

Analysis of Comments of Facebook Users on the 2018 Gubernatorial Election in Ekiti State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study assessed Facebook comments on the Gubernatorial election in Ekiti State, Nigeria; with a view to ascertaining the dominant tilts of the comments. It was anchored on Uses and Gratification theory and employed qualitative content analysis research design. The study found out that most of the comments on the gubernatorial election are politically maligning and condemnatory of politics and politicians. Only one of comments appears politically enriching, advocating and motivating. There was no comment that was apolitical or indifferent. The study recommended among others that users of social media should employ comments that can help reduce abusive expressions by intelligently appealing to the sense of maturity and reasons of every user before his/her own expectedly enriching comments.

Keywords: Facebook, Comments, Gubernatorial, Election, Ekiti State

INTRODUCTION

The advent of the Internet and its various social media platforms has virtually increased the scope of political information exchange, participation and discourse. That the political landscape in societies has been greatly influenced by social media platforms is to say the least. Ajayi & Adesote (2015) notes that considering the participatory, interactive and cost-effective nature of the new media, they have become veritable instruments for the deepening of democratic ideals and processes in terms of information sharing, monitoring and evaluation of electioneering processes, reduction of tension and anxieties associated with elections, ensuring and even enforcing transparency and accountability to a large extent. Observably, the influences of these social media platforms have not only been politically enriching but also painfully maligning. Ifeoma (2018) avers that extant evidence shows that the social media platforms have not only become tools for increased citizens' active political participations, but have also become platforms for the spread of hate speeches; and misinformation and/or fake news.

Facebook, as a social medium has perhaps been more politically employed among people in the Nigerian society. A critical examination of the emerging trend in the use of social media generally in Nigeria shows that social media such as Facebook, Blackberry Messenger, WhatsApps, Twitter, Blog, MySpace, YouTube and Instagram are no longer mainly social with the primary purpose of creating and enabling participation in social networking sites for people to socialize and check out what friends are doing but, have rather, become powerful tools for political communication and engagement, and a useful means of policing election results in Nigeria and by extension, veritable tools for active political participation. In this instance, social media became not only "sites of information" providing many Nigerians with political voice but also "sites of action" (Olsson & Dahlgren, 2010; Bakardjieva, 2010; Signe Bock, 2015; as cited in Ifeoma, 2018). Perhaps, it is safe to say that with the Internet enabled social media platforms no other public spheres of discourse have attracted so much attention like that of election matters.

The recently concluded gubernatorial election in Ekiti State was not without the employment of these social media, especially the Facebook social medium as a platform for active political participation and discourse. Ekiti state as one of the States in Nigeria has overtime been a political spotlight. Beginning from the defeat of Otunba Niyi Adebayo in 2003 and the coming in of Ayodele Fayose as Governor, Fayose's inglorious impeachment; the legal tussle between Segun Oni and Dr. Kayode Fayemi; the eventually declaration of Fayemi as the Governor in 2010; his defeat at the poll by Ayodele Fayose in 2014, Fayose untoward utterances against political opponents, especially President Mohammed Buhari; the victory of Dr. Fayemi over Professor Olusola Kolapo Eleka at the 2018 governorship poll; Ekiti State has undoubtedly not only been a political cynosure of all eyes but also engrossed with much political contestations and divergent viewpoint/comments. With particular reference to the recently concluded Gubernatorial election (2018), the social media, especially the Facebook, have been veritable channels of expressions of these political contestations, divergent viewpoints and comments.

Statement of the Problem

Several studies have been carried out on Ekiti State especially those bordering on elections and governance. Election matters, in particular, have provided a political discussion platform for scholars, and political commentators. For instance, Aborisade (2015), using Ekiti State as a case, carried out a study on Grassroots Political Communication: How "Stomach Infrastructure" Redefines Political Communication in Nigeria. Olayiwola (2016), did a study on Public Perceptions of Ekiti 2014 Gubernatorial Election in Nigeria; Durotoye A., Sa'eed H. (2014), did a study on Between 'Ekitigate and Protest Votes: Ekiti State 2014 Governorship Election Revisited. However, there is no study at present that addresses the employment of social media, especially the Facebook social medium in the matters of elections in the State. The present study fills this gap. Consequently, it sought to:

- i. identify Facebook comments on the 2018 Gubernatorial election in Ekiti State;
- ii. investigate the direction of Facebook comments on the 2018 Gubernatorial election in Ekiti State; and
- iii. examine the dominant tenor of Facebook comments on the 2018 Gubernatorial election in Ekiti State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- i. What are the Facebook comments on the 2018 Gubernatorial election in Ekiti State?
- ii. What is the direction of Facebook comments on the 2018 Gubernatorial election in Ekiti State?
- iii. What is dominant tenor of Facebook comments on the Gubernatorial Election in Ekiti State?

Review of Literature

Facebook is one of the social media platforms enabled by the Internet driven technology. It appears to be the most employed social media platforms since its debut in 2004. The concept of social media has been viewed from different perspectives by scholars. Simply put, social media is a collective term that describes an Internet enabled platform through which people communicate and interact with one another. Boyd and Ellison (2007:1) perceive social media as "web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system..." According to the Australian Electoral Commission (2011), social media can be defined as "online tools and Web sites that facilitate many-to-many communications between users. Specific examples include Facebook and Twitter, but may also include more regional or niche services, and more longstanding collaborative environments such as web-based forums and wikis". More specifically, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) see social media as

internet-based applications built on the technological and ideological foundations of Web 2.0. Social Media can equally be called a strategy and an outlet for broadcasting (Cohen, 2009:12). The term “social media” refers to the wide range of internet-based and mobile services that allow users to participate in online exchanges, contribute user-created content, or join online communities. The kinds of internet services commonly associated with social media include blogs, wikis, social bookmarking, Twitter, YouTube and so on (Dewing, 2012; as cited in Ajayi, Adesote, 2015).

The social media technologies provide flexibility, adaptability, usability and customizability. Constantinides and Fountain (2008) opine that the social media is a system that supports the creation of informal users’ network facilitating the flow of ideas and knowledge by allowing the effective generation, dissemination, sharing, editing of informational content. In short, social media is primarily used to transmit or share information with a broad audience in a free flowing technologically driven process. This facilitates social networking which has been described as a tool and a utility for connecting with others (Stelzner, 2009:4). But more appropriately social networking is an act of engagement; as people with common interests associate together and build relationships through community (Hartshorn, 2010) within or outside geo-political divides. This constitutes the prevalent activities that go on in the social media. Thus, while the latter is the facilitating conduit or platform; the former is the real activity that ensures its relevance to humanity and society (as cited in Ajayi, A., Adesote, S. 2015)

The term social media, according to Haddon (2015: 1), “refers to principally, and narrowly, to the more communication and interaction-oriented parts of the internet, including blogs, social networking sites such as Facebook, and microblogging sites such as Twitter, as well as to diverse platforms for sharing audio-visual materials (e.g., YouTube, Flickr).” Social media facilitate faster, easier and cheaper access to the world through their ability to channel various communication codes (texts, pictures, audio and video) between and among people, irrespective of temporal-spatial barriers (Lambe M., Victor, G., Maryam, 2016).

One indispensable feature of a democratic society is periodic elections. Participatory governance is realised as citizens periodically elects their representatives who will manage the affairs of the country. Election has been variedly defined. Suffice are the following definitions for our understanding. According to Nnoli, as cited in Okolie, A, Chime, J. (2008), election can be defined as the manner of choice agreed upon by a group of people out of many to occupy one or a number of positions of authority. To Alumona (2007), elections represent the main processes through which the people exercise their constituent power and sovereignty and also decide at periodic intervals who gets what, how and why. Advancing a similar view, Wanyande (as cited in Ademola, 2014), sees elections as representing a way of making choice that is fair to all, one that leaves each member of the electorate with reasonable hope of having his alternative elected. Wanyande’s view of elections seems to bring to the fore what constitutes free and fair election or credible election.

Succinctly expanding the scope of what constitutes credible elections, Mackenzie, as cited in Alumona (2007), listed four conditions that must be in place before a free and credible election can take place: first, an independent judiciary to interpret electoral law; secondly, an honest, competent, non-partisan administration to run elections, thirdly, a developed system of political parties, well enough organised to put their policies, traditions and team of candidates before the electors as alternatives between which to choose; fourthly, a general acceptance throughout the political community of certain rather vague rules of the game, which limit the struggle for power because of some unspoken sentiment that if the rules are not observed more or less faithfully the game itself will disappear amid the wreckage of the whole system, and by extension a springboard for political instability – and altogether threat to national security (as cited in Layefa & Bodunde, 2016)

Nigeria had her first real test of social media use for political purpose during the 2011 general elections. The new technology played an unprecedented role in the April 2011 Nigerian General Elections. INEC officials had in early March 2011 welcomed the assistance of civil society volunteers with its Facebook and Twitter accounts as well as a new media situation room which received feedback from the public and later began to provide real time information and answered constituent questions. Nigerian politicians actively utilized social media in their campaigns. They sent bulk text and voice messages in unprecedented numbers. They made massive use of Facebook pages and other social media platforms to win supports and canvass for votes (Okoro & Nwafor, 2013)

Attesting to the importance of the social media platforms in election matters, Ifeoma (2016) avers that while the 2011 elections marked the establishment of digitalization of politics in Nigeria, the 2015 Nigeria general election, further entrenched digital media use as part of Nigerian political culture. In the 2015 elections, results were first announced through the social media before the official announcements from the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) – a remarkable departure from previous established practice. This was also evident in the 2017 Anambra gubernatorial polls. Either by twittering, facebooking or whatsapping, Nigerian citizens participated vigorously in these general elections, contributing in part to the political change of baton in the Nigerian democratic terrain. In Ekiti and Osun state gubernatorial elections for instance, three hours after voting commenced, observers and citizens started broadcasting election results announced in their respective voting centres using Twitter, Facebook, BlackBerry Messenger (BBM), WhatsApp, and SMS. As election results in respective voting centres went viral on social media, political parties, citizens, both local and international observers were monitoring social media, tracking and analyzing these results. Even before INEC announced the official results, Nigerians knew who was leading in the respective polling units and wards, thereby minimizing the incidence of rigging at collation centres

Studies on Internet enabled platforms abound in extant literatures. These studies cut across various disciplines and settings. In Nigeria, studies on Internet enabled social platforms and political matters have been very pronounced. A few of these studies examined social media and political matters like elections generally. None appears to address a particular social medium. For instance, Okoro & Kenneth (2013), examined *Social Media and Political Participation in Nigeria During the 2011 General Elections: The Lapses and the Lessons*. Ifeoma (2018) did a study on *Social Media and Gubernatorial Elections in Nigeria: A Critical Discourse*. In a similar vein, Lambe, Victor & Maryam, (2016), carried out a study on *Social Media Use, Social Capital, and Political Participation among Nigeria University Students*. Obviously, none of these studies addressed a particular social medium, and political comments via such social medium. The present study finds relevance within this context.

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on Uses and Gratification theory. According to Littlejohn (as cited in Ogbiten, 2007), Uses and Gratification theory focuses on the consumer, the audience member rather than the message. “Unlike the powerful effects traditions, this approach imagine the audience members to be discriminatory users of the media”. It views the members of the audience as actively utilizing media contents, rather than being passively acted upon by the media. To wit, audience does not view media content without some relative derivative benefits.

Blumler and Katz (as cited in Michael, 2014), identify five ways in which media audience find media content useful vis a vis escape, social interaction, identity, information, education and entertainment. As a form of escapism, media can be an outlet for the audience to drift away from reality. With regards to social interaction, people relate with the character found in the media context. In this interaction, they may not realize that they are dealing with an aspect of social interaction that is real. In

identification, people are able to associate themselves with media presentation. People also use the media as a source of information when they listen to the news and they can learn some skills from the media. In a similar vein, Wimmer and Dominick (as cited in Santas, 2014) note that Uses and Gratification theory try to find out the motivating factors which underline audience use of media contents. They further opine that the theory examines how people use the mass media and the gratifications they derive.

The relevance of the theory is to seen in the way or manner facebook users make use of this social medium in expressing their views about the 2018 gubernatorial election in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The way and manner in which they express their views on the election all together underscore the satisfaction they may tend to derive. Thus, whether the comments expressed were politically maligning or enriching, the facebook social medium platform has been made use of and users are satisfied thereby.

Methodology

The study employed qualitative content analysis research design. This method allows for a thorough search or study of a phenomenon in a given documented situation. The population is facebook comments commencing from 23 June, 2018 to 4 August, 2018. These periods were chosen because of their nearness to the date of voting and after voting; and as such represented periods for intense comments before and after the gubernatorial election in Ekiti State. The facebook comments were categorized into three – comments that are politically enriching; comments that are politically maligning and comments that are apolitical or indifferent.

The categorized comments are operationalised thus: comments that are political enriching comprise those that centre on competence of candidates, manifestoes, right conduct of voters during and after elections; comments that are politically maligning comprise those that centre on abusive words on candidates, and see nothing good coming out of elections in Nigeria; comments that are apolitical comprise expressions of indifference.

Analysis of Facebook Comments

Facebook comments on the 2018 Gubernatorial Election in Ekiti State, South – Western, Nigeria, were not many. Three weeks before the election, few post/comments were noticeable, after the election, few comments were posted, and towards the end of the July and throughout the month of August, no comments were posted. However, posts about the election came up again in September. Since the time frame for the study was three weeks before election and three weeks after election, only the comments/posts within that time frame were analysed.

The study set out to answer three research questions; i) Are there Facebook comments on the 2018 Gubernatorial election in Ekiti State? ii) What is the direction of Facebook comments on the 2018 Gubernatorial election in Ekiti State? iii) What is dominant tenor of Facebook comments on the Gubernatorial Election in Ekiti State.

To answer research question one, the researchers identified comments on facebook that were on the gubernatorial election in Ekiti State. Facebook comments identified were 19 in number. Out of the 19 comments, seven were before the election; five were on the day of election while seven were after the election. As observed, facebook comments on the election were very few.

To answer research question two, the researchers attempted to observe the slant of the comments to ascertain their direction. Most of the comments were cynical, full of political apathy, disdain and politically maligning of both the People Democratic Party (PDP) and All Progressive Congress (APC)

candidates. Only one of the comments appears politically enriching. Observe some of the politically maligning comments:

Truly some minds are cast in stone where conscience has taken back stage. Some are just in human form but really nothing but demons. Talking about throw-back on human race, this guy takes the first position. That Ayodele Fayose could complain about rigging is astounding! Pray, what happened 4 years ago with the selection/super-imposition of Fayose on Ekiti people? To Fayose, that was acceptable since it involved him. They say what goes round comes round. He is struggling to swallow the bitter pill now that the seed he sowed is germinating fast and paying returns. I dare say that Peter Ayodele Fayose is a monster, a conscience-less being. An archetypal throw-back on the human race. Shameless idiot!!

In Ekiti State that has a childish loudmouthed clown as Governor it wouldn't be a surprise if he tries to instigate violence today but with the security personnel on ground he will be disappointed.

Ekiti State voters must remember that the N3,000 to N10,000 given to them to vote are investments from APC and PDP governorship candidates. The winner will recover his investment back in hundredfold.

Nigerians are now seeing APC for who and what they are. For the very obvious fact that this grossly satanic APC wants to rig Ekiti State Election at all cost, a whooping 30,000 security operatives had to be stationed in Ekiti for the inglorious job. Now they've gone all out and have sadly manhandled a sitting Governor Ayo Fayose in their effort to silence him. Is this APC change for destruction or a change from bad to worse?

Buhari has promised EKITI State multi billion road construction from Ile IFE to Ado EKITI to win EKITI gubernatorial election. What has Governor Rotimi Akeredolu got for ONDO State since he got to ONDO State over one year ago? Honestly, am no longer comfortable with the present politics. Must APC win the 36States?Everybody has kept quiet just looking forgetting the fact that it has its own demerits. Yes, Buhari is wonderful and he is really fighting corruption apart from the untouchable IKDC despite the ungoing massive disconnection as a result of fictitious overbilling which must end one day. Police were worst once upon a time.

As observed, only one of comments appears politically enriching - calling for a model to free the country of moneybag politician to have a better Nigerian society. Observe the comment:

following the just conclude ekiti election it is save to say we really have so much to do in preparation for 2019, campaigning for PVC on social media wont be enough, i saw videos of people collecting 4k mortgaging 4yrs of development for common 4 thousand naira. Now aside APC and PDP there are other platforms cos we currently don't have political parties in this country, they could be other contenders but then we only hear about 2 cos maybe they have the money(your stolen funds) to give or share round, we need to find a way to get the market woman, who is not on IG,FB involved in this movement cos this recycled leaders already know how to get them. We need to go back to the days of town hall meetings cos the suffering has eaten deep into us that we just accept whatever we get. We deserve better and we can get better lets not just be social media gladiators, let's work together to make this country great again. You have a circle you can

influence and everyone in the circle gets in touch with someone in another circle so we can do it preach it everywhere. we have done RECYCLING. But we need to work it out.

To answer research question three, the researchers identified the dominant tilt of the comments on the 2018 gubernatorial election in Ekiti State. From observation, more of the comments were politically maligning as could be seen above. Besides the one comment that is political enriching, there were two other comments that adopted spiritual angle to the election exercise. Observe the comments:

Save Ekiti state today O Lord, Use your mighty power to stop every plan of blood sucker, peace is what I pray for concerning Ekiti state election today, God please proof that you are the Almighty God and no one can overthrow your will. Let your will be done in ekiti state today and forever, protect ekiti state against war of politics, put devil to shame O Lord, cos you God alone has the final saying and no one will be able to stop God, by the power you are using to control the universe, let the name of your chosen one to be the next governor ekiti state be announce with your unstoppable voice of authority from the above, let the name of your chosen governor for ekiti state be unchangeable for any power on this earth. Amen Amen Amen in Jesus mighty name.

I pray for Fayose and PDP in Ekiti State, the way Chris Ngige of the APC made a mistake and campaigned for PDP, may that same mistake happen today while they vote.

Discussion

The array of facebook comments on the 2018 gubernatorial election in Ekiti State was very few. Within the given time frame – three weeks before the election and three weeks without - one would have expected to have seen more comments considering the political atmospheric tenseness. Perhaps, the fewness of the comments may probably inform the nostalgic disposition of most Nigerians which is not unrelated to the abysmal political, economic state of the Nigerian nation. This position supports the perspective of Layefa (2013) on the general nostalgia disposition of the average Nigerian – that it is no gainsaying that Nigerians have lost hope in government. The sordid reality of hardship, poverty, lack of infrastructure easily lend credence to the fact that the average Nigerian, who indeed, is yet to benefit from much vaunted dividends of democracy. Obviously, besides, political gladiators and sycophants, few Nigerians may not attempt comments on political issues on facebook because of the cost implication. The perspective of Asadu may also probably explain the fewness of facebook comments on the 2018 gubernatorial election in Ekiti state. He particularly noted that more nauseating in Nigeria is the democratic aberration of election rigging, political corruption, embezzlement of public funds, assassination, maiming and other politically motivated vices. These have made a good number of Nigerian apolitical.

As could be observed, most of the comments were not only unsavory and maligning but also devoid of any forms of political enlightenment and informativeness. Observe a comment of one of the facebook user “ *I dare say that Peter Ayodele Fayose is a monster, a conscience-less being. An archetypal throw-back on the human race. Shameless idiot!!*” Here is another comments, “ *In Ekiti State that has a childish loudmouthed clown as Governor it wouldn't be a surprise if he tries to instigate violence today but with the security personnel on ground he will be disappointed*”. Arguably, these comments are far from just disenchantment about elections in Nigeria but rather the spilling out of personal hatred and bitterness against the person of Peter Fayose; for he is not even the gubernatorial flagbearer of the People Democratic Party (PDP). This direct attack on the person of Fayose as observed

from the comments support perspectives in extant literatures that social media platforms have not only become tools for increased citizen' active political participations, but have also become platforms for the spread of hate speeches; and misinformation and/or fake news (Ifeoma 2018)

Some of comments of the facebook users on the 2018 gubernatorial election appear not only maligning but also sarcastic and cynical. Observe some of such comments:

Buhari has promised EKITI State multi billion road construction from Ile IFE to Ado EKITI to win EKITI gubernatorial election. What has Governor Rotimi Akeredolu got for ONDO State since he got to ONDO State over one year ago?", "Ekiti State voters must remember that the N3,000 to N10,000 given to them to vote are investments from APC and PDP governorship candidates. The winner will recover his investment back in hundredfold".

Evidently, comments on the election fell short of any form of politically enriching messages/information. The line of thought on the Use and Gratification theory seemingly appears not supported here. Concerning the theory, Blumler and Katz (as cited in Michael, 2014), identify five ways in which media audience find media content useful vis a vis escape, social interaction, identity, information, education and entertainment. As a form of escapism, media can be an outlet for the audience to drift away from reality. With regards to social interaction, people relate with the character found in the media context. In this interaction, they may not realize that they are dealing with an aspect of social interaction that is real. In identification, people are able to associate themselves with media presentation. People also use the media as a source of information when they listen to the news and they can learn some skills from the media. The observed comments from facebook users do not tend to any way inform, education, enlighten or help correct and mobilize readers/ other commentators towards such line of noble comments. Suffice to say that the employment of the facebook social medium was altogether mainly negative. This perhaps, is consistent with the view of George (2014) when he opines that the mass media can be either peace-building or war inducing features, and either life-affirming values or life-denying counter-values. The media can present edifying models of human life, love and solidarity, but also images of human hatred and destructiveness that provoke vengeance, violence and war.

It is instructive to note that only one of the comments appears politically enriching. As observed, the singular comment is not only educative, informative, it is also advocating a political campaign model that may probably help to dethrone corrupt money bag politics and their politicians in the Nigerian nation. Observe some highlighted features of the comment:

following the just conclude ekiti election it is save to say we really have so much to do in preparation for 2019, campaigning for PVC on social media wont be enough, i saw videos of people collecting 4k mortgaging 4yrs of development for common 4 thousand naira. Now aside APC and PDP there are other platforms cos we currently don't have political parties in this country, they could be other contenders but then we only hear about 2 cos maybe they have the money(your stolen funds) to give or share round, we need to find a way to get the market woman, who is not on IG,FB involved in this movement cos this recycled leaders already know how to get them. we need to go back to the days of town hall meetings cos the suffering has eaten deep into us that we just accept whatever we get. We deserve better and we can get better let's not just be social media gladiators, let's work together to make this country great again. You have a circle you can influence and everyone n the circle gets in touch with someone in another circle so we can do it preach it everywhere. we have done RECYCLING. But we need to work it out.

It is worthy of note that although, comments were few, none was apolitical or indifferent. There was no neutrality in the comments on the 2018 gubernatorial election. All facebook users have one form of comment to make about the election. The comments were either politically maligning or enriching. The implication of this is not far - fetched; Nigerians will want their views to be heard in matters that have do with elections for the enthronement of good governance.

Among the comments, two were in form of request to God. Of the two comments bordering on request to God about the election, the first comment was for God to allow peace to reign in Ekiti State. The concern of the commentator was not on who wins or who does not win but that God Himself should give Ekiti State to whom He deems fit. Ultimately God should cause peace to reign and halt any form of bloodshed. Observe some highlighted features of the comment:

Save Ekiti state today O Lord, Use your mighty power to stop every plan of blood sucker, peace is what I pray for concerning Ekiti state election today; Let your will be done in ekiti state today and forever, protect ekiti state against war of politics, put devil to shame O Lord, cos you God alone has the final saying and no one will able to stop God; let the name of your chosen governor for ekiti state be unchangeable for any power on this earth. Amen Amen Amen in Jesus mighty name.

This prayer comment is very much expected considering the religious temperament of the Ekiti people. A few number of Ekiti people profess the Christian faith, some the Islamic faith, and still some the African Traditional Religion (Personal observation). So, it is not surprising to have at least a comment that borders on prayer for peace to reign in the State during the election.

The second prayer comment is worthy of note. Observe the pattern: "I pray for Fayose and PDP in Ekiti State, the way Chris Ngige of the APC made a mistake and campaigned for PDP, may that same mistake happen today while they vote".

Indeed, Chris Ngige mistakenly made statements that favour PDP during APC campaign in Ekiti State, nevertheless a wish that a similar pattern should happen today while people vote, appears rather a vain partisan wish to say the least. Disappointedly, the wish was not granted. Or should one say the prayer was not reckoned with since it was not address to anyone in particular – whether terrestrial or celestial. The first prayer comment could be said to have been answered. Peace and order actually reigned during and after the election. There were no reported cases of killings, political thuggery and violence during and after the election. This is not to say that the presence of deployed security personnel was no factor in keeping peace and order during and after the election.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study examined facebook comments on the 2018 gubernatorial election in Ekiti State, Nigeria. It found out that most of the comments on the 2018 gubernatorial election are politically maligning and condemnatory of politics and politicians in the Nigeria society. Only one of the comments appears politically enriching, advocating and motivating. Another of the comment, though spiritual, was with positive possibilities. Given that politically maligning comments and condemnation of politics and politicians do not in any way help provide for political information exchange and discourse, the following recommendations are hereby made for an enduring political participation, information exchange, and good governance in the long run:

- i. Facebook users should understand that hate/maligned speeches do not influence positive reactions from anyone rather they spread the fire of bitterness and retaliation that does no one any good and by extension the society.

- ii. Users of social media should employ comments that can help reduce abusive expressions by intelligently appealing to the sense of maturity and reasons of every user before making his/her own expectedly enriching comment.
- iii. As a corollary to the above, facebook users can decide to act as check on users' comment by visiting (facebook) on weekly bases to stir the tide of comments towards enlightened discourse, and information exchange. Though, financially demanding but with amazing positive possibilities.
- iv. Facebook users can connect with other social media platforms with the aim of influencing concern users in the course of political discourse and information exchange. This can be done through intimating other social media users of need for responsible comments for the betterment of all and sundry in the Nigerian society, and in particular Ekiti State.

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