Youth Offline Political Participation: Trends and Role of Social Media

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ABSTRACT

Recently, the growing body of research has waded into the decline of formal political participation and engagement among youth especially voting and party allegiance due to the heightened youth activism such as protests and demonstrations. However, past research proposes that there is a significant relationship between the usage of social media and online political participation among youth. Many of those studies have inordinately relied on college students as samples rather than the entire population of youth with a vast amount of knowledge and experience in. Yet, only few researches have tried to uncover the tendencies of youth participation in formal political activities such as voting and party allegiance via the unprecedented social networking sites such as Facebook to address this issue, the study has employed multiple regression analysis to examine the correlation between use of Facebook, interactivity with politicians, Facebook information quality, political interest and offline political participation among Nigerian youth. This study has shown that Facebook use, interactivity with political figures, Facebook information quality and political interest significantly correlates with offline political participation. Social media allows marginalized youth to interact with friends and political figures, fostering their engagement in political issues, as well as enabling them to share and express their opinions thus draw youth participation in political activities such as voting. Incisively, Facebook serves as a gateway where youth can acquire political knowledge and information. It has become apparent that social media helps to lower the barriers and widen the scope of informal political activities.

Keywords: *Political participation, social media, youth, Facebook usage, Nigeria.*

INTRODUCTION

Some political communication scholars have contended that the parallel decline of political participation is related to the decrease in some forms of civic engagement among youth, therefore these declines can pose adverse outcomes and repercussions of a typical democracy (Putnam, 2000). Recent research has shown that the social interaction of youth through networks on social media can serve as a replacement for such absence of civic commitment, evidently because, social media provides extra channels for youth to participate in political activities Therefore, social media provides an alternative way to draw the attention of youth via social media networking sites such as Facebook because it offers an avenue for youth's political expression and voice, whilst discovering political information, wherein youth and their peers intermingle (Pew reports, 2011). Thus, can political activities on Facebook affect offline political participation among youth, considering that youth belongs to an age group of young voters and this category is traditionally perceived as

apathetic with regards to civic engagement? The results of numerous studies have revealed that political activities on Facebook are significant predictors of political participation (Vitak, Zube, Smock, Carr, Ellison & Lampe, 2016). Therefore, the extensive use of social media networking sites such as Facebook is especially beneficial to attract the involvement of youth because youth are statistically the least symbolized subsection of the population which represents least participation in many political happenings such as voting and (Carpini, 2000).

Social media have been growing at a phenomenal rate, especially since the Arab Spring, infused by this new development and acceptance, social media has also offered new perspectives particularly among the region's substantial youth population. This phenomenon raises the attention of many scholars (Adamu, Mohamad & Rahman, 2016). Researchers have investigated and discovered a significant correlation between Facebook use and political participation; nonetheless, an increasing body of research has not only charted a decline in formal modes of political participation among youth, particularly voting and political party activities, but also an increase in the participation of youth in social movements such as demonstrations and protests (Dalton, 2011). However, the use of Facebook politically specially to promote current events has been widely recognized to have helped lower the barriers of youth marginalization in political activities as well widen the scope of informal activities (Dumitrica, 2016). Similarly, the popularity of Facebook particularly among young voters has provided a highly obvious atmosphere for politicians to endorse themselves using their platforms in detail, and interrelate with the electorates in essentially different means. Likewise, Facebook has allowed youth to connect with each other concerning political matters and share as well deliberate their opinions. Studies on the role of Facebook in political activities shows that online political engagement has a positive influence on political participation (Jung & Zuniga, 2011; Vitak, Smock, Ellison & Lampe, 2011). For instance, Jung et al. (2011) stressed that commenting and posting political messages online has a positive relationship with offline political participation. Nevertheless, the influence of political information seeking is positively tense to online political participation and has the tendencies of partaking in the voting exercise (Yamamoto & Kushin, 2014). However, little is known about the connection between Facebook usage, interactivity with political figures, Facebook quality information, political interest and youth offline political participation.

Youth political participation has recently become a topic of growing interest around the world (Skoric & Poor, 2013); the emergence of youth as a desirable target group of political parties and politicians is due to their distinct features such as strength, expectations and mental tendency to welcome and support new ideas (Fjerza, Gega & Memaj, 2014). Thus, youth participation is imperative to consider because it offers insight into future offline political participation (Vissers & Maheo, 2012), and it is indicative of adult participation in those youth. Furthermore, youth represent the driving force of change in the society and their participation as a young adult is a powerful predictor of their future participation. Additionally, youth participation in political activities may likely to foster a sense of citizenship, and through citizen participation their perspectives and ideas can be taken into account, stimulating new approach and championing for policy formulation processes to be more transparent and accountable (EACEA, 2013).

Despite the fact that some literatures have identified youth as active, diverse, supportive and easy to accept new changes (Harris & Younes, 2010; Mohamad, Zulkepli, Ismail & Bakar, 2016), for many years they are recognized as distinct social demographic and

have been excluded from development and decision making, which all of these can help them to build their self-confidence and acquire relevant skills such as effective communication or teamwork (Diemer & Li, 2011; Mohamad, Ismail & Bidin, 2017). Similarly, in context of politics, youth have the qualities of diverse initiatives and strength as well as the perception on how to influence the lives of their political systems; however, in the recent past, there is a growing concern on the decreasing participatory tendencies among youth especially in the electoral turnout; moreover, political party membership is decreasing drastically over the last two decades, especially in Europe (Theocharis & Quintelier, 2014).

These concerns indicate that young people are believed to be particularly disappointed with the traditional bodies of representative government (Milner, 2011), these can be seen by a number of growing trends such as a youth denial to participate in the electoral processes, low rates of electoral turnout and even hatred to politics (Putnam, 2000; Wattenberg, 2012). These trends suggest that youth are not well represented or can be considered as influential in the national and international level of the democratic system, thus, they have become victims instead of becoming stakeholders in a political affairs because their priorities are often under-addressed which in turn may eventually lead to violence, if it is not properly managed (Diemer & Li, 2011; Harris et al., 2010).

Thus, this denial of youth involvement in politics and decision making is attributed to an elite or elders' conspiracy which places a barrier on youth offline participation in political affairs. Scholars of Facebook and political participation have identified the use of Facebook as having potentials to help youth to break the barrier against their participation. However, few studies have empirically related the Facebook usage to increase participation of youth in an offline political process (Odeyemi & Mosunmola, 2015; Ternes & Towers, 2014). Thus, this situation has limited the understanding of the correlation between Facebook usage and offline political participation (Smyth & Best, 2013). It is important for additional studies to be conducted in other to understand the reasons why youth have not been recognized and marginalized in political activities especially in the Nigerian context setting. Therefore, this study examines the connection between Facebook use interactivity with politicians, Facebook quality information, political interest and youth offline political participation in Bauchi metropolis.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT
Offline Political Participation
Traditional participation such as participating in political campaign, rally, working for a political party or aspirant, taking part in voting especially during the election has been considered as important to democratic processes (Skoric & Kwan, 2011), and this has become a favorable area of research for many scholars. This can be further supported by the definition of political participation as activities that provide citizens of a country to express their wishes, views and aspirations express their views as well as to be able to participate in decisions that influence or affect the selection of government or public officials which will create good policy and governance for their future (Norris, 2001). Participation in a democratic system is a fundamental and universal right that has been recognized in the Lisbon Treaty. This further suggests that every voter will have equal rights to take part in the representative system (Mayoral, 2011).

It is against this background that participation of youth in offline political activities has been measured as an important component for a vibrant and strong democracy (Bakker & Vreese, 2011). Therefore, youth political participation is fundamental to democracy and without it; upcoming generation of youth may perambulate into a political process without the requisite knowledge, skills and determination to challenge selfish political elites. As such, youth may lack enthusiasm to checkmate the actions of a government, thus contribute little into the policies which may influence their lives (Farson, 2013). Therefore, the issue of whether and what is influencing youth to offline political participation is imperative for both researchers and political figures.

Offline political participation is an important requirement and necessary for democracy (Putnam, 2000), this is because youth have equal opportunities and rights to have an effect on the development of different stages of political processes, rights for campaign reform, election and the policy decision process and its implementation (Wyngarden, 2012). It may also be true to say that voting and elections in general symbolize important ways of engaging youth in the democratic processes are the most significant political activities (Dalton, 2008).

This development has created long discussions among scholars that even though youth engagement and electoral turnout appears to be low in different countries, some studies have suggested that other systems of youth political participation such as online activities may likely to indicate upward direction and show tendency of their participation. Additionally, activities such as demonstrations and protests have now become apparent among youth (Dalton, 2011).

Recently, Facebook is often used to gather people to participate in politics and demonstration from place to place in the world (Carlisle & Patton, 2013). Specifically, bearing in mind western democracies where researchers are showing apprehension with the decline of youth in political activities (Putnam, 2000), Facebook appears to hold hopes to increase political participation and reinforcing democracy (Solvang, 2009). Nevertheless, this translates into the fact that Facebook may change as well motivate people that might have been disconnected from offline political activities to now participate in political activities like voting exercise.

The information given is usually more interactive, user friendly, concise and easier to comprehend. Youth is frequently posting political issues online, their personal views and opinions in relations to politics, sharing news and informative articles, interact with political actors and even view and share videos about political activities. Therefore, it can be safe to say that Facebook is a suitable medium to help spread political knowledge among youth and subsequently intensify their offline political participation. A considerable positive correlation between use of Facebook and offline political involvement exist, thus studies have indicated that Facebook use is positively connected to offline political participation (Carlisle & Patton, 2013; Vissers & Stolle, 2014; Theocharis, 2011).

Facebook Usage
Facebook fosters exposure to political mobilization and makes political information more available, therefore the medium is a potential means of recruiting people that were not politically motivated before into offline political activities. Thus, the accessibility and the interactivity nature of Facebook can effectively function as what is now referred as 'gateway participation'. Nonetheless, researches have revealed that Facebook is more persuasive than traditional media (Gromping, 2014). Similarly, Facebook provides similar and

innovative features in terms of exposure to information nevertheless has the additional benefits and advantages of universal reach, greater quality and superior speed and at the same time acts as an interactive medium of online political conversations. Thus, using these features, Facebook proves a momentous role in the creation of political knowledge (Muntean, 2015).

Furthermore, today youth in their formative years will obtain their political information from social media (Facebook) comparatively than the traditional media such as radio, television and newspapers. The information given is more interactive, user friendly, concise and easier to comprehend. Youth is frequently posting political issues online, their views and opinions in relations to politics, sharing news and informative articles, their interaction with political actors and viewing videos about political activities (Lahabou & Wok, 2011). Therefore, it can be safe to say that Facebook is a suitable medium to spread political knowledge among youth and in turn increase their offline political participation. Political knowledge as described by Carpini (2000), is the series of factual and true information concerning politics or political actors that is reserved in a long-term memory.

Over the years, it has been argued that political knowledge is one of important political variables that serves as a strong indicator of an ideal functioning democracy (Kenski & Stroud, 2006). Thus, electorates' proper knowledge and understanding of politics is imperative in order for them to make informed decisions or choices (Carpini, 2000). A well-structured and democratic country needs citizens with effective knowledge, skills, and a personality of character (Ngagement, Ducation & Galston, 2001). Knowledge and skills are much needed to judge and interpret deeds or actions of politicians and representatives with critical and analytical mind. Political knowledge is greatly essential in order to be a competent democratic participant and have the capabilities to analyze government public policy and institutions which in turn will showcase well-grounded and effective judgments.

In relation to the above statement, Popkin and Dimock (2000), have emphasized that citizens with low stages and levels of political knowledge or lack of good information about politics may certainly not engage in public discussion of issues, make any meaningful judgments and also are probably not going to participate in political activities at all. Knowledge of politics and public participation are very important especially in terms of political decision making in a democratic setting. Also, political knowledge is an essential ingredient for participation in politics such as turn out for voting (Binder et al., 1971; Carpini, 2000). Thus, there is a positive connection between political knowledge and offline political involvement (Brooks, Carpini & Keeter, 1997).

Interactivity with Politicians
Apparently, due to the intense use of Facebook, and with its technological advantage, Facebook can help in bridging the gap between the online and offline participation through the facilitated connection off to foster political campaign and engagement; politicians are now using it to post on their profiles, share political information and also directly interact with their supporters (Conroy, 2012). Facebook demonstrates the quality of instructiveness in a medium as compared to traditional media, thus it allows two-way communication rather than one-directional dissemination of information to the audience (Mayfield, 2008). However, the interactivity nature of Facebook may allow and create the process of interdependence among the users as such, the interactivity may likely contribute to offline participation attitude towards politics (Lee & Cho, 2011). Therefore, interaction with

political figures through Facebook may likely encourage youth to engage in an offline political events such as participating in political meetings, campaigns, or voting (Tang & Lee, 2013).

Recent literature has shown that social interface contributes positively to event participation, for instance people especially youth are more enthusiastic to honor an invitation sent by someone if they have already established a relationship or interacted with prior to the invitation (Tang & Lee, 2013). Thus, information that is distributed through multiplex networks and with existing established relationship and interaction via Facebook for example in which people are already connected online may likely trigger offline participation (Huang, Wang & Yuan, 2014). Individual interaction and identity is a fundamental factor and instrumental towards invitation or influence for offline participation, thus message exchange online and the strong point of social ties may stimulate political mobilization and participation (Marlowe, 2009; Vitak et al., 2011).

Even though social media in overall and Facebook in particular suggest important openings for youth to relate to politicians and various stakeholders, youth can become friends and initiate other interaction with political figures such as politicians in representative bodies, government agents and prominent community leaders through Facebook (Tang & Lee, 2013). Consequently, youth 'friendship' and relationship with those important political figures are likely to be self-motivated source of political information and perspective (Gromping, 2014). Henceforth, these political figures particularly politicians, grass roots activist and political observers have the predispositions of rallying and influencing youth to participate in offline activities (Feezell et al., 2009).

Thus, interactions with these political figures may increase political participation because political interactivity and discussions may likely stimulate interest to participate in offline political activities due to the fact that the process of interaction itself influences opinion formation (Ksiazek et al., 2014; Valenzuela Turner, 2011). Therefore, Facebook can be seen as a fundamental basis and a source of political information as a result of political interactivity between youth and political figures thus, online interactivity appears to be interrelated to political participation offline (Smith et al., 2009; Dumitrica, 2014).

Facebook Information Quality
Researchers have indicated that individual personal perseverance or objective of having good and constant information can encourage people to select and use a specific media therefore, this can help in shaping and justifying Facebook information quality as an encouraging factor for youth to use Facebook for offline political participation. This can be supported with the fact that youth select and use Facebook because it may satisfy their political information wishes and desires, youth's social and psychological factors often mediate the quality of information between them (Diemer & Li, 2011). Uses and gratification theory for example, has recently focused on motivational factors involved in social networks such as Facebook which moved from simple information searching to dynamic self-expression and partaking in political activities (Tang & Lee, 2013). Thus, Facebook information quality is now becoming an increasingly attractive predictor of participation in political affairs as it provides accurate, complete, up to date, well arranged and organized information needed by the youth (Young & Quan-Haase, 2009).

Thus, youth needs Facebook quality information to understand the interpersonal communication satisfaction and seek the consent and support of political party or candidate (Leung & Lee, 2014). This however further suggests the fact that information

content quality is an important determinant to offline participation and Facebook is being used to expedite the political involvement of both online and offline.

Perceived Facebook information quality as earlier discussed has demonstrated youth's belief of the collective content quality of Facebook information (Huang et al., 2014). Previous researches have documented that Facebook information quality can influence factors related to online political participation such as interactivity with individuals, usage intention to participate in offline politics activities such as engaging in civic or community services (Dong et al., 2010; Ellen Quintelier, 2007). This is because youth participation is often considered a significant element of a healthy democracy (Ellen Quintelier & Vissers, 2008), thus what facilitate youth's offline political participation is a very important area of research to academics and political stakeholders. From the communication perspectives, the theoretical development of political participation has been focused on the influence of accurate and quality information from reliable and more interactive media which Facebook stands for because it facilitates interpersonal discussion about politics (Jung et al., 2011). However, a considerable body of research has demonstrated important effects of Facebook information quality on offline political participation (Jung et al., 2011).

Seemingly, when youth compare political parties and candidates and therefore decides to support a particular party or politician, the quality of information they will get may likely influence and help them to make an informed decision about the candidate or party (Lin, 2014) as such, youth especially may actively participate in an offline political activities such as going for campaigns or physical voting. It may be accurate to say that Facebook appears to be well suited for promoting offline political participation due its features such as interactivity, speed, accuracy, timely, easy accessibility. Further, use of Facebook information quality can build a communicative power such as capacity to foster socio-political movement (Sormanen & Dutton, 2015).

Cogburn and Vasquez (2011) have also claimed that Facebook information quality is a determinant of the youth's decision to use Facebook for political activities. Supporting this, study aspects have emphasized on how people, especially youth, may exploit the informative, educational and political potentials of the online networks site such as Facebook with contents deemed political. Other studies have also emphasized and revealed that how information with richness, accuracy and speed can offer the government and nongovernmental organizations to spread their messages timely and these always available information may encourage offline participation to the populace (Hirzalla, 2011). Therefore, the accurate information quality is highly influential to youth in terms of making a right political decision (Dhaha & Igale, 2013)

Political Interest
Political interest is a political concept that is very significant for the emergence of democratic political identity and also serve as a crucial force for the exploration and the desire to participate (Whiteley, 2005). Youth recently are so enthusiastic about events and happenings around them particularly in political activities. Their quest to know and learn more about political activities propels them to develop their interest in politics and social issues by getting more information, through information seeking about political parties and candidates as well as sharing political information, showing their interest by voluntarily following political figures and engaging in political discussions (Kyranakis & Nurvala, 2013).

Further, there is a strong agreement among researchers to amid all other predictors,

political interest have a robust impact in terms of the drive to involve in politics. Collaborating with the work of Moeller, Vreese, Esser & Kunz, (2014), this account has supported the claim by stressing that political interest is an attitude that offers a sound and sustainable outcome in politics since it regularly expresses whether an individual may be politically active or quit. Consequently, it may be correct to say that Facebook users are being motivated and thus, political interest encourage friends in their network and these will likely encourage the engagement in offline political activities.

Similarly, it has also been found that the decline in political interest among youth is attributed to the decrease in offline political participation (Chao et al., 2012). This explains the fact that youth does not think of conventional ways of political participation, such as taking part in voting exercise, hence they often discard it. Therefore, Facebook is now a substitute platform of political countenance and political interest seems to be significantly connected to online and offline political participation among youth (Kim, Kavanaugh, & Pérez-Quiñones, 2007; Yamamoto & Kushin, 2014; Yang & DeHart, 2016). Reading of postings or messages and placement of political opinions, relating to politicians on Facebook and pondering on politics with a network of friends on Facebook groups may perhaps stimulate interest and awareness about helpful social and political matters, later enabling involvement in other online political activities and more demanding offline political events (Vissers et al., 2012).

Based on the established evidences, the researcher proposes four hypotheses on Facebook Use, Interactivity with politicians, Information Quality, and Political Interest with Offline Political Participation among youth.

H1: The usage of Facebook positively influences offline political participation.
H2: The interaction with politicians positively influences the offline political participation.
H3: The information quality positively influences the offline political participation.
H4: The political interest positively influences the offline political participation.

METHOD

In this section, data gathering procedures, respondents and measurement of variables are presented. Nevertheless, this research encompasses youth of the Bauchi metropolis in Nigeria.

Respondents
As suggested by the UNESCO meaning of youth, respondents in this study are the youth of the Bauchi cosmopolitan area young aged between 18 to 35 years old involving both males and females. The selection of youth as population is centered on the fact that this age group uses Facebook frequently for political events (Vissers et al., 2012). In Nigeria, the youth of formative age has been in the frontline of struggle for independence and democracy; equally, they contribute and depend good governance as well as demand for dependable leadership in the country (National Bureau of Statistics Nigeria, 2012). Equally, Bauchi Metropolis is a typical municipal area with high populace, high level of growth, and awareness of politics. Virtually, 70.25 percent are male between the ages of 18-22. The majority of the respondents holds a Diploma Certificate (51.1 percent).

Measurement Instrument

In this research basically, the aspect of offline political participation relied primarily on items adapted from the work of Jung, Kim and Zuniga (2011). Thus, this instrument includes of political activities like transferring or receiving political information on Facebook. The instrument is likewise used to measure Facebook use by youth and comprises items adapted from Ellison et al. (2007) which includes items that defines youth attitudes and connection to Facebook. Furthermore, Interactivity with politicians was measured with the item scale modified and improved from the work of Lee and Cho (2011). The items defined how Facebook has assisted youth with the chance to interact with politicians and create feedback from them. Information Quality was adapted from the work of Lim (2012) to measure the quality, speed and accuracy of information on Facebook. While, Political Interest was adapted from the work of Whitely (2005) to measure what may actually encourage youth to participate in politics online. Therefore, each item was measured by using the 5-point Likert Scale.

It is worthy to mention that before the real and main study was conducted, we indeed piloted a pre-test among the youth in Nigeria. The pre-test basically is a universal prerequisite for deciding the degree of acceptability, reliability and dependability of the measurement used in scholarship. The outcome of the pre-test has sufficiently confirmed Cronbach's alpha for offline political participation and thus remains .87, Facebook use is .86, Interactivity remains .86, Information quality is .89, and Political Interest Cronbach's alpha is .88 correspondingly. Similarly, prior to the testing of the research hypotheses, data underwent tests for normality which was conducted for each of the survey items. Test for normality involve Kurtosis measures, Skewness measures, moreover, visual inspection of histograms. To this end, the majority of the items appeared to be within normality and analysis indicates normal shaped histograms.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

For better understanding of the result of this study, it is pertinent to say that multiple regressions were rigorously used in analyzing the data in other to test the relationship between Facebook usage, interaction with politicians, information quality, political interest and offline political participation among Nigerian youth. Furthermore, the multiple regression technique was selected because it allows researchers in social science to deal with complexity in human behaviour as adopted in the subsequent studies Cohen, Cohen, West & Aiken, 2003; Mohamad, Bakar & Rahman, 2007; Bakar, Mohamad & Che Su, 2007). The essential idea of using the multiple regression method is to test the relationship between a dependent variable and two or more independent variables. Hence, using the multiple regression technique, we can determine the specific independent variable that may have the main influence on dependent variables. Additionally, the hypothesis deal with the connection between Facebook usage and offline political participation among youth respondents. Therefore, positive relationships were predicted in the hypotheses. Furthermore, the results of the multiple regression analysis suggest that there a significant positive relationship between Facebook use, interaction with politicians, quality information, political interest and offline political participation among youth (R^2= .320, p < .005). Consequently, the results indicate that there is a direct connection between Facebook use, interaction with pelicans, quality information, political interest and offline political

participation.

Model of offline political participation has tested the 4 hypotheses H1, H2, H3 and H4. Result show that all 4 hypotheses are statistically significant. The hypothesized model testing has indicated the results as presented below, all H1, H2, H3, and H4 are supported. Thus, these hypotheses demonstrate the standard estimate and are all significant (R^2= .32 and β=.46) respectively. Thus, the model of offline political participation fit the data statistically. Therefore, among the independent variables comprising of Facebook usage, interactivity with political figures, perceived Facebook information quality and political interest their relationship with offline political participation is statistically significant at 0.05 levels. The results indicate strong empirical evidence for H1, H2, H3, and H4. Moreover, interactivity with political figures has the maximum relationship with offline political participation with β = .27 and t-statistics= 5.19

Table 1: Descriptive statistics correlations and reliability of variable.

	Variables	α	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1.	Offline Political Participation	.774	3.46	.62	1.00				
2.	Facebook Use	.827	4.24	.53	.40**	1.00			
3.	Interactivity with Politicians	.789	4.06	.66	.50**	.40**	1.00		
4.	Information Quality	.725	3.64	.61	.40**	.35**	.50**	1.00	
5.	Political Interest	.776	4.10	.62	.41**	.34**	.51**	.40**	1.00

Significance *p < .05; **p < .01

Table 2: Summary of multiple regressions for offline political participation.

Variables	Expected Sign	β	t-statistics	P-value
Intercept		.46	1.92	.06
Independent variables				
Facebook usage	+	.20	3.85	.00**
Interactivity with political figures	+	.27	5.19	.00**
Facebook information quality	+	.12	2.35	.02**
Political interest	+	.15	2.91	.00**
Adjusted R^2			.32	
F-statistics *(df 4, 367)*			13.68	.00**
Durbin-Watson			1.83	
N			372	

Notes: ** significant at 0.05 (1-tailed), correspondingly; *Dependent variables* = OF, Offline political participation; *Independent variables* = FU, Facebook usage; IF, Interactivity with political figures; PQ, Facebook information quality; PI, Political interest

From the foregoing, the overall procedure of the results demonstrates a significant relationship between offline political participation and Facebook usage. Similarly, this results validate that Facebook usage interactivity with politicians, quality information and political interest are significant determinants of offline political participation β= .46, *t-statistics*=1.92, p < .05 and R^2 =.317. Evidently, these results provide support for the previous studies of Visser and Strolle, (2014), Ksiazek, Pee and Lessard, (2014), Carlisle and Patton, (2013), likewise it offers support for the existing hypothesis.

Hence, the results further show that for Facebook use *t-statistics* = 1.652, β= .20, p-value = .000**, p <.05, Interaction with politicians *t-statistics*=5.19, β= .27, p-value = .00**, p < .05, Information quality *t-statistics*=2.35, β= .12, p-value = .02**, p < .05, political interest *t=statistics* =2.91, β= .15, p-value = .00**, p> .0.5. Consequently, interactivity with politicians have the utmost significant relationship with offline youth political participation.

To this end, this research suggests that Facebook usage, interactions with politicians, quality information and political interest showcase a significant role in encouraging youth offline political participations. Thus, it can be understood from the result that Facebook usage, interaction with politicians, quality information, and political interest show the important relationship with offline political participation (Smith et al., 2009, Dumitrica, 2014; Vissers et al., 2012; Jung et al., 2011). This result is obviously revealing the important features of interactions with politicians on youth offline political participation in Nigeria. Consequently, for government, politicians or any political parties to yield significant decisions or articulate meaningful policies in Nigeria, all component apparatuses of offline political participation must be given a preference in terms of budget allocation and policy implementation. Thus, the government, political stakeholders' particularly political parties and candidates in Nigeria should focus largely on what motivates youth to have an offline political interest so as to strengthen their involvement. Therefore, based on the analysis and the magnitudes of the results, the following model of offline political participation is established.
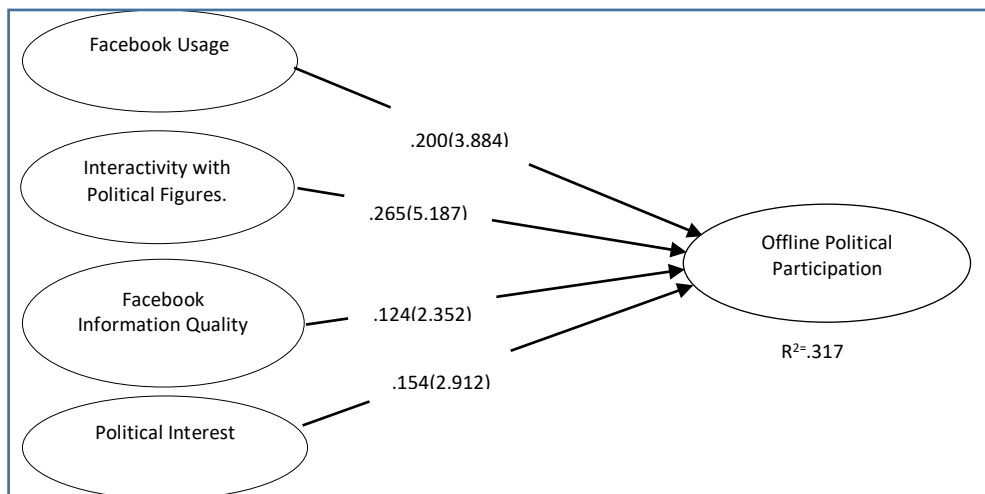

Figure 1: Model for offline political participation.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is imperative to say that offline political participation amongst youth is essentially dependent on the use of Facebook because more youth are indicating a strong dependence on it as it is their online platform to obtain political information they need to make a cognizant political decision. Henceforth, it is imperative to emphasize that targeting and tailoring political messages online to the youth through Facebook and what motivate youth to develop an interest in offline political activities should be an important factor in future campaign strategies. Additionally, campaign strategies should include the question of what motivates youth to cultivate interest in politics. As youth often lingers to become

increasingly dependent on Facebook to keep up with their socio-political civic activities, it can be assumed that youth will continue to put their trust on the available information online in order to make offline commitment and engagement.

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