters who accessed the campaign sites. From the perspective of the parties, it is also a problem for them. To upload messages, they required a good internet connection. So if they have information and they cannot upload it for people to read, the parties will have problem.

Secondly, some of the political parties did not have competent e-campaign or online teams. The parties did not have good internet campaign management teams and this affected the effective and efficient use of the internet for political campaigns during the election. Also was the problem of rivals who tried to sabotage online campaigns of other political parties. People could hack in and put materials a party does not want in a bid to tarnish a party's image. To curtail this, all these fall on a party having competent campaign officials.

The great numbers of the voting public were illiterates and as a result, the use of internet for political campaigns was not suitable to this category of voters. Radio and television were most appropriate. If one was taking about the internet, one was taking about literates. If one was taking about Radio and Television, one was taking about the entire population. Due to the numbers of Nigerians that use the internet, it could not be relied upon as the most reliable means of political campaign in Nigeria.

Ways use of internet aided in addressing challenges associated with the use of traditional media in political campaigns during election in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area.

Internet-based political campaigns offered political parties and candidates, opportunity for instant communication with Nigerian voters. The internet offered opportunity for instant feedback from many voters and supporters. It kept parties constantly abreast with what the voters thought about them and their policies. Unlike television, radio and newspapers, this was a major advantage the internet had over them in their uses in the campaign. The use of the internet in political campaigns helped to address these identified challenges with the traditional media use in political campaigns during the election.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

The discussion of findings for the study has been arranged based on the research questions of the study.

Research Question One: *To what extent did voters in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area come in contact with internet-based political campaigns during the 2011 Nigeria presidential election?*

Majority of voters did not access or come in contact with internet-based political campaigns during the 2011 presidential election. Data gathered via survey showed that of all 384 respondents surveyed in the areas, only 225 respondents had access to the internet, and only 110 (28.6%) respondents out of the 225 respondents with access to internet, accessed internet-based political campaigns sites during the 2011 Nigeria's presidential election, highlighting the challenge affecting the use of the internet-based political campaigns for political campaigns in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area.

In contrast to the low use of internet-based political campaign information in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area, in the United States where the internet has played an increasingly key role in elections, Rainie (2005) found that in 2004, at least 75 million Americans, 37 percent of the adult population, used the Internet to get political news and information, discuss candidates and issues, or participate directly in the political process. The number of online political news consumers increased from 18 percent of the U.S. population in 2000 to 29 percent in 2004. And, in those same four years, the number of registered voters who cited the internet as one of their primary sources of news about the presidential campaign increased by 50 percent.

A variety of factors have been identified by the respondents and interviewees of the study as factors responsible for the low consumption of internet-based political campaigns by voters in

Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area. These factors have been identified by research question two of the study.

Research Question Two: *what were the problems associated with the use of internet as a medium for political campaign during the Nigeria 2011 presidential election in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area?*

Data gathered from interviewees and respondents in this study showed that there were problems associated with the use of the internet as a medium for political campaigns during the 2011 Nigeria presidential election in the areas. Challenges encountered with the use of internet-based political campaigns by the parties and candidates during the election were the problem of illiteracy among voters since the medium required voters to be literate to use it effectively. There were also the problems of technical challenges which hindered parties from effectively using the internet to campaign. Inadequate electricity to run computers and the internet link facilities was also a problem. Furthermore accessing adequate technical manpower to man the e-campaigns by the parties and candidates was also a problem. Discerning the motivations behind comments or opinions of some of the visitors to the sites was a challenge as some of the commenting voters could not express themselves clearly.

From the perspective of voters, challenges encountered in accessing internet-based political campaigns of different political parties and candidates during the election included, not being able to afford the cost of browsing data for accessing the internet, network challenges often from poor internet services by internet providers, being unable to connect to the internet due to electricity failures as well as not possessing internet skills required to optimally use the internet to access internet-based political information. Similarly, these challenges have also been

highlighted by some empirical studies such as the one on Internet access and use among students of the University of Ilorin in Nigeria, carried by Udende (2010), which found that majority of respondents were of the view that the general (public) power outages, not have a laptop/desktop to access the internet, network failure and non –connectivity were factors that hindered them from accessing the internet.

Furthermore, a related study by Ahiakwo (2009) on internet connectivity in Nigeria, pointed out the following as the barriers to internet connectivity in Nigeria: lack of technical know-how/awareness as computer literacy in Nigeria is very low and poor technical know-how on the computer; inadequate telecommunication infrastructure, poverty level of the citizenry as connectivity of individuals to the global village (Internet) is very expensive for the average Nigerian. Thus, due to the problems in the use of the internet for campaigns or to receive campaign during the election, the internet was not fully adopted by both voters and the parties for information use or campaigns during the election.

The Theoretical framework of this study, which is, Technology Acceptance Model gives insights into why this is so: the model suggest that users' motivation to employ information technology can be explained by two major factors: perceived Ease of Use and Perceived Usefulness. Thus, it may be argued that perceptions on Ease of Use and (or) Perceived Usefulness amongst some voters, political parties and candidates was low, resulting in the low adoption of the internet for political campaigns or use for seeking political campaign information.

The challenges encountered by voters in the areas in accessing internet-based political campaign information according this study impacted on them in the following ways: it contributed resulted

in poor knowledge about the parties and candidates in the election. It hindered voters from following activities and events in the election on the internet like they would have wanted. Thus, majority of voters were forced them to depend majorly on other media rather than on internet political campaign sites for information during the election. Perhaps this explains why majority of voters in the area chose television and radio as their major sources of political campaign information during the 2011 Nigeria's presidential election. Notably, voters reported that they did not participate in the election as a result of being unable to access political information from internet-based political campaign sites due to challenges associated with accessing internet-based political campaign information during the 2011 presidential election.

Research Question Three*:* *To what extent did internet-based political campaign aid voters' decision- making during the 2011 presidential election in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area?*

Majority of voters in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area who accessed internet-based campaigns sites of People's Democratic Party (PDP) and Congress for progressive Change (CPC) during the election reported that internet- based political campaign was useful to their decision making during the 2011 Nigeria's presidential election. About 47.2% of respondents rated the usefulness of internet-based political campaigns to them as high or very high while 44.5% of respondents rated it as moderate. Furthermore, data from the study showed that 67.3% of voters agreed or strongly agreed that information on these campaign sites influenced their views about the candidates.

Analyses of the ways internet-based political campaigns aided voters' decision making during the election revealed that the PDP and CPC internet-based campaigns sites gave respondents

more information on their candidates and their positions on campaign issues during the election. Respondents indicated that their engagements with components in the PDP and CPC online campaign sites such as the parties' manifestos page, visions and missions page, interactions with other users of these online campaign sites, the candidates and parties' views on campaign issues and interaction with the parties' candidates online were means by which internet-based political campaigns contributed in aiding voters' decision making during the election.

Related empirical studies elsewhere have also found the positive impact of internet-based political campaigns on voter's decision making to be true. Owen (2011) found that a third of voters in the 2010 midterm elections in the United States reported that information gained online influenced their candidate preference. The study further showed that the online environment's effect on candidate choice is most pronounced for young voters, political independents, people who rely on the Internet as their main source of campaign information, and individuals who engage actively with online election media.

In relation to the Technology Acceptance Model, it can then be argued that positive perceptions on the usefulness of internet-based political campaigns may have influenced its consumption among voters in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area who accessed internet-based political campaigns sites during the election. Thus, majority of respondents (77.3%) reported that despite the challenges experienced in accessing internet-based political campaign information during the election, they would continue to rely on the internet for political campaign information during future elections.

Further highlighting positive value of internet-based campaigns to voters in the areas, majority of respondents (71.8%) in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area who

visited the internet-based campaign sites of candidates during the 2011 Nigeria's presidential election reported that exposure to internet-based political campaigns increased their participation in the 2011 Nigeria presidential election. These some respondents indicated that the volunteer page section of the campaign websites of the parties provided them opportunity to sign up to become volunteers to the campaign efforts of the candidates. Furthermore, the donation page section of the campaign websites offered respondents opportunity to make financial donations to the campaigns efforts of the candidates during the election. Other respondents also acknowledged that campaign messages online encouraging voters to ensure they voted on Election Day motivated them to actually vote. Thus, respondents acknowledged that these efforts increased their participation in the election.

Other empirical studies have also found the positive impact of internet-based campaigns on participation to be true as well. A study in the United States by Shah, Kwak, and Holbert (2001) found that individuals who use the Web for information and news exchange are more likely to be motivated politically than those who use the Internet for entertainment purposes. Tolbert and McNeal (2003) found a positive correlation between Internet usage and both voter turnout and campaign contributions. The researchers therefore concluded that the internet-based campaign provided the public with political information in a more convenient, detailed and low cost form which motivates civic participation. These studies therefore support the findings of this study.

Research Question Four: *What is the level of contribution of the internet in addressing the challenges of the use of traditional media in political campaigns in the 2011 election?*

Internet-based political campaign, based on data gathered from this study, was relatively successful in addressing challenges associated with the use of traditional media for political campaign for candidates and voters in the areas. For Political parties and candidates, the study found that it offered opportunity for instant communication with voters. Unlike the use of traditional media, internet-based political campaigns offered opportunity for instant feedback from many voters and supporters. It kept parties constantly abreast with what the voters thought about them and their policies. The cost of use of the internet for political campaigns was very low when compared to the use of traditional media. The use of the internet in political campaigns helped to address these identified challenges with the traditional media use in political campaigns during the election.

For voters who visited the internet campaign sites of candidates in the 2011 Nigeria's presidential election in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area, internet-based political campaigns addressed challenges associated with the use of traditional media to obtain political campaign information as it enabled voters to receive instant update on political campaign issues during the election unlike newspaper or other traditional where update on events in the election were somewhat delayed. It offered a better platform for voter- candidate interactions during the election. Internet communication was instantaneous. Compared to the quantity and quality of information on electoral issues available on the traditional media during the election, majority of voters (56.3%) reported that internet-based political campaigns sites provided more information on electoral campaign issues than the traditional media during the election. Thus, in view of the above, majority of the voters (71.8%) were of the view that accessing internet-based political campaign sites for electoral campaign information was better when compared to information on the traditional media during the election.

Furthermore, the study found that internet-based political campaigns enabled voters to access political campaign information anytime they wanted and also cheaply. Significantly, findings from an empirical study on internet and political participation, carried out by Larson (2004), supports the above findings, the study found that the emergence of the internet as a source of news and information is fundamentally different than past media evolution. It reported that newspapers and television reduced the amount of hard news delivered to consumers and in contrast, the internet, with its unlimited storage and audio/visual capabilities, provided an interactive framework capable of distributing much more information to the public than either television or newspapers. Moreover, Internet communication was interactive, providing a format where views can be discussed and debated.

Research Question Five: What were the similarities in the wordings of the internet-based political campaign massages used in the 2011 Nigeria presidential election?

The internet-based campaign sites of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) candidates shared a lot of similarities in wordings as many of the sections that make up the campaign sites were designed to achieve similar objectives. Goodluck Jonathan of the PDP campaign's sites had sections which were worded to offer information on his candidacy, information on his perspectives on campaign issues, donation opportunities for supporters, volunteer page and other campaign materials. The social media accounts such as Facebook and Twitter offered supporters and voters opportunities to interact with each other on campaign issues of importance to them. The internet campaign site, goodluckjonathan2011.com was designed to enable supporters to help Goodluck Jonathan get elected. Its features supported political discussions through online communities.

Similarly, General Muhammadu Buhari of the CPC online campaign sites had many sections which were worded similarly to those of the PDP candidate. The campaign website had the candidate's party manifesto, opportunity for questions and answer on campaign issues and other issues that bothered on his candidacy. The website was worded similarly to that of the PDP to offer opportunity to visitors to leave comments on the site as well as also interact with other visitors on the site. It offered voters opportunity to join the campaign efforts and the official fan page of the candidate. The social media accounts such as Facebook and Twitter offered supporters and voters opportunities to interact with each other on campaign issues of importance to them. The social networking sites of the candidates were designed to engage voters and the general public.

On the websites of both candidates, there were sections that were worded to request visitors to the sites to join the candidates' campaign organisations. While other sections requested visitors to the sites to sign up to receive newsletters and updates about the candidates' volunteer grassroots events and activities across the country.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

A detailed summary of the study will be provided in this chapter. Conclusions drawn from analyses of data in the study will be clearly stated and recommendations relevant to the study will also be drawn and presented.

5.2 Summary

The study looked at the use of internet-based political campaigns during the 2011 Nigeria presidential election in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area of Plateau State. From the objectives of the study as stated in chapter one of the study, the study hoped to offer much needed information to determine the usefulness of internet-based political campaigns to voters' decision making during the 2011 general election in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area. The study also sought to identify the problems associated with the use of internet-based political campaign during the 2011 general election and, determines the level of contribution of internet-based political campaigns in addressing challenges associated with the use of traditional media for political campaign during the 2011 general election in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area. The study was limited to the study of the 2011 Nigeria presidential election.

In chapter two, relevant studies were reviewed. The study looked at the conceptual, theoretical and empirical aspects of the various subtopics considered in the literature review. Also, the

theoretical framework for the study- Technology Acceptance Model was also discussed. The various topics reviewed in the study included: social Media; Internet-based Political campaign; Problems associated with Internet-based Political campaign; The Influence of Internet-based Election Campaigns on Voters; The Internet and challenges associated with Political Campaigns on the Traditional media.

In chapter three, methodology used in conducting the study was discussed. The location for the study was Abuja Municipal Area of Abuja Federal Capital Territory, and Shendam Local Government Area of Plateau State. Due to the nature of the study, the study combined quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. These methods had been chosen because they were the most appropriate methods required to generate needed data for the study. The population of the study was the inhabitants of Abuja Municipal Area of Abuja Federal Capital Territory and Shendam local government area of Plateau State, who were of voting age (18 years old) before the 2011 Nigeria's general election and had registered for voting in the election. The Population of study also included the campaign managers of political parties that participated in the 2011 Nigeria's general elections, as well as web consultants. There were 63 registered political parties in the 2011 Nigeria's general elections.

Quota sampling technique was used to draw sample from the inhabitants of Abuja Municipal Area of Abuja Federal Capital Territory and Shendam Local Government Area of Plateau State, who were of voting age (18 years old) before the 2011 Nigeria's general elections and had registered for voting in the election. Purposive sampling technique was used to identify and select the campaign managers of the political parties that participated in the 2011 Nigeria's and also web consultants, for the study.

In chapter four, data analyses using frequency distribution, tables and charts revealed:

- Majority of voters did not access or come in contact with internet-based political campaigns during the 2011 presidential election in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area of Plateau State.
- The problems associated with the use of internet as a medium for political campaign during the Nigeria 2011 presidential election in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area for political parties were illiteracy among voters, technical challenges, inadequate electricity to run computers and the internet link facilities and inadequate technical manpower to man the e-campaigns by the parties and candidates.
- For voters, challenges encountered in accessing internet-based political campaigns sites of different political parties and candidates during the election in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area, ranged from, not being able to afford the cost of browsing data for accessing the internet, network challenges often from poor internet services by internet providers, being unable to connect to the internet due to electricity failures as well as not possessing internet skills required to optimally use the internet to access internet-based political information.
- Majority of voters in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area who accessed internet-based campaigns during the election reported that internet- based political campaign aided their decision making during the 2011 Nigeria's presidential election. Furthermore, majority of voters reported that internet-based campaigns aided them in making up their minds on choice of candidates in the 2011 Nigeria presidential election.

- Internet-based political campaign was relatively successful in addressing challenges associated with the use of traditional media for political campaign for candidates and voters in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area.

- The internet-based political campaign sites of candidates of the PDP and CPC used in the 2011 Nigeria presidential election campaigns shared similar wordings and messages, all of which were designed to enable the candidates get elected.

5.3 Conclusion

Based on the above findings, the following conclusion is reached:

The use of internet-based political campaigns in the 2011 presidential election may have contributed relatively less significantly in the mobilization of voters in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area to participate, vote for, or support a candidate or political party when compared to other media used for political campaigns during the election due to majority of voters in the areas did not access internet-based political campaign information during the election.

However, despite the challenges of the use of internet-based political campaigns in the areas during the election, there was no doubt that it indeed changed the way voters and candidates interacted. It empowered the voter to assess the candidates' electoral credentials and points of view and further enabled the voter to contribute to the electoral debates.

Significantly, internet- based political campaign impacted on voter's decision making during the 2011 Nigeria's presidential election in the areas. Majority of voters who accessed internet-based

campaign sites in the areas during the election reported that internet-based campaigns helped them to make up their minds on choice of candidates during the election. Furthermore, internet-based political campaign was relatively successful in addressing challenges associated with the use of traditional media for political campaign for candidates and voters in the areas.

Although the use of internet-based political campaigns in the 2011 general election was a new phenomenon in Nigerian elections and its use in the elections was fraught with challenges, with the growing numbers of internet users in Nigeria particularly among the voting population, it is likely that its use by political parties, candidates and voters will continue to grow as they overcome challenges that limit the potentials of internet-based political campaigns in Nigeria.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the above findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are suggested:

- In view of the poor Internet infrastructure in Nigeria as identified in this study, urgent improvement of the internet infrastructure in Nigeria is required to ensure improved accessibility to the internet by Nigerians in different parts of the country. This can only be achieved when Internet service providers invest more in building their capacity to provide quality service to customers.
- The issue of high cost of using internet services in Nigeria have been highlighted in this study as a factor that discourages many voters from fully taking advantage of the opportunities that the Internet offers. Many Nigerians have not accessed internet-based political campaigns due to the high cost of browsing data to access internet sites. It therefore becomes necessary that factors that drive up cost of internet use be addressed by Internet operators and the government to bring down cost.

- In view of the fact that some political parties and candidates in Nigeria do not have competent Internet campaign management teams, as identified in this study, candidates and political parties should raise more competent internet campaign management teams so as to improve on the effectiveness and efficient use of the internet for political campaigns during future elections. This they can do by exposing them to further trainings on the management of the internet for political campaigns.
- In view of findings from this study which has shown that most Nigerians access the internet via mobile phones, Internet-based campaign managers are encouraged to also build campaign contents that are better suited for mobile phone internet browsers.
- Findings from this study have shown that some voters are unable to use the internet effectively due to language barrier and low literacy level, in view of these, Internet campaign managers are encouraged to provide internet-based political campaign contents in local languages also so as to enable many Nigerians who are not fluent in English language to easily follow campaign messages or contents on the internet and make their views available. Sustained government efforts at increasing the literacy levels in the country will have greater positive impact on internet use in the country.

5.5 Contribution to Knowledge

This study's contributions are in the areas neglected in previous empirical research on the use of the internet for political communication in Nigeria. The study has filled the gap in the following areas:

1. The study showed that there were problems associated with the use of the internet as a medium for political campaigns during the 2011 Nigeria presidential election in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area of Plateau State. Challenges encountered with the use of internet-based political campaigns by the parties and candidates during the election ranged from the problem of illiteracy among voters since the medium required voters to be literate to use it effectively, to problems of technical challenges which hindered parties from effectively using the internet to campaign, inadequate electricity to run computers and the internet link facilities, and inadequate technical manpower to man the e-campaigns by the parties and candidates. From the perspective of voters, challenges encountered in accessing internet-based political campaigns of different political parties and candidates during the election ranged from, not being able to afford the cost of browsing data for accessing the internet, network challenges often from poor internet services by internet providers, being unable to connect to the internet due to electricity failures as well as not possessing internet skills required to optimally use the internet to access internet-based political information.

2. Majority of voters in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area who accessed internet-based campaigns during the election reported that internet-based political campaign aided their decision making during the 2011 Nigeria presidential election. Further highlighting helpfulness of internet-based campaigns to voters in the areas, majority of voters in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area who visited the internet-based campaign sites of candidates during the 2011 Nigeria's

presidential election reported that exposure to internet-based political campaigns increased their participation in the 2011 Nigeria presidential election.

3. Internet-based political campaign was relatively successful in addressing challenges associated with the use of traditional media for political campaign for candidates and voters in the areas. For Political parties and candidates, the study found that it offered opportunity for instant communication with voters. Unlike the use of traditional media, internet-based political campaigns offered opportunity for instant feedback from many voters and supporters. It kept parties constantly abreast with what the voters thought about them and their policies. The cost of use of the internet for political campaigns was very low when compared to the use of traditional media. The use of the internet in political campaigns helped to address these identified challenges with the traditional media use in political campaigns during the election. For voters who visited the internet campaign sites of candidates in the 2011 Nigeria's presidential election in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area, internet-based political campaigns addressed challenges associated with the use of traditional media to obtain political campaign information as it enabled voters to receive instant update on political campaign issues during the election unlike newspaper or other traditional media where update on events in the election were somewhat delayed. It offered a better platform for voter- candidate interactions during the election.

5.6 Suggestions for further Research

There is need for a study on the use of internet-based political campaigns in the 2015 Nigeria general elections. Such study will throw light on the progress the use of internet-based political

campaigns may have made in political campaigns in Nigeria particularly when compared to the findings of this study.

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APPENDIX I

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Respondent,

I am an M.Sc student of the Department of Mass Communication, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, conducting a research on: **Use of the Internet for Political Campaign.** The questionnaire is aimed at obtaining data which will be used to determine the challenges associated with the use of the Internet in electoral campaign. Your response to the questions asked will be treated confidentially and it is for academic purposes only. Thank you.

INSTRUCTION
Below are some questions. Please tick [√] as applicable to you.

SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. **Sex:** Male [ ] Female [ ]

2. **Age**: Age: Less than 20 [ ] 21 – 30years [ ] 31- 40 years [ ] 41 – 50 years [ ] 51- 60 years [ ] above 60 years [ ]

3. **Educational Status**:

   Primary School Certificate [ ]
   W A S C, G C E, N E C O, S S C E [ ]
   Professional/Diploma/NCE [ ]
   HND/BSc/BA Degree [ ]
   Postgraduate Diploma [ ]
   MA/MSc [ ] Ph. D Degree [ ] Others [ ]

SECTION B: VOTERS' EXPERIENCE WITH INTERNET BASED POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

4.Which is your major source of Information in the 2011 Nigeria's presidential election?

Friends and family [ ] Television [ ] Radio [ ] Newspaper [ ], Magazine [ ] Internet [ ]Outdoor advertising (e.g. billboard) [ ] Outdoor political Campaign [ ] Pamphlets/Leaflets [ ]

5. Did you have access to internet during the 2011 Nigeria's presidential election?
Yes, I had access to the internet during the election [ ]
No, I did not have access to the internet during the election [ ]

6.Have you come in contact with internet based political campaign?
Yes, I have come in contact with internet-based campaign [ ]
No, I have not come in contact with internet based campaign [ ]

7 Did you access internet based political campaigns during the 2011 Nigeria's presidential election?
Yes, I accessed internet-based campaigns during the election [ ]
No, I didn't access internet-based campaigns during the election [ ]

8. How did you ACCESS the internet-based political campaigns mostly in the 2011 Nigeria's presidential election?

On my mobile Telephone [ ]
In a Cyber Café [ ]
Personal Computer [ ]
Others (**Please Specify**)…….. ……
I didn't have access to the internet [ ]

8**.** How often did you visit the internet based campaign sites of candidates in the 2011 Nigeria's presidential election?
Always Often [ ] Very Often [ ] Sometimes [ ] Rarely [ ]

9. Which presidential candidate's internet campaigns site(s) did you visit mostly in the Nigeria 2011 general elections?

Goodluck Jonathan [ ] Ibrahim Shekarau [ ] Mohammadu Buhari [ ] Dele Momodu [ ]
Nuhu Ribadu [ ] Others (**Please Specify**)……..…….....

10. Which activity did you carry out mostly when you visited the candidate's internet-based campaign site(s) in Nigeria's 2011 presidential election?

Checking Out News Feeds and Profiles of Candidates [ ]
Post Your Views on candidates' Wall [ ]
Check out What Politicians Are Saying [ ]
Engage in chat on campaign issues with other voters on the campaign site [ ]

Others (Please Specify) ……..

SECTION C: PROBLEMS FACED BY VOTERS IN ACCESSING INTERNET- BASED POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

11. What was the major difficulty you faced in accessing internet-based political campaign during the 2011 Nigeria's presidential election?

I could not always afford the cost of browsing data to access the internet [ ]

There were network challenges often resulting in poor internet connections [ ]

I experienced electricity failures resulting in inability to always access the internet [ ]

I had inadequate knowledge on how to operate the internet [ ]

I did not encounter any significant challenges [ ]

12. In what major way did difficulties you encountered in accessing internet-based political campaign affect you during the 2011 Nigeria's presidential election?

It poorly affected my knowledge of the parties and candidates during the election [ ]

I could not follow activities and events in the election like I would have liked [ ]

It forced me to depend mainly on other media than the internet for information [ ]

I did not participate in the election because of that [ ]

It did not affect me in any way during the election [ ]

13. Despite these challenges, would you still rely on the internet for political information in future elections in Nigeria?

If my access to the internet gets better in future, I will [ ]
I will not, I prefer other media to the internet [ ]
I will, no matter the challenges [ ]

SECTION D: HOW INTERNET-BASED CAMPAIGNS RESOLVED CHALLENGES FACED BY VOTERS IN THEIR USE OF OTHER MEDIA TO ACCESS POLITICAL INFORMATION

14. In what major way did the internet help you overcome difficulties you faced in getting from other media such as television, Radio, newspapers etc. during the 2011 Nigeria's presidential election?

It enabled me to receive instant feedback on issues and comments during the election than other media [ ]

It offered me greater opportunity for interaction with other voters as well as with candidates during the election [ ]

It enabled me to access political information anytime I wanted than from other media during the election [ ]

The internet did not make much difference [ ]

15. Use of the internet-based political campaign to get political information is better since it provides information in sound, picture, video and text.
Strongly Agree [ ] Agree [ ] Neutral [ ] Disagree [ ] Strongly Disagree [ ]

SECTION E: THE USEFULNESS OF INTERNET BASED POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS TO VOTERS' DECISIONS

16. News and information from Internet based political campaigns influenced your opinions about candidates or parties in the 2011 Nigeria's presidential election.
Strongly Agree [ ] Agree [ ] Neutral [ ] Disagree [ ] Strongly Disagree [ ]

17. Exposure to candidates' internet based campaign sites was helpful to you in your decisions on your choice of candidate or party in the 2011 presidential election.
Strongly Agree [ ] Agree [ ] Neutral [ ] Disagree [ ] Strongly Disagree [ ]

18. The Internet based political campaigns provided more information on the campaign issues you wanted the candidate to address than other media during the election.
Strongly Agree [ ] Agree [ ] Neutral [ ] Disagree [ ] Strongly Disagree [ ]

19. Internet based political campaigns increased your participation in the 2011 Nigeria's presidential elections.
Strongly Agree [ ] Agree [ ] Neutral [ ] Disagree [ ] Strongly Disagree [ ]

20. How would you rate the level of usefulness of internet based political campaigns to you in the 2011 Nigeria's presidential election?
Very high [ ] High [ ] Moderate [ ] Very low [ ] Low [ ]

APPENDIX II

INTERVIEW WITH CAMPAIGN MANAGERS OF POLITICAL PARTIES

1. Kindly state the reasons for the use of internet-based political campaigns by political parties and candidates during the 2011 presidential.

2. Kindly identify the problems your party experienced with its use of internet based-political campaigns during the election in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area.

3. Kindly identify those your use of internet-based political campaigns was targeted at during the election in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area.

4. In what ways did internet-based political campaign help in addressing challenges associated with the use of traditional media for political campaign in the election in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area?

APPENDIX III

INTERVIEW WITH WEB CONSULTANTS

1. Kindly explain the reasons behind the use of internet-based political campaigns during the 2011 Nigeria general election.

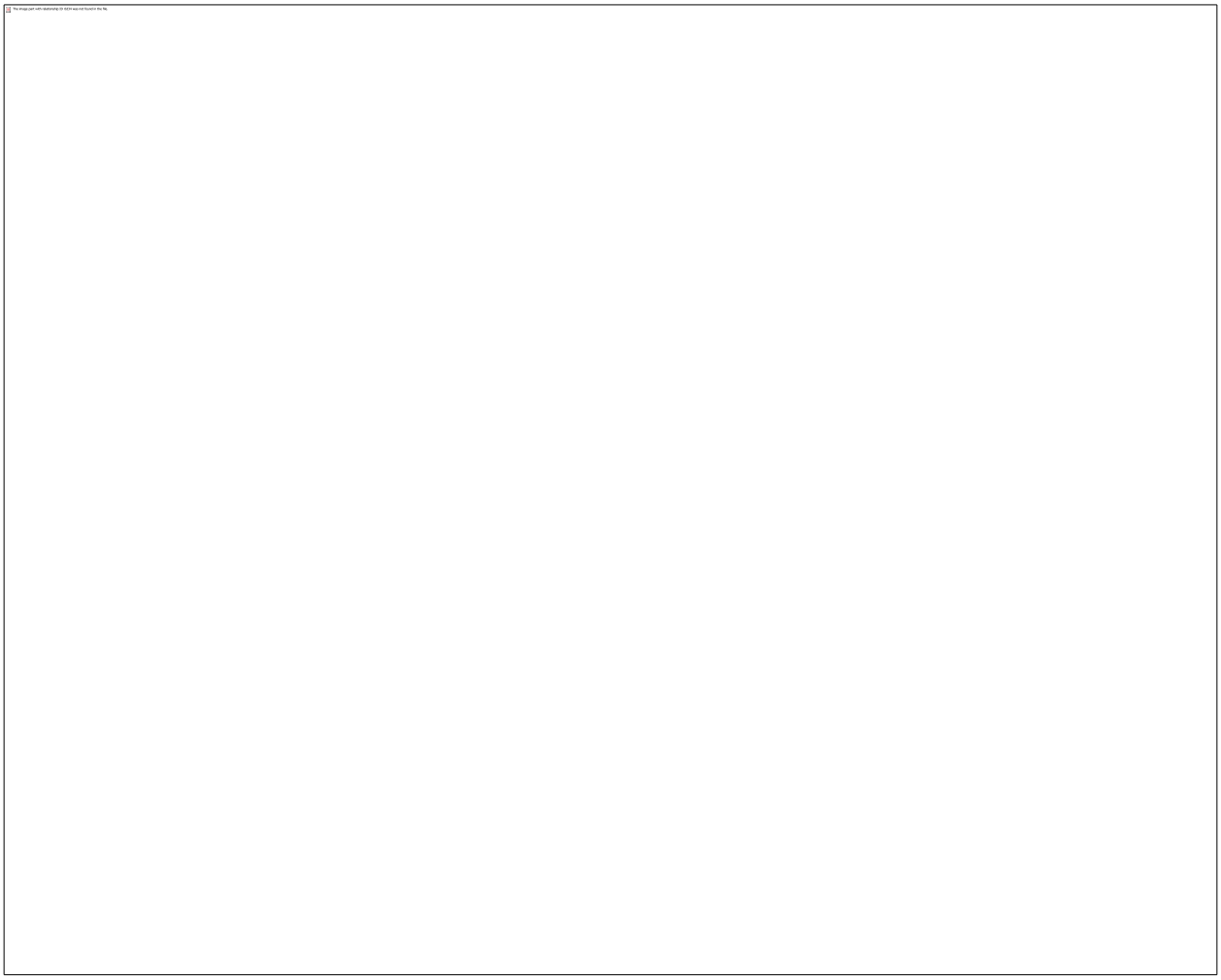
2. Kindly identify the opportunities available in the use of internet in political campaigns in the election in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area.

3. Kindly identify the problems associated with the use of the internet in political campaigns in the election in Abuja Municipal Area and Shendam Local Government Area.

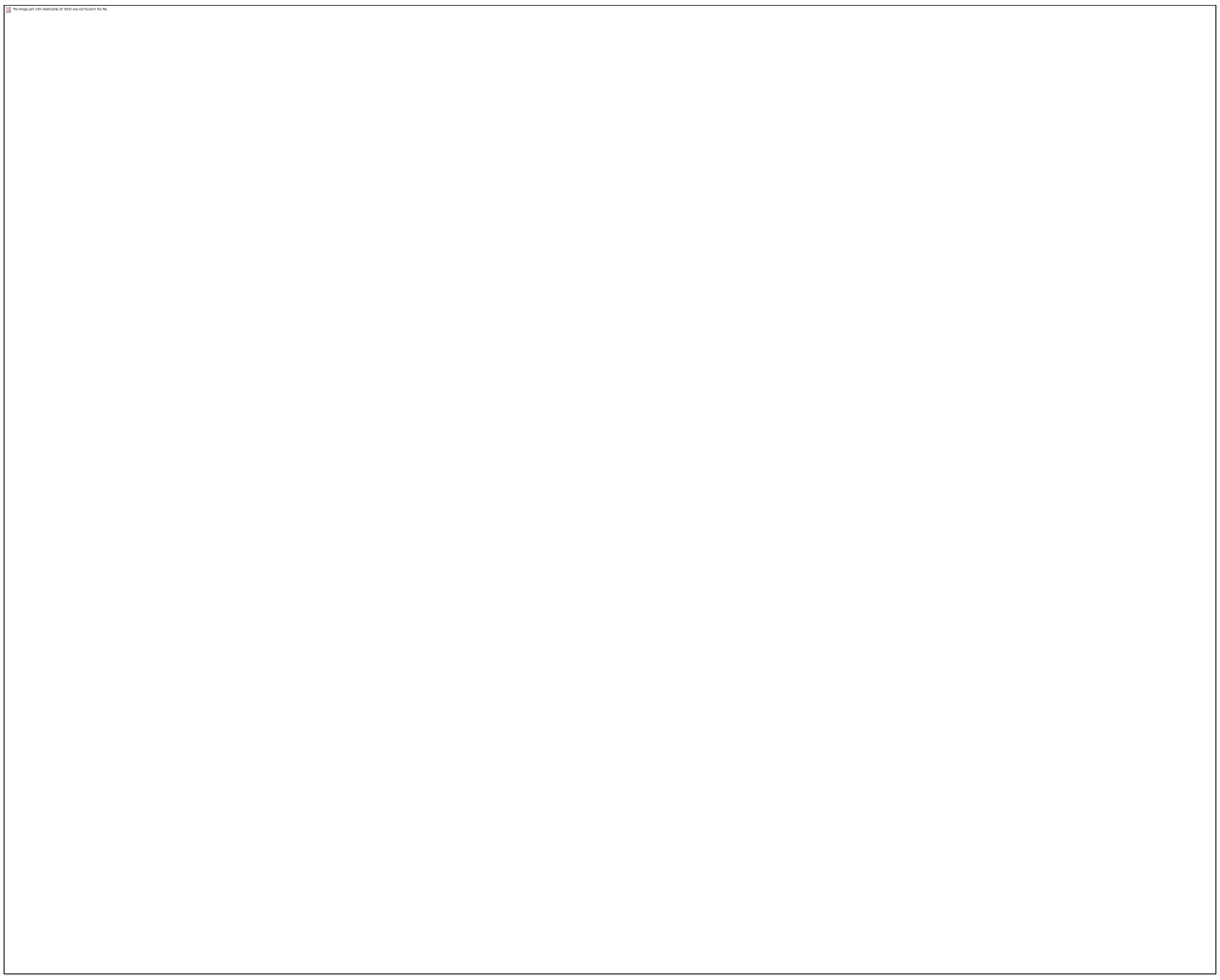
4. Kindly identify ways use of internet helped in addressing challenges associated with the use of traditional media in political campaigns during election.

APPENDIX IV

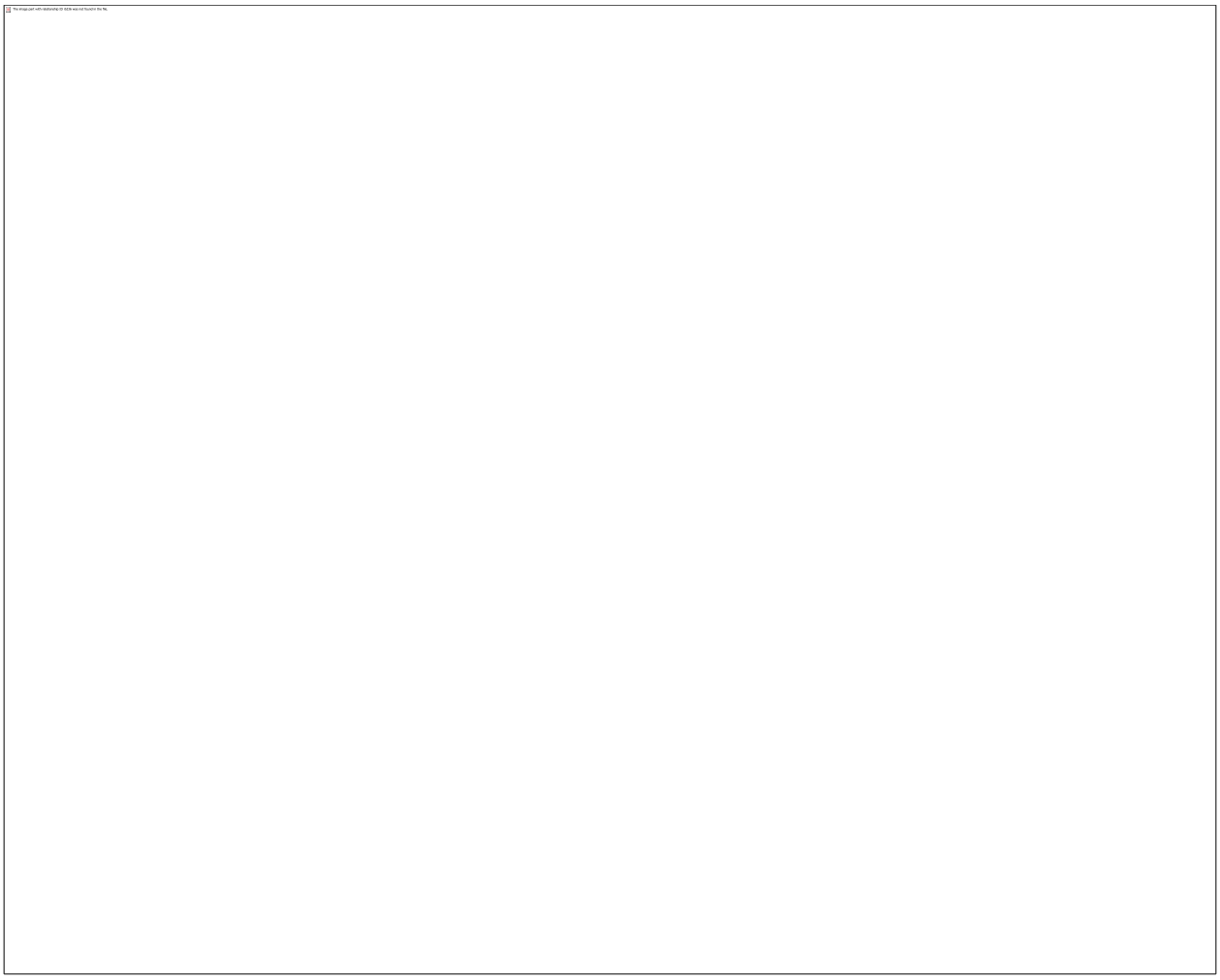
SOME INTERNET-BASED CAMPAIGN SITES OF THE CANDIDATES



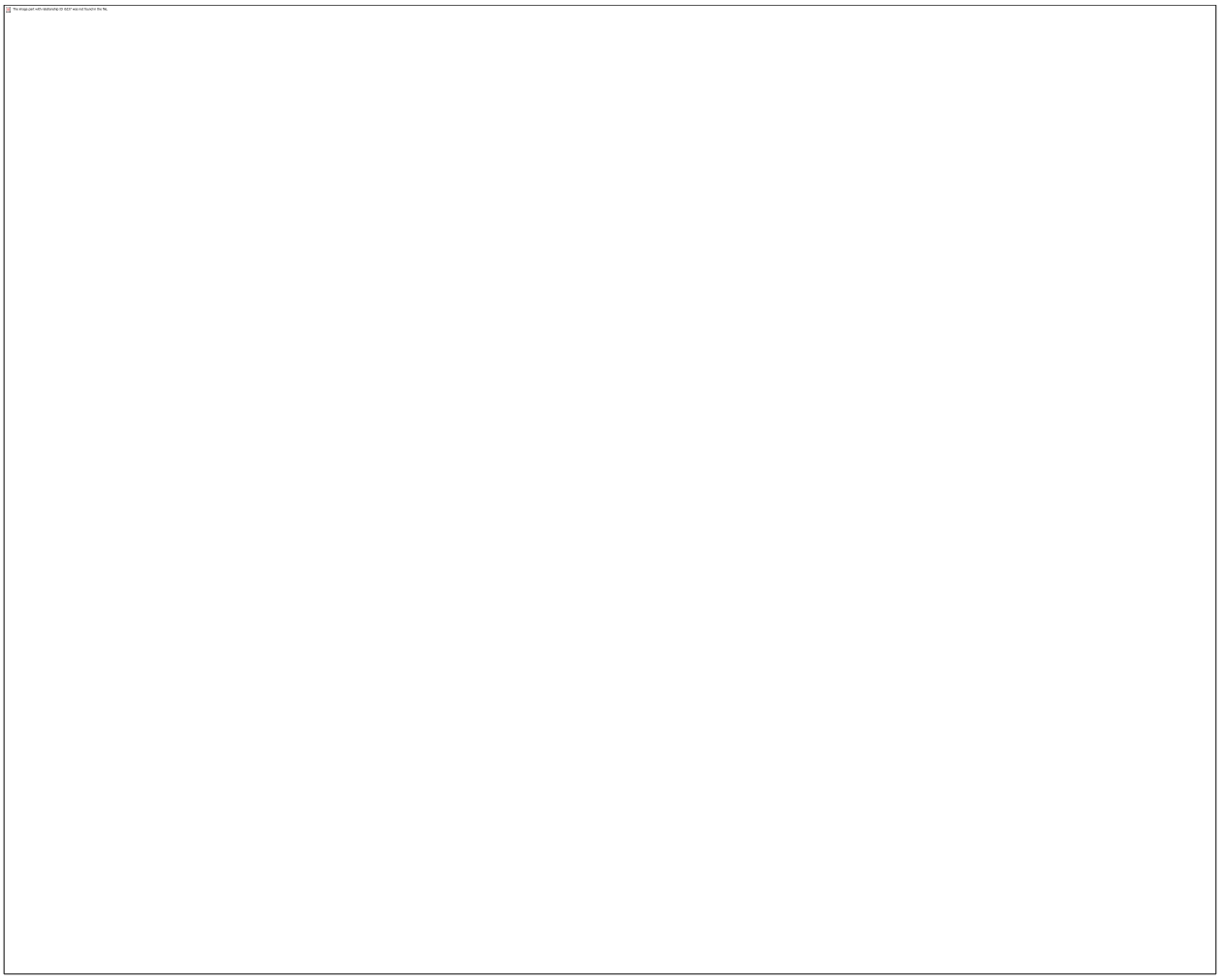
Source: (https://web.facebook.com/Buhari4change-Official-Fan-Page-116280281775259/7_rdr)



Source: (https://twitter.com/buhariforchange)



Source: (http://twitter.com/presgoodluck)



Source: (http://peoplesdemocraticparty.com.ng/?page_id=72)



Source: (http//web.facebook.com/goodluckjonathan)

APPENDIX V

PROFILES OF THE CAMPAIGN MANAGERS OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES INTERVIEWED IN THE STUDY

Respondent One: The secretary of Congress for Progressive Change, Abuja: was a member of the campaign managerial team of the Congress for Progressive Change in Abuja and was involved in online campaigns of party during the 2011 general elections.

Respondent Two: Head, Goodluck Jonathan Global Campaign Team (GJGCT): was in charge of the internet-based campaigns of Goodluck Jonathan Global Campaign Team in Nigeria during the 2011 general elections.

PROFILES OF THE WEB CONSULTANTS INTERVIEWED IN THE STUDY

Respondent one: Political Consultant at The Green Oasis Associates Ltd, Zaria, a consulting firm that offers consulting services to governments and corporate entities on campaign management.

Respondent two: Former Electoral Commissioner at Kano State Independent Electoral Commission, Nigeria. Former political consultant and lobbyist with the International Political Resource Centre, Kano.