Information needs and sources of electorates in Nigeria

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this study was to examine the information needs and sources of electorates in Nigeria and identify challenges faced when obtaining electoral information and news.

Design/methodology/approach – The study adopts the description survey design and hypothesized the information needs and sources on demographic variables such as age, sex and academic qualification. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used. A quantitative approach used based on a questionnaire completed by 236 respondents and a snow ball nonprobability sampling technique was used in this study. The research adapted Wilson 1999 theory of information seeking behavior.

Findings – The findings identified five information needs that are of interest to the electorates: registration of voter, level of security, right as a voter, manifestoes and candidate profile. It was discovered that WhatsApp, Facebook and friends were sources electorates used most in obtaining election-related news and information. The research went further to streamline the number of times such election-related news and information items were sought in a day and week; it was discovered that the manual system still dominated with the print newspaper rather than Twitter, WhatsApp, friends and colleagues and Facebook. The young person used social media most as source of information compared to aged respondents in Nigeria. Thekre is increasing in women participating in political and electoral information. Formal education does not have significant impact on the usage of election information and news. Language barrier, erratic power supply, expensive network service and no knowledge of where to source for information proved to be challenges electorates faced when seeking election-related news and information.

Research limitations/implications – This research will help to keep abreast of the information electorate needs and how they get such information. This research is limited to small group of electorates.

Practical implications – This paper includes more information about the electorates and political parties information needs.

Social implications – The finding was drawn from limited respondents that were ready to participate in the research by responding to various questions in the questionnaire. Therefore, there is need for further study to consider a wider population scope on information-related research of electorate in Nigeria.

Originality/value – This research was carried out by Ayinde Lateef; Keriafe D.E. and Fatima Ghayen.

Keywords Information, Information needs, Information sources, Electorates, Political parties

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Electorates are the decision-makers when choosing the legitimate person to lead a state, country or local government. Electorates drive the force that leads to good governance, leadership and healthy economy by voting for the best person at the best time and in the best situation (Pande, 2011; Banerjee *et al.*, 2011). They stated that information campaigns will increase the number of voters and adjust the level of electoral malpractice. In choosing the best person that will lead, there is a need to have a pre-information or knowledge about the person to be voted, their credibility, where to vote, security of the polling booths and other necessary information in order to choose the best person which will in turn shape the decision-making of a country to a greater height. Information is any piece of text or data, document, report, book collection, knowledge, market intelligence, link, association, perception, hunch or simple idea

held in any medium (Ayinde and Omotayo, 2017). Information can be in any form; print, nonprint, signs, emoji, etc.

Elections in many countries are growing into intense information-savvy and political parties use the entire medium available to reach out their potential voters (Majid *et al.*, 2012, 2017). Political parties used both print and online medium to galvanize the interest of electorates to vote for them via social networks, flyers, magazines, newspapers, emoji. In order for a voter to make an informed decision about which candidate to support in a given election, some minimal amount of information about the candidates is necessary – be it policy stances, ideology, partisan affiliation, interest group endorsements or trait evaluations (Utych and Kam, 2014). These electorates need information in order to keep them abreast of the developments in the electoral processes, candidates to be voted, the level of security at polling booths, the right as an electorates, party manifestoes which will in turn influence the electorates' decision-making on which political parties to vote or the candidates to vote for based on the kind of information they collect, process and use. Kaye and Johnson (2002) asserted that voters' demographics, media attributes and the level of political involvement have influence on the kind of information electorates preferred. Age, sex and academic qualification have influence on the electoral information needs of the electorate. It is believed if electorates have abundance, well informed and right sources, these will motivate them to participate effective in the electoral processes and choose the right leader which will in turn shape the nation's economy to better one and vice versa. Change in Information and Communication Technologies developments have brought about a modern dimension to election-related news and information (Larsson and Ihlen, 2015, Enli, 2017). The advent of the online medium of conveying information especially social media: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube has influenced the electorates in choosing their candidates.

Information is connected with the socioeconomic conditions occurring in an environment and is seen as one of the essential process of social development; therefore, lack of information is believed to act as a barrier to development (Wakelin and Simelane, 1995; Omotayo, 2018). As a result of the lack of sufficient information, one of the marketing strategies politicians and political organizations are not utilizing effectively and efficiently, is the opportunities from the social media (Cogburn and Espinoza-Vasquez, 2011). Social media is one of the tools used by many political parties and politicians to capture the attention of their potential and habitual electorates.

Nigeria is one of the countries in which democratic development is rapidly growing and elections determine who will rule and how the economy will develop; this has a greater impact on the economy. Leaders have a large causative influence on the economic outcomes of their nations and also it was documented that economic growth connects with the support from the government (Jones and Olken, 2005; Duch and Stevenson, 2008; Lucardi, 2019). The person elected has a great influence on the economy, the kind of policies implemented and the governing styles to be applied. The votes of the public shape the kind of leaders that will rule and if there is adequate information pertaining to the vote, which candidate to vote for at the right time, in the right language, in the right structure and in the right format. These will propel electorates to be more informed and motivate them to participate in electoral processes and make critical judgments when voting, which will in turn, lead to inclusive government, good economy and good decision-making. Theoretical work that elaborates on quality of voters' information to turnout asserted that, informed persons are more likely to exercise their suffrage than the uninformed (Feddersen and Pesendorfer, 1996, 1999). They went further to state that informed voters will not elect the worse person as their leader. An informed electorate will think beyond the box in exercising his or her political franchise based on the kind of information he obtained. An informative electorate tends to exercise his or her franchise than an uninformed electorate, that is, informed electorates will not make mistake in thumbing at the polling booth for the wrong candidate, filling out the ballot paper for more than one party, not marking the ballot paper or defacing the ballot paper what will invalid; will know his or her rights on the day of the election. More informed electorates can be deceived by traditional attack tools such as buying of vote and ethnicity (Pande, 2011; Von and Kuhn, 2020). This can lead to the

question on creation of credible electorate news and information sources for low income countries like Nigeria?

The research by Hamalai *et al.* (2017) shows that as voting age population increases in Nigeria, the voters' turnout decreases in the presidential election; decreases in voters' turnout in 2007, 2011 and 2015 were 57.1%, 53.7%, 43.7%, respectively. Some of the dysfunctions identified by scholars in electoral processes in Nigeria led to decline in voters' turnout are vote buying, manipulation of voters through appeal to sectarian sentiments and other primordial considerations including intimidation/coercion and rigging (Hamalai *et al.*, 2017). The aspect of information needs and sources of electorates in Nigeria, which is germane to the success of elections and good governance need to be researched.

The aim of this study is to answer these questions:

(1) What are the information needs of electorates?

(2) What sources of information do electorates use?

(3) What sources of information do electorates prefer to use?

(4) What are the challenges electorates faced when obtaining needed information?

H1. Male and female electorate information need will not differ significantly.

H2. There will be no significant difference between different levels of academic qualification on source of information use for related information.

H3. Electorate age categories will not differ significantly in the use of social media and non-social media sources of information.

Literature review
Voting is one of the easiest ways eligible citizens exercise their enfranchisement. Political parties need to pass information to the electorates about their programs, manifestoes and achievements which will enable them to be more informed about their potential candidate and the necessary information needed as an electorate. The government or electoral body needs to keep the electorates informed of their rights as an electorate, important of voting, polling booths and other necessary information. Political parties and electoral bodies use the entire medium available to select, organize, process, inform and communicate information in order to reach their habitual and potential electorates. With the development of the modern medium of communication such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube; political parties influence their potential and habitual voters via the use of ICT and other media in their public opinion. Campaigning is one of the ways which the political candidates select, organize and disseminate information to the electorates. Information can be disseminated to the electorates in different forms (Karlsen, 2010). Majid *et al.* (2017) classified election campaigns into three broad categories: premodern campaigns (newspaper phase), modern campaigns (television phase) and postmodern campaigns (digital phase) with extensive use of computer-generated content.

The premodern campaign is the first phase, which was mainly the print, that is, the newspapers, posters, handbills, flyers; stickers are used to disseminate electoral-related information and news to electorates. These sources limit information channels from the political parties to the audience. Print media does not attract a wider audience rather it is targeted to a specific audience and campaigns could be controlled easily through the print media. There is no flexibility in terms of feedback. The second phase which is the television

phase is where campaigns and political activities could reach wider electorates. Broadcast media has easy access and speedy electoral-related information and news to meet the electorates' needs which will reach a larger percentage of the electorate. Pate (2012) argues that the mass media have remained in the fore of the struggle to promote the rights of individuals through a reputable election method. Furthermore, Matsa (2018) carried a study at Pew Research Center on some countries such as Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom; he asserted that at least 70% affirmed that they received news daily via TV. Television also has limitation in terms of reaching the larger electorates compared to the postmodern campaigns.

The postmodern campaigns (digital phase) involves use of computer-generated content extensively, which implies the Internet campaign phase, which is common in this 21st century where the electorate have direct access to their candidate without sitting together in the same room and it gives room for spontaneous feedback. Social media is widely used to communicate with electorates, gain support and mobilize the electorates. Politicians are exposed to users directly irrespective of demographic characteristics and political interest (Diaz, *et al.*, 2016; Nielsen and Vaccari, 2013; Gayo-Avello *et al.*, 2013). It provides the avenue where voters have a cordial interaction and relax atmosphere with a candidate whom they cannot have direct access. The Internet phase can be targeted to specific electorates within a Local Government, State Government, country, workplaces or organizations. It turns potential electorates to habitual electorates via the use of social media to influence the thought and thinking of the electorates prior to the election. The Internet propels political participation of ordinary citizens who do not participate in political engagement to habitual political electorates who will be more engaged with political information; involved in political discussion and interact with citizens based on the informed knowledge (Chadwick, 2006). A lot of scholars opined that Internet use has a positive influence on citizens' political participation (Corrado, 1996; Whillock, 1997; Bucy; Gregson, 2001; Tolbert and McNeal, 2003; Johnson and Kaye, 2004; Shah *et al.*, 2005).

Social media provides direct access to candidates compared with the other media such as television, newspapers. They have to adapt to the unique affordances of social media sites (Hoffmann and Suphan, 2017; Jungherr, Schoen and Jürgens, 2016). It gives the oppositions opportunity to relate with other political parties via their social media platforms and easy feedback from other political parties. It also gives room to disseminate information to the grass root and also feedback. Some researchers argued that social media has brought politicians and parties to the grassroots especially giving the potential voters that opportunity to interact with the party and party candidates. Obama campaigning in 2008 provides a very good example of citizen participation in political campaigns via the use of the power social media (Barr, 2009). In 2010 election campaign in Australia, Bruns and Burgess (2011) state that social media exercised an important function in meeting the information needs of Australian during election especially via Facebook and Twitter; despite the fact that the political parties did not really make use of these platforms effectively. In a research carried out by Towner (2013) identifies that traditional media did not increase offline and online political participation; instead, participation made effective use of the online sources, especially Twitter, presidential candidate websites, Facebook and blogs.

Twitter has become one of the most popular sites on the Internet. Twitter provides the platform where there are spontaneous feedbacks from parties and candidates when electorates tweet to ask or passage information. Research carried out by Todd *et al.* (2013) shows that over 60% of candidates' tweets were utilized tweet and retweet specific information. They went further to explain that giving updates from the campaign trail to promote themselves or party members, and critiquing opponents are central to the element of election campaigns.

Political information and sources

Different political parties use different information strategies in getting to their potential and habitual electorates. Politicians used various new methods of disseminating information to the masses which will in turn galvanize the voters (Davis and Owen, 1998; Owen, 2017) amassed news ways of conveying messages to the public, other elites and the press, influencing constituents' opinions, recruiting volunteers and donors, and mobilizing voters (Davis and Owen, 1998; Owen, 2017). The political party, the country, the religious setting or the culture of the people will determine the strategy employed to navigate and disseminate political information to the electorates. Lilleker *et al.* (2015) identified recent forms of participation in their work on Polish elections and that Internet can have wider impact on political participation while Gibson (2015) disagrees that the rise of citizen-initiated campaigning (CIC) passes power to the hands of the grassroots, thereby challenging the dominant professionalized model of campaigning.

A political strategy identified by Chadha and Guha (2016) asserted that BJP's India strategized on how to win the election by party functionaries and volunteers. He devised the use of volunteer platforms where supporters can connect with the party leaders via registered via e-mail address in order to provide them with suggestions and advice. He also creates social media apps which translate to different languages in India to reach people at the grassroots, converted it to songs, stating Modi's achievements, slogans, political jokes and messages. Selfies snapped during campaigns goes viral and they were always tweeting during campaigning periods. He used technologies to capture the attention of the electorates. These strategies adopted by the BJP leader changes from the usual local campaigning strategy to Web 2.0 campaigning strategy. This case study embraces the online technologies' campaigns where electorates have direct access to candidates and the overall imperatives of the command and control logic of campaign structures remain significant (Chadha and Guha, 2016).

However, this online political strategy is questioned by scholars who argued that social media has a less significant impact on political knowledge or a sense of personal efficacy or participation (Zhang and Chia, 2006). Karpf (2013) points out that empirical research has shown only a little, positive correlations between Internet use and various forms of political participation and, sometimes no concrete relationships at all. Others, such as Hindman (2009), have stressed that it is only little small persons that participate on the Internet, while Stromer-Galley (2014), commenting on citizen engagement in contemporary US presidential campaigns concludes that, although much hope still pervades popular and academic thinking about digital technologies (especially the communication technologies captured by the phrase social media).

The 2012 US election was labeled the first "Facebook election", as the Democratic Party invested millions of dollars in targeted adverts and network analysis using social media platforms. The strategy Donald Trump used to defeat Hilary Clinton was through fake news. Research proof shows that 62% folks, adults get news on social media (Gottfried and Shearer, 2016); the foremost common pretend news stories were additional wide shared on Facebook than the foremost common thought news stories (Silverman, 2016). Many people see pretend news stories report and they believe them (Silverman and Singer-Vine, 2016). The most mentioned pretend news stories attended favor Donald Trump over Clinton (Silverman, 2016). Bringing these facts together, Donald Trump might not be elected presidents if not for the effects of fake news suggested by some commentators (Parkinson, 2016; Read, 2016; Dewey, 2016). Also, Allcott and Gentzkow (2017) affirmed that use of fake news by Donald Trump was widely shared over social media. They released that less than 115 pro-Trump fake stories communicated on Facebook, and 41 pro-Clinton fake stories shared a total of 7.6 million times. The content of fake news could not be filtered or fact-check by electorates which could make many believe such information or news is real and can reach many readers via the Internet.

Šuminas, and Mierzecka, (2014) did a research on political information sources of young citizens in Lithuanian asserted that the cogent sources young people obtain their political information is from the Internet while social media was very low as sources of political information in Lithuanian especially in interacting with political parties and politicians. In Netherland, a study carried out by Moeller (2014) shows that newspaper reading played a cogent role among traditional sources of political information in analyzing internal political efficacy among adolescent while the political information online obtains the strongest impact on internal efficacy. Also in Italy, Political information strategy Grillo used in the 2013 election was identifying and coding political themes (information) that could capture the attention of Italians and made them mainstreams: corruption, bribery, sexual scandals and the politics of privileges and favors (Bartlett *et al.*, 2013a, b). BeppeGrillo using the social media as the primary medium of connecting and conversing of achievements, development and organization; his movement has matured from zero political force to a serious political force in Italy the space of three years (Bartlett *et al.*, 2013a, b). He formed the M5S – 5 Star Movement, which focused on the Internet in getting the attention of the activists at the local level. Koo *et al.*, (2015) carried a research on the role of podcast (social media) transform politics, the South Korean presidential election where political podcasts (NaneunGgomsuda) was used to influence the election which gained popularity because it raised several allegations with supporting evidence against the incumbent president Lee Myung-bak which major media such as newspapers, television cannot publicly criticize . This strategy can be used where the government did not allow the opposition to have access to the media when the incumbent government owns or influences the media outlets and infrastructures.

In Africa, social media was used in causing major political changes in the 21st century and beyond. The advent of social media in North Africa revolutionized Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, where citizens were having free access to the Internet. In 2011, Egyptians used Facebook, Twitter and YouTube as a method of communicating, organizing demonstrations and rallies to overthrow the President. Statistics show that during this time the rate of tweets from Egypt increased from 2,300 to 230,000 per day and the top 23 protest videos on YouTube had approximately 5.5 million views (Al-sebaei, 2013).

Wilson (1999) Theory of information seeking behavior
Information seeking, searching have seen many theories developed in the past decades by information behavior researchers (Ellis, 1989, 1993; Dervin, 1992; Kuhlthau, 1993; Wilson, 1999). Basically, these theories centered on the behaviors and characteristics of different persons as a results of their information needs. For instance, Ellis presents her model of information seeking behavior as elements of behavior that may occur in different sequences with different persons, or with the same person at different times, Kuhlthau identifies specific stages on the basis of her analysis of behavior of the "information search process", Dervin model comprises situation, gap and use as the three important steps of information behavior of users. However, Wilson diverse theories of information seeking behavior borders around the information need of a person. In 1981 Wilson developed his first model of information seeking behavior in which he suggested that information need arises as a result of resolving specific problem, he added that while satisfying the information need, user encounter barriers. Over the years, Wilson have reviewed his first model by drawing upon research from a variety of fields other than information science, including decision making, psychology, innovation, health communication and consumer research (Wilson, 1999). In 1999, Wilson went further to stress on the intricacies of context of information seeking process. The 1999 model of Wilson is commonly known as the Macro-model which comprises of three important aspect:

(1) Why information seeking is more likely to occur in response to some needs more than others?

(2) Why some information sources are more used by the users than others? and

(3) Why user's opinions of their own competence influences their success in meeting an information goal? (Rather and Ganaie, 2019).

The questions why information seeking is more likely to occur in response to some needs more than others and why some information sources are more used by the users than others explored in Wilson (1999) theory are quite relevant for the study of electorate information need and sources for election-related information. Hence the study will seek to understand electorate information needs, their sources of information and why they prefer some information sources than the others as indicated in Wilson (1999) theory of information behavior

Methodology
The study examined the information needs and sources of electorates in Nigeria. The primary method of data collection was a questionnaire which was applied to those who had voted at least once, that is, 18 years or older, registered with the electorate body and a Nigerian. The questionnaire contains sections on information needs, information sources and problems encountered when obtaining needed information on voting. The first part of the questionnaire contained demographic information about the respondents, age, sex, religion and educational qualification. The next section of the questionnaire asserted the number of times the respondent had voted. The third stage contains the information needs, sources and challenges electorates faced when obtaining information needed on voting and it also contains data on respondents' perceptions of the credibility of the information accessed via different sources. SPSS package was used for data analysis.

A small group of electorates was used as a pretest for two weeks. Based on feedback, the questionnaire was revised to the final form. Convenience snowball method was used for data collection where the questionnaire was distributed at various congregation, platforms, party meetings and political gatherings. This was done for 10 weeks. A total of 236 questionnaire were suited for the analysis. Both descriptive and inferential statistics (Independent samples test, general linear model tests and analysis of variance [ANOVA]) were used to analyze the data collected. The challenges encountered during the distribution of the questionnaire was getting across to respondents, language barriers and those not interested in providing information on the election.

Findings and discussion
The demographic characteristics of the 236 respondents for this study were electorates that were eligible to vote, 18 years and above and have voted at least once. Table 1 shows profile of which 36.0% were male and 64.0% were female, this means the more than 60% of the respondents were female. Majority of the respondents were in tertiary education which was over 50%, this shows that 56.3% of the respondents were highly educated and only 5.5% were not educated. The age table shows that 54.2 % were between 26–35 years, followed by 36–45 years which contained 23.7%, that is, 26–45 years contains 77.9 % of the 100 % of the age population. This means that 77.9% were youth (see Table 2).

This table indicates that the respondents with the highest number in terms of number of times voted, voted twice which was 36.4 % and the lowest was four times which was 11.4 %, this indicates that most of the respondents were knowledgeable on voting (see Table 3).

Characteristic n (%)	n (%)
Gender	
Male	85 (36.0)
Female	151 (64.0)
Academic qualification	
Primary school	30 (12.6)
Secondary school	59 (24.8)
Tertiary education	134 (56.3)
None	13 (5.5)
Age	
18–25	31 (13.1)
26–35	128 (54.2)
36–45	56 (23.7)
46–55	7 (3.0)
56-above	14 (5.9)
Religion	
Islam	92 (39.0)
Christian	121 (51.3)
Others	23 (9.7)

Table 1.
Demographic
characteristics of study
participants

	Frequency	
Once	30	12.7
Twice	86	36.4
Thrice	43	18.2
Fourth	27	11.4
Fifth	50	21.2
Total	236	100.0

Table 2.
Number of times voted

Rank	Information needs	Very important	Important	Some what important	Not important
1	Registration of voter	38.1%	58.1%	0.8%	3.0%
2	Level of security	68.6%	22.5%	2.1%	6.8%
3	Right as a voter	46.7%	37.7%	14.8%	0.8%
4	Manifestoes of each party	63.1%	17.4%	8.1%	11.4%
5	Candidate profile	39.4%	41.1%	18.6%	0.8%
6	Party endorsement	48.3%	30.1%	17.8%	3.8%
7	Registration deadlines	34.7%	41.9%	13.6%	9.7%
8	Election calendar	16.9%	18.6%	33.5%	30.9%
9	Update on my registration	9.7%	41.5%	26.3%	22.5%
10	Electorate sites	17.4%	33.1%	32.6%	17.0%
11	Location of polling booth	18.6%	26.3%	22.9%	32.2%
12	Election officer	14.0%	14.8%	34.7%	36.4%

Table 3.
Information needs of
electorates

From the table above, respondents were questioned about their information needs. 12 sets of phrases were used to gather information. The main reason is to identify the respondents' information needs. Data from the first two columns (important and very important) were merged to determine ranking of these information needs. The highest information need was

registration of voter 96.2%, then level of security 91.4%, then right as a voter 84.4%, followed by manifestoes 80.5%, followed by candidate profiles 80.5%, while location of polling booth and update on my registration were the least information needs of respondents with 44.9% and 28.8%. This means that respondents information needs revolves more on registration of voters, level of security before election, during election and after election, rights as a voter, the manifestoes and candidate profiles.

The research went further in addressing the hypothesis stating that male and female electorate information need did not show significant difference, the independent t-test was employed. From the analysis, the Levene's test for equality of variances is greater than 0.05 ($P > 0.05$) then we concluded that there is equality of variance. Hence, the top row of t-value was considered. However, the various items of information needs were computed into a single variable as electorate information need. Table 4 present results of the difference between male and female electorate information need. Obviously, male electorate information need (Mean = 24.329, SD = 3.441) is lower from their female counterpart (Mean = 26.331, SD = 3.471). The mean difference between male and female information need was −2.001 and 95% confidence interval for the estimated population mean difference is between −2.926 and −1.077. The test shows that there is significant difference between male and female electorate information need. This means that female electorate in Nigeria seek more information to help them participate better in the electoral process (see Table 5).

This table shows how respondents obtain election-related news and information. The purpose is to enlighten the government and also the political parties to channels which they could mobilize or catch the attention of the delegates in order to acquire election-related news and information which will in turn motivate them to participate in the election. The table indicates that Whatsapp was the most used source of getting information during the election with 17.8%, followed by Facebook 13.6%, then friends and colleague 13.1%, then party site 11.4%, the least used for sourcing for election-related news and information were YouTube 1.7%, library/information center 2.1%, text messages 1.3%. The uses of online sources to get election information were the most used sources; Whatsapp and Facebook (see Table 6).

From the table above, the researcher went further to break the information sources to specific frequency in order to have exact information sources by the number of times they are used. The set of 15 information sources were used to collect data in order to identify the most preferred source of seeking related election information. The data of the first two columns were combined to finalize the ranking of these frequency sources used (3–4 times daily and 1–2 times daily). The table shows print newspapers were the most used source of seeking election-related information which was 87.3%. This shows that the respondent still believed in the print media (newspapers), followed by Twitter 81.1%, then Whatsapp 75.8%, then friends and colleagues 61.1%, then Facebook 58.9%. This shows that the newspaper was mostly used to obtaining related election information because it is one of the primary sources and it is difficult to spread fake news with print media compared to online sources. Other social media such as Twitter and Whatsapp were identified as other strong methods of sourcing election related news and information. The three least used sources were Blogs, Library and Information and NGO's. The Library/Information center which ought to be disseminator of knowledge is not playing her roles in providing the needed information for electorates (see Table 7).

From the above table, it shows that most of the sources were credible 82(34.7%); followed by highly credible which is 57 (24.2%), combination of credible and highly credible shows that the total is 58.9% and only 13 (5.5%) asserted that the sources were not perceived credible (see Table 8).

The results in Table 8 provide information on the general linear model test for significant difference between the various electorate academic qualifications and their sources for related information use. The report shows that there was no statistically significant

		Levene's test for equality of variances		*t*-test for equality of means				95% confidence interval of the difference	
		F	Sig	*T*	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean diff	Lower	Upper
Electorate information need	Equal variances assumed	0.022	0.883	−4.266	234	0.000	−2.001	−2.926	−1.077
	Equal variances not assumed			−4.276	175.532	0.000	−2.001	−2.925	−1.077

Note(s): Male (*n* = 85) Mean = 24.329 SD = 3.441; Female (*n* = 151) Mean = 26.331 SD = 3.471

Sources	Frequency	Percent
Whatsapp	42	17.8
Facebook	32	13.6
Friend or colleague	31	13.1
Political Party Website	27	11.4
Electoral Website	19	8.1
Radio	18	7.6
Party meeting	14	5.9
Television	13	5.5
NGO	9	3.8
Newspaper	8	3.4
Twitter	8	3.4
Library\information center	5	2.1
Blogs	3	1.3
YouTube	4	1.7
Text	3	1.3
Total	238	100.0

Table 5.
Source of
information used

Source	3–4 times a day	1–2 time a day	3–4 time a week	Irregularly	Never
Newspaper	70.8%	16.5%	8.9%	0.8%	3.0%
Twitter	22.5%	58.6%	9.7%	9.7%	0%
Whatsapp	36.4%	39.4%	21.2%	3.0%	0%
Friend or coll	31.4%	29.7%	32.2%	6.8%	0.0%
Facebook	44.9%	14.0%	28.8%	12.3%	0.0%
Radio	23.3%	31.4%	27.5%	4.7%	13.1%
Party site	19%	15.7%	12.7%	29.7%	33.9%
Campaign flyer	1.7%	19.5%	14.8%	19.9%	44.1%
Text	15.3%	33.1%	17.8%	18.6%	15.3%
Television	10.6%	34.7%	28.0%	6.4%	20.3%
Party meetings	10.6%	34.7%	28.0%	6.4%	20.3%
Electoral guide	7.2%	27.1%	20.8%	17.8%	27.1%
NGO	8.9%	17.4%	15.3%	16.5%	41.9%
Library and Inf	13.1%	11.4%	27.1%	16.5%	31.8%
Blog	0.8%	1.3%	23.3%	46.6%	28.0%

Table 6.
Most preferred source
of information used

	Frequency	Percent
Least credible	47	19.9
Somewhat credible	37	15.7
Not credible	13	5.5
Credible	82	34.7
Highly credible	57	24.2
Total	236	100.0

Table 7.
Perceptions of
credibility of the
sources

difference ($F(3,232) = 0.903$, $P > 0.05$, partial $n^2 = 0.012$) of the sources used for information by electorate academic qualifications, hence the need for carrying out post hoc (unplanned) range tests for multiple comparisons to determine which means differ became inappropriate. This implies that the information source used by electorate to gather useful information on

Dependent variable: electorate information source

Source	Type III sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig	Partial eta squared	Qualification	Mean	Std. dev
Corrected model	53.759[a]	3	17.920	0.903	0.441	0.012	Primary ($n = 30$)	42.6667	5.65889
Intercept	218946.042	1	218946.042	11,029.969	0.000	0.979	Secondary ($n = 59$)	42.8814	4.00898
Qualification	53.759	3	17.920	0.903	0.441	0.012	Tertiary ($n = 134$)	42.1642	4.30805
Error	4605.224	232	19.850				None ($n = 13$)	44.0000	4.79583
Total	431104.000	236					Total ($n = 236$)	42.5085	4.45258
Corrected Total	4658.983	235							

Note(s): a. $R^2 = 0.012$ (Adjusted $R^2 = -0.001$)

Table 8.
General linear model tests of between electorate academic qualifications

the electoral process does not depend on the different levels of electorate educational background (see Table 9).

However to gain further insight on the sources of information made available to electorate in the study, the researcher computed five sources: WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Blogs and YouTube into social media sources and the other 10 sources were computed into non-social media sources separately. The study hypothesizes insignificant difference on social media/nonsocial media sources used by electorate age categories. To achieve this, one way ANOVA test for significant difference between age categories of electorate and the two types of media sources use for related information was tested. The result shows that there was a statistically significant difference of nonsocial media (F-ratio = 0.903, SD = 4.30569 $p < 0.05$), social media (F-ratio = 13.636, SD = 4.30569 $p < 0.05$) sources used for information by the electorate age categories. This obviously depict that the use of social media and nonsocial media sources for related information depends on electorate age categories since there is significant differences between the sources and their age categories. Therefore Tables 10 and 11 provide detailed information of the Bonferroni post hoc range tests for multiple comparisons between the age categories to determine the point of significant difference.

Employing the Bonferroni post hoc test to identify were the significant difference lies between electorate age categories and their use of nonsocial media sources for related information gathering, the table above shows that significant differences were found between electorates in the age category of 26–35 years and 56 years and above ($p < 0.05$), between 36–45 years and 56 years and above ($p < 0.05$). This could mean that electorate who are 45 years and below use nonsocial media sources differently from those who are probably 50 years and above.

More so, on the use of social media sources for related information by electorate age categories, the Bonferroni post hoc test in Table 11 shows that there is a strong significant difference between electorate within the age category of 18–25 years and 36–45 years

Table 9.
Summary of one way ANOVA of nonsocial media and social media information sources by electorate age categories

	Information source	N	Mean	SD	Sum of squares	DF	Mean square	F-ratio	Sig
Electorate age difference	Nonsocial media	236	32.4619	4.30569	184.738	4	46.185	2.557	0.040
	Social media	236	13.2797	2.24986	227.221	4	56.805	13.636	0.000

Dependent variable: non social media sources

					95% confidence interval	
(I) Age	(J) Age	Mean difference (I-J)	Std error	Sig	Lower bound	Upper bound
18–25	26–35	0.40600	0.85070	1.000	−2.0051	2.8171
	36–45	0.84908	0.95136	1.000	−1.8473	3.5455
	46–55	1.31336	1.77838	1.000	−3.7270	6.3537
	56 and above	−3.04378	1.36843	0.271	−6.9223	0.8347
26–35	36–45	0.44308	0.68088	1.000	−1.4867	2.3729
	46–55	0.90737	1.64959	1.000	−3.7680	5.5827
	56 and above	−3.44978*	1.19629	0.043	−6.8404	−0.0592
36–45	46–55	0.46429	1.70368	1.000	−4.3644	5.2930
	56 and above	−3.89286*	1.26985	0.024	−7.4919	−0.2938
46–55	56 and above	−4.35714	1.96725	0.277	−9.9328	1.2185

Table 10.
Bonferroni post hoc test of multiple comparisons by age

Note(s): The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

($p = 0.000$), between those within 26–35 years and 36–45 years ($p = 0.000$) and a weak significant difference between those within 36–45 years and 56 years and above ($p = 0.045$). This might implies that social media sources were more appealing and dynamic to those who are 45 years and below than those who are above 50 years of age (see Table 12).

It indicates that electric power service has the highly frequency 79 (33.5%); followed by language barrier 56 (23.7%), followed by expensive network service 44 (18.6%), followed by no knowledge of where to source for the required information 43 (18.2%).

Discussion
The information needs and sources of electorates differ from country to country obtaining election related information and news based on age, gender, academic qualifications or just exposure to latest information. Findings of this study show that there are 236 respondents which were valid from the questionnaire. The respondents valid for voting must be atleast 18 years, registered to vote and as a voter at least once. It shows that the numbers of female in this research are more than 60%, respondents with tertiary education are more than 50% and that between 18–35 years had more than 60% of the respondents, which means we have more of youths, educated respondents and females in this research which makes the research more modern generational research that will survive for the future.

The information needs of electorates
The study analyzes the number of times voters had voted, it shows that voters who had voted twice had the highest frequency, followed by those who had voted five times, then those who

					95% confidence interval	
(I) Age	(J) Age	Mean difference (I-J)	Std error	Sig	Lower bound	Upper bound
18–25	26–35	0.96547	0.40857	0.190	−0.1925	2.1235
	36–45	2.96659	0.45692	0.000	1.6716	4.2616
	46–55	2.21659	0.85411	0.101	−0.2042	4.6374
	56 and above	1.21659	0.65723	0.654	−0.6462	3.0793
26–35	36–45	2.00112	0.32701	0.000	1.0743	2.9280
	46–55	1.25112	0.79226	1.000	−0.9943	3.4966
	56 and above	0.25112	0.57455	1.000	−1.3773	1.8795
36–45	46–55	−0.75000	0.81824	1.000	−3.0691	1.5691
	56 and above	−1.75000[*]	0.60988	0.045	−3.4786	−0.0214
46–55	56 and above	−1.00000	0.94482	1.000	−3.6779	1.6779

Dependent variable: Social media sources

Note(s): The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

Table 11.
Bonferroni post hoc test of multiple comparisons by age

	Frequency	Percent
Language barrier	56	23.7
Electric power service	79	33.5
Expensive network service	44	18.6
No knowledge of where to source for the required information	43	18.2
Poor services offered	5	2.1
There is no time	5	2.1
Others	4	1.7
Total	236	100.0

Table 12.
Challenges faced when seeking for electoral information challenges electorates faced when meeting their electoral information and news

had voted three times while voters with the least voting time was four. This will inform us in evaluating information needs and use of different groups of voters. A descriptive analysis was run on 12 sets of phrases were used to gather information, the highest information need was registration of voter, level of security, right as a voter, manifestoes and candidate profiles while the least information needs by electorates are location of polling booth and update on my registration. This means that respondents need information most about registration of voters, level of security before election, during election and after election; rights as a voter, the manifestoes and candidate profiles. These information needs were needed during campaign, on the Election Day and also these will make voters to make informed decisions when making decisions to vote. One of the information needs needed most by electorates is level of security. Violence in election plagues from 20 to 25 % in Africa (Bekoe, 2010). Violence during pre voting, during voting and after voting where thousands died, this can erode people's faith in voting for the right candidate in order to save their lives. He elaborated that Nigeria had violence election recurrence. Collier and Vicente (2014) analyses the electoral violence in Nigeria and stated that the level of insecurity at the polling booth is enormous. Also Yoroms (2017) asserted that there were proliferation of small arms and ammunition by nonsecurity men (private security, militias or party thug) during the 2011 and 2015 election in Nigeria. According to research by Von and Kuhn (2020) asserted that in Africa, the more electorates are informed of electoral information the more they are exposed to violence by politicians and also violence during election which affects voters' turnout in Africa (Gutiérrez-Romero and LeBas, 2020). The least information need of the voters was updates on registration of the voters, electoral offences and election sites.

The researcher went further to analysis if there is significant differences between information needs and gender; findings show that information need of respondents by gender differs significantly; female electorates have higher information needs for decision-making compare to their male electorates. This means women are more informed of electorate information and news than male. The quest for more information by female electorate can be seen in their level of political involvement. In the past few years, the Nigeria political sphere has been experiencing enormous increase of female participation in voting at all level from 2015, 2011, 2007, 2003 and 1999 (Eme *et al.*, 2014). This is in line with Gine and Mansuri (2018) examines the effect of electorate mobilization campaign that aimed Pakistan women and realized a treatment effect on turnout. This is also in line with Sustainable Development Goal 16; active participation of women in political process, according to the research by World Federation of United National Association, sub-Sahara Africa and percentage of women in National parliaments in Nigeria was 23.9% in 2016. These have been as a result of different women organization working on gender equality in politics and motivating women to participate in politics which have achieve positive results (Nigeria, B.C., 2012; Ikelegbe, 2005; Nwangwu and Ezeibe, 2019). This shows that women are showing more interest in political or electorate information than before.

Sources of information use by electorate
In understanding the sources of information electorate use for obtaining election-related information, respondents were asked to identify the source of information they used for election related information from a list of information sources available to them. It was discovered that Whatsapp, Facebook, friends and Political Party Website were sources mostly used while the least consulted sources were YouTube and text.

The most preferred source
However, the research streamlined specific frequency in order to have exact information sources by the number of times they are used; respondents were asked to indicate the most

preferred sources used for information gathering according to the frequency of times a particular source was used. It was recorded that respondents mostly preferred Newspaper (print), Twitter, Whatsapp, friends or colleague, and Facebook for gathering election related information. Library and information centers, blogs, and NGOs were not as preferred as the aforementioned of information. The use of newspaper, text messages as dominant sources of electorate news and information can be attested by a research done by Aker *et al.* (2017) where newspaper print media, text messages has a positive influence on the treatment of voter turnout and (Gerber *et al.*, 2009, Baekgaard *et al.*, 2014); they identified that the newspapers has positive effects on voting behavior. Also, a research by Winchester *et al.*, (2014) identified that young electorates rely more traditional media (newspaper) than social media for electoral or political information.

More so, the study found out that the respondents educational background does not show significant difference in their use of these sources of information. This seems plausible in the wake of electorate participation in Nigeria election process, as more and more persons irrespective of their educational background show interest in a particular candidate and/or party, which is obviously seen in the huge turnout of electorates with different educational background in the 2015 and 2019 general election in Nigeria. This is arguable, because going to school does not mean you will have interest in politics or electoral processes. It is based on interest rather than education background. However, Wolfinger and Rosenstone (1980) differ in their analysis that citizens with degree were likely to vote more compared to citizen with people with schooling less than five year.

Furthermore, in computing the diverse information sources available for respondent responses into social and nonsocial media source of information, it was observed that electorate above 50 years significantly differ in the use of nonsocial media sources like newspaper than those below 46 years, thus on the social media use, the reverse was the case. This simply tells us that most youth in the study gather much information using social media tools like Whatsapp, Twitter and Facebook in Nigeria. These results are in line with the communication mediation model proposed by McLeod *et al.* (2010). It shows that youth communicate more on political or electoral information more to peers, politicians and others. Some political and media observers commented that social media played a significant role in the 2008 campaign in affecting young voters' political cognition and behaviors; Hesseldahl *et al.*, 2008; Marchese, 2008; Owen, 2008; Kushin and Yamamoto (2010) asserted that social media played a significant role in young voters; which was opposite to the findings by (Winchester *et al.* (2014) which analyzed that young voters in Australia used the traditional media (newspaper) most which played a major role in obtaining political or electoral information; while aged electorate prefer the newspapers, radio, television, party meetings, friends and colleagues and text massages. This means that the manual information sources {print newspaper} still dominates when getting election-related news and information in Nigeria and also beyond. It is still mostly preferred then followed by the social media (Twitter and Whatsapp). The Library is not seen as the first projecting the image as an advocate of necessary electoral news and information. The respondents perceived the sources has credible and dependable which the sources used most was the print media which do not convey fake news.

Challenges electorates faced when meeting their electoral information and news
From the analysis, it can be deduced that the major challenge electric power service, because there is always epileptic power supply which makes electorates not to be aware of the political or electoral information and news around them. Uninformed electorates will be deformed, electorates also lacks language barriers, the mode of communicate should be subdivided into local languages so that those at the rural areas could understand, digest and make informed

decisions when deciding on whom to vote for or on how to vote. Others are expensive network service, no knowledge of where to source for the required information. This is justifiable based on Table 11 which shows that the print media is the most used sources, when there is frequent epileptic power supply, electorate cannot used their phones to browse, radio or television to access electoral information and news, there will used the print media to obtain the electoral information they need.

Conclusion
Electorate information needs and sources of electorates are becoming critical issues in the world today. In Africa, it is needed in order to reach out to the electorates (potential and habitual) which will in turn accelerate the turnout of voters and will later shape the economy by voting for the best candidate. The purpose of this study was to examine the information need and sources of electorates in Nigeria and identify challenges electorates faced when obtaining electoral information and news. The findings established that more women and youth were involved in the study. It was required that only those who were above 18 years and have voted once were allowed to participate in the research. The results of our research show that information needs of electorates compared to other developed countries were different; our research shows that electorates are more interested in registration of electorate, security before, during and after election. Electorates mostly need information on registration of voters which is germane to electoral process and which will make the respondent valid as a voter; also the government should provide adequate information on availability of security during election because one of the things that hinder electorates from voting is the unsafe of lives before election, during election and after election. If the government can provide adequate information on the level of security on the lives of its citizens before election, at various polling booths and after election, this will increase the number of voters that will participate in election processes. The government should especially target electoral stakeholders (voters, candidates, election observers, electoral officers and media); electoral information (registration data, voting results and campaign materials); electoral facilities (ballot boxes, polling stations) and electoral events (campaign rallies, voter-education exercises, vote-counting exercises) (Fischer, 2002). The 2019 presidential election was not peaceful in Kano, Kaduna and some part of Lagos (source).

From the analysis, it shows that women are more participating in electoral process, news and information. Therefore, the government; nongovernmental organizations should advocate more for women participation in politics and electoral processes. The study also shows that academic qualification did not have affect on the sources of electorate information and news. Voting and information is not based on formal education rather it is based on developing interest in political and electoral news and information.

It is not amazing that the social media (Whatsapp and Facebook) is the main source through which electorates in Nigeria obtain their electoral news and information. However, when the researcher emphasized on the most preferred sources of electoral information, it is amazing that the traditional source which newspaper is the most preferred sources; therefore, the government, NGOs and politicians should used it as a medium to get across to electorates. The research shows differences in terms of age of electorates in Nigeria and the sources of information; electorates between ages of 18–45 years used less of nonsocial media than age 46 years and above. The research went further to analyzed the electoral information and news based on social media usage, it shows that social media are more appealing to electorate that are below 46 years. The government and political parties should reach out to younger electorates via the social media while aged electorates via nonsocial media. The government, politicians and political parties should structure information needed by electorates to suit their needs by providing the information in various media such as social and nonsocial media.

The government should provide voter education or literacy across local governments, state and federation where electorates can learn, unlearn and relearn about election; this will assist electorates in getting enlightened about the registration of voters and also motivate them to participate in the electoral processes. Also, political parties should structure information to captivate the attention of the electorates.

This research suggested if government, political parties and politicians should know and identify the information needs and sources, this will in turn accelerate the number of voters which will lead to good governance and leadership. This research contributed to literature by identifying unique information needs and sources of electorates which will assist the government, politicians and political parties to accelerate the number of electorates. Aside from vote buying, rigging, existing literature has not really highlighted the information needs and sources of electorate in Nigeria which identified that information on security before, during and after election is needed by electorate which may have effect on voter's turnout. Further research might deal deep on information on security in relation to voter's turnout.

The basic challenge faced by electorates in getting electoral news and information is epileptic power supply, the government should provide adequate power supply so that electorates could be informed or updated about election-related news/information. Also manage the network subscriptions or subsidiaries network data for electorates so that they could get adequate election related news/information. Political parties as well could provide network data for electorates. Political parties should structure their information in different languages, format (pdf, word, PowerPoint, graphic or pictorial) and also provide the best medium that will suit specific ethnic groups. The government and political parties should support civil society programs around media literacy. It is so dishearten that the library and information which ought to be a cogent source of electoral information in meeting the needs of the electorate is the least sources.

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Appendix

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear respondent,

This survey is on the **information needs and seeking behaviour of electorates in Nigeria.** The outcome of this research is expected to enlighten the recognized authorities on how to meet the information needs of electorates and provide the best channels of meeting the information needs of the electorate. This research will also give an understanding on how to get the right information to potential and habitual electorates at the right time and the right venue (New voters, registered non-voters, and potential voters).

Therefore, your sincere response will be appreciated as you are assured that the information supplied will be strictly treated with utmost confidentiality.

Thank you.

Kindly note that this is an independent research

Instruction: Kindly tick (√) the suitable response

1. Gender: A. Female   [ ]   B. Male[ ]
2. Age: A. 18-25 years [ ] B. 26-35 years [[C. 36-45years [ ]
    D. 46-55years [ ] E. 56years and above [ ]
3. Academic Qualifications
    A. Primary Education [ ] B. Secondary Education [ ] C. Tertiary Education [ ] D. None [ ]
4. Religion: A. Islam [ ]   B. Christian [ ]   C. Traditional [   ]
5. How many times have you voted? A. None [ ] B. Once [ ] C. Twice [ ]
    D. Thrice [ ]   E. Thrice + [ ]
6. Tick (√) how important these information needs are to you as an electorate from the table below.

Information on:	Very important	Important	Somewhat important	Not important
Location of polling booth				
Election calendar				
Update on my registration				
Election officers				
Registration of voter				
Level of Security				
Electorate sites				
Party endorsement				
Candidates' profile				
Location of polling booth				
Electorate sites				
Manifesto of each party				

7. How do you source for information as an electorate? Tick as many as it applies to you.

Source on:	
Electoral Website	
Radio	
Television	
Party site	
Face book	
Twitter	
Blogs	
YouTube	
Whatsapp	
Text	
Friend or Colleagues	
Library/information centres	
News papers	
NGO	
Party Meetings	
Newspaper	
Blog	

8. What information sources for does electorate? Tick as many as it applies to you?

Source on:	3-4 times a day	1-2 time a day	3-4 time a week	Irregularly	Never
Radio					
Television					
Party meetings					
Face book					
Twitter					
Blogs					
Whatsapp					
Text					
Friend or Colleague					
Library/information centres					
News papers					
NGO					
Party site					
Campaign Flyer					
Electoral guide					

9. What are the challenges you face as an electorate when seeking for information?
    Tick as many as it applies to you
    A. Language barrier   [ ]
    B. Epileptic power supply   [ ]
    C. Expensive network service   [ ]
    D. No knowledge of where to source for the required information [ ]
    E. Where to get the information is too far.   [ ]
    F. Poor services offered   [ ]
    G. There is no time   [ ]

10. What are your perceptions of the credibility, timeliness and biasness of election-related
information accessible through different communication channels?

    A. Least credible B. Somewhat Credible C. Not Credible D. Credible E. Highly credible

Thank you for filling out this questionnaire!