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Influence of Cognitive Engagement on Youth Online Political Participation in Nigeria: A Partial Least Squares- Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) Approach

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Abstract

Concerns for non-participation of youth in the political process is a global phenomenon, yet not much studies have been carried out in this area especially from virtual perspective. Consequently this study investigated the relationship between features of cognitive engagement and Nigerian youths' political participation. Thus, the predictors of political participation from a social media viewpoint were assessed. A cross-sectional survey was conducted on 201 randomly selected undergraduate students of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Questionnaire was used to collect data which were analysed using Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modelling. Results revealed that all hypothesized relationships in the study were supported. Specifically, the findings of this study suggested that access to political information on Facebook and Twitter, political interest, and policy satisfaction leads to online political participation on Facebook and Twitter among youths in Nigeria. As a result, this study provides empirical evidence that in an online setting, access to political information, political interest and policy satisfaction promotes political participation, hence adding to the body of knowledge on online political participation. Thus, results of this study may help in proffering solutions on how to engender political participation among Nigerian youths in the digital age.

Key Words: Information, Political Interest, Policy Satisfaction, Online Political Participation, Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM)

Introduction

One of the most visible impacts of social media in society today is its effect on political participation (Vincente & Novo, 2014), especially online political participation (Kasmani, Sabran & Ramle, 2014). This has led to a steady growth in the number of studies in this area (Bakker & De Vreese, 2011; Bekafigo &

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McBride, 2013; Quintelier & Theocharis, 2012). This interest became heightened when Obama successfully used social media to campaign for and win the US presidential election (Cohen & Kahne, 2012; Johnson & Kaye, 2014; Stieglitz & Dang-Xuan, 2013; Valenzuela, Kim & Gil de Zuniga, 2012; Xenos, Vromen & Loader, 2014).

Accordingly, current researches have shown that media have made way for new forms of political participation especially from citizens using social media (Hosch-Dayican, Amrit, Aarts & Dassen, 2014). These new forms (generally referred to as online political participation) include a number of activities ranging from following political party or political accounts, to mobilizing other participatory acts online (Gibson & Cantijock, 2013; Gil de Zuniga, Veenstra, Vreg & Shah, 2010). Although it is still contested which online activities can be regarded as political participation, there is an agreement that online versions of traditional offline political acts belong to a wide range of political participation (Gibson & Cantijock, 2013; Hirzalla & Van Zoonen, 2011). As a result, online political participation mirrors real world political participation (Vitak, Zube, Smock, Carr, Ellison & Lampe, 2011).

It is noteworthy that participation of individuals in politics of their nation is a crucial element of democracy (Varmali & Gorgulu, 2014). Therefore, concerns for declining political participation (Friedland, 2010; Saldana, McGregor & Gil De Zuniga, 2015) and its implication for the proper functioning of democracy have prompted scholars to investigate what stimulates citizens' desire to participate in politics (Carlisle & Patton, 2013; Lee, Shah & Mcleod, 2012). Increasingly, the focus of this concern (Casteltrione, 2012) has been on youths as surveys have shown this group are particularly apathetic to political life (Agboola, 2013; Bakker & De Vreese, 2011; Baumgartner & Morris, 2010; David, 2013; Theocharis & Quintelier, 2014; Ward & Vreese, 2011; Yamamoto & Kushin, 2013).

In South Korea for example, Seongyi and Woo-Young (2011) reported that youths are disengaged from politics due to rigorous academic challenge. Likewise, in the United States, there was a drop in youth political participation from one-half in the 1970s to less than one-fifth in 1998. This drop continued up to the last two decades. In fact, Wells and Dudash (2007) stated that less than 40% of American youths participated in the 2004 presidential election. Notably, this dis-engagement in American youths could be traced as far back as 1972 when 18 year olds were first eligible to vote (Iyengar & Jackman, 2004; Wells & Dudash, 2007). Equally, Mongkuo, Lyon, Hogan and Delore (2014) also reported various forms of decline in political participation among American youths from 1996 to 2012. The same trend was witnessed in Britain where there was a decrease in youth political participation from 66% in 1987, to 44% in 2010 (Whiteley, 2011). Evidently, this youth apathy toward politics is a global phenomenon (Ekwenchi & Udenze, 2014) which has led to an increased call for this group to participate in politics (Livingstone, Bober, & Helsper, 2011).

Conversely, scholars like Uzochukwu, Patricia and Ukueze (2014) have argued that political use of social media by youths is one of the fastest growing examples of online political participation. However, there is still the question of

whether such participation is sufficient to sustain democratic institutions and increase youth's political participation (Bakker & De Vreese, 2011). This doubt may not be unconnected to the fact that social media is used by youth for predominantly entertainment-oriented purposes (Freeman, 2013; Salman & Saad, 2015).

Furthermore the non-participation of youths in politics is particularly worrisome because early political participation is a strong indicator of future democratic involvement which helps sustain democracy (Bennet, 2008; Mongkuo, Ly on, Hogan & Delore, 2014). Despite this worry, it is observed that not much studies have looked at this phenomenon from an online perspective. As a result, David (2013) recommends that studies should examine youth political participation using a new kind of measurement that suits the notion of political participation (through social media). This may provide insights into youths' participation in politics, and also clarify arguments on their participation or non-participation.

Therefore, since Inglehart (1977) and Pattie, Seydand Whiteley (2004) have noted that in an offline setting, political participation is the product of an individual's cognitive engagement which involves access to information, political interest and policy satisfaction. These variables will be looked at in this study from the perspective of Facebook and Twitter. Facebook and Twitter were chosen because they are among the most visited sites globally (Adaja & Ayodele, 2013) and the most popularly used for online political participation (Stieglitz & Dang-Xuan, 2013). Thus, the major objective of this study was to assess the relationship between access to information, political interest and policy satisfaction with online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.

Consequently, this paper is guided by the thesis postulated in Cognitive Engagement Theory (CET) by Ronald F. Inglehart in 1977. Basically, the theory aims at explaining the fact that political participation is a product of an individual's access to information, political interest and policy satisfaction (Pattie, Seyd & Whiteley, 2004). Access to information refers to how individuals use media to get political information. Political interest encompasses what propels citizens to want to participate in politics, while policy satisfaction is about whether or not citizens are content with policy decision making process or generally policies that government of a particular country makes in the interest of citizens (Whiteley, 2005).

Literature Review

Social media is a way to link youths to the political process since they spend increasing amount of time in the online world (Agboola, 2014). Thus social media have provided youths with new ways of political participation and democratic citizenship (Oser, Hooghe & Marien, 2012). This increased use of social media by Nigerian youths for political participation has led to a political revolution in the country (Dagona, Karick & Abubakar, 2013; Olabamiji, 2014). This revolution cannot be likened to the violent revolution of Egypt and Tunisia, rather, it is a revolution of freedom of expression and access to information (Agboola, 2014). This trend could be likened to the statement of Campante,

Durante and Sobbrío (2013) that the world is going through a “communication revolution” which has provided opportunity for democratic development.

Therefore, democracy depends on citizen participation and the way through which citizen can participate is to consume political news (Jordan, Pope, Wallis & Eyer, 2014). Hence, following political news online increases online political participation (Calenda & Meijer, 2009; Tolbert & McNeal, 2003). This makes political participation a function of access to information online (Agboola, 2014; Bachmann & Gil de Zuniga, 2013). As such Gustafsson (2012) found that informational use of media increases political discussion among citizens and in the long run increases political participation. Therefore, the more exposed citizens are to news and information about politics, the more they will participate in politics (Engesser & Franzetti, 2011; Wojcieszak, 2012). Similarly, Salawu (2013) and Mustapha and Wok (2014) found a positive relationship between access to information online and political participation among Nigerians. Against this background, we hypothesize the following:

H₁ Access to political information on Facebook and Twitter is positively related to youth online political participation on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria.

Furthermore, we expect a positive relationship between political interest and political participation on social media among youths in Nigeria. This is because over time scholars have found that political interest has a positive effect on political participation (Carlisle & Patton, 2013; Sheppard, 2012). Thus lack of political interest is attributed to decline in political participation and increased political apathy. As a result, citizens who are more interested in politics are more likely to participate in politics and vice versa (Boulianne, 2011; Hur & Kwon, 2014; O’Neil, 2006).

However, not all relationships between political interest and political participation are positive. For instance, Baumgartner and Morris (2010) in a survey of 3500 youths found that use of social media does not increase the political interest nor participation among 18-to 24-year-olds in Iowa, rather it empowers youths to avoid content they are not interested in, hence calling to question the democratic potential of social media. Due to this ensuing arguments we hypothesize that:

H₂ Political interest is positively related to youth online political participation on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria.

Additionally, since policy satisfaction embodies policy making process and policy outcomes (Whiteley Clarke, Sanders & Steward, 2013), it is expected that the more citizens are involved in the process of policy making, especially with the help of technology like social media, the fairer the process becomes and the more citizens are satisfied with the outcome which in turn leads to political participation. As such, the hypothesized relationship between policy satisfaction and online political participation is as follows:

H₃ Policy satisfaction is positively related to youth online political participation on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria.

Youths and Online Political Participation

The Internet from its web 1.0 technology to its recent web 2.0 technologies has affected the way politics works (Dimitrova & Bystrom, 2013; Yamamoto & Kushin, 2013). This is because the Internet is like a 'deliberative space' which can be highly democratic (Cogburn & Espinoza-Vasquez, 2008). Presently, it has added to tools of participation especially among youths making them involved in political activities online (Ternes, Mittelstadt & Towers, 2014).

Hence, youths who engage in such activities like online discussion forum and emails have a higher possibility of being engaged in various forms of political actions than those who do not (Bae, 2014). Furthermore, there is increased use of Internet to retrieve political information and also participate (Hoofman, 2012). This indicates that Internet is a powerful tool for political participation (Campante, Durante & Sobbrío, 2013).

Subsequently, social media also became a powerful tool for political participation among youths. Notably, online political participation on social media is multifaceted; first it has cognitive dimensions such as information seeking, and then behavioral dimensions such as expression. These two dimensions are particularly common among youths who use social media to express their political opinion through print, audio and even video capabilities (Kushin & Yamamoto, 2010).

Thus, Yamamoto, Kushin and Dalisay (2014) observed that there is a rise among youths use of social media to get various kinds of political information. This may not be unconnected to the fact that social media sites have created novel opportunities for user-centered, interactive political experiences. Equally, Vitak et al. (2011) noted that youths in America use social media for political participation, especially for informational use because it is accessible at any time of the day and also less stressful as with just a few clicks, participation occurs.

Consequently, Stieglitz and Dang-Xuan (2013) and Vitak et al. (2011) discovered the most common form of participation by youth is the informational type. For example, youths use Facebook mostly for forms of political participation that are communicative in nature (Vitak et al., 2011). Unfortunately, this has raised concerns that youths are becoming "slacktivist". Slacktivism refers to the act of engaging in political participation that requires less commitment hence little or no impact on effecting change (Christensen, 2012).

However, Cohen and Kahne (2012) explained that participatory politics are communication-and peer-based acts. Therefore, youths use them to exert their voice and influence on issues of public concern thus increasing their political participation. Hence, slacktivism should not be equated as non-participation, rather it is a legitimate form of online political participation. Moreover, David (2013) noted that social media is a major part of youths' media consumption and media consumption is a leads to political participation.

Additionally, Xenos, Vromen and Loader (2014) found that social media use propels youths to participate in politics in Australia, UK and US. Relatedly,

Calenda and Meijer (2009) reported that in the Netherlands and other Western European countries, social media use by youths featured prominently in political participation. Equally in Russia, Koltsova and Shcherbak (2014) reported that in the 2011/2012 campaign, social media use by youths was responsible for unpopularity of the ruling party from 64% of votes in 2007, to 49% in the 2011 elections.

Furthermore, findings from a study conducted in the Philippines shows special attention is paid to social media and their role in democratic participation among youths. Due to easy access, there is a growing number of youths who engage in political activities online. This has led to a shift from political participation offline to online political participation. This indicates that social media is a fertile ground for political participation and by extension, varieties of political activism in the Philippines (David, 2013).

On a general note, it is evident that social media provides youths in nations the means to participate in politics (Theocharis & Quintelier, 2014). As a result, Titus-Fannie, Akpan and Tarnongo (2013) forecast that its use for political purpose could surpass the dominating social use youths put it to. This is because social media makes the political system more accessible to youths hence providing an avenue to discuss politics. It has moved from motivating online visits to political action such that if they do not result in direct behavioural change, they still signify some form of political participation (Titus-Fannie, Akpan & Tarnongo, 2013).

Methods

Cross-sectional survey was used to collect data from 201 randomly selected undergraduate students of Ahmadu Bello University (Zaria) with the help of structured self-administered questionnaires. Demographic data were analyzed descriptively with SPSS, while PLS-SEM was used to test the hypothesis for this study. Specifically, the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression-based method was used as estimation procedure in order to minimize error in this study. Consequently, to model the relationship between the independent and dependent variable, the path model for this study was developed using Smart PLS 3.0 software (Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2014). Additionally, due to the multi-dimensional nature of some constructs in this study a Hierarchical Construct Model (HCM) was formed (Henseler, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2012; Lohmoller, 1987). The HCM approach was adopted to reduce the complexity of the research model, while at the same time leading to theoretical parsimony. Also, HCM was used to avoid collinearity issues which may affect the discriminant validity of some items in the study (Hair et al., 2014). Accordingly an assessment of both the first and second stage hierarchical construct model was carried out.

Measurements

Measurements for this study were derived from a number of validated scales from previous studies. Accordingly, a 7-point semantic differential scale was used as response categories for all study variables. A detailed outline of the scales are explained thus:

Access to Political Information on Facebook and Twitter

This study used attention, exposure and reliance (Moy, Torres, Tanaka & McCluskey, 2005) to measure Nigerian youths' access to political information on Facebook and Twitter with six items. The construct was measured multi-dimensionally, with access to political information on Facebook as one dimension and access to political information on Twitter as the second dimension.

Consequently, attention to Facebook and Twitter for political information was measured on a 7-point scale, with 1 for "No Attention" and 7 for "Lots of Attention" as anchors. Respondents were asked two questions on how much attention they pay to political information on Facebook and Twitter. This measurement was adapted from Yamamoto, Kushin, and Dalisay (2014). For exposure to political information on Facebook and Twitter, the measurement of Bekafigo and McBride (2013) was adapted. Respondents were asked two questions on how often they use Facebook and Twitter to access political information using 7 response categories ranging from "1" for "Never" to "7" for "All the time". The scale for level of reliance on social media for political information was adapted from the measurements of Johnson and Kaye (2014). Hence, respondents were asked two questions on how much they rely on Facebook and Twitter for political information. The 7-point scale comprised of "1" for "Never Rely" and "7" for "Heavily Rely" as anchors.

Political Interest

The measures for political interest were adapted from Whiteley (2005). Eight items were asked in the context of Facebook and Twitter on a 7-point scale with "1" for "Strongly Disagree" and "7" for "Strongly Agree" as anchors. The eight items were; "None of my friends on my network are interested in politics", "I am too busy to worry about politics", "I often discuss politics with my social network", "Politics makes no difference to people in my social network", "Politics has an impact on anything I do", "I am very interested in politics", "I know less about politics than most people in my social network", and "Sometimes politics seems so complicated I cannot understand".

Policy Satisfaction

Policy satisfaction was measured by a combination of process and outcome considerations (Whiteley, Clarke, Sanders & Steward (2013). Thus, for policy process, the measurement of Whiteley (2005) was adapted. As a result, six items were asked on a 7-point scale of "1" for "Not at all" and "7" for "A lot" as anchors. The items bordered on if respondents were involved in any of the following on Facebook and Twitter; "Have a say in how policies are made in their country", "Have an opportunity to be involved in the policy making process of their country", "Consulted about policy making in their country", "Involved in the policy making process of their country", "Discuss how policies are made among their Facebook and Twitter contacts", and "Have influence on policy making when they and their friends communicate their opinion to government". For policy outcome, the measurement of Shore (2014) and Whiteley, et al. (2013) was adapted. Hence, on a 7-point scale of "1" for "Very Dissatisfied" and "7" for

“Very Satisfied” as anchors, respondents were asked one question on how satisfied they are with government policies in Nigeria.

Online Political Participation on Facebook and Twitter

Online political participation on Facebook and Twitter was measured as a multi-dimensional construct with two set of questions for Facebook and two set of questions for Twitter. As a result, the first two set of questions was on political activities performed and observed on Facebook, while the second two set of questions was on political activities performed and observed on Twitter. These two set of questions formed an index for online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.

The scale for online political participation on Facebook was adopted from Vitak et al. (2011). They developed an index of items for political activities on Facebook by combining political activities performed and political activities observed on Facebook. For political activities performed the index represented “political activity of respondent on Facebook”, while for political activities observed the index represented “exposure to network’s political activity on Facebook”. These two set of items formed the index of respondent’s online political participation on Facebook.

Therefore, the first set of questions for this study contained 10 items on political activities performed by respondents on Facebook, while the second set of questions contained 9 items on political activities observed by respondents on Facebook. One item (discussing political information in a Facebook message) was excluded from political activities observed because it is a political activity that can only be performed and not observed by friends in a network due to its private nature.

Thus, the 10 items for political activities performed were: “Discussed political information in a Facebook message”, “Posted or shared a status update about politics”, “Posted or shared a photo about politics” “Posted or shared a video about politics”, “Posted or shared a link about politics” “Posted a wall comment in a wall post about politics”, “Posted or shared a note about politics” “Joined or left a group about politics”, “Clicked ‘going’ for a political event”, and “Liked a political party or candidate’s page”. These 10 items were measured with a 7-point scale ranging from “1” as “Never” to “7” as “Very Often” as anchors.

The 9 items for political activities observed on Facebook were: “Posting or sharing a status update about politics”, “Posting or sharing a photo about politics” “Posting or sharing a video about politics”, “Posting or sharing a link about politics” “Posting a wall comment in a wall post about politics”, “Posting a note about politics” “Joining or leaving a group about politics”, “Clicking ‘going’ for a political event”, and “Liking a political party or politician’s fan page”. These 9 items were measured on a 7-point scale ranging from “1” as “Never” to “7” as “Very Often”.

For online political participation on Twitter, 7 items were adopted from Tumasjan, Sprenger, Sandner and Welpe (2011) and Yamamoto et al. (2014). The 7 items were used for both political activities performed and observed on

Twitter. For political activities performed on Twitter, the items included: "Tweet about politics", "Retweet or quote a tweet about politics", "Mention a politician or a political party", "Reply a tweet about politics", "Join a political discussion", "Join a political debate", and "Follow a politician or political party". These items were measured on a 7-point scale ranging from "1" as "Never" to "7" as "Very Often". For political activities observed on Twitter, the items included: "Tweeting a message about politics", "Retweeting or quoting a tweet about politics", "Mentioning a politician or a political party", "Replying a tweet about politics", "Joining a political discussion", "Joining a political debate" and "Following a politician or political party". These items were measured on a 7-point scale of "1" for "Never" to "7" for "Very Often".

Demographic Variable

The age range of respondents was between the age brackets of 16 and 40. Therefore the options for age comprised: 16-20 years, 21-24 years, 25-29 years, 30-35 years and 36-40 years. Additionally, gender was dummy coded as "0" for male and "1" for female.

Results

The results of this study were analyzed in two stages, first demographic data were analyzed descriptively with frequency and percentages using SPSS, while the results for the main study variables were analyzed with PLS-SEM.

Demographically, the highest number of respondents were within the age range of 15 to 19 years representing 92 (45.8%), followed by those in group 20-24 years with 70 (34.8%), and then 25 to 29 years with 31 respondents representing 15.4%, while the least age group were those between 30 to 35 years and 36 to 40 years accounting for 3 (1.5%) and 5 (2.5%) respectively. In terms of gender, distribution of respondents were male with 121 (60.2%), and females 80 (39.8%).

For the study variables, the two-step process was used to evaluate and report the results of the PLS-SEM analysis (Henseler, Ringle & Sinkovics, 2009). The processes are: the assessment of a measurement model, and the assessment of a structural model (Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2014). Notably, due to the multi-dimensional nature of some constructs in this study (APIFT, PS and OPPFT), they were operationalized at higher level of abstraction, hence forming a Hierarchical Construct Model (HCM).

Assessment of First Stage Hierarchical Construct Model

In assessing the first stage model, internal consistency and indicator reliability were assessed alongside convergent and discriminant validity as can be seen in Figure 1.1, Table 1.1, Table 1.2 and Table 1.3.

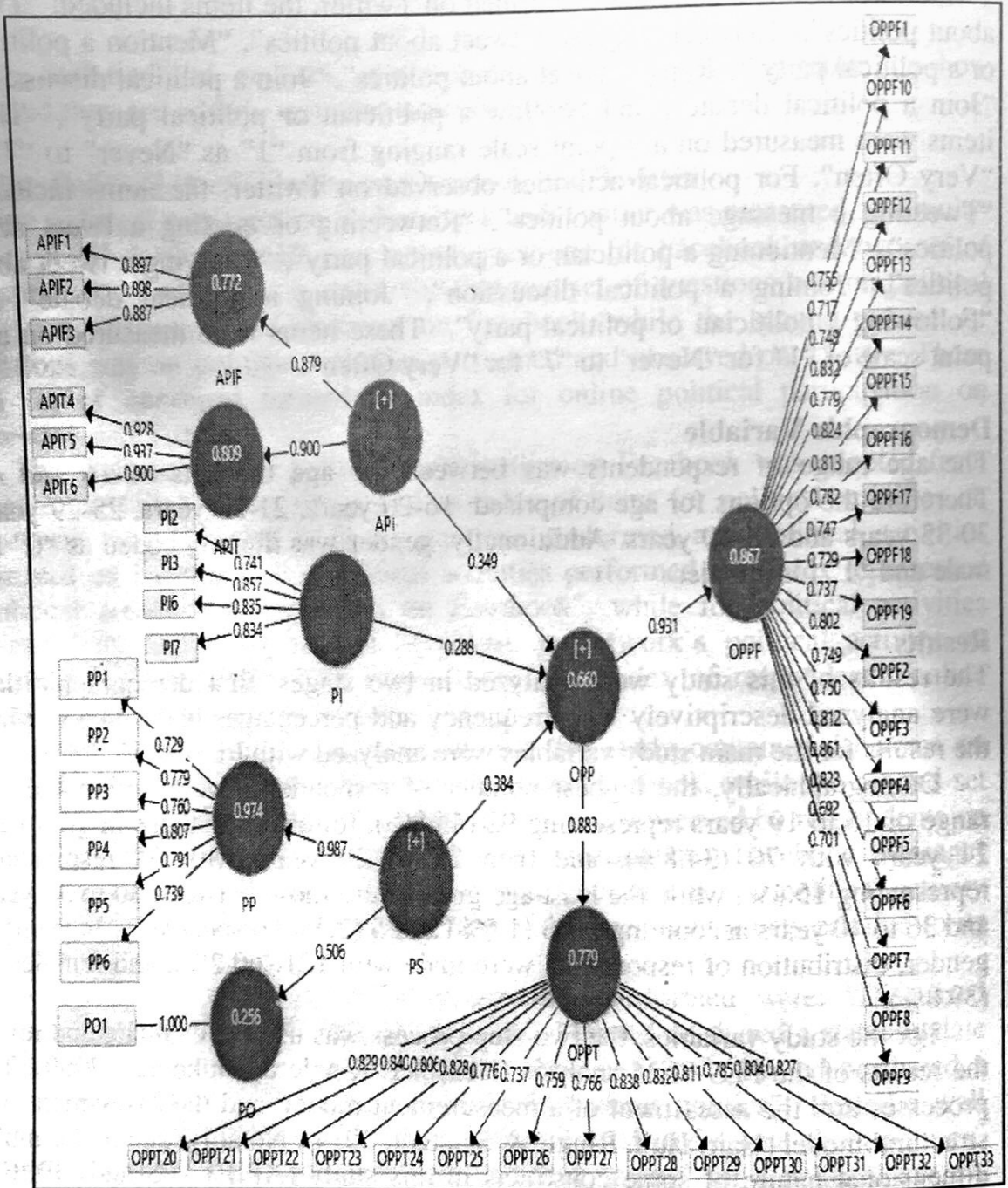


Fig. 1.1. First Stage Hierarchical Construct Model

Internal Consistency Reliability

The Cronbach's alpha coefficient and composite reliability coefficient were used to examine the internal consistency reliability of this study. Using composite reliability coefficient to interpret internal consistency reliability was based on the rule of thumb of Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson (2010) who recommended that composite reliability coefficient should be at least 0.70. Table 1.1 shows the composite reliability coefficients of the latent constructs range from .890 to .972 with each exceeding the minimum acceptable level of 0.70. This indicates sufficient internal consistency reliability. The same can also be said for the Cronbach's alpha result with values ranging from .834 to .970.

Indicator Reliability

The indicator reliability was assessed by examining the outer loadings of each constructs' measure which should be 0.70 or higher (Hair, Sarstedt, Ringle & Mena, 2012). Hence 4 items (PI1, PI4, PI5, PI8) which present loadings below 0.70 were deleted from the model. Hereafter 50 indicators with factor loadings greater than 0.70 were retained in the model. (See Figure 1.1).

Convergent Validity

The convergent validity of this study was examined by the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of each latent construct (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The AVE of each latent construct should be at least 0.50 (Chin, 1998). The AVE for this study as shown in Table 1.1 were all above 0.50 suggesting adequate convergent validity.

Table 1.1: AVE, Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability

Constructs	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
APIFT	0.652	0.893	0.918
PI	0.669	0.834	0.890
PS	0.529	0.847	0.885
OPPFT	0.511	0.970	0.972

Discriminant Validity

Based on Fornell and Larcker's (1981) suggestion, discriminant validity was evaluated with the use of the AVE with a score of 0.50 or more. Also the square root of the AVE should be greater than correlations among latent constructs. Thus, as seen in Table 1.1, the values of AVE for this study were between .511 and .669 indicating acceptable values. In Table 1.2, the correlations among the latent constructs were compared with the square root of AVE (in bold face). The AVEs were all greater than the correlations among latent constructs, indicating sufficient discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 1.2: Discriminant Validity (FornellLarcker Criterion) for First Stage Constructs

Variables	APIF	APIT	OPPF	OPPT	PI	PO	PP
APIF	.894						
APIT	.582	.922					
OPPF	.549	.478	.773				
OPPT	.384	.612	.651	.803			
PI	.441	.412	.625	.549	.818		
PO	.146	.159	.297	.206	.346	Single Item	
PP	.294	.354	.615	.575	.485	.361	.768

Furthermore, discriminant validity was also determined by comparing the indicator loading with other reflective indicators in the cross loading table (Chin,

1998). Hence based on Chin's suggestion, all indicators (in bold) as seen in Table 1.3 were higher than the cross-loadings of other reflective indicators. This further indicates adequate discriminant validity.

Table 1.3: Cross Loadings for First Stage Items

ITEM	APIF	APIT	OPPF	OPPT	PI	PO	PP
APIF1	.897	.503	.540	.371	.400	.142	.280
APIF2	.898	.514	.414	.301	.360	.135	.233
APIF3	.887	.544	.519	.359	.423	.116	.274
APIT4	.572	.928	.455	.553	.415	.201	.311
APIT5	.520	.937	.439	.599	.345	.102	.323
APIT6	.517	.900	.429	.540	.378	.134	.346
OPPF1	.466	.368	.755	.512	.558	.311	.539
OPPF10	.380	.257	.717	.391	.417	.215	.427
OPPF11	.506	.356	.748	.434	.481	.229	.410
OPPF12	.488	.443	.832	.534	.552	.236	.476
OPPF13	.399	.346	.779	.471	.485	.180	.419
OPPF14	.448	.395	.824	.495	.511	.252	.417
OPPF15	.434	.377	.813	.496	.497	.182	.449
OPPF16	.477	.355	.782	.485	.435	.151	.421
OPPF17	.519	.390	.747	.426	.431	.203	.414
OPPF18	.451	.412	.729	.474	.380	.236	.440
OPPF19	.403	.283	.737	.383	.423	.188	.413
OPPF2	.455	.396	.802	.552	.552	.237	.507
OPPF3	.356	.298	.749	.508	.486	.219	.518
OPPF4	.359	.428	.750	.672	.483	.308	.565
OPPF5	.387	.394	.812	.573	.525	.185	.532
OPPF6	.370	.346	.861	.552	.545	.273	.534
OPPF7	.411	.351	.823	.527	.541	.243	.589
OPPF8	.371	.367	.692	.423	.438	.275	.414
OPPF9	.401	.438	.701	.581	.399	.227	.504
OPPT20	.304	.517	.530	.829	.529	.149	.511
OPPT21	.364	.618	.580	.840	.539	.203	.514
OPPT22	.284	.504	.557	.806	.485	.190	.577
OPPT23	.292	.534	.593	.828	.474	.161	.474
OPPT24	.322	.466	.502	.776	.405	.146	.404

OPPT25	.294	.409	.502	.737	.413	.272	.436
OPPT26	.269	.360	.542	.759	.450	.146	.426
OPPT27	.298	.546	.444	.766	.431	.108	.401
OPPT28	.334	.555	.521	.838	.477	.170	.452
OPPT29	.297	.496	.504	.832	.409	.139	.492
OPPT30	.294	.491	.536	.811	.451	.152	.464
OPPT31	.345	.521	.449	.785	.319	.166	.391
OPPT32	.300	.388	.485	.804	.333	.178	.481
OPPT33	.325	.463	.553	.827	.429	.139	.426
PI2	.263	.198	.428	.384	.741	.204	.387
PI3	.411	.347	.574	.454	.857	.303	.392
PI6	.319	.354	.512	.431	.835	.264	.415
PI7	.431	.424	.520	.515	.834	.347	.398
PO1	.146	.159	.297	.206	.346	Single Item	.361
PP1	.338	.381	.605	.508	.467	.317	.729
PP2	.204	.241	.471	.356	.405	.237	.779
PP3	.209	.236	.406	.427	.320	.242	.760
PP4	.129	.254	.367	.409	.324	.312	.807
PP5	.236	.264	.551	.526	.390	.257	.791
PP6	.243	.258	.439	.423	.332	.298	.739

Assessment of Second Stage Hierarchical Construct Model

In line with the principle of HCM, the latent variable scores in the first stage model were recomputed to construct a simpler second stage model (Wilson & Henseler, 2007). As a result, the dimensions of the constructs in the first stage model in Figure 1.1 served as items for the construct in the second stage model in Figure 1.2.

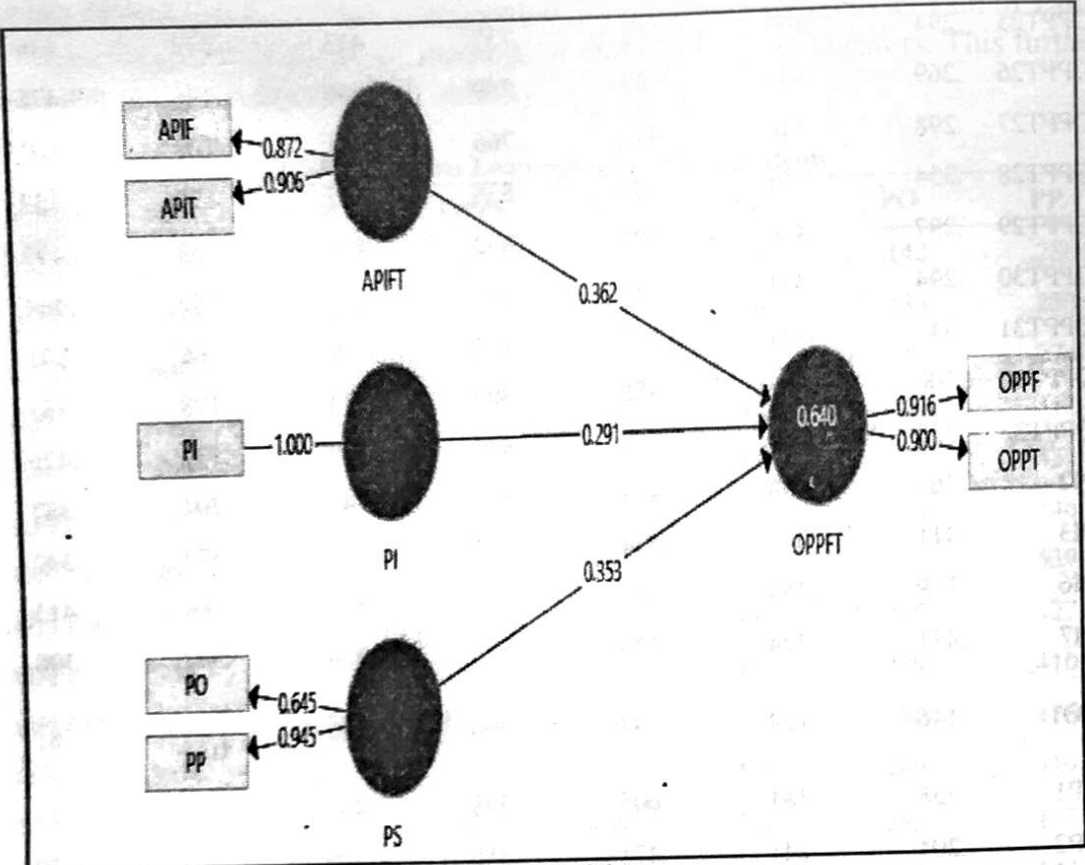


Fig. 1.2. Second Stage Hierarchical Construct Model

The second-stage model in Figure 1.2 shows the item loadings were within acceptable levels as all were above 0.70, indicating sufficient indicator reliability. Furthermore, to determine the discriminant validity of the second-stage model, the Fornell-Larcker criterion and cross-loadings of items were used as presented in Table 1.4 and 1.5.

Table 1.4: Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker Criterion) for Second Stage Constructs

	APIFT	OPPFT	PI	PS
APIFT	0.889			
OPPFT	0.628	0.908		
PI	0.479	0.647	Single Item	
PS	0.36	0.634	0.518	0.809

Table 1.5: Cross loadings for Second Stage Items

	APIFT	OPPFT	PI	PS
APIF	0.872	0.516	0.441	0.291
APIT	0.906	0.597	0.414	0.345
OPPF	0.574	0.916	0.625	0.607
OPPT	0.568	0.900	0.548	0.542
PI	0.479	0.647	Single Item	0.518
PO	0.172	0.279	0.346	0.645
PP	0.365	0.655	0.484	0.945

Thus, values in Figure 1.2, Table 1.4 and 1.5 also indicate that the requirements for reliability and validity for this study were met in the second stage model.

Assessment of Structural Model

To assess the structural model, this study applied the standard bootstrapping procedure of 5000 bootstrap samples and 201 cases to examine significance of the path coefficients (Hair et al., 2014). Consequently, results of the estimates of the structural model are shown in Table 1.6.

Table 1.6: Structural Model Assessment

	Relationship	Beta value	Std. Error	T value	P-Values	Findings
H₁	Access to Political Information on Facebook and Twitter - □ Online Political Participation on Facebook and Twitter	.362	.061	5.914	.000	Supported
H₂	Political Interest - □ Online Political Participation on Facebook and Twitter	.291	.066	4.430	.000	Supported
H₃	Policy Satisfaction - □ Online Political Participation on Facebook and Twitter	.353	.059	5.969	.000	Supported

Table 1.6 shows the result of the hypothesis testing for this study. Specifically, hypothesis 1 predicted that access to political information on Facebook and Twitter is positively related to online political participation on Facebook and Twitter. Results in Table 1.6, Figure 1.2 showed a significant relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter ($\beta = .362$, $T = 5.914$, $p \leq 0.001$) supporting hypothesis 1. Similarly, Hypothesis 2 which predicted that political interest is positively related to online political participation on Facebook and Twitter is supported with the following values ($\beta = .291$, $T = 4.430$, $p \leq 0.001$). Likewise, hypothesis 3 is also supported with the following values ($\beta = .353$, $T = 5.969$, $p \leq 0.001$) indicating that policy satisfaction is positively related to online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.

Furthermore, in assessing the structural model, coefficient of determination (R-Squared value) was used to assess the variance explained of the endogenous latent variable (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011; Henseler, Ringle, & Sinkovics, 2009). The R-Squared value is the proportion of variation in the dependent variable that can be explained by one or more of the predictor variable(s) (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson & Tatham, 2006). Although the acceptable level of the R^2 value depends on the research context (Hair et al, 2010), Chin (1998) advises that the R-Squared values of 0.67, 0.33 and 0.19 in PLS-SEM can be regarded as substantial, moderate and weak respectively. The R-Squared value of the endogenous latent variable in this study is 0.640 (64%) (See Figure 1.2). This suggests that three sets of exogenous latent variable (i.e access to political information on Facebook and Twitter, political interest and policy satisfaction) collectively explain 64% of the variance of the endogenous variable online political participation on Facebook and Twitter. Hence based on Chin's (1998) suggestion, the endogenous latent variable of this study showed acceptable levels of R-Squared Value.

Discussion and conclusion

In terms of the relationship between the exogenous and endogenous variables, the findings of this study indicated that all the three formulated hypothesis were supported. Precisely the results of the PLS-SEM analysis showed that access to political information on Facebook and Twitter, political interest and policy satisfaction were significantly related to online political participation in Facebook and Twitter.

Consequently, the significant relationship found between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter in this study is consistent with the findings of Calenda & Meijer, 2009; Dimitrova, Shehata, Stromback & Nord, 2014; Fraile, 2011 Grönlund & Wakabi 2015; Odunlami, 2014; Olabamiji, 2014; Tolbert & McNeal, 2003) who also found that access to political information leads to political participation. Furthermore, findings of this study is in line with Salawu (2013) who noted that due to greater access to information in Nigeria there is increased political participation. Similarly, in a survey of 312 Nigerian students in Malaysia, Mustapha and Wok (2014) found that there is a positive relationship

between online news source and political participation. Thus, results of this study which indicates that the more Nigerian youths have access to information on social media, the more they participate in politics find support from previous studies.

Furthermore, the positive relationship discovered between political interest and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter in this study is in line with the finding of Carlisle and Patton (2013), Hurand Kwon (2014), and Verba, Scholzman and Brady (1995). They also discovered that political participation is driven by interest in politics. Similarly this study indicates that political interest on Facebook and Twitter propels Nigerian youths to participate in politics on Facebook and Twitter. Thus the more Nigerian youths pick interest in political contents they encounter on social media the more they participate in politics on social media.

Also based on the statement of Whiteley et al. (2013) that the more citizens are involved in the process of policy making, especially with the help of technology, the fairer the process becomes, and the more citizens are satisfied with the outcome the more they participate in politics. This study found that Nigerian youths who are involved in the policy process and outcomes on social media are more inclined to be satisfied with government policies which in turn influences them to participate in politics online. This finding is in congruence with that of Pandian (2014) who found that policy satisfaction is related to political participation.

Consequently, based on the findings of this study, this research has made contribution to the modelling of the relationship between access to information, political interest, policy satisfaction and political participation. Specifically, these relationships were modeled from the perspectives of social media with particular reference to Facebook and Twitter.

Also, this study provided further empirical evidence in relation to the exogenous and endogenous variables by focusing on them in an online setting thereby investigating a broad range of online political activities. This extension is important because limiting research to offline forms of political participation will not adequately capture political participation in the digital age, especially among youths. Therefore, this study further added empirical evidence to the body of knowledge in the area of online political participation as it could serve as basis for future studies on social media and online political participation.

Generally, this study provides some practical implications with regards to online political participation in the Nigerian context. This is because it indicates that access to political information on Facebook and Twitter, political interest and policy satisfaction are important considerations in increasing political participation among youths. Hence stakeholders especially government can make considerable efforts in encouraging political participation by using social media to improve on access to information, political interest and policy satisfaction. This is because by making it easier for youths to access political information, or increase their political interest and policy satisfaction, Nigerian government, media and other stakeholders will enable youths participate more in politics which will eventually benefit the society in the long run. This step is vital

because this segment of the population are the ones who will be in charge of the affairs of the country in future. Hence providing a solid foundation while they are still young could prove crucial for future democratic development.

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