



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



## Interpersonal communication as a means of tackling voter apathy among Nigerian youths

Nsikak S. Idiong <sup>1,\*</sup>, Princess Aniekan Utuk <sup>1</sup> and Etimbuk Ebong Idiong <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Department of Journalism, University of Uyo, PMB 1017, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.*

<sup>2</sup> *Department of Strategic and Corporate Communication, University of Uyo, PMB 1017, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.*

World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews, 2023, 18(03), 1541–1551

Publication history: Received on 12 May 2023; revised on 27 June 2023; accepted on 30 June 2023

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30574/wjarr.2023.18.3.1194>

### Abstract

This paper analyzed the place of interpersonal communication as a means of tackling voter apathy among Nigerian youths. The study is a survey. Survey was used to analyze how interpersonal communication can be used as a means to tackle voter apathy among residents of Akwa Ibom state. The population of this study was 384 residents in Uyo Urban. The study investigated the causes of voter apathy among youths in Uyo, the extent interpersonal communication influences voter turnout and political behavior among youths in Uyo and the sources of interpersonal communication that are most effective in influencing youths' behavior and decision. The results from this study not only revealed that interpersonal communication influenced the electorate voting behavior during the 2023 general elections, it was also the greatest influence on the political behavior of the electorates. Also, the results showed that individuals who discussed voting more often had more positive attitude towards voting and were more likely to vote in an election. The study, among others, recommends that politicians and political parties should strive to inculcate interpersonal communication as a key component in political campaigns because it not only helps to eliminate voter apathy, it also creates an opportunity for the electorates and the politicians, to have a face-to-face interaction, which would otherwise, be impossible with mass media.

**Keywords:** Voter apathy; Political communication; Interpersonal communication; Voter behaviour; Persuasion; Argumentation

### 1. Introduction

According to Pattie and Johnson (2000, p63) "Those who talk together, vote together". They used this to describe how interpersonal political communication can influence who people vote for. Information about an election will encourage citizens to participate and cast their votes. The influence of communication on voters' choice usually takes place in the form of in-direct effects. For example, agenda setting, framing effects and knowledge gains. A direct and persuasive influence is relatively rare and mostly short lived. However, this might change as the proportion of undecided, more susceptible voters continue to increase in number in many countries of the world. According to Lazarsfeld, Berelson & Gaudet (1944), communication from three sources may likely change political behavior. They include: communication by political candidates and parties, communication by journalists, and interpersonal communication with family, friends, colleagues, or acquaintances.

In the case of interpersonal communication, communication may occur face to face more, rarely for political candidates and journalists, but in most cases, the major pathway for transmission and distribution of information regarding elections will be through the mass media (Bennett and Entman, 2001). Communication influences two aspects of voting behavior: Voter choice and Voter turnout. They are interrelated and they both determine the results of an election. Any

\* Corresponding author: Nsikak S. Idiong

candidate or party that aims to be successful needs to gain the support of citizens by motivating them to vote on election day.

Interpersonal communication has a crucial role to play in political campaigns because it creates a forum where the sender and the receiver can meet and interact in a face-to-face situation. During elections, Politicians and political parties use up enormous resources in the course of convincing and persuading citizens to vote for them. They utilize the different forms of media to communicate their ideas or manifestoes to the electorates during elections; one of which is interpersonal communication (Johansson, 2004). According to Iyengar and Prior (1999), to campaign for something, is to advocate or speak loudly for it. They agree that a political campaign is an organized effort, which seeks to influence the decision-making process within a specific group. In democracies, political campaigns often refer to electoral campaigns, wherein representatives are chosen or referendums are decided.

Voter apathy is a subdivision of political apathy and has become one of the foremost democracy quandaries especially in Nigeria. Participation in politics is an important part of decision making in a democratic setting. Therefore, when voters do not come out to participate in voting, it definitely impacts negatively on the electoral process and sometimes undermines the outcome of an election. It may mean that the majority who did not vote indirectly empowered the minority who voted to make decision on their behalf. Election remains meaningful when people massively participate and voter turnout indicates inclusiveness and significant participation. Voters' involvement in politics is an indicator of a healthy democracy. It also expresses citizens' interest in the political process of a nation and enhances people's indispensability in the development agenda of the state. Thus, election is a means that allows citizens to choose who should represent them in government which is fundamental for development and sustainable democracy. Hence, immense voter turnout is a major prerequisite for the deepening of a democratization process. It measures the rate of inclusiveness and participation of people. Invariably, low turnout may indicate several abnormal signs that may hinder progress in the practice of democracy.

In 2011, voter turnout was at what can now be described as an impressive 53.7 per cent of the voting population. By 2015, it dropped to 43.7 per cent and 34.75 per cent in 2019. According to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), there are a total of 93,469,008 registered voters in Nigeria but only 87,209,007 which is 93% collected their Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs), making them the only ones eligible to vote in the 2023 general elections. However, only 25,286,616 accredited voters which is about 28% of all eligible voters in Nigeria, participated in the 2023 Presidential election. The low turnout of voters has characterized Nigerian elections over the years, and have witnessed a steady decline which reached a new low during the 2023 presidential and National assembly election.

In recent years, the notion that young people are apathetic and disengaged from politics has become general knowledge as studies have found that young people lack knowledge of, interest in, and participation in politics. Many Nigerian youth are ignorant of the political system and seem not to care what goes on in the country. The level of ignorance on political issues among youths globally and in Nigeria in particular has become worrisome. Despite this, as important as the issue of youths and politics is, not many researches have been done to ascertain the level and causes of apathy among the youth. Rather, what we have are mere assumptions and journalistic write-ups. A cardinal feature of democracy remains the active participation of citizens in governance. The place of the youths in the democratic process remains cardinal for the growth of the nation.

It is in line with this that the paper examines the place of interpersonal communication as a vital means of tackling voter apathy among Nigerian youths.

### **1.1. Research Questions**

The focal phenomenon for this study was investigated using the following research questions:

- What are the causes of voter apathy among youths in Uyo?
- To what extent does interpersonal communication influence voter turnout and political behavior among youths in Uyo?
- What sources of interpersonal communication are effective in influencing youths' decision and behavior?

---

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Interpersonal Communication: A Conceptual Clarification**

Interpersonal communication is the form of communication in which there is an interaction between two persons in such a way that there is transmission or exchange of ideas, opinions, thoughts, etc., between them. In this sense, the

ideas that have been conceived in the mind of one person are transmitted (verbalized) during the discourse, deliberately for the benefit and consumption of the receiver (Ella and Onwochei, 2008). Interpersonal communication includes message sending and message reception between two or more individuals. This can include all aspects of communication, such as listening, persuading, asserting, non-verbal communication etc. It is communication that is personal and occurring between people who are more than acquaintances. Interpersonal communication messages are offered to initiate, define, maintain or further a relationship. It is simply the process through which people create and manage their relationships, exercising mutual responsibility in creating meaning. Individuals also communicate on different interpersonal levels, depending on who they are engaging in communication with. Interpersonal communication can be conducted, using both direct and indirect media of communication, such as face to face interaction, as well as computer mediated communication. Successful interpersonal communication assumes that, both the message senders and the message receivers will interpret and understand the messages being sent on a level of understood meanings and implications.

According to Yaroson and Asemah (2008), interpersonal communication can thrive when the sender and the receiver share certain things in common; it may be age, religion, education, belief, politics, etc., that bring people together, into communicating with each other. It is also known as dyadic communication. As observed by Jan and Sirag (2008), interpersonal communication is a form of communication, which involves close physical proximity to each other. Interpersonal communication is the application of interactions between people of different cultures, with an emphasis on the problems associated by uncertainty and anxiety, stemming from cultural differences. Interpersonal communication skills are the tools we use to let others know what we think, feel, need and want. And they are how we let others know that we understand what they think, feel, need and want. Interpersonal communication concerns the study of social interaction between people. Interpersonal communication theory and research seeks to understand how individuals use verbal discourse and nonverbal actions, as well as written discourse, to achieve a variety of instrumental and communication goals, such as informing, persuading and providing emotional support to others. The above assertion shows that interpersonal communication takes place between two or more people and it is always successful when the participants have something in common.

## 2.2. Interpersonal Communication and Politics

Politics is a dominant phenomenon in the contemporary society. The role and effect of interpersonal communication in the process of politicking cannot be overemphasized. It is the most effective tool or form of communication being employed by political parties and politicians in order to influence or persuade the electorates to cast their votes in their favor. Interpersonal communication occurs in all the series of activities that make up politics as a process. Some of these activities include the following:

- **Electorates' Education:** Though, other forms of communication like mass communication are also employed for this purpose, the most effective is that of interpersonal communication. Civil Liberty Organization (CLOs) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) often employed interpersonal communication in enlightening the publics regarding their electoral duties. This takes place at face-to-face public enlightenment or educate their subjects on their electoral duties. Even, the smallest unit of the society otherwise called 'family circle', the heads of family (fathers) usually educate their members via interpersonal communication.
- **Voters' Registration:** In most cases, the mass media create awareness for the voters to get registered. But from observation, the effectiveness of the exercise is greatly achieved through the interpersonal communication mechanism. The registration officers provide necessary practical guidelines, ask questions from the electorates and answers supplied immediately. At times corrections are made so as to avoid hitch free-exercise. All these are made possible by virtue of interpersonal communication.
- **Candidates' manifesto:** This is an important aspect of political process. It is a situation whereby a political aspirant unfolds his plans and programs to the electorates so that they can vote for him. This usually takes place in a face-to face setting. In fact, it is an avenue for an aspirant to determine his fate because the face-to face atmosphere provides the opportunity to give correct meaning and interpretation to electorates' reactions.
- **Political Parties Campaign:** Political parties must unveil the overall programs they have in stock for the electorates. This is strategically done by employing interpersonal communication.
- **Voters'/Electorates Decision:** Despite the use of mass media such as television, radio, magazine, newspaper, internet etc. which are used to persuade voters to vote for a political candidate. It is discovered that the final decision of voters is largely dependent on social class influence, parental influence or order, group influence, peers/friends influence. All these are situations of interpersonal communication.

In reaching the grassroots populace or the electorates in general during political campaigns, the media of mass communication can hardly operate successfully alone. They need the support of interpersonal channels of

communication. Communication experts have begun to see the futility in using only modern mode of communication to permeate the grassroots in the process of political campaigns and the whole of election process.

**2.3. Interpersonal Political Communication**

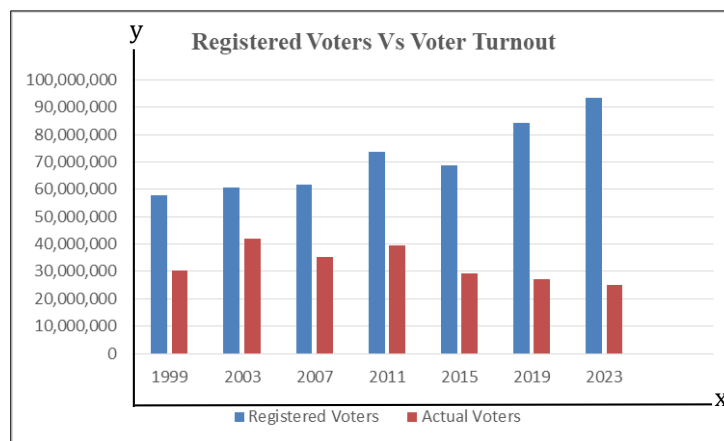
The current studies on interpersonal communication by scholars have brought about what is now called “Interpersonal Political Communication”. It simply implies a form of interpersonal communication whereby political information, talks, conversation, viewpoints, ideas, and education take place between two or more people or groups in order to change or persuade people, change attitudes and seek supports during an election. As submitted by Rudiger (2000) in his paper titled “Interpersonal Political Communication, interpersonal political communication more often than not occurs between like-minded souls and consists in exchanges of mutually agreeable political messages. Rudiger (2000) submits that political conversations are also powerful sources of political persuasion, even if they take place in secondary relationships. Analyzing the effects of interpersonal political communication in electoral behavior, Rudiger (2000) sees interpersonal influence as a mighty force that is responsible for the tendency of election results to reflect societal lines of cleavage. He maintains that political discussion intensifies during campaigns to remind people of who to vote for on elections day. He states further that, by providing information and by conveying norms and expectations about behavior, interpersonal political communication functions as a powerful mobilizer for political participation.

**2.4. Political Apathy in Nigerian Politics**

**Table 1** Presidential election turnout: 1999 - 2023

Year	Population	Registered Voters	Actual voters	% of Actual Voters
1999	115,114,302	57,938,945	30,280,052	52.26%
2003	128,962,732	60,823,022	42,018,735	69.08%
2007	144,363,880	61,567,038	35,397,517	57.49%
2011	161,224,487	73,528,040	39,469,484	53.68%
2015	177,155,754	68,833,476	29,432,082	43.652%
2019	200,963,599	84,200,000	27,324,583	34.75%
2023	221,126,104	93,469,008	24,900,000	26.72%

Source: Compiled by author with data from INEC



**Figure 1** Presidential election turnout: 1999 - 2023

Apathy refers generally to indifference or lack of desire while political apathy is indifference on the part of any citizen of any country with regards to their attitude towards political activities such as politicians, elections, public opinions, civic responsibilities, etc. Weijun (2010) defined political apathy as public or individual indifference towards political events and movements. It can also be defined as indifference to or general lack of interest in politics and political

activities. Such indifference is manifested in lack of knowledge or curiosity about what is going on in one's country, the government, political system, and distrust of politicians leading to a lack of desire to vote during elections or participation in elections. Political apathy is a global phenomenon and characteristic of most democracies where there is usually low turn-out during elections. However, empirical evidence shows that it is more endemic in developing countries particularly in Africa because of reasons such as faulty electoral processes characterized by violence, gender discrimination, electoral malpractices, illiteracy, ignorance and failed promises among others.

## **2.5. Interpersonal Communication and Voter Behavior**

In today's world, discuss about political candidates and issues within one's social network is a common practice. This is shaped by an ever-increasing variety of media channels such as email, smartphones, online engagement and social networking sites. Interpersonal communication has consistently been shown to affect voter turnout and choice. The more people talk about politics, the more they are likely to vote. However, Political cynicism can also spread in interpersonal discussion networks and depress turnout. In interpersonal discussion networks, close relationships tend to be more influential, but also, rather homogeneous. These homogeneous networks not only reinforce their members' party preferences, but also serve as filters enhancing the effects of attitude-consistent media coverage. But if the networks include people from different backgrounds and with different opinions, they may initiate changes in political orientation. Interpersonal networks also contribute to issue priming: our judgment on which issues are important is strongly related to the experiences and opinions of our personal discussion network. And interpersonal communication plays an even greater role among those who do not pay attention to election news coverage. But importantly, comparative studies have been able to confirm the universal nature of many of these effects of interpersonal communication (Schmitt-Beck, 2003)

## **2.6. Impact of Interpersonal Communication on Voter Behavior**

Even though its importance for voting behavior was one of the key findings of Paul Lazarsfeld and his colleagues (1944), interpersonal communication has not received much scholarly attention. Now that interpersonal communication on politics is increasingly taking place in online media it has become more easily observable and, perhaps, even more influential: all forms of online communication greatly facilitate the exchange of political information for citizens. What started with rather deliberate attempts at conversion in the form of e-mails to personal contacts containing political arguments, comments, jokes, and, later on, links to candidate websites, news sites, or content-sharing platforms, has now become a playful sport on social network sites, further blurring the lines between political actors, journalists, and citizens as sources of communication.

## **2.7. Theoretical Framework**

For the purpose of this study, two theories of mass communication shall be examined. The essence is to have a more lucid and vivid assessment of the subject.

### *2.7.1. Two-Step Flow Model of Communication.*

This theory of communication proposes that interpersonal interaction has a far stronger effect on shaping public opinion than mass media outlets. The two-step flow model was formulated in 1948 by Paul Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet in the book *The People's Choice*, after research into voters' decision-making processes during the 1940 U.S. presidential election. The theory of the two-step flow of mass communication was further developed by Lazarsfeld together with Elihu Katz in the book *Personal Influence* (1955). The book explains that people's reactions to media messages are mediated by interpersonal communication with members of their social environment. A person's membership in different social groups (family, friends, professional and religious associations, etc.) has more influence on that person's decision-making processes and behavior than does information from mass media. Since its formulation, the theory of the two-step flow of communication has been tested, and validated. The two-step flow of communication begins with messages disseminated through the mass media. However, rather than being directly received by an audience of individuals who are attentive, the messages are received by a layer of opinion leaders who are interested and engaged in public affairs. Opinion leaders absorb the messages from the mass media, recast and reinterpret the messages, and through personal connections, pass them along to an audience that is often distracted, unaware, or uninterested in political matters. numerous occasions through replicative studies that looked at how innovations were diffused into society through opinion leaders and trendsetters.

This theory is relevant to this study because it is important to understand how interpersonal communication can be used to tackle voter apathy among Nigerian youths as numerous studies have shown that they do not participate actively in the political process of the country.

### 3. Materials and Methods

#### 3.1. Research Design

The research design adopted for this study is the survey method. Quantitative and qualitative data will be generated through a field survey of research design. The survey method is a means of collecting large and standardized data from the field using well structured questionnaire. Standardized data will enable the researcher to provide information to the research questions in order to generalize influences about the target population.

#### 3.2. Population of the Study

The population for this study comprised of youths in Uyo Urban. For this study, youths are considered to be individuals between the ages of 18 to 35 years. According to Nigeria metro area population (2023), Uyo has a population of 1,329,000 people.

#### 3.3. Sample and Sampling Procedure

Sample size is the agreed number of subjects to be involved in the study. The sample size for this study was arrived at using Meyer sample size determinant table which says that for a population range above 500,000, the appropriate sample size will be 384.

The sampling techniques used in this study are the convenience sampling technique and quota sampling technique. The convenience sampling method was used because individuals were selected based on how easily accessible, they were to the researcher while the quota sampling technique was used because a particular quota needed to be assigned to a particular subset to represent a specific number of individuals from each group.

#### 3.4. Method of Data Collection

The primary instrument for data collection is the questionnaire. The questions were close ended, straight forward and easy to understand. The researcher adopted the online survey method in other to reach residents of Akwa Ibom state within the stipulated time of the research. Participants were randomly selected. The questionnaire was designed using Google Forms and circulated to residents through the most predominantly used social media platforms – WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter. The questionnaire comprised 12 items. The questions made up of demographic data of respondents (Questions 1-3), and questions considered suitable to achieving the objectives of the study and answer the research questions (Questions 4-12). The researcher administered the questionnaire to residents of Uyo proportionally with a view to gather perceptions on voter apathy.

#### 3.5. Method of Data Analysis

Data from the survey are presented in tables and charts and analyzed using simple percentages for easy understanding.

## 4. Results

**Table 2** Distribution of respondents according to demographics (N=384)

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Male	198	51.6
Female	186	48.4
Age		
18 – 23	126	33
24- 29	160	42
30-35	98	25
Total	384	100

The data collection instrument was the questionnaire. it was used to analyze how and if interpersonal communication is a vital means of tackling voter apathy among Nigerian youths.

**Table 3** Respondents that registered to vote in the 2023 General Elections

Sex	Yes	No	Not Interested
Male	186	11	1
Female	170	12	4
Total	356	23	5

Source: Field work, 2023

**Table 4** Respondents that actually voted in the 2023 General Elections

Sex	Yes	No
Male	171	15
Female	159	11
Total	330	26

Source: Field work, 2023

**Table 5** Respondents main source of political information

Source	No of Respondents	Total (%)
Family	132	34.3
Friends/Colleagues	104	27
Religious leader	44	11.4
Politicians	32	8.3
Opinion leaders	61	16
Mobile phones	NIL	NIL
Others	11	3
Total	384	100

Source: Field work, 29023

**Table 6** How often respondents engage in political discourse with their main source of information

Scale	No. of Respondents	Total (%)
Always	95	25
Often	254	66.1
Rarely	21	5.5
Never	14	3.6
Total	384	100

Source: Field work, 2023

**Table 7** Extent to which respondents perceive their source of political information is politically knowledgeable/credible

Scale	No or respondents	Total (%)
To a very large extent	101	26.3
To a large extent	174	45.3
To some extent	100	26
To little extent	9	2.3
To no extent	NIL	NIL
Total	384	100

Source: Field work, 2023

**Table 8** Extent to which respondents' source of political information influences respondents' political behavior

Scale	No or respondents	Total (%)
To a very large extent	94	24.5
To a large extent	162	42.2
To some extent	71	18.4
To little extent	42	11
To no extent	15	4
Total	384	100

Source: Field work, 2023

**Table 9** Reasons responsible for respondent's voter apathy

Reasons	No. of Respondents	Total (%)
Electoral violence	40	10.4
Insecurity	50	13
Dishonored promises	31	8.1
Corruption/Bad governance	45	12
Poverty	21	5.5
INEC	31	8.1
Inadequate electoral education	13	3.4
Electoral malpractice	121	31.5
Religious affiliations	12	3.1
Politicians	11	2.9
Others	9	0.5
Total	384	100

Source: Field work, 2023



## 5. Discussion

This section discusses the findings of the study in relation to the three research questions raised.

### 5.1. Research Question One: What is the cause(s) of voter apathy among Nigerian youths?

This research question sought to find out the causes of voter apathy among Nigerian youths. The findings of this study revealed that the major cause of voter apathy among Nigerian youths is electoral malpractice. Also known as electoral fraud, they are illegal/irresponsible acts performed by the electoral body, political parties, candidates or the electorate which are capable of influencing the smooth conduct of elections in a country. 121 respondents represented as 31.5% of the entire population had lost interest in the political institution of the country because of the reoccurring trend of electoral fraud which could come in the form of fake data and manipulation of votes, artificial scarcity of electoral materials, underage voting, thuggery and intimidation of political opponents, financial inducement and other corrupt practices.

Despite the assurance and promises made by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), promising Nigerians especially the youths that their votes would count in the 2023 general elections, as it was now one man one vote due to the introduction of the BVAS machine, the youths who had anticipated the forthcoming election were once again disappointed because of the high level of electoral malpractice that was prevalent on the election day.

This result corroborates Adebajoko, (2020) study. The study uses quantitative method of data collection to analyze political apathy among Nigerian youths. The overall result showed that the high level of political apathy among Nigerian youths was caused by the major institutions of the country such as INEC/government and political parties/politicians. This study is very similar to the present one in both results and methodology.

### 5.2. Research Question Two: To what extent does interpersonal communication influence voter turnout and political behavior among Nigerian youths?

This research question sought to find out the extent to which interpersonal communication influences voter turnout and political behavior among Uyo youths. Respondents were asked how often they engaged in political discuss and 254 amounting to 66% of the population said to a very large extent. When asked the extent to which they perceive their source of political information as credible, 174 respondents amounting to 45.3% of the population said to a very large extent. Finally, 162 respondents amounting to 42.2% of the entire population said that their sources of political information influence their political behavior to a very large extent. The findings of this study revealed that interpersonal communication goes a long way in influencing political patterns of young people. It revealed that interpersonal form of communication remains the most effective form of communication in grassroot mobilization, election process and political campaign.

This result corroborates Semiu, (2013) study. The study explored the dynamics of interpersonal communication system in political campaign and election process. The study reached similar conclusions with the present one.

This study is in line with the two-step flow theory flow theory of mass communication that explains that people's reactions to media messages are mediated by interpersonal communication with members of their social environment and that a person's membership in different social groups (family, friends, professional and religious associations, etc.) has more influence on that person's decision-making processes and behavior than does information from mass media.

### 5.3. Research Question Three: What sources of interpersonal communication is most effective in influencing youths' decision and behavior?

This research question sought to find out the major sources of interpersonal communication that is most effective in influencing youth's decision and behavior. 132 respondents comprising 34.3% of the entire population revealed that the major source of information they got came from Family. This was seconded by friends/colleagues with 104 respondents (27%) of the population and 61 respondents (16%) of the population who said their major source of political information came from opinion leaders. This finding reveals that young people's engagement in political discussions with parents and their family members represents a significant component of the political socialization process and can be seen as an activity where they learn some very basic democratic skills.

This study corroborates Iqbal and Shabir, (2019) study. The study used the survey design method to determine the influence of interpersonal communication in shaping voting behavior of Pakistani youths. The study concludes that

interpersonal communication sources especially parents seem to more powerful than media exposure either traditional media or new media in influencing the voting behavior of youths.

---

## 6. Conclusion

This study concludes that interpersonal communication is an effective tool of communications in the process of grassroots mobilization especially for electoral participation and remarkable landmark in political campaign. The psychological approach of interpersonal communication gives it an edge over other forms of communication. The immediate and spontaneous feedback mechanism inherent in interpersonal communication is another landmark which makes it most effective. In essence, it has been established that the effects of interpersonal communication in electoral process cannot be over-emphasized.

### *Recommendations*

This study recommends:

- Interpersonal communication should be seen by all as a vital tool and an effective form of communication in grassroots mobilization and must be exploited for the purpose to the latter.
- Political parties and political actors should make use of interpersonal communication positively as well as other stakeholders to create a virile and progressive society. Attention must be shifted away from extreme use of mass media thinking that they have limitless or unlimited powers. Attention should also tilt towards the use of interpersonal system of communication for ultimate effect in our diffusion of innovation process.
- Finally, the fact still remains that interpersonal communication is the ultimate in shaping opinion, influencing attitudes and changing behaviors during political campaign and election process. Merrill (1984, p80) has said it all, "that mass media effects or power is not absolute. That mass media operates with many social forces to bring about certain result. The implication of much of this "effects" research is that mass communication is influential but not central or dominant in the model of personal influence. This is what Katz and Lazarsfeld (1989, p150) emphasize on "Interpersonal Influence" that mass communication is by no means irrelevant with regard to political persuasion but that on the whole, the impact of political discussion in an interpersonal communication atmosphere is indeed most powerful than that of media usage.

---

## Compliance with ethical standards

### *Acknowledgments*

The authors wish to acknowledge the assistance of Ms. Elizabeth Ndem in carrying out this research.

### *Disclosure of conflict of interest*

The authors wish to attest and affirm that they know of no conflicts of interest in the authorship of this study.

### *Statement of informed consent*

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

---

## References

- [1] Adebajoko, A. (2018). Nigerian Youths and Political Apathy: A Survey of Undergraduate Students of Federal University Lafia, Nasarawa State, Nigeria. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 1(2): 43-55.
- [2] Bennett, W. L. and Entman, R. M. (2001). Mediated politics: An introduction. In W. L. Bennett and R. M. Entman (Eds.), *Mediated politics: Communications in the future of democracy* (pp. 1–29). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- [3] Ella, D and Onwochei, M. (2005). *An Introduction to Speech Communication for higher Education, Colleges and Schools*. Jos: Animation Press
- [4] Iqbal, Y. S. and Shabir, G. (2019). Influence of interpersonal communication sources on voting behavior of youth. *Global Social Sciences Review*, 4:(4): 202-208.

- [5] Jan, M. and Siraj, S. A. (2008). Contextual Domain of Interpersonal Communication. Retrieved from <http://www.aiou.edu.pk/gmj/artical5%28b%29.asp>.
- [6] Johansson, B. (2004). Mass Media, Interpersonal Communication or Personal Experience? Perceptions of Media Effects among Swedish Politicians. Retrieved from [http://www.nordicom.gu.se/common/publ\\_pdf/157\\_259-276](http://www.nordicom.gu.se/common/publ_pdf/157_259-276).
- [7] Katz, E. (1957). The two-step-flow of communication. An up-to-date report on a hypothesis. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 21, 61 – 78.
- [8] Lazarsfeld, P. F., Berelson, B. and Gaudet, H. (1944). *The People's Choice*. New York: Free Press.
- [9] Okada, N. (1986). The process of mass communication: a review of studies on the two-step flow of communication hypothesis. *Studies of Broadcasting*, 22, 57 – 78.
- [10] Schmitt-Beck, R. (2003). Mass communication, personal communication and vote choice: The filter hypothesis of media influence in comparative perspective. *British Journal of Political Science*, 33(02), 233–259.
- [11] Semiu, B. (2013). The dynamics of interpersonal communication system in political campaign and election process. *International Knowledge sharing Platform, New Media and Mass Communication*. Vol. 10.
- [12] Weijun, N. (2010). Political apathy amongst youths-term papers – Weijunngo, [www.studymode.com](http://www.studymode.com) ›
- [13] Yaroson, E. D. and Asemah, E. S. (2008). *Theories and Models of Mass Communication*. Jos: Great Future Press.