USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE GENERATION AND DIFFUSION OF INFORMATION DURING THE 2015 GENERAL ELECTIONS IN NIGERIA

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DEPARTMENT OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE
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JULY, 2017

DECLARATION

I, Kenneth Ohis IRENOA hereby declare that this dissertation entitled "Use of Social Media in the Generation and Diffusion of Information During the 2015 General Elections in Nigeria" is a product of my research work and is original. Authors cited in this dissertation have been duly acknowledged.

_____ _____

Kenneth Ohis IRENOA **Date**
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CERTIFICATION

This dissertation titled "Use of Social Media in the Generation and Diffusion of Information During the 2015 General Elections in Nigeria" meets the requirement for the award of Master Degree in Information Science, from the Department of Library and Information Science, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and Literacy**.**

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Mr. Anthony Irenoa and Mrs. Constance Ebun Irenoa.

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ABSTRACT

Information plays a vital role in every society. It has the potentials to create conflicts situations and peace, if properly and contextually understood and well managed. The ways and channels through which information flows have profound implications if not properly understood. The study sought to understand the role that social media played in the generation and diffusion of information during the 2015 general elections in Nigeria; to achieve this four research questions were raised: What types of information were generated and diffused on social media about the presidential candidates during the 2015 general elections in Nigeria? What types of information were shared on social media about the presidential candidates during the 2015 general elections in Nigeria? How did social media friends make sense of information shared with them about the presidential candidates during the 2015 Nigeria general elections? How do the two constructs of dual process theory (Informational and Normative factors) explain information generation and diffusion on social media during elections? The study which is a qualitative research was premised within the interpretive paradigm, with Deutsch and Gerrard's Dual Process Theory used as a theoretical framework for the study. The case study approach was used to investigate the phenomena. Nine (9) respondents were purposively sampled for the research and a content analysis of their social media pages was conducted. Inductive approach was employed in analyzing the data realized from the content analyzed pages from the respondents, which yielded two hundred and sixty-two (262) open codes, from which eighteen (18) sub-categories, seven (7) categories, and three (3) major themes were derived. The findings of the study showed that there was a higher use of social media during the 2015 general elections as compared to previous elections and was used to post offensive information about the candidates. Also, the study revealed that most people shared or were most likely to share what they believed to be true which had propaganda and high misinformation. People and friends on social media made sense of information received at face value and in most cases were not as interested in the message posted but where the person making the post was from. The social media was extensively used to propagate hate and divisive sentiments during the 2015 electioneering period in Nigeria. The study concluded that as social media continues to gain immense traction in terms of use in society, steps need to be taken to reduce the unending possibilities for misinformation, propaganda, and rumours which if misconstrued could lead to conflict situations.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIT	-	African Independent Television
APC	–	All Progressive Congress
BBC	-	British Broadcasting Corporation
DPT	-	Dual Process Theory
EFCC	-	Economic and Financial Crimes commission
FG	-	Federal Government
GCE	-	General Certificate Examination
GEJ	-	Goodluck Ebele Jonathan
GMB	-	General Muhammadu Buhari
IMF	-	International Monetary Fund
INEC	-	Independent National Electoral Commission
OPC	-	Oodua Peoples' Congress
PDP	–	Peoples Democratic Party
PGEJ	-	President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan
PHD	-	Doctor of Philosophy
UGC	–	User Generated Content
US	-	United States

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Diffusion of information during political transition periods potentially lead to conflicts (Kühne, 2010; Zurich & Vorrath, 2010; Vladisavljevic, 2015). Conflicts in turn results to loss of lives and property (Osaghae & Robinson, 2005; Tchombe, 2006). Conflicts are seen as violent expressions of disagreements and frustrations (Annan, 2014). While conflicts are common in every society, countries in democratic transitions are particularly susceptible to political conflicts. For example, over the last two decades, since the wind of democratic movements have swept across countries, particularly in Africa, conflicts related to democracy has pervaded many societies especially during electioneering periods. Instances include: Rwanda and Burundi (Diamond, 2005); Liberia, Sierra Leone, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Ivory Coast, and Nigeria (Nwolise, 2003; Alimba, 2004; Ottaway & El-Sadany, 2012; Alimba, 2014; Blanchard, 2014).

To reduce the loss of lives and properties resulting from conflicts, a lot of studies have been conducted. For instance, Kimmel, 2004; Yecho, 2006; Sia, Tan & Wei, 2010, explored conflicts resulting from technological mediums of information sharing – radio, television, etc., Nwolise, 2003; Onwudiwe, 2004; Alimba, 2014, in their studies considered conflicts rooted in economic differences, ethnic affiliations and struggle for power, while, Varvar, 2000; Albert, 2001; Lyam, 2006, explored the social gaps which created conflicts situations. However, while these studies have helped to understand conflicts, political conflicts still persist in countries that are in democratic transition. In order to avoid and reduce loss of lives and properties resulting from conflicts which have their origins in the generation and diffusion of information, scholars have stressed the critical need of exploring the problem from how voters generate, diffuse and apply political information. This is an epistemological dimension of looking at political conflicts.

Epistemological dimension to looking at conflicts refers to how voters acquire knowledge, rely upon their prior cognitive schema, frame of reference, and habit of mind to make sense of political situations (Cline, 2015). Epistemological approach provides alternative ways of understanding the complexity of political conflicts from the dynamics of how information is generated, shared, understood, and applied within individual and group cultural contexts and situations (Labonte & Robertson, 1996; Crossley, 2001; Hoffman, Wu, Krajcik, & Soloway 2003; Simpson & Freeman, 2004). The benefits of epistemological approach to conflicts is rooted in the fact that, people understand issues differently based on their socio-cultural settings which lead to disagreements and resultantly conflicts. From the above, it can be inferred that information is a critical component of epistemological dimensions to understanding conflicts, especially political conflicts, in which various typologies of information are generated and diffused: verified true information (facts), grapevine, rumours and outright lies (Taslitz, 2009).

Similarly, among the typologies of information, misinformation and rumour is adjudged to be a major trigger of crises especially in countries under democratic transition (Bhavnani, Findley, & Kuklinski, 2009). The different kinds of information being diffused form a core of the political communication during democratic transitions. Therefore, for better understanding of conflicts in countries in democratic transition, there is the critical need to investigate how information is diffused, adopted, and used. Specifically, there is the need to investigate how social media (particularly Facebook) is used in the generation and diffusion of information during electioneering periods in conflict prone societies such as Nigeria.

Diffusion of information during democratic transition

Diffusion of information is an important aspect of every society, regardless of the state and period which such society is passing through. It is important because as humans,

we are hard-wired to communicate with each other (Goleman, 2006). This means as individuals and members of a larger society, we create and disseminate artefacts about ourselves, experiences, and by extension, the other people we come in contact with. These interactions become expansive to encompass our immediate habitats, other individuals, governments, and so on. The interactions and our own desire for company, approval and need for each other leads to the generation and diffusion of so much information. Diffusion of information is a process by which a piece of information is spread between entities potentially receptive to that piece (Guille & Hacid, 2012). Analysis of these pieces of information being diffused have been noted to include political discussions. Political discussions are major topical issues been discussed among individuals and groups within the society. Some of these topical issues of discussion bother around elections, politicians, parties, campaign trails, advertorials, and commentaries which are key features of democratic transitions.

Democratic transitions are periods when there is a change in governance from one government to another (regime change) through electoral processes leading to democratic change (Birch, 2005). Democratic change, like any other process of diffusion, can be understood in terms of two important elements, the transfer and the reception of information (O'Loughlin, Ward, & Lofdahl, 1998). These information flows are a part of a web of interactions among voters within a society. The entrance of social media has influenced the rate at which these interactions are carried out and the extent of coverage is overwhelming. Social media technologies enable individuals to simultaneously share information with any number of peers or groups (Bakshy & Marlow, 2012) about their governments, mobilize and even incite a whole number of gullible voters due to the simultaneous and far reaching medium of information diffusion. These simultaneous diffusion is significant in the influence it has on their relationships within the society. The structure of societies and the relationships between different societies have been shaped to

a great extent by the flow of information in them (Diamond, 1997), this as noted in the campaigns for votes and parties by candidates and their supporters, propaganda and intentional misinformation against others especially by persons with enough social influence to compel others to a certain type of action. Social influence plays a crucial role in the range of patterns of behaviour of people. These behaviours are influenced by the way voters come to know what they know. An important aspect of how they know what they know is through intersubjective discourse rooted in social epistemology.

Epistemology is the philosophy of knowledge or "the science of knowing" (Babbie, 2007). It is concerned with how people come to know what they claim to know about the social world or social reality (Krauss, 2005). The benefits of looking at political conflicts from epistemological perspectives are numerous. An understanding of epistemology helps us to determine what our information structures, systems, services, policies, and institutions ought to be like, and what they ought to do, if the processes by which we interact with information are to result in the satisfaction of our "epistemic objectives"—e.g., the rapid, cheap, and easy acquisition of all and only those beliefs that are justified, true, and relevant (Fallis 2006). It is used in demonstrating how an understanding of the ways in which social groups (as well as individuals) acquire knowledge can be applied in the design of information services to those groups (Egan & Shera, 1952; Furner, 2002; Furner, 2004).

Social Epistemology is broadly construed as a study of the social dimensions of knowledge acquisition and information processing (Goldman, 2010; Palermos & Pritchard, 2013). Social epistemology is a branch of traditional epistemology that studies epistemic properties of individuals that arise from their relations to others, as well as epistemic properties of groups or social systems (Goldman, 2010). These relationships have been further enforced and expanded by the increased generation and diffusion of information through the use of social media.

Social media is a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of web 2.0 and allows voters, candidates, parties and other agencies to create/generate, exchange and diffuse of user-generated content on issues about the elections (Boyd & Ellison, 2008; Sweetser & Lariscy, 2008; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Liu, Austin, & Jin, 2011; Jussila et al., 2014). Social media has significantly transformed the political communication practices of voters and groups within the society. It has influenced how voters collaborate among themselves, make and retain friends and political associations, thereby creating and sharing massive amounts of information about their political affiliations and interests on social media platforms.

Similarly, contents are created and diffused through instantaneous interactions among participating members by providing dynamic platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, WhatsApp, etc.) that enable content sharing, discussions, and organization of activities and events like solidarity mobilizations for candidates, causes, enlightenment campaigns, and so on (Cachia, Compano, & Da Costa, 2007). The social media has made it easier for content that is designed to fit the voters and their preferences, resulting in the users becoming further able to freely contribute and edit the content holding sites. This is referred to as “user generated content” (UGC). UGC makes it possible for individuals or groups to share any kind of self-created artefacts (Dalip, Goncalves, Cristo, & Calado, 2017) and share among themselves including political contents. The implication is that, social media has made it possible for candidates, supporters, and voters to generate and diffuse any kind of information without the barriers of editorial control, which increases the chances for the communication of harmful information (misinformation) that could poison the minds of recipients of such content generated and diffused. UGC covers all kinds of material and information given on websites, blogs, social networking sites, social apps, and so on, that has been produced entirely by the users (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). In many instances, users of social media have resorted to propagating lies, half-truths, rumours, all

in their bid to tilt public opinion in a certain direction, or to tarnish the credibility of the opposition. With the presence of the myriad of services made available by the social media, social media services are rapidly changing the way people create, distribute, and share information especially during social crises (Shklovski et al., 2008; Palen et al., 2009; Palen et al., 2010; Starbird and Palen, 2010), thereby influencing the way we communicate, especially political communication.

The social media has significantly expanded the possibilities of communicating such diversely held perspectives among the electorates, candidates and political parties, especially during elections in any country. Electioneering periods are marked by increased level of information created and diffused among the people. This is made possible due to the need by candidates to market themselves to the electorate, also, prospective voters who in turn want to know more about the candidates and their parties, turn to various means of getting the required information. The information helped to make decisions based on what people have heard, seen and are convinced about. The information seeking activities lead to information generation and diffusion from interactions among candidates to voters, voters to voters, monitoring and organizing agencies to voters about the entire process, candidates, conducts of individuals and groups before, during and after the entire process (Ekine, 2010). These processes lead to an increased level of information generation and diffusion activities during electioneering periods. The increased level of information generation and diffusion if not properly understood and controlled has the potentials to lead to politically motivated conflicts, which lead to loss of lives and property, especially during electioneering periods.

The inauguration of the Fourth Republic on May 29, 1999, Nigeria began a democratic journey that has lasted fourteen uninterrupted years. High hopes and expectations greeted the return to multi party politics in 1998 and consequently civil rule in 1999 (Omoiya, 2012; Oni, 2014). Democracy in Nigeria from the onset has been a

marriage with so many challenges, uncomfortable at best and under constant pressure. However, democracy is no longer a strange concept to an overwhelming percentage of Nigerians, but what may be strange to them is the brand of democracy in the country (Ajayi & Ojo, 2014).

The Universal declaration of human rights, 1948, article 21, paragraph 3 states that "Periodic and genuine elections are seen as a key component for enhancing the legitimacy of a government and strengthening the social contract between citizens and their governments" (International Peace Institute, 2012). Since, 1999 that the military handed over power to a civilian government, Nigeria has been able to transfer power from one government to another, albeit with so much tension, and loss of lives due to political conflicts that have erupted over the years (UNDP, 2006). However, these conflicts which are deeply rooted in communication and information sharing during electioneering periods highlight the need to better manage communication and information generation and sharing in order to perpetuate democracy through elections in Nigeria.

Elections and Democracy

Elections are citizens' means to hold the government accountable for the economic, social, and institutional development of the country. Electoral participation is widely considered to be an important indicator of democratic functioning: high turnout is good for democracy, whereas low turnout is unhealthy for democracy (Boomgaarden, Johann, & Kritzinger, 2016). Elections are seen as a pillar of democracy, enabling voters to elect representatives to exercise a public mandate on their behalf. They provide regular deadlines, giving citizens an opportunity to assess the ruling party's performance at the end of a term in office, and to renew their trust in the same representatives or to opt for change (Panyarachun, 2008). Elections in Nigeria follow a lay down process by the elections governing body, Independent national electoral commission (INEC, 2006).

The election process (electoral process) relates to the entire cycle ranging from the provision of voter education to the dissolution of the National Assembly (Elekwa, 2008). Similarly, INEC (2006), in Elekwa (2008), deposes that the different phases of the electoral process include the following: (i) Delimitation of electoral boundaries, (ii) Registration of voters, (iii) Notice of elections, (iv) Nomination of candidates, (v) Election campaigns, (vi) Elections, announcement of results and completion of tribunal sittings, (vii) Participation of other organizations, (viii) Resolution of electoral conflicts resulting from the participation of other organizations, and people, groups. The electoral process is therefore a complex process that encompasses the good intentions and undesirable outcomes of election administration, particularly in emerging democracies where general elections are often marred by culturally hued electoral malpractices (Kühne, 2010; Idike, 2014) leading to politically motivated conflicts.

Political conflicts in Africa generally, and Nigeria in particular, occur often during electioneering periods. Majority of the conflicts within the period and due to perceived doubt as to the credibility of electoral processes. Electoral processes have the capacity to contribute to the peace—or can be catalysts of conflicts (UNDP, 2006). Election processes are contests through which political power is retained or pursued, and social differences are highlighted by candidates and parties in campaigns for popular support, they can often generate vulnerabilities for the escalation of conflict into violence (UNDP, 2006). During the build-up to elections in most countries, Nigeria not an exception, communication, information dissemination by the candidates and their campaign teams tend to charge the political landscape, thereby creating tensions as they mobilize along extremist lines to win support, as rival factions vie for votes and to secure turf, and as parties or factions seek to weaken or even eliminate opponents in efforts to seek or retain political power.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

A high amount of information is generated and diffused during electioneering periods. Most of the diffused information are aimed at educating the populace on expected behaviour (on the part of electoral agencies), convincing and cajoling prospective voters to swing votes to particular candidates and parties. The increased level of information circulating during elections have the capacity of creating tension, which have the tendencies of becoming conflicts situations, if not properly understood. Some of these information diffused during election periods help voters to make decisions about the candidates to vote for, there is paucity of literature that explains what kinds of information are generated and diffused during electioneering periods in Nigeria and how voters and groups make sense of these information during the elections. Especially, how individual voters and groups generate information about their party and candidates, and how the information generated is diffused, understood, and acted upon by potential voters and groups during the elections in Nigeria.

It is important to understand how individual voters and groups generate, and diffuse information about their party and candidates during electioneering periods. This is because party loyalists generate and diffuse information that may be: facts, misinformation, rumours, half-truths, propaganda or outright lies. Once there are information that are half-truths, rumours, propaganda or outright lies, the results become obvious in heightened anxiety, tension, and in some cases degenerates to crises and conflicts which lead to loss of lives and property (International Crisis Group, 2014). There is need to investigate the kinds of information generated during electioneering periods, to determine whether the information generated and diffused trigger anxiety, apprehension and have potential to generate conflicts.

This study investigated the kinds of information that were generated and diffused about the presidential candidates during the 2015 electioneering periods in Nigeria particularly on social media platforms (Facebook).

1.3 Research Questions

This study seeks to address the following questions:

1. What types of information were generated and diffused on social media about the presidential candidates during the 2015 general elections in Nigeria?
2. What types of information were shared on social media about the presidential candidates during the 2015 general elections in Nigeria?
3. How did social media friends make sense of information shared with them about the presidential candidates during the 2015 Nigeria general elections?
4. How do the two constructs of dual process theory (Informational and Normative factors) explain information generation and diffusion on social media during elections?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The study has the following objectives mainly on the use of social media on information diffusion during electioneering periods in Nigeria:

1. To identify the types of information that were generated and diffused on social media about the presidential candidates during the 2015 elections.
2. To examine the types of information shared about the presidential candidates during the 2015 general elections in Nigeria.
3. To explore how social media friends made sense of information communicated to them on social media about the presidential candidates during the 2015 elections.
4. To explore how the dual process theory explains information generation and diffusion on social media during electioneering periods in Nigeria.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study will help increase the understanding of how people make sense of received information and how they make credibility judgement of information generated and diffused on social media. The study will also provide an empirical documentation of the kinds of information that is generated and diffused on social media during electioneering periods in Nigeria about the presidential candidates during the 2015 elections by exploring the varied ways in which people used social media in generating and diffusing information (factual or misinformation). The study will also help government and other concerned agencies by better equipping them to counter the surge of harmful and unsubstantiated information (rumours, misinformation, etc.) propagated on social media platforms and also in the design of systems and programmes where electorates can easily and confidently authenticate information received especially during electioneering periods in Nigeria.

1.6 Scope and delimitation of the Study

The study is focused on political interactions on social media (Facebook) regarding the Nigeria 2015 elections, with attention targeted at the presidential candidates of the two major parties (PDP and APC), their supporters, and campaigns covering the period between October 2014 and April 2015. The study covered intersubjective discourse (comments, reactions, post shares) which have the potentials to lead to conflicts as generated and shared by individuals on Facebook that referenced either or both presidential candidates during the 2015 election in Nigeria.

1.7 Limitation of the Study

The study initially was to examine the following social media sites and apps, that is, the study set a strict condition that all the participants must use at least three of the four social sites/apps (Facebook, Twitter, Nairaland and WhatsApp) but had to focus only on Facebook as that was the most common among the participants with WhatsApp (but this

was dropped due to the new end-to-end security feature updated by the app and the nature of the app which makes it difficult to view comments as a third-party viewer). Twitter was also dropped (many of the respondents were not using Twitter as they complained that it was not user friendly) and same with Nairaland. Due to the nature of the research (qualitative) and choice of a non-probability sample for the study, projecting data beyond the sample was not possible as doing this was statistically inappropriate (Zikmund, 2003).

1.8 Operational Definition of Terms

Administrator – this refers to the individual (s) who created or are given special privileges by an administrator to control, edit, add, and carry out other functions within a created group/page on social media applications as used during the 2015 presidential elections in Nigeria.

Diffuse(d) – information/thought/comment generated by the respondent and then posted/shared on his/her page and visible to friends on Facebook concerning the 2015 presidential elections in Nigeria.

Emoticon (s) – hhhfg

Friends – these refer to the individuals and fans of the respondents (who are account holders on social media) of the study.

Generate(d) – information/thought/comment that is original to the respondent concerning any/both presidential candidates during the 2015 elections in Nigeria.

Generate(d) and Diffuse(d) – this refers to the process of creating information and sharing with friends and fans on social media. It involves the process of typing comments (information to be shared with others) and then posting (that is 'clicking' the button

provided the social media site or app) which makes it appear as a post on the individual or group wall/page.

Post – refers to information that appears/found/displayed on the wall of the respondent's Facebook page concerning the 2015 general elections in Nigeria.

Presidential candidates – These refer to the two major presidential candidates of the APC and PDP in the 2015 elections in Nigeria.

Pseudo-Person (s) – these are people who are not using their real names on social media

Share(d) – information concerning the 2015 presidential elections in Nigeria that was posted on the respondent's page but is not originally generated and diffused by the respondent.

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CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

It is essential for every research to be based on some underlying philosophical assumptions. Situating a research within a philosophical perspective and appropriate research method(s) is important for the development of knowledge in a given study. To conduct and evaluate any good investigation therefore, it is pertinent to know what these assumptions are. This chapter explores the philosophical assumptions upon which this research study is based. The chapter reviews the research paradigm for the study, which is the interpretive paradigm. The dual process theory by Deutsch and Gerrard (1955) which is the theoretical framework for the study was also reviewed. The chapter is arranged thematically as follows: Introduction, research paradigm, theoretical framework, previous studies that used the dual process theory, and summary of the review.

2.2 Research Paradigm

In conducting a research, there are several important questions researchers need to consider when investigating a phenomenon. They include; how to research, and what to research? But fundamental to the researcher's answers is their perspective on Why research? (Remenyi et al. 1998; Remenyi, Studies, & Dublin, 2002). These perspectives help justify the place of the research within a body of knowledge. These perspectives are referred to as paradigms. According to Taylor, Kermode, and Roberts (2007), a paradigm is "a broad view or perspective of something". Additionally, Weaver and Olson's (2006) definition of paradigm, reveal how research could be affected and guided by a certain paradigm by stating that "paradigms are patterns of beliefs and practices that regulate inquiry within a discipline by providing lenses, frames and processes through which investigation is accomplished". Research scholars identify three paradigms within an inquiry is positioned. They are: positivism, interpretivism, and mixed methods.

For this study, the interpretivist paradigm was adopted, this is because, scholars who advocate for this paradigm believe that reality is multiple and relative (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988; Antwi & Hamza, 2015) and these multiple realities depend on other systems for their meanings, which make it very difficult to be interpreted in terms of fixed realities (Neuman, 2003). Hence, the reliance on the interpretative approach which gives room for the exploration of the multiple subjective meanings held by individuals. Reeves and Hedberg (2003) inferred that the "interpretivist" paradigm emphasizes the need to put analysis in context. The interpretive paradigm is concerned with understanding the world as it is from subjective experiences of individuals. They use meaning (versus measurement) oriented methodologies, such as interviewing or participant observation, that rely on a subjective relationship between the researcher and subjects. Interpretive research does not predefine dependent and independent variables, but focuses on the full complexity of human sense making as the situation emerges (Tronvoll, Brown, Gremler, and Edvardsson, 2011).

The interpretative paradigm provides a means for articulating and making visible the voices, concerns, and practices of individuals in particular places (Schwandt, 2003; Gichuru, 2017). Interpretive approaches give the research greater scope to address issues of influence and impact, and to ask questions such as 'why' and 'how' particular technological trajectories are created (Deetz, 1996; Elbanna, 2010). Walsham (1993) and Boland & Lyytinen (2004) opine that the purpose of the interpretive approach in information science is to produce an understanding of the context and the process whereby information science influences and is influenced by the context. Therefore, the goal of interpretivist research is to understand and interpret the meanings in human behaviour rather than to generalize and predict causes and effects (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988; Neuman, 2003). For an interpretivist researcher, it is important to understand motives, meanings, reasons and other subjective experiences which are time and context bound

(Hudson and Ozanne, 1988; Neuman, 2003). This interpretivist paradigm captures in context the intention of the study to investigate how social media is used in the generation and diffusion of information during electioneering periods in Nigeria. The interpretative paradigm provides a number of premises on which empirical research and theorizing is centered, an example of such premise is the social constructivism (Riegler, 2012).

Social Constructivism

Social constructivism is a sociological theory of knowledge that applies the general philosophical constructivism into the social. The concept has a long theory in sociological and philosophical thought, but the term has been coined by Berger and Luckmann (1991) with their book The Social Construction of Reality. The concept uses George Herbert Mead's Ideas of Socialization and Interaction and in this respect some aspects resemble ideas in Russian cultural psychology, wherein groups construct knowledge for one another, collaboratively creating a "small" culture of shared artefacts (anything created by humans which gives information about the culture of its creator and users) with shared meanings.

On social media, there is a high exchange of information via instant messaging, wall posts, picture sharing, etc., which increases the creation and diffusion of artefacts. The implication of this is the emphasis on reflexivity, that is, continuous and critical evaluation of how one's own viewpoints, conceptualizations and methods influence or even create the phenomena under scrutiny (Alvesson, 2003). Social constructivism refers to learning as the result of active participation in a 'community' where new meanings are co-constructed by the learner and his/her 'community' and knowledge is the result of consensus (Smith, 2010; Amineh & Asl, 2015).

During elections in Nigeria, the electorates seek actively to know about the potential candidates, their agenda, and the benefits they stand to gain from supporting any of the candidates. This information is learnt through active participation on social media platforms. Generally, social constructivism implies that what is real is not objective fact;

rather, what is real evolves through interpersonal interaction and agreement as to what is "fact" (Preez & Goedeke, 2013; Tveit & Sunde, 2016). By implication, this means that people's understanding of issues which are multiple and different, affects what they accede to as facts and stemming from their interactions, they construct new reality.

In the same vein, a rich body of literature abounds on the use of student discussions in the classroom support and are well grounded in theories of social constructivism. Participating in group discussion allows students to generalize and transfer their knowledge of classroom learning and builds a strong foundation for communicating ideas orally (Reznitskaya, Anderson, & Kuo, (2007). On social media, participants create and share information through their interactions on topical issues and general happenings around them especially in trying to make sense of the happenings. Elections are issues that affect individuals and groups as they regard to candidates, political parties, voting process and who to vote. These decisions are influenced by their interactions on social media which are socially constructed. Many studies give backing to the roles that discussion plays in increasing students ability to test their ideas, synthesize the ideas of others, and build deeper understanding of what they are learning (Nystrand, 1996; Corden, 2001; Reznitskaya, Anderson, & Kuo, 2007; Weber, Maher, Powell, & Lee, 2007).

In the context of this research, the social media participants who are involved social discussions test ideas, synthesize and build understandings of ideas generated and shared among themselves. Large and small group discussion also affords participants opportunities to exercise self-regulation, self-determination, and a desire to persevere with tasks (Corden, 2001; Matsumura, Slater & Crosson, 2008). Additionally, discussion increases participant motivation, collaborative skills, and the ability to problem solve (Nystrand, 1996; Dyson, 2004; Matsumura, Slater & Crosson, 2008). Increasing participants' opportunity to talk with one another and discuss their ideas, elevating their ability to support their thinking, develop reasoning skills, and to argue their opinions

persuasively and respectfully (Reznitskaya, Anderson, & Kuo, 2007). The implications of the above indicates that interactions/discussions on the social media is shaping their abilities of participants in the making decisions regarding their actions or inactions based on choices of who to vote or otherwise.

One recent branch of work exploring social constructivist perspectives on learning focuses on the role of social technologies and social media in facilitating the generation of socially constructed knowledge and understanding in online environments (Dougiamas, 1998). This is true considering the immense impact the social media has had in terms of shaping attitudes and behaviour of people (voters - individuals, candidates, and groups) as it relates to their actions. The actions or inactions of people are situated in the level of information possessed and expectations of others. This is explained by the two constructs (informational and normative factors) of the dual process theory by Deutsch and Gerrard (1955).

2.3 Deutsch and Gerrard's Dual Process Theory

Dual process theory is a psychological theory that posits two distinct categories or types of influences on the persuasiveness of received messages: informational influence and normative influence (Deutsch and Gerrard 1955). Morton Deutsch and Harold B. Gerrard conducted experimental studies which were developed in a way to prove that social influences have an impact on an individual's psychological processes. Social influences affect an individual's decision making and judgement, individuals are said to rely on the judgements and perceptions of other individuals as a trustworthy source of correct evidence in regards of reality. Social media provides an avenue where multiplicity of interactions take place, a place where people are influenced by each other. These influences have social implications regarding decisions and judgement calls about issues, events, and phenomena. This was captured in the Asch (1953) situation as expounded upon in the study by Deutsch & Gerrard (1955).

Deutsch and Gerrard were intrigued by the Asch (1953) situation: a situation in which a naïve subject makes judgements about which of three lines is most similar in length to a standard line after being exposed to false, but unanimous judgements by three accomplices of the experimenter. At the time, it was a very popular paradigm for doing research on the effects of social influence upon individual judgement prior to their study. This theory focused on a communication influence model based on both the receiver's self-judgment of the information and the normative power of other audiences. It is useful in explaining communication effectiveness when group opinions/discussions are present (Briggs et al. 2002; Sia et al. 2002). Pursuant to this, the study explored the social interactions on election matters which dominate discussions during these periods but not empirically documented in the Nigerian context.

2.3.1 Normative Influence

Normative influence is defined as influence to conform with the positive expectations of another (The Student Room, 2017). Influence is an inherent feature of social interactions. Social interactions connote the presence of more than one person during a communicative process. This process entails the exchange of information among the participants engaged in the interaction. Every interaction has rules and norms that govern how people make contributions during the discussion. These rules influence how and when a participant is considered to be right or wrong within the context of the group. This influence of group is regarded as normative influence.

Positive expectations according to Deutsch and Gerrard refer to those expectations whose fulfillment by another leads to or reinforces positive rather than negative feelings and whose non-fulfillment leads to the opposite, to alienation rather than solidarity. Normative influence refers to the influence on the individual arising from the norms/expectations of others that are implicit or explicit in the choice preference of the group or community (Price, Nir, and Cappella, 2006). It refers to the influence on the

individual arising from the norms/expectations of others that are implicit or explicit in the choice preference of the group or community. In normative influence, one's communication evaluation is based not so much on the received information as on the opinions of other audiences. Within every group, there is always the unspoken rule which governs what is shared or not, what is appropriate or not. On social media, the appropriateness of communications affects the interactions that occur within the group to which the participant belongs. Individuals within groups have to conform to the approved norms and are so expected to behave in a certain manner. The need to feel accepted motivates our actions, resulting in our efforts to act in similar ways to everyone else.

2.3.2 Informative Influence

Information influence is defined as the influence to accept information obtained from another as evidence of reality (Kaplan and Miller, 1987). In the communication process, continuous judgements and evaluations are made about a presenter. What is considered true and accepted information is based on the judgement made of the presenter to have the requisite knowledge to give such information. This is referred to as informational influence. It is often that influence that is derived from the power of an individual or group to present their perspective on a subject as more authoritative and erudite than the opinion of the majority (Kaplan and Miller, 1987). Informational influence arises from information obtained as evidence about reality. It is based on the receiver's self-judgment of the received information, and hence the relevant components of the information, such as the content, source, and receiver, are important sources of influence (Cheung, et al. 2009). For instance, informational influence may be derived from the power of the presenter if he/she is considered to be more authoritative and erudite about the topic being presented. We all need to feel that we know what is right. Uncertainty is not a feeling we like to relate with. As a result, we look to the group to define right and wrong for us.

2.4 Previous Studies of Theory of Dual Process Theory (DPT)

Studies have been conducted using the Deutsch and Gerrard's (1955) Dual Process Theory (DPT). Kim and Bock (2011) using the two factors/influences of DPT studied the factors that affect the behaviour of spreading online rumours focusing on the emotion of the recipient. Kim and Bock hinged their study on trying to understand the characteristics of online rumours that facilitate the behaviour of rumour spreading. The study raised one research question "What kinds of factors affect the behaviour of spreading rumours online"? The study applied the cognitive emotion theory and dual process theory of information processing to examine how online users express their emotions of online rumours. They found out that informational based determinants significantly influenced positive emotion. They also found out that there were significant differences between positive and negative emotion, noting that consensus played an important part in forming their positive emotion.

In another study by Bartle, Avineri, & Chatterjee (2013) titled "online information-sharing: a qualitative analysis of community, trust and social influence amongst commuter cyclists in the UK". The research took into consideration the use and behavioural effects of travel as experienced shared through word-of-mouth in everyday travel behaviour. It discussed social interactions about travel with informational influence where beliefs are based on the experiences of other individuals. It explored using qualitative approach the social processes which occurred when a group of 23 commuter cyclists interacted with one another through a specially designed, map-based website over a period of six weeks. Methods used were observations of website interactions, participant questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The study found out that processes of group identification and trust were found to be associated with strong positive attitudes towards cycling relating to the fact that information sharing was performing a social role alongside its more obvious function of diffusing practice travel information.

In a study by Sia, Tan, and Wei (2002), group polarization and computer mediated communication: effects of communication cues, social presence, and anonymity. They explained what group polarization was and the tendency for people to become more extreme in their thinking following group discussion. The study examined how computer-mediated communication may be associated with group polarization. Two experiments were carried out, at the end of which insights into the processes that trigger group polarization. The results highlighted the potential for critical organizational decisions to become prone to group polarization. The study uncovers two settings in which group polarization tends to be high, they highlighted the benefits of these settings which they noted encourages innovation and entrepreneurship because the settings may cause people to generate a greater number of novel arguments.

In another study, Yang, Chiu, and Chen (2011) in their study titled "examining the social influence on college students for playing online games: gender differences and implications". They tried to examine the social influence that online gaming had on college students with particular reference to the role that gender plays with its attendant implications, their argument which is premised on the increasing popularity of online games. The study used the informational influence, normative influence and attitude to test their hypotheses. They employed a mixed method of qualitative and quantitative, questionnaires and focus group interview was used to generate the data for the research. A result which showed that more males engaged in online gaming as against the lower number of their female counterparts. Also, it revealed significant effect of social influence on each group's attitude with the males being more obvious.

Mendes-Filho and Tan (2009) in their study "User-generated content and consumer empowerment in the travel industry: a uses and gratification and dual-process conceptualization". They examined the user behaviour on the web, in terms of the time spent on the web and what they shared while on the web. The purpose of the study they

claimed was to theoretically propose a set of factors that integrate user generated content (UGC) adoption with consumer empowerment variables to enhance our understanding of how UGC empowers online consumer in the travel industry. The study came up with three contributions; proposing a new construct of consumer empowerment, conceptualizing the UGC using theories, and providing a framework for the design, implementation and managing of websites.

Cheung, Luo, Sia, and Chen (2009) from their study "credibility of electronic word-of-mouth: informational and normative determinants of online consumer recommendations". They explored how rumour was transmitted historically via Word-of-mouth (WOM) and extending the study to the on-line context (eWOM) by examining the informational and normative determinants of the perceived credibility of on-line consumer recommendations. A survey of users of an on-line consumer discussion forum in China substantiated the effects of the determinants, although post-hoc analyses revealed that prior knowledge and involvement level moderate some of them. Implications for research and practice are discussed. The study explores how informational and normative determinants influence the perceived credibility of on-line consumer recommendations. In addition, for nomological completeness, the relationship between information credibility and readers' eventual adoption of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) recommendations is also examined and discussed. The research questions are: How would informational and normative determinants affect a user's credibility evaluation of on-line consumer recommendations?

How would an information reader's motivation and ability level influence the relationship between the informational and normative determinants and the reader's perceived information credibility? How would this perceived credibility of eWOM influence its adoption?

2.5 Summary of the Review

The chapter explored the philosophical assumptions for the study. The research paradigm in which study was situated, that is, interpretative paradigm, a school of thought that believes reality is a socially constructed phenomenon. The approach of the research which is qualitative methodology, because it is covers a range of approaches linked to different beliefs about what there is to know about the social world and how to inquire into this social world, and aids in exploring in-depth and interpreting the social world.

The chapter also discussed the theoretical framework adopted for the study and why the dual process theory and specifically the normative and informational constructs are appropriate for the study. Studies that also used the theory from a variety of fields were reviewed, their objectives for the studies, methodology, and their findings highlighted.

In spite of the many researches already carried out in a variety of fields especially using the constructs of the dual process theory (DPT) in the study particularly in the understanding of persuasion and how people make credibility judgement, there is little research that studied how people evaluate and make judgements of information diffused through social media during electioneering periods in Nigeria, particularly, what makes people accept or reject received information and the motivation that makes them forward such received information. Also, most studies that have studied information exchange on social media during elections have not used a theoretical framework to guide their research. The study adopted a qualitative methodology to study how the normative and informational factors on information generated on social media during electioneering periods based on the individual experiences, memories and the role societal norms play during the decision-making processes resulting from their varied interpretations.

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CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discussed the research methodology adopted for the study. The chapter is discussed under the following sub-themes: research methodology to be adopted, research design, unit of analysis, selection of participants, instrument for data collection, rigour in qualitative research, procedure for data collection and procedure for data analysis.

3.2 Research Methodology

The information behaviour exhibited by people are always situated within different contexts. This implies that a single methodology will never be satisfactory in explaining their actions in totality due to the nature of each unique context they find themselves (Choy, 2014). As a result of this, scholars have suggested looking at each context in their uniqueness, a school of thought which gave birth to the interpretative paradigm. Interpretative paradigm postulates that reality is multiple and context based. Scholars in this school argue that the multiplicity and subjectiveness of reality makes interpretation difficult using fixed realities (Neuman, 2003; Joubish, Khurram, Ahmed, Fatima, & Haider, 2011). Interpretative paradigm is concerned with understanding the world as it is, from the subjective experiences of individuals. Mostly associated with the interpretative paradigm is qualitative methodology. Qualitative methodology is best suited to address research problems in which the variables are not known and there is need to explore (Padgett, 2008; Creswell, 2013). This research adopted qualitative methodology to gather data necessary to answer the proposed research questions. Qualitative research relies on reasons behind various aspects of behaviour (Yauch & Steudel, 2003; Joubish, et al 2011). It involves an in-depth understanding of human behaviour and the reasons that govern human behaviour. The qualitative approach mostly unveils the understanding of how the

objects ideas and how they feel with regard to the subject under investigation, rather than measuring how largely they are held (Yauch & Steudel, 2003).

3.2.1 Research Design

The design of a research is a comprehensive picture of how an investigation would be implemented. The design of the research is a qualitative case study. Qualitative case is interested in the in-depth study of a phenomenon, it emphasizes on the uniqueness of each entity and is supported by the case study method which also focuses on identifying the specific event, exceptions from the norm in a given event. The case study research method was adopted to study the use of social media in the generation and diffusion of information during electioneering periods in Nigeria. Lincoln and Guba (2002) describe case study as a construction that uses conventions of narratives to explore insightfully issues with which the researcher has intellectually wrestled with, in order to challenge, empower and help reader vicariously understand a problematic case in new way. Therefore, case study as research method allows for an in-depth examination of events, phenomena, or other observations within a real-life context for purposes of investigation, theory development and testing, or simply as a tool for learning (Merriam, 1998; Adams, Lunt, & Cairns, 2008), this is in line with the qualitative methodology. Case studies are particularly useful when the focus of the research is on the relationship between the person (or group) and the setting, so that, it is significant to detach one from the other (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Case study relies on multiple forms of data in order to build an in-depth case. It allows the researcher to develop categories and themes surrounding the statements of the research participants, provide a description of the experiences, and extracts information that addresses the primary research question (Maxwell, 2005; Shively, 2006).

3.3 Unit of Analysis

The population for this study includes users of social media platforms particularly, individual pages and groups to which they belong on Facebook in Nigerians who were

eighteen (18) years as at 1st October, 2014 and created or shared content about the presidential candidates during the Nigeria general elections of 2015.

3.4 Selection of Participants

Every research methodology adopted by any study has elements and/components that make up its participants (population in the case of quantitative studies). These participants are important because it gives the research a focus. As a result, scholars have suggested that a representative portion of the population can be selected as sample for the research. Sampling is the procedure a researcher uses to identify people/elements for a study.

In qualitative methodology, scholars (Patton 2002; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003; Teddlie & Yu, 2007; Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014; Patton, 2015) suggest the use of purposive sampling because it helps to generate the required participants for a study based on some predetermined criteria which the researcher has identified as necessary to adequately answer the questions posed by the study. Purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling used for selecting population for a study. In a non-probability sample, units are deliberately selected to reflect particular features of groups within the sampled population. The sample is not intended to be statistically representative: the chances of selection for each element are unknown but, instead, the characteristics of the population are used as the basis of selection. It is this feature that makes them well suited to small-scale, in-depth studies. Purposive sampling leads to greater depth of information from a smaller number of carefully selected cases (Patton, 2002; Palinkas et al., 2013). Purposive sampling is widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest (Palinkas et al., 2013). The sample units are chosen because they have particular features or characteristics which will enable detailed exploration and understanding of the central themes and puzzles which the researcher wishes to study. Purposive sampling helps identify participants who are best

able to help the researcher understand the problem and answer the research questions raised for the study (Creswell, 2003; Gentles, Charles, & Ploeg, 2015). Purposive sampling is a technique widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources (Patton 2002). This involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Cresswell & Plano-Clark, 2011). In addition to knowledge and experience, Bernard (2002) and Spradley (1979) note the importance of availability and willingness to participate, and the ability to communicate experiences and opinions in an articulate, expressive, and reflective manner. For the sample to be adjudged as encompassing enough, maximum variation sampling strategy was adopted to ensure that the sample selected captures what it was set to capture.

Maximum Variation sampling is a strategy for purposeful (purposive) sampling that aims at capturing and describing the central themes or principal outcomes that cut across a great deal of participant or programme variation (Patton, 1990). For small samples a great deal of heterogeneity can be a problem because individual cases are so different from each other. The maximum variation sampling strategy turns that apparent weakness into a strength by applying the following logic: Any common patterns that emerge from great variation are of particular interest and value in capturing the core experiences and central, shared aspects or impacts of a programme. Maximum variation sampling helps to capture important shared patterns that cut across cases and derived their significance from having emerged out of heterogeneity. It can also be used to document unique or diverse variations that have emerged in adapting to different conditions (Patton 2002).

Variation is maximized when one identifies the diverse characteristics or criteria for constructing the sample. Patton (1990) in attempting to justify how variation is maximized gave the instance that, suppose a statewide programme has project sites spread around the state, some in rural areas, some in urban areas, and some in suburban areas. The evaluation

lacks sufficient resources to randomly select enough project sites to generalize across the state. The evaluator can at least be sure that the geographical variation among sites is represented in the study. A maximum variation sample is constructed by identifying key dimensions of variations and then finding cases that vary from each other as much as possible. This sampling yields: '(1) high-quality, detailed descriptions of each case, which are useful for documenting uniqueness, and (2) important shared patterns that cut across cases and derive their significance from having emerged out of heterogeneity' (Patton, 2002).

The same strategy can be used within a single programme in selecting individuals for study. By including in the sample, individuals the evaluator determines have had quite different experiences, it is possible to more thoroughly describe the variation in the group and to understand variations in experiences while also investigating core elements and shared outcomes. The evaluator using a maximum variation sampling strategy would not be attempting to generalize findings to all people or all groups but would be looking for information that elucidates programmatic variation and significant common patterns within that variation.

Eligibility criteria for participants in the study. Participants were eighteen (18) years and above as at 1st October, 2014, with social media accounts, specifically; Facebook. For the study, 16 participants were selected but seven withdrew voluntarily, this is in line with the suggestions by scholars that the smaller the size, the more in-depth the investigations for a qualitative study. Charmaz (2006) and Creswell (1998) suggested a small number as sample. It is important to note that, the sample size for qualitative research is not a strict necessity, since projections and generalizations are not its major purpose (Zikmund, 2003; Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006).

3.5 Instrument for Data Collection

In every research, data collection is paramount. Data is paramount because it helps the researcher to measure and answer stated research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes. In gathering data therefore, it is important to have access to, and use the right instruments due to the importance placed on collecting the accurate data. Aina (2004) described instruments as the tools that are used to collect data. He further stressed that their primary function is to enable a researcher to collect reliable data which will later be analyzed. For this study, use of documentary sources (Facebook screen grabs from the study's consenting respondents) was the source of data.

Due to the nature of the research questions, the study resorted to documentary sources to collect data which the researcher believed was more appropriate for the research questions. The use of documentary sources refers to the analysis of documents that contain information about the phenomenon under study (Austin & de Jong, 2008; Bowen, 2009). In the context of this study, the sources include: Facebook walls history of participating respondents. Payne and Payne (2004) describe the documentary method as the techniques used to categorize, investigate, interpret and identify the limitations of physical sources, most commonly written documents whether in the private or public domain. Documentary sources provide what Scott (1990) characterizes as mediated access as opposed to proximate access (Scott, 2006; Bowen, 2009). Mediated or indirect access is necessary if past behaviour must be inferred from its material traces, and documents are visible signs of what happened at some previous time. This source aided the researcher to take look back at some events (2015 elections in Nigeria) that have already taken place, in terms of interactions between the respondents under study.

3.6 Rigour in Qualitative Research

There is a general agreement that all research studies must be open to critique and evaluation (Long & Johnson, 2000). The essence is to assess the worth of a study – the

soundness of its method, the accuracy of its findings, and the integrity of assumptions made or conclusions reached (Long & Johnson, 2000; Rolfe, 2006). The basic strategy to ensure rigour in qualitative research is systematic and self-conscious research design, data collection, interpretation, and communication. Beyond this, there are two goals that qualitative researchers should seek to achieve: to create an account of method and data which can stand independently so that another trained researcher could analyse the same data in the same way and come to essentially the same conclusions; and to produce a plausible and coherent explanation of the phenomenon under scrutiny (Mays & Pope, 1995; Rolfe, 2006).

Seale and Silverman outlined the modus operandi that can help to improve the reliability and validity of qualitative data (Seale & Silverman, 1997). Also, the utilization of detailed transcription techniques, schematic plan of systematic coding by means of computer programs, as well as counting in qualitative research were reviewed by Seale and Silverman as modalities to ensure rigor in qualitative research (Seale & Silverman,1997; Morrow, 2005). Likewise, MacLean and associates pointed out that the combination of verbatim transcription and researcher's observation of non-verbal behaviour of the respondents is contributory to the validity and reliability of qualitative data generation (Maclean, Meyer, & Estable, 2004). Although of little significance, the process of transcript review is also meticulous in enhancing rigour in qualitative methods (Hagens, Dobrov, & Chafe, 2009).

3.7 Procedures for Data Collection

The data necessary for achieving the objectives of this study was collected using documentary sources. The researcher approached some persons (both Online and physically) that the researcher presumed to fit the profile for participation in the study, this was to source for volunteer participants. The participants were briefed on the description, nature and purpose of the study as well as the procedure and criteria for participation. Also

the risks, rights, confidentiality and discomfort involved in the research as well as the benefits of the research was carefully explained to the participants. The participants were given participation consent form to sign.

In collecting the data, the researcher content analyzed the Facebook walls of nine (9) consenting respondents out of the earlier selected participants. To identify the types on information generated, diffused and shared about the presidential candidates during the 2015 general elections, the Facebook pages of the respondents were content analysed with focus on information on their pages that either discussed or was about either of the two major presidential candidates. And to discover how people and fans made sense of the information shared with them on social media, the study analysed the reactions (comments and posts) of people/friends of the respondents of the study.

3.8 Procedure for Data Analysis

In this study, inductive approach was used for data analysis. Thomas (2003) stated that the method is a "simple and straightforward approach for deriving findings (themes, concepts) from raw data through detailed readings of the data transcripts." Using this approach, the researcher determined the important themes, and selected the data to support, describe and derive meaning from these. The collected information was thoroughly read, then from the narratives, open codes were derived, then the open codes were grouped and placed in sub-categories. The sub-categories were grouped into related sub-categories, then they were categorized. The categories were then developed around themes for the study and analysis conducted with the intent to interpret the meanings inherent in the collected narratives.

The process of inductive analysis as described by Thomas (2003) and adopted in this study is as follows.

1. *Preparation of raw data files (data cleaning).*

Raw data files (captured Facebook screen grabs with the information that answered the research questions were placed in a 162 page Microsoft word document) which was then transcribed from the picture mode to editable word document. The participants were distinguished by coding the researcher using numbers as participants as ‘e.g. 1, 2, 3’ for the precise sequence of the discussion.

2. *Close reading of the text*

The transcribed data (text) was read several times to gain an understanding of the content, then they were separated into different Microsoft Word documents according to the study’s research questions and themes covered within the text highlighted. Related narratives were identified. And a brief note indicated as clue to the research question each narrative addressed. The relevant texts highlighted were then be recorded using Microsoft Word 2016.

3. *Creation of subcategories*

Categories or themes were identified and defined within the context of the study. In this process, relevant narratives were read severally to identify relationships (with the intent on grouping related codes and how they differed). From each narrative, open code(s) were drawn using exact words of the participants. Some narratives that containing more than one meaning were coded multiple times. Also, the open codes were scrutinized and related open codes identified and grouped together to form subcategories.

4. *Overlapping coding and uncoded text*

Thomas’s inductive approach allows for segments of text to be coded into more than one category and some text may not be coded into any categories if the researcher views them as irrelevant to the research’s aims and questions. Overlapping codes were scrutinized, and refined to reduce the number of category labels to those that best represent the key themes of the research.

5. *Continuing revision and refinement of category system*

This final stage of the inductive process involves merging common categories, searching for contradictory points of view and new insights, and selecting appropriate quotations that convey the core theme of each category. Related subcategories, will be brought together to form a category. The categories were then narrowed into the themes. Wass, (2013) “found that selection of key quotations for each theme assisted in further refinement of the categories. This process is useful to identify any further areas of overlap and decision-making about text that is not consistent with the research aims and questions.

The study is a qualitative content analysis of data collected and an analysis, of screen captured information about/on the presidential candidates of the two major parties during the 2015 elections, sourced from the Facebook pages of nine (9) respondents. It consists of narratives about the kinds of information that were generated and diffused on social media about the presidential candidates during the 2015 general elections in Nigeria; the kinds of information that were shared on social media about the presidential candidates during the 2015 general elections in Nigeria; and How the electorates made sense of the information communicated to them on social media about the presidential candidates during the 2015 general elections in Nigeria.

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CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presented the analysed data collected from the Facebook walls of respondents of the study. Facebook is a social media network which allows all types of interactions on a variety of issues by participants. The study collected data on political information about the presidential candidates during the 2015 general elections on Facebook: 1) the type of information generated and diffused on social media about 2015 presidential candidates in Nigeria; 2) the type of information shared on social media about 2015 presidential candidates in Nigeria; and 3) how friends on social media made sense (this was identified by a content analysis of the reactions (comments) to the information generated, diffused and shared by the respondents of the study by others who were not directly involved with the study) of information shared with them about 2015 presidential candidates in Nigeria (General Muhammadu Buhari of the APC, and President Goodluck Jonathan of the PDP). The chapter also analyzed and discussed how the constructs of dual process theory (Informational and Normative Factors) explained how information is generated and shared on social media.

4.2 Document Analysis

The study carried out a content analysis of the Facebook walls of nine (9) consenting respondents based on the research questions raised. The analysis was of posts (narratives) from the walls of the respondents that answered the research questions. The narratives were placed in a Microsoft word document (coding template/sheet) labelled datasets A, B, and, C depicting three research questions (totaling 162 pages). For each dataset the researcher used an inductive analytical process described by Creswell (2013) cited in: (Musa, 2013) where the researcher worked back and forth between the themes and the database until the researcher has established a comprehensive set of themes.” While

reading the documents, the researcher highlighted sentences, phrases, and passages that dealt with the research questions.

An iterative analysis method informed by Krathwohl (1998) cited in: (Musa, 2013) employed a series of steps for coding the highlighted narratives. Following these steps, the researcher read through the data looking for differences and resemblances in the narratives collected. One hundred and seventy (170) narratives were derived from a 99-page Microsoft word document (coding template), depicting information about and related to the (1) types of information that was generated and diffused, (2) types of information shared, and (3) how the people made sense of the information shared with them on social media. From research question one (RQ1), ninety-six (96) open codes were derived, research question two (RQ2) had one hundred and twelve open codes, and research question three (RQ3) had seventy-four open codes. In total, the study had one hundred and seventy (170) narratives and two hundred and sixty-two (262) open codes. The 262 open codes were collapsed into three major themes, with seven (7) categories and eighteen (18) recurring topics referred to as sub-categories – Dataset F (summarized in Table 1 -classification themes and categories (see appendix C, Pg. 113) Table 2 – classification sub-categories (see appendix D, Pg. 114) Table 3 – description of seven categories (see Appendix E, Pg. 115). Dataset D presents the descriptions of the three themes, with seven (7) recurring categories, Table 4 – Illustrative quotes for classification sub-categories (see appendix F, Pg. 116) Table 4.1 – Category by frequency for RQ1 (see table 4.1, Pg. 49) Table 4.2 – Category by frequency for RQ2 (see table 4.2, Pg. 60) and Table 4.3 – Category by frequency for RQ3 (see table 4.3, Pg. 71) showing categories and sub-categories on the information generated and diffused by research question, that is, each table represented a research depicting information from the respondents, elaborated in frequencies, and percentage of frequencies. From the analysis of narratives from the coded data, three major

themes were evident: Evaluation of candidates, Security Issues, Election Updates, and others. The themes were further split into categories which are discussed below.

4.3 Description of Emergent Themes and Categories

There are three (3) broad themes and seven (7) categories shown in Table 1 (Appendix C, pg. 105), sub-categories, frequency and percentage of frequency in Tables 2, 3, 4, and 4.1 – 4.3. They illustrate issues related to explicit apprehensions about the 2015 general elections: (1) evaluation of the presidential candidates; (2) security before and during the 2015 elections; and (3) the administration of the 2015 elections in Nigeria. The themes and categories are explained below, and they are presented from the underlying issues to explicit apprehensions. Issues that uniquely identify the types of information that were generated and shared during electioneering periods in Nigeria.

4.3.1 Emerged Themes from Research Question 1

Types of information generated and diffused on social media about the presidential candidates during the 2015 elections

Table 4.1: Category by Sub-Categories Frequency and Percentage – RQ1

Research Question 1	Theme	Categories	Sub-Categories	Freq. of Categories	Percentage %
What types of Information were generated and diffused on social media about the presidential candidates during the 2015 general elections in Nigeria	**Evaluation of Candidates**	1. Past actions and performance 2. Behavioural and Academic Qualification 3. Personal qualities of the candidates	Past actions and performance • Dictatorship • Ethnic bias • Evidences of performances • Past achievements • Incompetence	 4 3 4 5 12 **28**	 4.1 3.1 4.1 5.2 12.5 **29**
			Behavioural and academic Qualification • Not qualified • Education • Endorsements for candidates	 11 7 12 **30**	 11.4 7.2 12.5 **31.1**
			Personal qualities of candidates • Candidate's credentials • Corruption • Comparison of	 9	 9.3

			candidates	10 3 **22**	10.4 3.1 **22.8**
	Security Issues	4. Threat of violence 5. Insurgency	• Threat of violence • Boko Haram Insurgency	2 3 **5**	2.0 3.1 **5.1**
	Elections Update	6. Elections results 7. Technology Use for elections	• 2015 Elections results • Controversy surrounding card reader use	7 4 **11**	7.2 4.1 **11.3**
				96	**99.3%**

Theme One – Evaluation of Candidates – (80/96; 82.9%): This theme depicts narratives related to evaluation of presidential candidates. The narratives discuss issues about the people's memory of the events that the two presidential candidates were key actors. The theme analysed under three (3) categories: Past performances and actions (28/96, 29%), qualification of candidates (30/96, 31.1%), personal qualities (22/96, 22.8%). These are explained below.

Category One – Past performances and actions – (28/96, 29%) this category reveals narratives an evaluation of the memory of the people regarding past performances and actions of the presidential candidates. The shared posts depict the fear and distrust held by the respondents, that the candidates would repeat history or not live up to expectations, and the category is divided into the following sub-categories: Dictatorship (4/96, 4.1%), Ethnic bias (3/96, 3.1%), Evidence of performances (4/96, 4.1%), Past achievements (5/96, 5.2%), Incompetence (12/96, 12.5%). These five sub-categories are explained below.

***Dictatorship*.** Leadership style was a common information that was generated and shared on social media. In this sense, respondents recalled from memory the leadership style exhibited by the candidates. Although, unsurprisingly more allegations of dictatorship were leveled against General Buhari who was a former military head of state of Nigeria. Respondents shared information about the military past of General Buhari during his stint as head of state. The respondents stated in their posts that Buhari does not have the

democratic credentials to rule Nigeria. That he will return the country to the part of dictatorship, a style he governed with while he was head of state in the 1980s. A respondent referred to General Buhari in a post as: "*Buhari is a dictator"*. In a similar fashion, another respondent stated that Buhari's military training is already makes him incapable of leading the country and doubted his democratic credentials, as against the supporters claim that he has been transformed into a democrat, posting that: "*Buhari a tyrant painted to look like a democrat"*. Other posts show examples of Buhari's cruelty to some individuals during his previous regime, and their fear that he might become a wicked president.

Ethnic bias. Accounts of prejudicial treatment on the part of General Buhari in the past are indicated as reasons for the fear of a Buhari presidency. Respondents allude in their posts that General Buhari may not be fair and treat Nigerians equally. The fear is cited in instances of the treatment meted to the leaders he deposed during the coup. He (Buhari) was accused of placing Shagari under house arrest, while Ekwueme (Shagari's Vice President) was jailed at the Kirikiri Maximum prison. A respondent posted that: "*Buhari treated Shagari specially"* and in a similar post, another respondent shared that: "*Buhari was cruel to Ekueme and some others detained in Kirikiri maximum prison for a year"*, while another respondent questioned the justification for the disparity in treatment of the leaders: "*What was the reason behind the disparity in treatment of the two leaders"?* The shared posts depict the feelings of some respondents about the candidacy of General Buhari based on history.

Evidences of performances. the sub-category portrays narratives related to the positive achievements of presidential candidates in their previous years in office. In a show of support of the candidacy of General Buhari, a respondent posted that: "*Buhari tackled Nigeria's problems"*, while he was head of state. Another gave instance to the value of the Nigerian currency which he stated had great value, posting that: "*Naira had better value*

than the dollars under Buhari". General Buhari was believed by these respondents to have performed creditably. However, a respondent posted what seemed like a conspiracy from higher powers that General Buhari was overthrown because of his good plans for Nigeria: "*Buhari Was overthrown because he was making Nigeria become an economic giant"*.

***Past achievements*.** In the run-up to the elections, campaigns were rife of the failure of Jonathan in his years as president of Nigeria. He (Jonathan) was lampooned on different forums which claimed he had not achieved anything to demand a second term in office. But to counter the allegations, fans and supporters alike, respondents cited instances (picture and news clippings) of the performance of President Jonathan is claimed to have achieved as commander-in-chief (Ibekwe, 2015; Baffour, 2015; Umoru, 2015). A respondent posted support of the president by stating that he had done well countering the allegations of total failure: "*but I can mention 3 to 4 breakthroughs in Nigeria that occurred under Jonathan regime"*. He went on in subsequent posts to list some of the achievements: "*train is now back in Nigeria after about 30 years of neglect, first government to construct modern Almajiri schools, Jonathan built 12 universities in Nigeria, and Jonathan built more schools than prisons"*.

***Incompetence*.** Apart from narratives evaluating achievements of the candidates in past tenures, another yardstick used to evaluate the contestants was about the competence of the candidates to govern Nigeria. Particular focus was on the incumbent president who majority of the respondents experienced his leadership. Posts shared by respondents allege incompetence on the part of president Jonathan. President Jonathan was roundly mocked on social media for his perceived weakness and inability to govern Nigeria properly. In a post, a respondent claimed that Jonathan made far too many excuses for his shortcomings as president: "*Jonathan spends too much time finger pointing and making excuses for his failure"*. An indication that he was not delivering according to expectations. A respondent accused him of making the lives of common Nigerians harder by some of his decisions and

policy directions: "*Jonathan removed petroleum subsidy"*, a commodity which had effects across the society, as an increase meant a number of other things became more expensive from transport, to items in the market. Another respondent indicated that Jonathan was a failed experiment: "*Jonathan was elected because we thought he could fix Nigeria but he has made it worse*" and that: "*Jonathan has been tried but failed"*. A similar comment highlighted Jonathan's failure: "*Mr. @presgoodluck, your administration performed below par"*. Related to this is a post by another respondent which claimed that Jonathan had no idea on governance: "*Jonathan's government is alleged to be clueless"*.

Category Two – <u>Qualifications of candidates</u> – (30/96, 31.1%) this category reveals narratives which depict differing opinions and postings which are evaluating the candidates and their credentials to contest the elections. Respondents generated and diffused information which highlight their knowledge of the two major candidates of the APC and PDP before the elections.

Not qualified. Narratives from this sub-category portray comments and posts that emanate from the respondents which are evaluating the candidates and claiming they were not qualified to run for presidency. Some posts were reflective of time, that is, dynamic trend of past governance and current expectations. General Buhari was adjudged unqualified by respondents who believe the time and current trend does not favour a leader of Buhari's person. A respondent posted that: "*Buhari is analogue, a backward choice"*, indicating that Buhari can no longer handle the plurality of the Nigerian people and the present-day Nigeria. Some respondents believe Buhari had nothing to offer but just a hunger for power, with a respondent questioning why General Buhari wants to be president by stating that: *"GMB doesn't know why he wants to return to Aso Villa"*, the respondent wonders why Buhari is still attempting to contest for elections in a country he once led and achieved nothing of note. Another respondent accused General Buhari as a terrorist posting

that: *"Buhari is a Boko Haram sympathizer"* that he was one of the challenges facing the country.

***Education*.** The 2015 elections in Nigeria witnessed a major shift in expectations by Nigerians. The elections witnessed much fuss about the educational qualifications of the candidates. There were accusations and counter-accusations on the media and social media, that General Buhari did not have school leaving certificate (Umoru, 2015) by fans of the PDP, and by extension questioning Buhari's ability to lead Nigeria. The entries reflected narratives related to the highly debated and controversial issue about General Buhari's certificate issue (Point Blank News, 2015; Vanguard, 2015). A respondent used a cartoon of General Buhari to mock him (Buhari) because of the certificate issue with a message: "*Buhari going back to write GCE, will be back in 2019"*. However, in total support of General Buhari, a respondent posted that: "*Whether Buhari has a certificate or not, he is better than GEJ's PhD"*, due to the heat the certificate controversy was generating.

The respondents seem to have preference for a candidate that was deemed to be of good academic standing and could raise his/her head high among his peers in the comity of nations. The issue of academic qualifications was notably commonplace with some respondents doubting the ability of Buhari to express himself properly in English language. During the presidential debate which raised much discourse, social media was agog with expectations about Buhari's participation. A respondent stated that: *Buhari will need interpreters, we should use the BBC Hausa for the presidential debate*. In an unexpected twist however, a respondent posted information credited to former president Obasanjo, that Jonathan did not complete his PhD. Which was during the heat of the certificate debate of Buhari.

***Endorsements for candidates*.** Another kind of information posted on social media about the presidential candidates during the 2015 electioneering periods was on the endorsements by individuals, groups and organizations on the two candidates. Notable

endorsements were from top individuals with influence in the society, and renown organizations gave public support to the candidates which were posted by respondents on their Facebook walls. Respondents also posted different messages on social media campaigning for and trying to influence others to supporting preferred candidates. Their posts included a variety of media which include: picture posts, cartoons, videos, and simple texts.

Category Three – <u>Personal qualities</u> – (22/96, 22.8%) another common feature of information generated and diffused was an x-ray of the personalities of the candidates. Narratives uncover a series of information regarding the knowledge of the respondents about the candidates. In one of the sub-categories, still dwelling on narratives about the past knowledge of the candidates, some respondents posted that:

***Candidate's credentials*.** This sub-category portrays narratives which revealed the respondent's belief in the candidates. While some had preference for General Buhari judging from their conviction that he was a fearless, dogged fighter needed to lead Nigeria. In a post by a respondent he stated that: "*Buhari has integrity and zero tolerance for corruption"*. In a similar post, another stated: "*Buhari is a disciplined gentleman"*. Another posted that General Buhari will provide a more purposeful leadership: "*Buhari leadership is purposeful"*, all listing the personal traits that would lead to success as president.

***Corruption*.** Many Nigerians had concerns about the level of misuse of the country's resources by the leaders at various cadres. This made the issue a critical element used by the respondents evaluating the candidates for the 2015 elections. The two candidates were put under the spotlight with posts depicting different degrees of corruption. Respondents were attempting to make character judgement based on their perception of happenings under the candidate's previous terms as leaders. Postings by respondents depict different levels of accusation of corruption on the candidates and their associates. A respondent questioned Buhari's allies, who he alleged to be corrupt

individuals in his post: *"terribly corrupt men in the country are surprisingly supporting Buhari"*, and in a similar fashion, another respondent stated in a post that he suspects Buhari's candidature: *"there's something fishy about Buhari candidacy"*, Buhari is accused of corruption by association.

Meanwhile, President Jonathan was slated before and during the campaigns for 2015 elections for corruption. In other instances, the opposition party accused his appointees and many individuals in president Jonathan's government as very corrupt and looters of the Nigerian economy. A respondent bluntly posted that: ***"****Jonathan is corrupt and ethnic"*. With a similar post by another respondent indicating that the level of corruption had gotten worse, a notion supported by Ijewereme, (2015) in his published article that corruption had increased considerably under President Jonathan's watch: "*Jonathan did not start corruption but it has gotten worse under him"*. Ekpo, Chime, & Enor (2016) noted that Jonathan's quest for second term in office beclouded his sense of judgement and totally bamboozled his political will to fight corruption with cases of loyalists scandalous cases of embezzlements, misappropriations, and diversion of public funds. A number of respondents also share similar beliefs about Jonathan being corrupt, stating that he Jonathan could not control the appointees and they were looting the economy dry.

Comparison of candidates**.** Direct comparison of the candidates was another common information shared by fans on social media. Attempts were made by respondents to paint positive images in support of their preferred candidates, while some were blunt defense against attacks from perceived opponents. A number of respondents in their posts perceived President Jonathan as a better choice for president than General Buhari. Some of their reasons bother on democratic tendencies. A respondent posted that: "*Jonathan is a better choice to Buhari"*, while another viewed President Jonathan as a diplomat: "*Jonathan is a diplomat"*. While defending general Buhari, a respondent posted a message

in stubborn support of General Buhari, stating that: "*Whether Buhari has a certificate or not, he is better than GEJ's PhD"*. This indicating that Buhari had his total support regardless of any other thing that could be raised to disqualify General Buhari's candidature. Another respondent posted a preference based on the APC not providing a better alternative to President Jonathan: "*APC provided no VIABLE alternative to Jonathan"*. indicating that the incumbent president was a better choice to General Buhari.

Theme Two – Security Issues (5/96, 5.1%). The theme has two categories depicting narratives relating to security, and anxiety among Nigerians about the conduct of the 2015 elections. The fear in the polity was palpable with some US analysts predicting that the elections will make or mar Nigeria as a republic (Danbazau, 2015). The raging insurgency in the North-East of Nigeria was another leading cause of panic coupled with the religious and ethnic division among Nigerians during the period leading to the elections. The theme has two major categories which include: (1) Boko Haram insurgency (3/96, 3.1%); and (2) Threat of violence (2/96, 2.0%). The categories are explained below:

Category Five – Boko Haram Insurgency. This comprised of narratives which depicted the posting on the activities of the terrorists which made fear widespread particularly in the Northern parts of Nigeria by boko haram insurgents (Otuchikere, 2015) in the North-East geo-political zone of Nigeria, and the scattered cases of suicide bombings, and the Chibok girls' abduction saga (Elombah.com, 2015; Nigerian Eye, 2015) which was at its peak during the 2015 election period in the country. With the election slated during the period when the terrorist attacks (Sotubo, 2015) and military engagements were toughest, there was fear and anxiety. The postponement of the election was also debated on social media. A respondent indicated the palpable fear of the upcoming elections in a post with a sad 'emoticon', stated that the INEC and President Jonathan had postponed the elections: "*election postponed"*, another respondent showed frustration in a post accusing General

Buhari of boko haram links: "*God forbid a useless change of voting in a political wing of B/H sympathising for Boko Haram*". A respondent reacting to the seeming delay of president Jonathan in conquering the Boko Haram insurgency and rescuing the Chibok girls posted: "*Mr. @presgoodluck Thank u for visiting Maiduguri"* and continuing in another similar post lamented the lateness of his visit: "*unfortunate U did it just 1 month 2 #feb14 & 9 months in #ChibokGirlsClock"*.

Category Six – Threat of violence. The 2015 election was anticipated with a high level of uncertainty. Predictions had been made that the elections had the potential to divide Nigeria. This increased the tension and anxiety that surrounded the 2015 election (Olaniyi, et al., 2015). The election polarized the country along religious and ethnic sentiments (Ikpeama, 2014; Okafor, 2015). The period preceding the 2015 elections was particularly stressful for many, as many dreaded the near certainty of violence (Ovuorie, 2014). Many during the period travelled back to their places of origin (Nigerian Observer, 2015).

The sub-category depicts narratives revealing posts relating to expectation cum fear of violence. A respondent posted an information credited to a militant: "*There will be bloodshed if Jonathan loses 2015 election – Asari Dokubo"*. In a similar narrative, another respondent posted: "*There will be parallel government if Jonathan and PDP rig 2015 election – Amaechi"*. Some of these narratives depicted the general feelings among people in the country during the period. Portraying the mood of the country during the elections posted on his wall: "*2015 elections: Exodus of Northerners from South-South"*. Same was also observed of none Northerners leaving for the East, South-South, and South-West.

Theme Three – Election Update (11/96, 11.3%) this emergent theme explains narratives related to information generated and diffused on social media that highlighted posts about the elections with the two candidates as central actors, or relating to them. This theme has

two categories (1) Election results (7/96, 7.2%), and (2) Technology for Elections (4/96, 4.1%). The categories are explained below.

Category Seven – Election Results: the results of the 2015 elections were keenly followed by many Nigerians (Diamond Report, 2015). Though a good number of the results posted on social media platforms were termed unofficial and fake (Nairaland, 2015; Odogwu, 2015), but it showed an increased number of people (respondents included) who followed the postings from individuals and the media from polling units to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) official release by the INEC Chairman, Prof. Attahiru Jega. These following on social media was unprecedented in the history of elections in Nigeria.

The narratives reflect some reactions on the election results. At the official release and declaration of General Buhari as the winner, a respondent posted: *"can I start calling Buhari Mr. president"*. Another respondent praising the maturity and sportsmanship of President Jonathan posted: *"A single decision can change a narrative about a person, you have my eternal respect President Jonathan"*. Similar reactions trailed President Jonathan's actions with another also posting: *"PGEJ call to congratulate GMB on his impending victory at the polls, Jonathan has shown an exemplary maturity and tolerance; it is a mark of a true democrat"*. Encomiums continued to pour in for Jonathan for the singular act of conceding the election (Nigerian Nation, 2015; Owete, 2015; Nwabughiogu, 2016) even before the official declaration. With a respondent posting that: *"Jonathan guaranteed peace and calm in the polity especially of the president and his supporters, it rubbishes d whole claims of d presidency planning an interim govt or a military takeover"*.

Category Eight – Technology for elections: the 2015 elections in Nigeria, witnessed the introduction of technology meant to reduce incidence of malpractice during the conduct of the elections proper. They were called card readers. The card readers were received with mixed feelings. The sub-category depicts narratives about the card reader use for the

presidential election. In the build-up to the elections, there were reported instances of the failure of the card readers (Pulse, 2015; Vanguard, 2015), which started to generate suspicion on the part of the PDP, who were pushing for suspension of the card readers (Adebayo, 2015; Premium Times, 2015; Vanguard, 2015), an action which generated some responses from respondents. A respondent posted that: "*They say Buhari belongs to d analogue age, Buhari accepts card readers"*, with a similar response posted: "*they (Jonathan and PDP) are d ones rejecting digital card readers for the elections"*.

4.3.2 Emerged Themes from Research Question 2

Types of information shared on social media about the presidential candidates during the 2015 elections

Table 4.2: Category by Sub-Categories Frequency and Percentage – RQ2

Research Question 2	Theme	Categories	Sub-Categories	Freq. of categories	Percentage %
What types of Information were shared on social media about the presidential candidates during the 2015 general elections in Nigeria	**Evaluation of Candidates**	1. Past actions and performance 2. Behavioural and Academic Qualifications 3. Personal qualities of the candidates	Past actions and performance • Dictatorship • Election rigging • Sharia Issue • Past achievements • Candidate's indecisiveness	 5 2 3 3 2 **15**	 4.4 1.7 2.6 2.6 1.7 **13**
			Behavioural and academic qualifications • Not qualified • Education • Election Campaigns/promises • Health concern • Endorsements	 17 10 8 1 14	 15.1 8.9 7.1 0.8 12.5
			Personal qualities of candidates • Good credentials of candidates • Corruption	**50** 14 6 **20**	**44.4** 12.5 5.3 **17.8**
	Security Issues	4. Threat of violence 5. Insurgency	• Threat of violence • Boko Haram Insurgency	5 6 **11**	4.4 5.3 **9.7**
	Election Updates	6. Elections results 7. Election news	• 2015 election results • Updates on the elections • Election Predictions	12 2 2 **16**	10.7 1.7 1.7 **14.1**
				112	**99%**

Theme One – Evaluation of Candidates – (85/112; 75.2%): This first theme as derived from the information captured on the research question on kinds of information shared by the respondents. This research question sought to explore the kinds of information shared by the respondents, about the two major candidates during the 2015 elections in Nigeria. The shared information represents postings which were not originally generated by the respondents but from a third-party individual or from another source (online news agency, other social media platforms, or individual). The narratives highlighted are related to the two major candidates of the APC and PDP. The theme is divided into four (4) categories: Past actions of the candidates (15/112, 13%), About the qualification of the candidates (50/112, 44.4%), Personal qualities of the contestants (20/112, 17.8%). These are explained below.

Category One – <u>Past actions and performance</u> – (15/112, 13%) this category depicts narratives related to the knowledge of the respondents regarding past activities and their experiences of the two candidates. The narratives depict how the information possessed and acquired have influenced the decisions by the respondents about the candidates.

***Dictatorship*.** The narratives on dictatorship was depicted in this sub-category. Information shared on the social media walls of the respondent revealed the belief among the respondents that General Buhari had dictatorial tendencies. Referring to the background of Buhari in the military, and how he performed while he was head of state. Some of the posts shared by the respondents captured narratives that depict a draconian type of leader. A leader who would block freedom of the press, and would not lead with democratic tenets. A respondent shared a post which stated that: "*Buhari will deny press freedom"* and a similar shared post stating that General Buhari's credentials and antecedents in the military spoke against what the APC were preaching to the people about Buhari. Another shared post actually painted an image where fear will dominate his rule. The shared post read that: "*The fear of Buhari is the beginning of wisdom"*.

Election rigging. This sub-category revealed narratives depicting elections manipulations. The shared posts were a revelation (video documentation of the 2011 election between Buhari and Jonathan) of the past elections where allegations of rigging were made. General Buhari was particularly targeted in the allegations of mass rigging. The shared video which showed "almajiris" been used as voters in the North during the 2011 elections. A respondent shared a picture post of "almajiris" gathered together in a group with the message: "*Buhari's (under-age) voters in the North*".

Sharia issue. Another issue that trended during the electioneering period had religious perspective. Rumours were rife that one of the candidates was nursing the agenda of turning Nigeria into a Muslim country. General Buhari was accused of planning to convert the country into an Islamic country if he won the 2015 polls. The allegations were said to have been a plan that had been in the pipeline and was linked to the Boko Haram insurgency. A respondent shared a post which alleged that: "*Buhari has Sharia agenda*". Another post that was shared by another revealed a comment credited to Buhari in the past: "*Buhari: God willing, we will not stop the agitation for total implementation of Sharia in Nigeria*". In a similar post, another respondent shared an information that gave a timeline to the plan, indicating that the plan had been an elaborate one. Buhari was referred to as a Jihadist in the shared post.

Past achievements. The sub-category had narratives that depicted the successes recorded in the past by the candidates. The candidates were evaluated on how they fared while holding office in the past. What they achieved were used to weigh them considering the task at hand. Instances of their achievements were shared by the respondents to buttress their arguments in favour of their preferred candidate. A respondent shared a post which highlighted Jonathan's success: it stated that: "*Under Jonathan's watch, INEC became the pride of every Nigerian*", with a similar shared post stating that Jonathan created new universities that generations will remember. Another respondent shared a picture post

which highlighted the economic achievements recorded by Jonathan, where Nigeria's economy was rated as having the highest growth rate in the world just behind China by the IMF.

***Candidates indecisiveness*.** Another information shared on social media was evaluation based on the ability of the candidates to make decisions when required. Quick and clear judgements were seen as very important skills required to govern the country. The sub-category captured narratives that depicted the decision-making ability of the candidates. The information shared about the candidates depicted that some respondents doubted Buhari, citing his inability to even pick a running mate for the elections which was already very close as a case in point. An instance is a shared post by a respondent which stated that: "*Buhari yet to pick a running mate for 2015*".

Category Two – <u>Qualifications of candidates</u> – (50/112, 44.4%). The 2015 elections was unique for many reasons. One was that the keen interest shown was very high. Second was that other persons evaluated and passed their own knowledge and perceptions to the respondents who had accepted what was shared with them. A reason adduced for re-sharing such information on their walls, was replete on their walls. Another was that, the people wanted a candidate that was perceived generally as qualified, so they share information that tallied with what they already believed to be true about the candidates. This was evident in the types of information shared on social media about the candidates. From the information shared, narratives that highlighted issues about the qualifications of the candidates to run for office were captured. This category portrays narratives which depicted how the other people view the candidates running for the presidency and accepted by the respondents. The category is sub-divided into sub-categories: Not qualified; education; Campaign related; health concern; and endorsements.

***Not qualified*.** The information shared by other persons and re-shared by the respondents in the study. Narratives from this sub-category revealed how other people

perceived the candidates and how the respondents who align themselves to the information shared by sharing the postings on their own walls. The belief that both candidates were either qualified for presidency was a common feature of posts on social media. Fans of both candidates tried to present their preferred candidates as qualified, while opponents discredited and shared information which showed that the candidates they oppose was not qualified.

Some persons and groups who evaluated the candidates and were convinced that the candidates did not meet the requirements to lead Nigeria shared posts which portrayed such picture. Instances of the shared posts include: some respondents shared on their walls that Buhari was not qualified as he did not have the democratic credentials to do so. Some others claim that he was too old, while some called him a puppet of some group of persons. In a post shared: "*there is nothing that qualifies Buhari to seek the exalted office of the president*", while Jonathan's antagonists shared information about his many failures in his tenure that was ending. He adjudged to have failed in the education sector, created more poverty and high level of unemployment in the country. Some brought to memory some promises made during the previous campaign for 2011 where he was credited to have made some promises which he did not execute. For instance, in a shared post: "*if I (Jonathan) cannot fix power in four years, I am useless, don't waste your votes on me*". A picture post was also shared of young men checking under a gutter (a mockery) for the over one million jobs claimed to have been created by Jonathan's government with a message "*We are looking for the 1.5 million jobs that GEJ said he created*".

***Education*.** Another information that was shared was evaluation about the educational credentials of the contesting candidates. Many questioned the academic qualifications presented to the electorates in the 2015 elections. Majority of these were however targeted at General Buhari. He was accused of not having the basic senior school leaving certificate, and as such was not fit to lead a nation of high lettered people. The

issue of the academic qualification was highly circulated with claims and counter-claims made of the matter, and court proceedings instituted to adjudicate if Buhari was qualified. Instances shared include: "*Buhari certificate saga: APC tense*". In an unexpected twist, however, Jonathan who was a PhD holder was accused of not having a PhD. A post credited to former president Obasanjo was shared where he was quoted as saying that: "*President Jonathan did not complete his PhD*".

***Campaign promises*.** During the course of the campaign, candidates in their attempt to woo voters to cast their votes in for the candidates, made promises to do myriad of things if voted into office. These promises were then broadcast by fans and loyalists to the various candidates on their social media pages. The sub-category depicts narratives that revealed information shared by respondents about promises made by the candidates during their campaign.

The campaign period highlighted the programmes and agenda of the candidates. Issues about corruption, development and other promises that were shared on the social media pages and walls of the respondents. A respondent shared a post which captured Buhari as promising to stamp out corruption. With many other promises to which the fans were peddling on their walls that GMB had promised to execute.

***Health concern*.** In the run-off to the elections, much was discussed about the health of the candidates. The health of General Buhari was particularly debated, with rumours of ill-health flying around news media, social media and networking sites, and in informal settings (Premium Times, 2015; Channels Television, 2015). A respondent shared a post that revealed a narrative that aptly captured information that was said to have happened during Buhari's campaign in one of the states in Nigeria: "*Buhari is medically unstable, flown abroad"*. With other claims stating that he collapsed during the campaign. The people wanted definite information about the health status of the presidential contestant.

Endorsements. Another type of information shared during the 2015 elections about the candidates, was related to the support received from top personalities and groups in respect to the elections. These endorsements came as public support given by individuals and groups who are believed to have influence and respect in the society. A respondent shared a post: *"Obama supports Buhari"*, recognizing international support for Buhari, with a similar post shared stating that: "*Nigerians in Malaysia endorse Buhari"* and another shared a post that: "*Babangida endorses Buhari"*.

Category Three – <u>Personal qualities of the candidates</u> – (20/112, 17.8%). This category highlights the shared information captured as narratives from the various respondents about who they knew the candidates to be, that is, the personalities of the contestants.

Good credentials of candidates. This subcategory discussed the credentials of the candidates based on the information they came across and their previous knowledge of the candidates. Many of the respondents shared information believing the candidates had the requisite knowledge and wherewithal necessary to lead Nigeria. Some of the shared information attempted to calm the doubts some person had of General Buhari. A respondent shared a post that stated: *Buhari not a fundamentalist,* while a similar post shared claimed that Buhari was going to govern democratically.

Some of the individual qualities of the candidates were also discussed on social media. Issues bothering on their behavioural qualities were also analysed from shared posts. In a shared post, which revealed a positive image painted of General Buhari, he was hailed as a gentleman and an incorruptible individual. In a similar attempt by those who viewed President Jonathan in a positive light, statements about his democratic credentials were shared. In the shared posts, he (Jonathan) was praised for his democratic nature. President Jonathan was viewed as one who allowed the system to work, without imposing his will at all cost on the people. He (Jonathan) according to a shared post was hailed as a

true democrat and a good compatriot: *Jonathan is a true democrat and a party leader who does not influence majority decisions at the party*.

Corruption. One of the major campaign against the incumbent government was that of corruption. A large majority of the Nigerian populace had been inundated with a barrage of accusations as to the level of corruption been perpetrated under the Jonathan led administration. On issues bordering on corruption, many narratives showed the varying levels of trust and distrust reposed in the presidential contestants for the 2015 elections.

One important image projected of General Buhari during the 2015 electioneering campaigns was that, he was totally anti-corrupt and that he was not rich. However, in a post which portrayed an irony of the Buhari anti-corrupt stance, a respondent mocked General Buhari, sharing a post which highlighted a poor Buhari who claimed that he could not buy the nomination form, yet his wife donates an amount that could buy nomination forms for over ten presidential candidates: "*Buhari took loan to buy nomination form, yet wife donates N135 million drugs"*, indicating that Buhari was been deceptive to Nigerians. In a similar play of mockery, another respondent shared a post which was a reaction to the campaign agenda of Buhari, which was targeted at fighting corruption: "*Buhari will function more with the EFCC"*. However, a respondent shared a more futuristic position from a popular columnist which read: "*I am eager to see how Buhari will end corruption in Nigeria*".

During the 2015 campaign period, claims and counter-claims were made about massive amounts of money that Jonathan had disbursed for the campaign with a respondent sharing a post naming a beneficiary of the windfall. Indicating that a large portion of the national wealth were been distributed by cronies of Jonathan. "*Gani Adams queried by OPC leaders about Jonathan's N1.6bn campaign fund",* and another showing in the shared post that corruption had greatly increased under Jonathan's watch: "*increased indiscipline, bribery and corruption, theft"*.

Theme Two – Security Issues (11/112, 9.7%). The theme has two categories depicting narratives relating to security, and anxiety among Nigerians about the conduct of the 2015 elections. (1) Boko Haram insurgency (6/112, 5.3%); and (2) Threat of violence (5/112, 4.4%). The categories are explained below.

Category Five – Boko Haram Insurgency. The category comprises of narratives portraying information shared on social media about the Boko Haram insurgency (Otuchikere, 2015) before and during the 2015 election, particularly in the North-East geo-political zone of Nigeria, and the recurrent incidences of suicide bombings, and the kidnap of the over 260 Chibok girls (Elombah.com, 2015; Nigerian Eye, 2015). The 2015 election was scheduled during a period when the terrorist attacks were very frequent (Sotubo, 2015) and military engagements were high, increasing fear and anxiety especially among non-indigenes residents in the Northern parts of the country. Due to the onslaught of the military offensive against the terrorist group, there were musings from official quarters about the safety of holding elections during the period. The postponement of the election was debated on social media, with some respondents alleging that it was a plot to manipulate the elections. Narratives from this category also portrayed statements credited to the candidates, and shared by respondents on social media.

A respondent shared a post which indicated one of the candidates' unhappiness at the seeming failure of the incumbent in the fight against Boko Haram: "*Buhari unhappy with Military effectiveness against Boko Haram"*. However, a respondent shared a post which accused General Buhari of boko haram links: "*Buhari chides FG for killing Boko Haram members"*. In a shared post, the FG stated that respondent reacting to the seeming delay of president Jonathan in conquering the Boko Haram insurgency and rescuing the Chibok girls posted: "*Jonathan cannot stop Boko Haram before elections* and that the Chibok girls kidnap issue: *no time-frame for the rescue of Chibok girls"* and after a level of victory against the insurgents, the incumbent president claiming that the terrorists would

not occupy territory in Nigeria, shared by a respondent: "*(Jonathan) says Terrorists will not occupy our territory again"*.

Category Six – Threat of violence – there was a high level of tension and anxiety that surrounded the 2015 election (Olaniyi, et al., 2015). The election showed massive evidence of religious and ethno-tribal sentiments (Ikpeama, 2014; Okafor, 2015). The period before the elections was tense, as a cloud of uncertainty about the safety of persons was particularly high (Ovuorie, 2014). As the elections drew closer, many left with their families back to their places of origin (Nigerian Observer, 2015). The sub-category depicts narratives revealing posts relating to fear of violence. A respondent shared a post alleging plot to cause trouble: "*FG plans violence in some states"*.

During the campaigns, president Jonathan and his entourage were attacked in Katsina. In a shared post, Buhari was accused of attacking the president during his campaign tour of Katsina State where the security detail of the president and his convoy were pelted with stones: "*Buhari accused of attacking Jonathan in Katsina"*. In similar shared information, a threat made by Buhari after losing the 2011 election was brought to the fore, where Buhari had allegedly vowed to make Jonathan's tenure a torrid period: *"Buhari threatened to make Jonathan's 2011 government ungovernable"*. Some of these narratives showed the general feelings of anxiety among the populace in the country during the period.

Theme Three – Election Update (16/112, 14.1%). This theme explains narratives related to information shared on social media that depicted posts about the elections with the candidates of the APC and PDP as main actors. This theme has two categories (1) Election results (12/112, 10.7%), and (2) Election News/updates (4/112, 3.4%). The categories are explained below:

Category Seven – Election Results. The 2015 elections witnessed more social media and new media coverage unlike any other in the history of elections in Nigeria (Diamond Report, 2015). A high amount of information about the candidates and events surrounding the election were posted and shared by various individuals and groups. Some of these include; happenings around the country, unofficial results from polling units, and so on, (Nairaland, 2015; Odogwu, 2015). In spite of the unofficial nature of what was shared on online, individuals and groups actively sought out information from these platforms.

The narratives reflected shared information on the presidential election results. Information related to which candidate was leading at different times were shared, official declaration of the 2015 election, reactions of the candidates and reactions of the people about how the victorious and losing candidate at the polls. A respondent shared a post about the victory of Buhari: "*Buhari wins 2015 polls"*. A respondent praised the maturity and sportsmanship President Jonathan displayed for conceding the elections by sharing a post: "*incumbent President Jonathan calls to congratulate"*. Encomiums continued to pour in for Jonathan for the singular act of conceding the election (Nigerian Nation, 2015; Owete, 2015; Nwabughiogu, 2016) even before the official declaration. With a respondent posting that: "*Jonathan shows magnanimity, calls to congratulate Buhari on electoral victory"*.

Category Eight – Election News: During the course of the elections, information was shared from other sources dwelling on the conduct of the elections. This category captured narratives that depict information shared on some activities and political moves engaged in by the candidates during the electioneering period. In a bid to quell crisis related to the conduct of the elections, a respondent shared an information from top personalities in Nigeria: "*Jonathan must conduct credible, peaceful polls – Abdulsalami, Sultan"*. An attempt to avert rigging which was believed would result in conflicts. Another respondent

shared the political maneuvers by president Jonathan: which also trended on social media: "*Jonathan adopted by AD, Labour Party as Candidate"*.

4.3.3 Emerged Theme from Research Question 3

How the people/Friends made sense of information generated and shared on social media about the presidential candidates during the 2015 elections

Table 4.3: Category by Sub-Categories Frequency and Percentage – RQ3

Research Question 3	Theme	Open – Codes (Categories)	Categories	Freq. of Cat.	Percentage %
How did the friends made sense of the Information that were generated and shared on social media about the presidential candidates during the 2015 general elections in Nigeria	**Evaluation of Candidates**	**Past actions and performances** 1. Fail Buhari [1] 2. Okay [1—6] 3. U of all people should not campaign with such insultive photo [1—7] 4. Lets campaign peacefully and not provocatively [1—8] 5. I would rather vote for Buhari but doesn't mean I would insult Jonathan [1—9] 6. Is Buhari a true muslim? [4—38] 7. Islamic fanatic Buhari in church bcos of votes [4—39] 8. Buhari change is not clear [4—40] 9. Buhari has religious sentiments [4—41] 10. Buhari voters are underaged [4—46] 11. We will not vote for Buhari [4—47] 12. Buhari/APC change are lies [4—48] 13. Clueless Jonathan better than dictator Buhari [4—49] 14. Change through rigging [4—61] 15. Have they swept aside the corrupt elements? Answer is NO [7—83] 16. The marks on their faces differ [7—90] 17. A million-dollar question [7—92] 18. God is working out His purpose for this nation [7—112] 19. I am sorry for Nigeria [7—116] 20. You dey yab my fiful [7—119] 21. I really want this debate to hold [7—120]	1. Past actions and performances 2. Behavioural and Academic qualifications of the candidates 3. Personal qualities of the candidates	30 24 20 **74**	40.5 32.4 27.0 **28.2**

		22. Is that possible [2—32] 23. The mentioned projects are imaginary [4—53] 24. Jonathan's transformation requires time and patience [4—44] 25. GEJ is a complete and colossal failure [7—102] 26. It doesn't matter how clouded our senses have become [7—124] 27. Jonathan's government fighting corruption [4—45] 28. If Buhari's first tenure was best ever, then u did not objectively analyse Jonathan [7—95] 29. All those calling Jonathan a colossal failure are not better off [7—104] 30. Are you sure we will not be needing another clueless 4 years? [7—121] **Behavioural and Academic qualifications of the candidates** 1. We have seen their CVs, and they are not fit for the job [7—94] 2. We should use BBC Hausa for presidential debate [7—117] 3. The truth cannot be overturned by our refusal to accept it [7—125] 4. LKWM ooo! My good friend just said a funny truth [7—127] 5. March for Buhari [1—10] 6. March for Buhari [6—67] 7. May Allah help Buhari achieve his objective [2—34] 8. "by Allah's grace" [2—35] 9. Buhari lacks political ideology [7—122] 10. Buhari is a lesser evil [8—143] 11. Buhari is a pretender [4—54] 12. What change is Buhari selling to Nigerians [4—55] 13. Buhari not qualified to preach one Nigeria [4—56] 14. Who is qualified then [2—31] 15. Buhari has an Islamic and foreign agenda against Nigerians [4—57] 16. Buhari a jihadist [4—58] 17. Buhari has Boko Haram connections [4—59] 18. Buhari has sharia agenda [4—60]			

		19. Not all that is on the Internet is true, this never happened [7—126] 20. **Mockery**: When you hear a DR handing over to an ALMAJIRI on the 29th [6—79] 21. Vote for Jonathan [4—50] 22. God placed Jonathan in power [6—66] 23. Jonathan and Buhari can't change the country [8—140] 24. Even if u don't want Buhari, are there no other candidates [7—101] **Personal qualities of candidates** 1. Back to military rule. Hahaha [1—21] 2. I wonder if the old generals mean well for the country [7—113] 3. Buhari only barred AIT from his personal activities [1—17] 4. Buhari has power to do that [1—18] 5. Dis is democracy and not military era [1—19] 6. Freedom of speech, so he has no to do that to AIT [1—20] 7. Shame on Buhari for pretending to be a saint [4—63] 8. Jonathan is corrupt and incompetent [4—43] 9. We want Buhari [9—145] 10. Buhari a gentleman [9—147] 11. Buhari is the best man for the job [9—146] 12. Better tell them o [2—25] 13. Buhari is the right candidate because he is not corrupt [8—144] 14. We have seen their CVs, and they are not fit for the job [7—94] 15. Forget the university issue [2—29] 16. Jonathan is president of all liars [6—65] 17. Jonathan is lying [2—37] 18. Good change cannot come from corrupt minds [8—141] 19. Jonathan is a gentleman [4—62] 20. Better to remain with Jonathan [4—42]			
				74	**99.9**

Theme One – Evaluation of Candidates – (74/262; 28.2%). This theme captured narratives generated from the initial information shared on social media (Facebook) about the presidential candidates. As expected, the posts (information) generated and shared about the two major candidates during the 2015 general elections provoked reactions and responses. The responses from fans/friends were content analyzed and discussed under this theme. The study however focused on just this theme since it had more reactions compared to the other themes derived in the study (66.2%). For instance, in response to a picture post of General Buhari by a respondent, which depicted Buhari in rags and looking like a beggar with a caption *"Never again to a dictator"* drew reactions from other members who made series of comments which castigated the post: a comment stated that, *"U of all people shouldn't campaign with such insultive photo. Haba"*, the individual did not expect such a post about the candidate from the person making the post.

In another reaction, a respondent saw it as provocative and capable of leading to conflicts due to the volatility of the 2015 election period, by stating that: *"Let's campaign peacefully and not provocatively"*. However, supporting a previous comment, a respondent stated that: *"fact that I would rather vote Buhari doesn't mean I should insult or participate in posting ugly fotoshops of GEJ"*. The post was considered offensive and capable of tipping the already fragile situation. During the run-up to the elections, AIT was accused of bias reportage to Buhari and as such Buhari was reported to have ban any member of the AIT reporting his activities. He was also quoted to have said: *"I will take away press freedom if it distracts my government"*. This generated responses, captured as narratives of the reactions of other people to the post, the people were divided with a commenter trying to justify Buhari's actions by commenting: *"He only barred AIT from covering his personal activities"* and another supporting the previous comment that Buhari had the right to ban the media house.

However, another challenged the previous comments that, it is a democratic dispensation and it was unbecoming to ban the media house. This comment also gained support from another, who posted that: "*Freedom of speech, so he has no right to do that to AIT"*. Another commenter simply mocked by stating that Buhari was going to return us back to the military rule. A respondent shared a picture post of Modern Rail tracks praising the good performance of president Jonathan disputing the tag given to the incumbent by the opposition, that Jonathan was clueless. The respondent posted the picture with the caption: "*If cluelessness can achieve this, then no doubt a clueless president is better than a dictator. Vote GEJ 2015 for continuity"*, a post which raised reactions. The message in the post was disputed by a commenter who stated that the projects were imaginary and a figment of the respondent's imagination, also criticized Jonathan for abandoning the highways which were in deplorable states according to him.

Similar responses also depicted the claims and counter-claims about Jonathan's performance in office, with some seeing him as a colossal failure. In the attempt to defend their preferred candidates and their reasons for sticking with either, comments and reactions became personal and with veiled insults which many hurled at each other. Due to the insults, a respondent feeling spited by a comment on his wall made an exasperated comment showing his frustrations at the turn which the comments had taken: "*This is absolute bullshit. I'm sorry to say this… but all ye Jonathanians… why cant U just see the truth."*.

Narratives show that all comments were made sense of in one of three ways: Positive, negative, and the neutrals. The positive comments were those who agreed with and supported the information posted (mostly among fans of the candidates). The negatives were from those opposed to the candidates being projected by any information diffused or shared (antagonists of the candidates being projected), for example, in a post that depicted Buhari as a dictator and perceived past wicked acts, a commenter posted that: "*Good*

research, it's nice to remind GMB of d ills" and another stating that: "*He thought he was going to die a military. Bt now he wants to enjoy democracy dt he jailed Solarin for agitating for"* all trying to expose Buhari as a tyrant that should not be voted as president. While the last group were those who felt not sufficiently convinced of either candidates and would prefer to raise neutral arguments or raise contrary opinions to popular expectations from the posters or sharers of the information under scrutiny.

4.3.4 How the Two Constructs of Dual Process Theory (Informational and Normative Factors) Explain Information Generated and Diffused on Social Media during Elections

Deutsch and Gerrard's Dual Process Theory (DPT) is a psychological theory which postulates two distinct influences (factors) on the persuasiveness of received messages. They include: Informational and Normative Influences. The factors (influences) were developed to prove that social influences affected the psychological processes. It particularly focused on how it affected an individual's decision making and judgement. In essence, individuals make judgement calls on daily basis about issues, events, happenings, etc. Social media in Nigeria is relatively free (that is, no recorded evidence of restrictions placed on its use so far), which means that people can post whatever they feel like posting without any form of sanction. Social media creates room for social interactions to occur

Informative Influences

Informational influences are based on the acceptance of information obtained from others as evidence of reality. Communication on social media involves a series of interactions forth and back. People generate and diffuse information on a variety of interests to which they have. In doing this, they share artefacts which carry contextual, and sometimes circumstantial meanings. They make judgements and evaluations about the presenter (source of information received) with bias in some cases (depending on their evaluation of

who, where, and the message – usually last in that order). The theory posits that people view truth and accept such information based on the judgement made of the presenter to have the requisite knowledge to give such information. This is referred to as informational influence. Informational Influence is defined as "influence to accept information obtained from another as evidence about reality". It is often that influence that derives from the power of an individual or group to present their perspective on a subject as more authoritative and erudite than the opinion of the majority (Kaplan and Miller, 1987).

Acceptance of Information from others – acceptance of received information is based on a previous knowledge. People tend to accept information that was in consonance with or close to their previous belief. The respondents tend to believe or prefer to accept as truth information which comes from people who are seen to share similar interest particularly with regards to the candidates involved in the elections. It is based on the receiver's self-judgment of the received information, and hence the relevant components of the information, such as the content, source, and receiver, are important sources of influence (Cheung, et al. 2009). The study noted that respondents from their interactions were more likely to make judgements from their previously held information repertoire, which in many cases are based on their religious and ethnic affiliations.

Evidence about reality – what people/individuals accept as reality is subject to a number of factors, among which include: environment, norms, family, religion, and so on. Information generation and sharing is influenced by these factors because the society accepts what is shared because they believe in the power of the presenter. To be able to understand the meanings from the information in circulation, people draw from their experiences and knowledge to make credibility judgement on the truthfulness or otherwise of what is received as evidence of reality. For instance, informational influence may be derived from the power of the presenter if he/she is considered to be more authoritative and erudite about the topic being presented. An example is evidenced in the shared post that

reported former president Olusegun Obasanjo as predicting that General Buhari would win the 2015 elections: "*Obasanjo says Buhari will be next President"*, which was shared by another northern respondent to his friends who "liked" the shared information, since it furthered a choice of candidate which they seemingly preferred.

Normative Influences

Normative influence according to Deutsch and Gerrard (1955) is the need to conform with the positive expectations of others, particularly in a group environment. Social interactions connote the presence of more than one person in a communicative process. It entails exchange among participants engaged in the interaction.

Need to conform - Every interaction has rules and norms which govern how people make contributions during the discussion. From the interactions captured in the study, it is evident that norms were expected to be adhered to, with those who break from it sanctioned (though not punitively, as they do not have such powers, except in the event where it offends the administrator/social media account holder). This is particularly noted among respondents from the Northern region, with lesser inclination to positive conformity on information received from other people from the South-East, South-South, and South-West. For example, a Northern respondent countered another Northern respondent for what seemed like a positive comment he made in reference to president Jonathan:

> "*We have seen President Goodluck Jonathan at work generally as well as specifically on (University) education for the past four years"*, (post from a Northern respondent) the information posted drew the following reaction from another (response from a Northerner) which was written in a mixed code of English and Hausa languages: "*Ok kaima dan goodluck ne ko boko haram with d university issue" (interpretation: ok are you also supporting Goodluck? Forget about the university issue)*

It was not expected of the respondent to post anything which could be viewed as supporting or portraying Jonathan in good light from the respondent who was a Northerner.

Information generated, diffused and shared by respondents and their friends on social media revealed a kind of unstated rule among respondents from same region against the candidate from the other region. Respondents (particularly from the North) were expected to automatically support the candidature of Buhari.

Positive expectations of others – Groups in most climes set rules and regulations to foster seamless communication. Though in most groups (with exception to formal groups) there is an unstated code that all members engaged in the group or communicative process were expected to adhere to. Adherence to these unstated codes is expected of participants within the group. However, the study noted that majority only positively conformed along religious, ethnic and tribal lines. That is, those from the North were expected to automatically give positive comments to posts from people from the same region, and other regions too were expected to follow suit.

Social media as a Group environment – group environment connotes where two or more persons meet and interact. Social media has particularly broken the traditional group by extending interactions across states, countries and now continents. Individuals make friends with people without necessarily having to be within the same small community. A simple “Friend Request” and acceptance by the individual requested from is all it takes to make friends. Though the early connections could have been from school environment, places of religious worship, sports, etc. Facebook enhances the odds of making new friends by showing a list of people who are friends with the people you are already friend with. That is, if Mr. A is friends with Mr. B, friends of Mr. A are made available to Mr. B and vice versa.

4.4 Discussion of Findings and Implications

The findings of this study identified offensive information, propaganda, rumour and outright false information as common while interactions on social media (Facebook)

featured the presidential candidates during the 2015 elections in Nigeria in attempts to carry-out evaluation of the personalities of the candidates, security issues, and information about the elections (updates) as some of the major information generated and diffused during electioneering periods. The findings answer the research questions raised for the study and are discussed below.

Types of information generated and diffused about the presidential candidates

Information posted (generated and diffused) on social media about the two presidential candidates include: attempts by the people to evaluate the candidates (as shown in Table 4.1, Pg. 44) using information from their social media pages, drawing from their previous experiences and knowledge to draw conclusions about the two candidates (informational influences) and information received from other people, groups, and what the media are saying about the two candidates (normative influences). The evaluation began from their immediate knowledge about the candidates and then extended to what was uncovered about their history in office (past actions and performances of the contestants while previously holding office), information about the qualification of the candidates to contest the elections (their educational backgrounds, and other judgement calls about their abilities to govern Nigeria).

In doing this, the interactions on social media had a high recurrence of: propaganda, intentional misinformation and outright lies. These are seen in their attempts to evaluate the presidential candidates from previous knowledge of their terms in office. Also, the information available and shared on the personal qualities of both candidates were major indices presented on social media in the evaluation process, and the people also evaluated the personal qualities of the two candidates in some instances, the candidates are insulted and caricatures are made of their personalities all in the bid to discredit and convince others of the unworthiness or otherwise of the candidates. Themes surrounding security issues were also commonplace on social media, with the people generating posts (user generated

content – which revealed their individual convictions) depicting failure of the incumbent president, particularly about the violence in parts of the country, the Boko Haram insurgency and the Chibok girls kidnap issue, while others accuse the challenger of complicity in the level of insecurity pervading the country all displayed through the postings on their individual social media pages. The elections conduct was another key issue which constantly generated reactions in form of posts which were then diffused to their friends and fans on social media platforms.

However, information generated and shared on social media was not limited to just plain text, but there was an extensive use of pictures (cartoons, videos, etc) and imagery (metaphors, similes) which were used to display different intentions and conveying veiled messages and meanings. They included: mockery, attempts to discredit, or positively portray a disliked or preferred candidate during the 2015 elections. A plethora of sophisticated editing softwares were used to depict derogatory images of the candidates during the presidential elections. Furthermore, creations of a plethora of forms were used to convey messages/information of varying dimensions depicting numerous ideas. Some were demeaning and insulting caricatures, demeaning images, etc. which had the potentials to become catalysts for full blown conflicts in events where recipients misconstrued the shared information, as supported by Munyua (2011).

Types of information shared about the presidential candidates during the 2015 elections

Information shared on social media about the two presidential candidates had different dimensions to them, although they also were targeted at aiding the people to make judgements about the presidential candidates. The information shared carried either positive or negative evaluations, depending on the candidate being projected as the better alternative. The information shared were calculated attempts at tilting the receiver's choice (decision-making process by helping them make calculated choices). Sharing of

information with meanings embedding to them was commonplace on social media, either discrediting or praising a candidate. To achieve this, some of the information shared were without facts or evidence attached (rumours), while others were just false information meant to misinform the receiver so as to enhance the odds in favour of the candidate being sold to the receiver (misinformation). Some of the information had propagandist dimensions reeled into the current happenings within the country.

Research question two was quite similar to research question one in this regard, but the major differences were the embedded meanings, intentions and motives behind the posted messages. Key themes derived from the narratives of the information posted can also be summarized into attempts made to evaluate the presidential candidates, security issues, and the elections proper in terms of events and intrigues surrounding the conduct of the elections. Most of the information were targeted at helping the people think and making judgements from what they already know about the two candidates (informational influences) but attempting to suppress their normal thought processes, but persuading them instead to think along the lines being portrayed to them using the social media and other news media which was one key reason postulated by the DPT. The evaluation covers what the candidates have done previously (past precedents of the contestants) with extra dimensions added to further sensationalize the events surrounding the past of the candidates. Same sensationalism added to the qualifications of the candidates, and their competences to handle the country. On the issue of security, pressure groups, fans, and anti-government campaigns used the social media tools to project the failures of the incumbent on Facebook, Twitter, Nairaland, Blogs, WhatsApp, and other social networking sites to paint gory pictures in the minds of the readers about the Boko Haram insurgency and the Chibok Girls kidnap issue.

How the friends made sense of the information that was communicated to them on social media about the presidential candidates during the 2015 elections

From the information generated, diffused, and shared on social media about the presidential candidates, the comments and reactions to information shared showed that the two candidates polarized the country along religious and ethnic/tribal sentiments. The comments by the individuals regarding post that they have access to depict the following, that:

1. The information posted and reactions from friends and fans indicated that there was an evident level of tension among the ethnic/tribal composition of Nigeria (Adibe, 2015; Araba & Braimah, 2015), that is, North against the South-East, South-West and South-East, etc. information generated and diffused revealed high levels of intolerance, an obvious issue among the different ethnic/tribal associations as displayed on social media platforms. This is aptly displayed in the reactions to user generated content (UGC) emanating from persons from the other regions, and in most cases, persons who were not of same religious belief or inclination.
2. Respondents (users/fans/friends) on social media as depicted from their reactions to what was posted, do not really view the content (information being shared whether it has truth or not) as important, but the bearer (the individual posting or making the comment – where he/she is from, political affiliation) of the content. Postings were regarded as attacks on the person especially when the commenter is from the other ethnic divide. Such individual is roundly attacked on social media by members of the other ethnic divide who feel offended.
3. Information generated, diffused and shared on social media during the 2015 elections in Nigeria, revealed increased sentiment attached to individuals and the perception from some specific segments; where he/she is from, and party affiliations, with less focus on how qualified the candidate is to run for office

contested. Information shared by critics of the candidates' qualification are mostly from other ethnic climes and opposition party which makes the people to rally round such candidate in support and take offence on any negative information passed about the candidate.

The Implications

The tension among ethnic/tribal associations in Nigeria during the 2015 general elections showed that unguarded actions, utterances and postings could lead to conflicts of epic proportions. Social media due to the uncensored nature of its content can be used as indicated by Munyua (2011) and Bruce-Lockhart (2014) could incite conflicts especially in Nigeria where social media is not censored or regulated by government. This coupled with the distrust and suspicion of ethnic tribes in Nigeria, makes interactions on social media of importance. Blind loyalty to ethnic and religious affiliations also makes it difficult for individuals to make credible judgements before proceeding into actions that could be devastating.

The increased level of mockery, and caricature made of candidates with sophisticated softwares which aid editing and creation of virtually any kind of image, and insinuations could also lead to conflict situations. For instance, an individual was alleged to have named his dog Buhari and it was shared on social media, drawing a frenzy of reaction, with the arrest of the individual (who is from the South-South Geo-political zone) citing fear of violence by the Nigerian police (Abati, 2016; Nnadozie, 2016) tells a lot about the tension in Nigeria among the ethnic groups.

Social media in Nigeria is relatively free, that is uncensored to a large extent (unlike what is obtainable in some African countries, China, etc.). Individuals can post whatever they feel like without any major repercussions from the government and its agencies. War of words is commonplace on social media today. Comments and reactions on social media

groups, fan pages, individual pages are replete with verbal attacks going on among members of the groups, individuals, etc., based on the information posted or shared.

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary, contribution to knowledge, conclusion and recommendations for the study. The study which was on the use of social media in the generation and diffusion of information during electioneering periods in Nigeria. The chapter is structured according to the following subthemes: summary of the study, summary of the major findings, contribution to knowledge, conclusion and recommendations.

5.2 Summary of the Study

Conflicts have been a recurrent during election periods in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular. The 2011 presidential elections in Nigeria was marred by violence and property damage. The peculiar ethnic and religious division among Nigerians was highlighted in the information generated and shared by individuals and groups on social media platforms have been classified in different climes as ‘hate messages’, ‘misinformation’, ‘propaganda’ and ‘rumour’. And all have the potential of resulting to conflicts of varying dimensions considering the high levels of ethnic suspicion, religious intolerance, and absence of successful programmes to foster unity among Nigerians.

The study set out to explore how social media was used to generate and diffuse information during the 2015 elections in Nigeria, with particular focus on information generated, diffused and shared about the presidential candidates of the two major political parties (APC and PDP) in the 2015 general elections in Nigeria. The scope was limited to the two candidates, due to considerations bothering on the amount of information elicited and the time it required to analyse the mass of information and sense made from the information within the time frame for the study which spanned a period of October 2014 to March, 2015. To achieve the research objectives, the study adopted the Dual Process

Theory (DPT) by Deutsch and Gerrard's (1955) was adopted as a lens for understanding the factors that influenced how people generated and made credibility judgement of information communicated to them on social media (particularly Facebook). The researcher designed the study as a qualitative content analysis of captured Facebook screen grabs of information on the Facebook walls of nine (9) respondents who cut across four major areas in Nigeria (North, South-East, South-South, and South-West). The respondents were purposively sampled following the study's peculiar criteria. The information collected from the Facebook screen grabs about the 2015 presidential candidates during the elections were content analysed, then transcribed, coded and narratives pertaining the study's research questions were analysed using thematic inductive analysis.

5.3 Summary of the Major Findings

The summary of the major findings is as follows;

1. The study found that the types of information generated and diffused about the presidential candidates during electioneering periods were mostly offensive information in nature – with evaluations of the candidates that had misleading content.
2. Based on the findings of the study, the types of information shared during 2015 electioneering period included propaganda and misinformation such as pre-concluded evaluations of the presidential candidates aimed at discrediting the candidates.
3. The study found that people made sense of information generated and shared with them on social media based on the information available to them mainly at face value (informational influences) and expectation of others (normative influences) such that they did not really dig deep to find truth embedded in shared information.
4. The two constructs of DPT informational and normative factors explained how the people make sense of information shared with them on social media.

5.4 Contribution to Knowledge

a) The study has provided an empirical documentation on the types of information generated, diffused and shared on social media during the 2015 electioneering periods in Nigeria.

b) The study also revealed that the types of information that were most likely to be shared were those that the receiver believed.

c) The study discovered that reactions to posts on social media received either positive or negative responses based on the ethnic/tribal affiliations of the individual making the post.

5.5 Conclusion

Information has power, and misconstruing information could result in conflicts of devastating proportions. The need therefore to understand the types of information generated and diffused on social media is pertinent. The motivations and factors that influence how individuals and groups make credibility judgement of information received on social media is also of critical importance. Social media is currently the most rapid medium for diffusing information (the Ebola night for instance), and if not properly understood and managed could become a curse to the already strained unity of the Nigerian state. Nigerians have turned the social space to a war theatre with propaganda rife, incitements, misinformation, and rumour gaining traction on daily basis. Judging from the current trend, the government has not made substantial success in stemming the division already pervading the country. Unfortunately, the war of attrition and intrigues of the APC and PDP is creating further division in the country, with unguarded utterances which litter the social space. It is pertinent to have better understanding of the motivating factors for the transmission (diffusion and spread) of harmful information and fashion out strategies to nip its spread due to the current political atmosphere in Nigeria which is in a really delicate state.

5.6 Recommendations

This study recommends the following based on the findings and conclusion.

1. The study recommends that, it is important to have good understanding of the types of information generated and shared on social media in order to stem the propagation and escalation of conflicts with origins in information.
2. Due to the tendencies towards conflicts in Nigeria, especially during electioneering periods, it is important to understand how people make sense of information generated and shared on social media particularly in conflict prone Nigeria.
3. Due to the amount of information generated and shared on social media which have the possibility of degenerating to conflict situations, the study recommends a passive interest by government and its security agencies to quickly nip in the bud interactions that have the potentials of becoming full conflict situations especially during elections in Nigeria.

5.7 Suggestion for Further Study

The study set out to understand the types of information that was prevalent on social media during the 2015 elections and how people made sense of the information. With the continued growth of social media use in Nigeria, and rise of groups on social media which has become a source for the propagation of hate messages, incitements, growing ethnic and tribal sentiments especially by pseudo-persons. The researcher suggests a comparative study be conducted to capture the post 2015 election in Nigeria particularly the first eight (8) months and eight (8) months after with focus on interactions in groups on social media.

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Appendix A: Participation Consent Form

DEPARTMENT OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE,

AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA.

PARTICIPATION CONSENT FORM

Title: **Use of Social Media in Generating and Diffusing Information During the 2015 General Elections in Nigeria**.
Researcher: Kenneth Ohis Irenoa - 08034604549

Supervisory Team:

Dr. Abdullahi I. Musa – Department of Library and Information Science, A.B.U. Zaria

Dr. Ezra S. Gbaje – Department of Library and Information Science, A.B.U, Zaria

Programme: MSc Information Science

Status: Postgraduate (Masters)

The above-named researcher, humbly request your voluntary participation in a study involving documentary sources exploration of your social media pages/ in-depth interview.

The details, purpose and the procedures to be used as well as the potential benefits and possible risks of participation are articulated below. You may ask any questions you have to help you understand the project.

1. **Purpose of the study**: The study intends to explore the use of social media in the generation and diffusion of information during the 2015 general elections in Nigeria particularly, how the informational and normative factors affect how we make credibility judgements of received information.

2**. Explanation of Procedures**: The research will be conducted by collecting qualitative data. Pages of consenting individuals will be content analyzed in the form of a documentary exploration of your social media pages will be conducted during which you will be expected to willingly give consent to enable us have access to your Facebook pages during the course of the study.

3. **Participation Criteria*:*** To qualify as a participant in this study, you have to be an avid social media enthusiast, that is, use at least one of: Facebook, Twitter, BlackBerry Messenger, Nairaland, WhatsApp, but for the study, use of Facebook is most desired.

4**. Discomfort and Risks**: Individuals participating in the interview/documentary source exploration portion of the study will not be exposed to any major "risks." Participants will be required to give permission to carry-out a content analysis of posts, comments, and shared details (including text, images/pictures, cartoons and videos) on their pages.

5. **Benefits**: Participants will not be bothered for their physical presence as information required will be sourced from their pages (online) on the topical issues of the Nigeria elections 2015 will be explored and your opinions (comments, postings, etc.) adequately recorded for the sake of knowledge generation and sharing.

6. **Confidentiality**: Data discovered will be strictly used for academic purposes only. Upon completion of the research work, notes and transcripts will not become accessible publicly as they will be disposed of. Names and other private information will not be required for the study.

7. **Withdrawal*:*** On acceptance to participate in this study, you are not bound by any form of legal cooperation and as a result, you can withdraw from the study at any time without any form of penalty.

If you are satisfied with the above and wish to participate in the study, please sign below.

Participants signature…….. Date……..

Thank you

Appendix B: Contact Details Form

DEPARTMENT OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE,
AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA.

PARTICIPANT CONTACT DETAILS FORM

Thesis Title: **Use of social media in the generation and diffusion of information during electioneering periods in Nigeria.**

Researcher: Kenneth Ohis Irenoa

Status: Post-Graduate (Masters)

Supervisory Team:

Dr Abdullahi I. Musa

Dr. Ezra S. Gbaje

Department: Library and information Science.

Thank you for volunteering to participate in this study. Please, provide the following details. Do note that, the requested details are to help understand category of people who participated in the interview session. It is also a means to reach out to participants as the need may arise.

1. Identity N0: - …….
2. Affiliation (Fan, Enthusiast, etc.) ..…….
3. Status: Student ( ), Artisan ( ), Trader ( ) Civil Servant ( ) Others (please specify) ……..
4. a) Phone number(s)…….
   b) Email: …….
   c) Facebook Username ……...

Thank you

Appendix C: Classification Themes and Categories

Classification of Themes and Categories	
Classification Themes	
1.	Evaluation of Candidates
2.	Security Issues
3.	Election updates
Classification Categories	
1.	Past actions and performances
2.	Behavioural and Academic qualification
3.	Personal qualities of the candidates
4.	Threat of violence
5.	Insurgency
6.	Election results
7.	Technology use of elections

Appendix D: Classification Sub-categories

1.	Dictatorship
2.	Ethnic Bias
3.	Evidences of performance
4.	Past achievements
5.	incompetence
6.	Not qualified
7.	Education
8.	Endorsements of candidates
9.	Candidate’s credentials
10.	Corruption
11.	Comparison of candidates
12.	Threat of violence
13.	Boko Haram insurgency
14.	2015 election results
15.	Controversy surrounding card readers

Appendix E: Description of Seven Categories

S/N	Categories	Description
1	Past actions and performances	Postings related to the past leadership performances of the two presidential candidates
2	Behavioural and Academic Qualifications	Postings related to the people's opinion on the behaviour and academic achievements of the two presidential candidates
3	Personal qualities of candidates	Postings related to the people's opinion of the observed characters of the two presidential candidates – integrity, anti-corruption, etc
4	Threat of violence	Postings related to the tension and anxiety due to the presidential elections and security issues
5	Insurgency	Postings related to the alleged roles played by the two presidential candidates in the Boko Haram insurgency
6	Election results	Posting related to the predictions of the 2015 presidential elections, unofficial results on social media platforms
7	Technology use for elections	Postings related to the introduction of Card Readers for the 2015 presidential elections

Appendix F: Illustrative Quotes for Classification Sub-Categories

Classification	Illustrative Quotes
Dictatorship	• Buhari is a dictator [1] • Buhari a tyrant painted to look like a democrat [4] • Buhari jailed Taiwo Solarin for 18 months in 1984 [7] • Buhari denied Tai of his asthma medications [7]
Ethnic Bias	• Buhari was cruel to Ekueme and some others detained in Kirikiri maximum prison for a year [7] • What was the reason behind the disparity in treatment of the two leaders [7]
Evidences of performances	• Buhari tackled Nigeria's problems [6] • Naira had better value than the dollars under Buhari [6]
Past Achievements	• Jonathan built more schools than prisons [4] • Jonathan built 12 universities in Nigeria [7] • First government to construct modern Almajiri schools [7]
Incompetence	• Jonathan Blames past leaders [3] • Jonathan was elected because we thought he could fix Nigeria but he has made it worse [6] • Jonathan has been tried but failed [6] • Jonathan's government is alleged to be clueless [7]
Not qualified	• He (Buhari) is not qualified to lead a democratic Nigeria [1] • Jonathan failed in the Education sector [2] • Buhari is analogue, a backward choice. [4] • GMB is a puppet of some group of men [4]
Education	• Whether Buhari has a certificate or not, he is better than GEJ's PhD [2] • Buhari had WAEC certificate in 1961 [2] • Buhari certificate saga: APC tense [4] • Buhari will need interpreters [7] • we should use the BBC Hausa for the presidential debate? [7] • Jonathan did not complete PhD [2]
Endorsements for candidates	• Nigerians in Malaysia endorse Buhari [2] • Babangida endorses Buhari [2]
Candidate's credentials	• Buhari has integrity and zero tolerance for corruption [2] • Buhari is a disciplined gentleman [2] • Jonathan is a diplomat [4]
Corruption	• Jonathan is corrupt and ethnic [2] • Buhari took loan to buy nomination form, yet wife donates N135 million drugs [4] • Jonathan did not start corruption but it has gotten worse under him [6] • there's something fishy about Buhari candidacy [7]
Comparison of candidates	• Jonathan is a better choice to Buhari [4] • Fashola said dat Nigerians should vote for an 82yrs Maj. Gen Buhari over a 54yrs Goodluck Ebele Jonathan [4]

Threat of violence	• Buhari accused of attacking Jonathan in Katsina [2] • Buhari threatened to make Jonathan's 2011 government ungovernable [4] • There will be bloodshed if Jonathan loses 2015 election – Asari Dokubo [5] • There will be parallel government if Jonathan and PDP rig 2015 election – Amaechi [5]
Boko Haram Insurgency	• Jonathan cannot stop Boko Haram before elections [2] • no time-frame for the rescue of Chibok girls [2] • you (Jonathan) cannot stop boko haram [3] • Buhari chides FG for killing Boko Haram members [4] • Mr. @presgoodluck Thank u for visiting Maiduguri [7]
2015 Election results	• Jonathan promises to graciously bow out if he loses election (referring to Jonathan's promise when election results are made public) [2] • Buhari leads after 31 states [3] • A single decision can change a narrative about a person, you have my eternal respect President Jonathan (referring to Jonathan conceding the 2015 elections) [6] • PGEJ call to congratulate GMB on his impending victory at the polls [7]
Controversy surrounding card readers	• They say Buhari belongs to d analogue age, yet Buhari accepts card readers [2] • Buhari just voted (using card reader) [2]

Appendix G: Research Flow Charts

Fig 1a: RQ1 - Themes and Categories

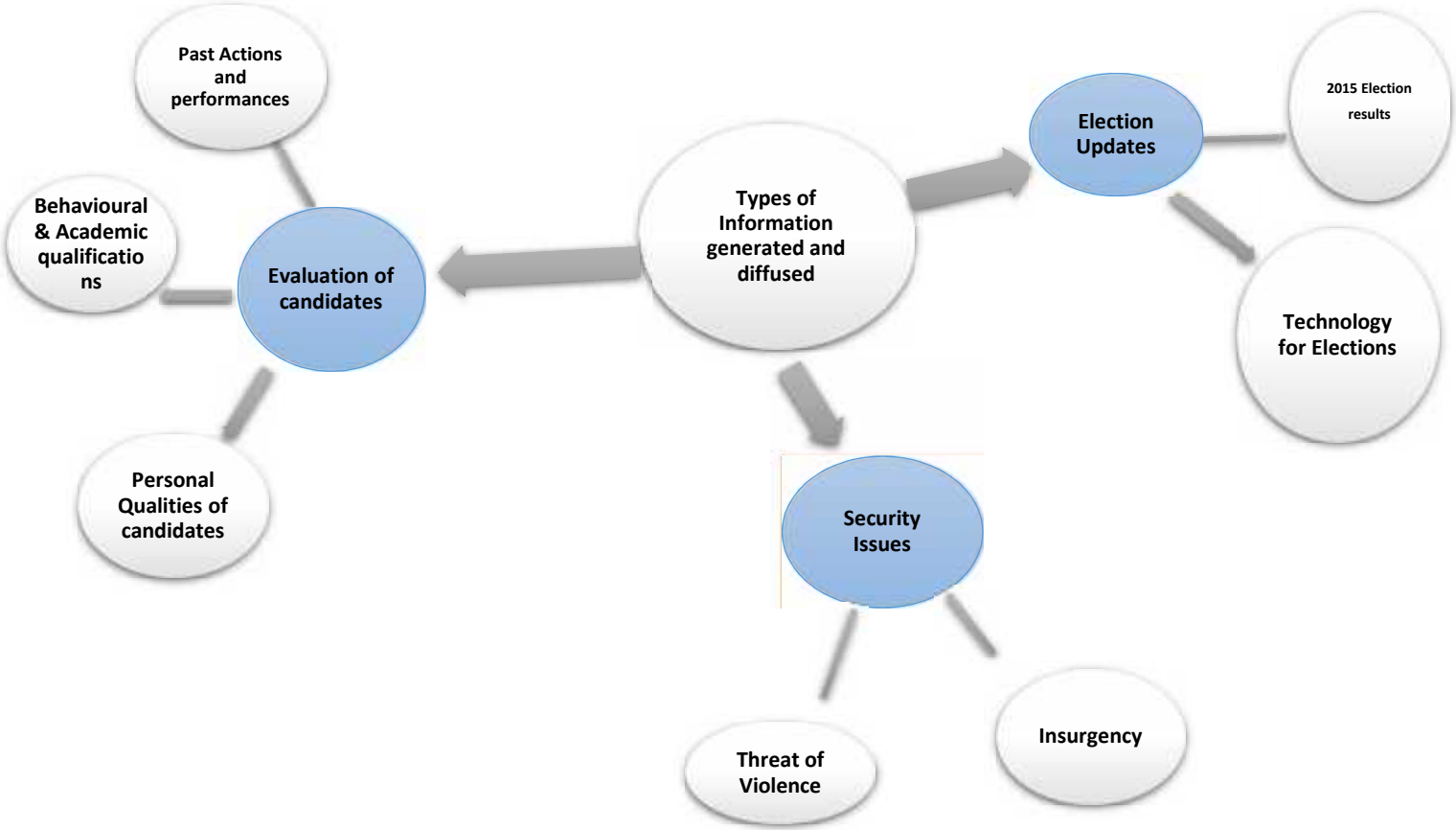

Fig 1b: RQ1 – Themes, Categories and Sub-categories

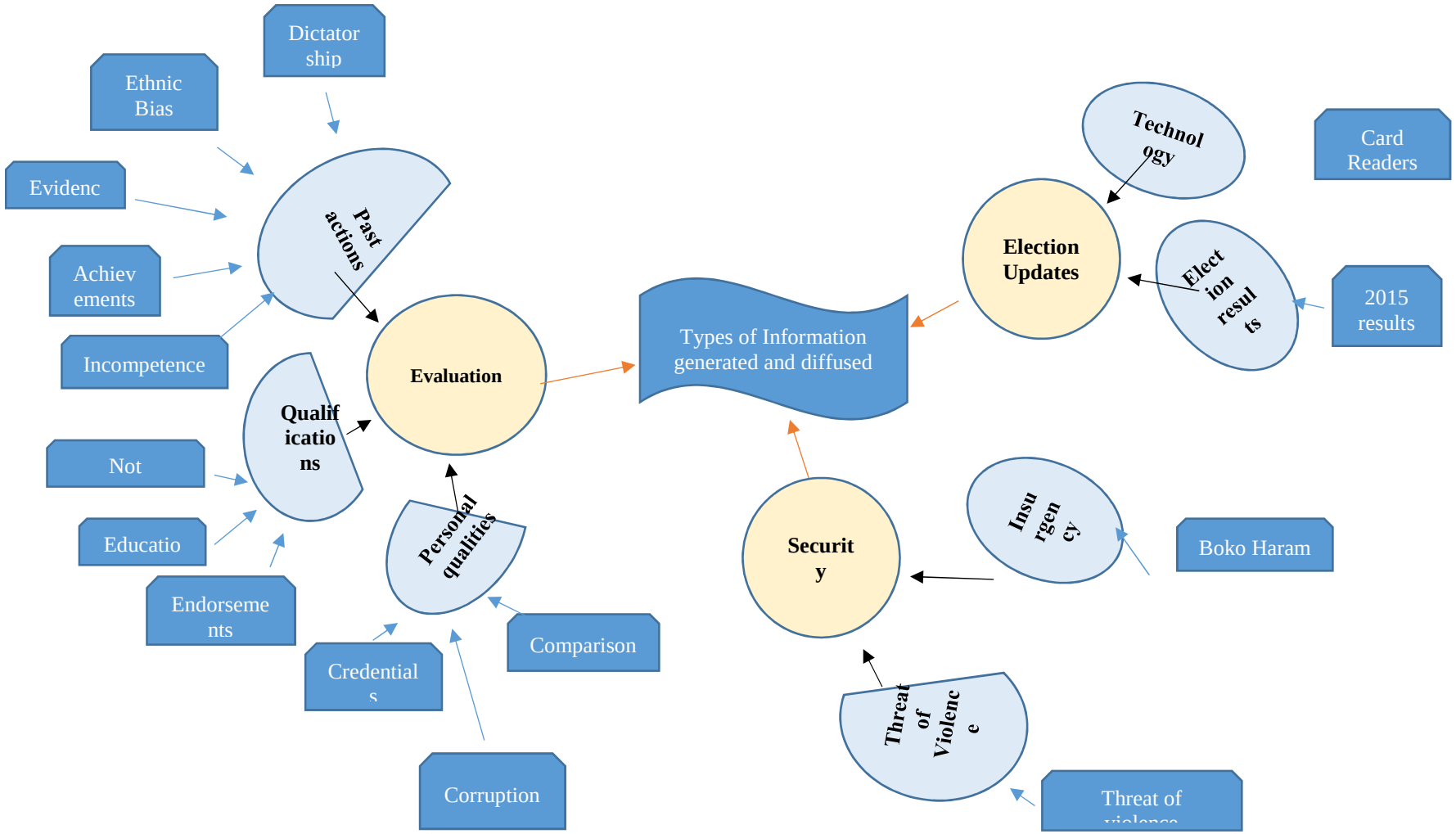

Fig 2a: RQ2 - Themes and Categories

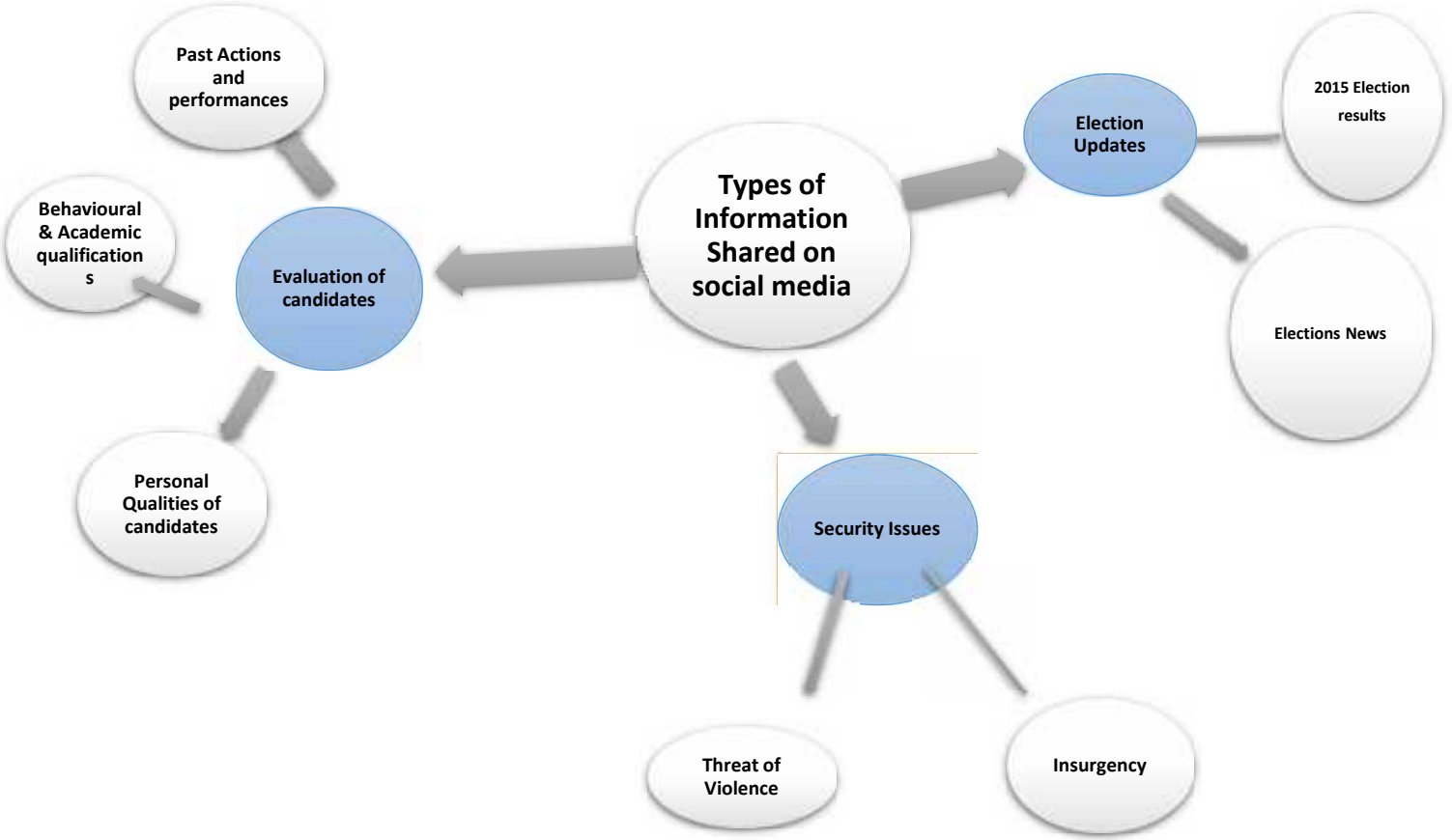

Fig 2b: RQ2 – Themes, Categories and Sub-categories

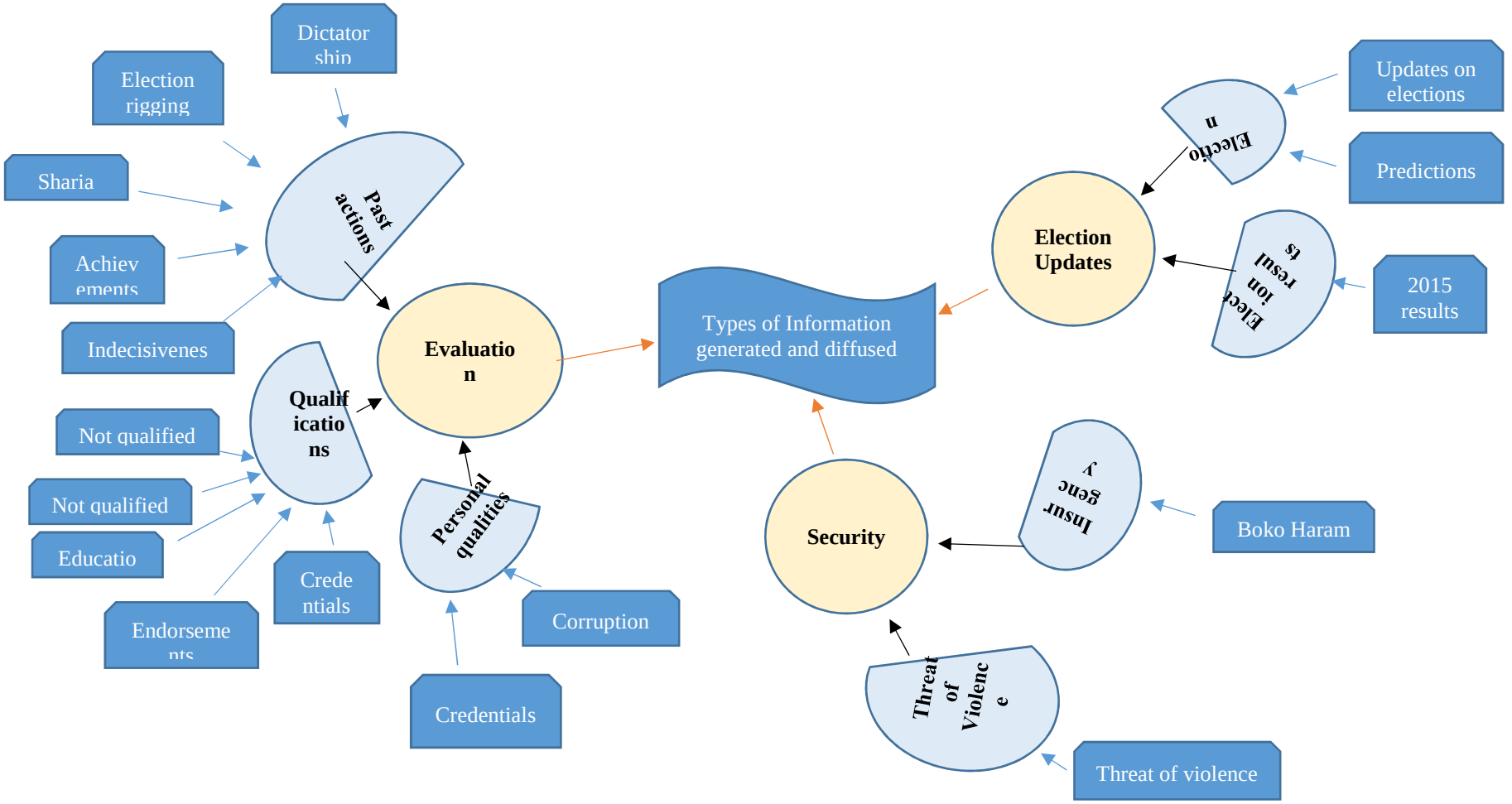

Fig 6: Data Analysis Process