

**THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON POLITICAL MOBILIZATION AND
PUBLIC OPINION: A CASE STUDY OF THE NIGERIAN 2023 PRESIDENTIAL
ELECTIONS.**

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BENIN CITY, EDO STATE

OCTOBER, 2025.

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**A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL
SCIENCE, FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN,
BENIN CITY, IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE AWARD OF THE BACHELOR OF SCIENCE B.SC. DEGREE IN
POLITICAL SCIENCE.**

OCTOBER, 2025.

DECLARATION

I, MARACHUKWU CHINONSO CYRIL, hereby declare that this project titled “IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON POLITICAL MOBILIZATION AND PUBLIC OPINION: A CASE STUDY OF THE NIGERIAN 2023 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS” is my original work and has not been submitted, either in part or in full, for any degree or certification at any other institution. All sources of information and references used in this work have been duly acknowledged.

.....

Date:

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CERTIFICATION

We, the undersigned, certify that this work was carried out by MARACHUKWU CHINONSO CYRIL in the Department of Political Science, faculty of Social Science, University of Benin, Benin City. For the requirement of the award of Bachelor of Science degree in political science.

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MRS. JOY OMOWAYE

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DR. G.O IGIEBOR

(Ag. Head of Department)

.....

DATE

.....

DATE

DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to God almighty whom alone I drew strength, courage and inspiration needed to complete this program successfully.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I sincerely express my profound gratitude to almighty God for his grace, wisdom and strength throughout the course of this research.

My heartfelt appreciation goes to my supervisor Mrs. Joy Omoregie Omowaye, for her invaluable guidance, constructive criticism and encouragement which greatly shaped the success of this project work.

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ABSTRACT

This study was to carry out a comparative study on the impact of social on the political mobilization and public opinion: a case study of the Nigerian 2023 presidential election. The study was necessary to examine how impactful social media was on political mobilization and public opinion a case study of the Nigerian 2023 presidential election.

The study adopts the investigative survey research method. The research instrument was a well-structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was validated by the project supervisor for final correction. The reliability test was carried out using the test re-test method to arrive at a value that was reliable. Questionnaires were administered and answers offered were collated and analyzed using the frequency count, mean and standard deviation, while regression analysis was used to test for hypothesis.

Findings from the study revealed that social media was impactful on the political mobilization and public opinion a case study of the Nigerian 2023 presidential election, it will help ordinary Nigerians understand how social media affected the 2023 presidential election; it will reveal both negative and positive effects of social media on political mobilisation and public opinion.

Therefore, this uncertainty is what makes the study necessary by focusing on the 2023 Nigerian presidential election; we can understand how social media shaped political mobilisation and public opinion both the good and the bad sides.

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Background Of The Study

In the past, politicians in Nigeria mostly used newspapers, radio, and television to reach out to people during elections. But in recent years, especially during the 2023 presidential election, many Nigerians, especially young people, started using social media platforms like Twitter (now X), Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube and Instagram to follow politics, support candidates and express their opinions. The 2023 Nigerian presidential election marked a turning point in the nation's political communication landscape. Social media has become a powerful tool for sharing news and opinions, During the Nigerian 2023 political election, social media helps politicians talk directly to voters and allows people to discuss their views on who should lead the country. It also became a place where people expressed their opinions about the candidates and the election process. The rise of cartoon journalism in print media, as a preferred medium for expressing individuals' opinions, contributing, correcting, criticising or making suggestions on social, political or socio-economic issues, also contributes to this (Essien, 2024). In the Nigerian 2023 presidential election social media break down barriers in the electoral process, it mediating these barriers due to physical separations and lack of resources that may affect physical political engagement (Chinedu Okeke and Obi, 2018). Through the help of technology of smartphones and the internet, those rural areas were able to participate in

political debates, get information and vote. Social media ensured the flow of information in real time, ensuring that the voters were alongside of the campaign activities, the stance taken on certain policy issues and any news related to the elections (Udanor 2018). The Nigerian 2023 presidential election witnessed a surge in political discourse on social media platforms. The impact of social media on the 2023 presidential election in Nigeria extended beyond voters' engagement and political discourse.

It also played a vital role in election monitoring, transparency and accountability (Michael, 2023). By sharing information in real time, social media helped expose instances and cases of voters intimidation, ballot box snatching and other electoral irregularities. Social media acted as a watchdog, enhancing accountability and ensuring the democratic process remained intact (Abubakar 2018). The social media outlet became informant and source of news that the regular media houses failed to report. Such reporting influenced public awareness of local concerns, gave voice to the voices of the powerless or the voiceless entities and in general, contributed to the advancement of a more democratic society.

The diversity of the Nigerian audience, the fragmentation of the media market and issues of availability and diversity are some of its characteristics. Understanding how social media impacted the electoral process explains how the digital platforms closed these gaps and encouraged participation. It would also offer insights into how to deal with problems

related to the sharing of fake news on social platforms (Ceron 2018). Therefore research on how social media impacts on the 2023 Nigerian presidential elections will aid academic knowledge and offer practical insights on the politics of the digital society, enhancing the political process and people's participation.

1.2 Statement of the problem

In today's world, social media is everywhere Facebook, Twitter (x), WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok etc .people no longer depend only on newspaper, TV, or radio to get political information. Instead they go online to hear from politicians, share their opinions and even argue about who they support.

During the 2023 Nigerian presidential election, social media played a very big role; candidates used it to campaign and youths used it to mobilise themselves, and people used it to express their genuine opinion, hopes, anger and frustrations. This brought some problems, While social media helped spread information fast, it also spread fake news, hate speech and propaganda, which confused many voters.

The problem is that we don't clearly know whether social media actually helped people make better political decisions or if it only created division and tension. Did it truly mobilise citizens positively or did it mislead them with misinformation? Did it strengthen democracy by giving people a voice or weaken it by spreading lies?

Therefore, this uncertainty is what makes the study necessary by focusing on the 2023 Nigerian presidential election; we can understand how social media shaped political mobilisation and public opinion both the good and the bad sides.

1.3 Research Questions.

The following research questions have been formulated to guide the study

1. How did the youths use social media during the 2023 Nigerian presidential election?
2. Did social media help politicians and political parties to reach more people and mobilize support?
3. Did social media influence how people formed their opinions about the candidates?
4. To what extent did social media encourage young people and first time voters to participate in the election?

1.4 Research Hypothesis

The null hypothesis would be tested at 0-05 level of significance.

H₀₁: Social media had a big effect on how people joined political activities during the 2023 Nigerian presidential election.

Ho2: Social media influenced public opinion, meaning it shaped the way people saw the candidates and political parties.

Ho3: The use of social media increased political participation, especially among youths and first-time voters in the 2023 election, and social media was a major source of both true and false information, which affected how people made their political choices.

1.5 Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of social media on political mobilisation and public opinion: a case study of the Nigerian 2023 presidential election.

Specifically, the study intends to:

1. To understand how social media was used during the 2023 Nigerian presidential election.
2. To find out if social media really helped political parties and candidates mobilise (gather support) from people.
3. Ascertain the extent to which social media impacts political mobilisation and public opinion during the Nigerian 2023 presidential election.

1.6 Significance of the study

The study will invariably be of tremendous importance to students, politicians, Nigerians and researchers accordingly.

The findings will help ordinary Nigerians understand how social media affected the 2023 presidential election; it will reveal both negative and positive effects of social media on political mobilisation and public opinion.

It will show politicians and political parties how effective social media is in reaching a wide audience and mobilising support and shaping political narratives.

For voters especially the youth and first-time participants, the study will highlight the extent to which social media influences political choices and attitudes. It will also serve as a guide for electoral bodies and government agencies by drawing attention to the challenges of fake news, hate speech and misinformation spread through social media platforms during elections, while suggesting ways to address these issues.

1.7 Scope of the study

This study focuses on the role of social media like (Facebook, Twitter(X), WhatsApp, Instagram and TikTok during the 2023 Nigerian presidential election. It looks at how these platforms were used by politicians, political parties and citizens to share messages, mobilise support and express opinions.

1.8 Definition of Terms

Social Media

Social media refer to websites, applications and online platforms that create, share and exchange information, ideas, pictures, videos and messages. It is called social because it connects people together and media because it is a way of communicating or sharing content.

Political Mobilization

Mobilisation means the process of bringing people, resources or energy together to take collective action towards a specific purpose.

Election

Election is a formal process where people choose their leaders or make decisions by voting. It can be held to fill positions like president, governor, senator, local council member or even for community and organisation leadership.

Public Opinion

The collective attitude, beliefs or views held by the general public or a specific group of people on political or social issues, often influenced by media, culture, and experiences.

Political participation

Any activity that involves citizens in the political process, including voting, attending rallies, signing petitions, or engaging in discussions on political matters.

Presidential Election

A specific type of election where the head of state (president) is chosen by eligible citizens, as in the Nigerian 2023 presidential election.

Political communication

The way political information is shared and exchanged, especially between political actors, the media, and the public.

Influence

The capacity of social media or other tools, to affect or change people's behaviours, opinions, or decisions regarding politics.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter focuses on the review of related literature. And it will be discussed under the following sub-headings:

- Theoretical framework
- Conceptual framework
- Historical and political context (Nigeria -2023)
- Youth mobilisation and the obedient / online youth movements
- Campaign strategies and digital communication tactics.
- Public opinion formation and attitude change.
- Online-offline: converting digital engagement into real-world political action.
- The impacts of social media on political mobilisation during the Nigerian 2023 presidential elections.
- The extent to which social media impact public opinion during Nigerian 2023 presidential election.
- Outcomes/ implications for public opinion during the Nigerian 2023 presidential election.

- Limitations and challenges of social media during Nigeria 2023 Nigerian presidential election.
- Platforms, affordances and digital tools.
- Summary of reviewed literature

2.1 Theoretical framework

The study is hinged on agenda-setting theory developed by McCombs and Shaw (2016). The theory explains how social media platforms have revolutionised the way we communicate, share information and interact with others. In the context of the 2023 Nigerian presidential election, social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram acted as agenda setters by elevating specific-topics into national conversations. Hashtags, trending topics and viral content drew attention to issues such as youth unemployment, insecurity, corruption and good governance. The framing of these issues shaped how citizens interpreted the candidates and their policies, thereby influencing political mobilisation and voter sentiment. Nigerians especially young voters relied on social media for real-time campaign updates, fact-checking, political debates and mobilisations. Platforms were not only used for news consumption but also for creating memes, organising rallies and expressing frustrations or aspirations. This illustrates that social media was actively utilised as a tool for both personal gratification and collective political participation.

In Nigeria's 2023 election, social media influencers and public figures played pivotal roles in shaping political online debates. Lazarsfeld and Katz (2018) suggest the information from the media reaches the wider population through opinion leaders including influencers, activists, bloggers and celebrities who command large audiences online.

2.2 Conceptual framework

The conceptual frame theory posits that media, particularly social media plays a vital role in shaping how people perceive and represent events particularly in relation to their primary features. As a result, social media have played an important role in shaping Nigerians' perceptions of electoral exercises, political campaigns, and election outcomes over the years, primarily through the manipulation of political narratives in the nation (Udanor et al, 2016). Unlike traditional newspapers, magazines or news channels that can only cover a story for a limited time or within a few pages, websites like Twitter or Facebook allow individuals, citizen journalists and other breaking news sources to express their perspectives and interpretations. This has led to a multiplicity of opinions allowing citizens to receive more information and reason more deeply about political issues. However the disadvantage is that social media only shares news items that fit the people's opinions and camps thus extending polarisation and fortifying partisanship (Ogbu 2023). Specifically the reflections show that social media has played a role in the

agenda setting and issue framing of Nigeria's elections. For instance, political parties, candidates and interest groups may utilise a social media site to set an agenda through the active sharing of posts or comments that create awareness and frame issues in a certain way (Lewis 2018). For example, they may focus on anticorruption, security or long-term economic development problems and indicate what the audience and mainstream media should talk about regarding these matters.

2.3 Historical and political context (Nigeria-2023)

Literature on political mobilisation in Nigeria shows that social medias' role didn't emerge in a vacuum but was enabled by historical precedents. In the previous elections (2015-2019), youths activism (e.g. EndSARS) and dissatisfactions with political elites. For example, Nigerian youths had been mobilising through social media before 2023 using platforms like Twitter\X and Facebook during protests and earlier elections to challenge established power structures. The Nigerian 2023 presidential election took place in a highly charged environment framed by economic hardship, governance concerns, and strong calls for reform. Several studies document that Nigerians especially younger demographic had become increasingly attuned to digital spheres for political informations and expression by 2023 (e.g. online activism and political knowledge among Nigerian youth during the 2023 elections shows higher political awareness among youth who engage online). The context also includes regulatory tensions (internet

freedom, government regulation), distrust of traditional media, and a growing digital divide which shapes who can participate effectively, understanding these contextual factors is essential because the effectiveness of social media for political mobilisation and opinion-formation depends heavily on access, media literacy, sociopolitical trust and the histories of political communication in Nigeria.

2.4 Youth mobilization and the obedient/ online youth movements

A substantial strand of the literature focuses on youth mobilisation through social media in the Nigerian 2023 election. The term “Obidient” refers to supporters of Peter Obi and the labour party, many of them young Nigerians using social media to push for change. Studies show that social media enabled youths to gather, share political information, express dissatisfaction, amplify alternative candidates’ voices and engage in peer to peer persuasion. For example, the study of political mobilisation by Peter Obi in North-central states found a significant relationship between use of social media by the campaign and the voter’s decisions in those states. Another study “online activism and political knowledge among Nigerian youth during the Nigerian 2023 election found a positive correlation between engagement in online activism and levels of political knowledge among youth aged 18-35. Youths were not just consumers of messages but producers-tweeting, sharing content, creating memes participating in discussions, forming virtual communities. However, there are also limits, some youths remains activism remains

slacktivism (limited offline effect) and differential access (digital divide, literacy) means not all youth are equally engaged or influential. These findings suggest that youth mobilisation via social media was both broad in reach and mixed in depth.

2.5 Campaign strategies and digital communication tactics

Candidates in the 2023 Nigerian presidential election and their political parties increasingly devised campaign strategies that deploy digital tools in deliberate ways. Research such as social media campaign techniques employed by presidential candidates in the 2023 Nigerian elections examines how techniques like hashtags, videos, infographics, blogs, email outreach, paid ads and social media managers were used. These tactics were designed to engage, persuade and sometimes counter negative messaging. For example, for Peter Obi's campaign, synergy between party strategy and candidate social media activity was detected, which helped in projecting coherent messaging. Campaigns also used visuals, emotive storytelling, and live broadcasting of events and user-generated content as key tactics. However, there is also evidence of misuse propaganda, character attacks or defamation via social media and content that may mislead or polarize. Overall, these strategic choices influenced both reach and resonance of political messages and thereby shaped public opinion and mobilisation capacities.

2.6 Public opinion formation and attitude change

Public opinion formation via social media has been studied in Nigeria with mixed findings. Some works show that exposure to political content through social media indeed shapes attitudes toward candidates, governance issues (e.g. corruption, youths inclusion) and can shift voters preferences, especially among younger, more digitally active individuals. The study “social media platforms as basic tools for voter mobilisation in Nigerias’ 2023 Nigerian presidential election” found that respondents who engaged more with political content online (Facebook, Twitter/ X) reported being more aware, more likely to discuss politics and more prone to being influenced. Contrastingly, some research suggests that while social media strengthens awareness and opinion reinforcement, persuasion (i.e. changing someone’s vote at the margin) is weaker: people often consume content that aligns with their existing beliefs. Mis-information complicates opinion formation by injecting false frames or misleading data, which can lead to misinformed attitudes. Also, public opinion tends to be volatile close to election events, influenced by trending topics, memes or viral posts rather than deep policy debate. The literature thus underscores a duality: social media as both a site of opinion reinforcement and occasional attitude change with stronger effects among youth and those more exposed to diverse sources.

2.7 Online-offline: converting digital engagement into real-world political action

A recurring theme in the literature is whether and how digital engagement translates into actual political behavior-voters turnout, volunteering, attending rallies, or other offline action. Studies of Nigeria's 2023 election show evidence in favour of some conversion: for example, the study "evaluating social media influence on political mobilization in 2023 presidential campaign" found that 62.4% of respondents acknowledged that social media had influenced their voting decisions. The labour party campaign study in the North-central states found that social media mobilization by the candidates had a statistically significant relationship with voting decisions in those states. Nonetheless, literature also acknowledges that not all online activism leads to offline outcomes, constraints include logical issues, censorship or suppression, fear of harassment, lack of infrastructure, and sometimes the gap between intention and actual behavior. Researchers suggest more rigorous measurement (longitudinal studies, matching self-reported vs observed behavior) to ascertain magnitude of online-offline conversion in the Nigerian 2023 context.

2.8 The impact of social media on political mobilisation during the Nigerian 2023

presidential election.

The 2023 Nigerian presidential election marked a pivotal moment for digital politics in Nigeria. Scholars and observers agree that social media platforms (twitter/x, Facebook,

Instagram, WhatsApp, TikTok) were central to how campaigns were run, how citizens debated issues and how voters were mobilised especially among young people and urban, digitally connected constituencies. Several strands of literature converge on these core effects: social media as a catalyst for rapid grassroots mobilisation, social media's role in agenda setting and changing mainstream media reporting and the simultaneous amplification of misinformation and the growth of fact-checking practices. A dominant finding in the literature is that social media substantially increased political engagement among younger Nigerians. Case studies and content analytic work on "Obidient" movement and allied youth-driven campaigns show how hashtags, memes, viral videos and influencer endorsements amplified a candidate's visibility, provided low-cost recruitment channels and helped coordinate offline activities (rallies, volunteer drives, crowdfunding). This work emphasises how online narratives when paired with offline organizing produced measurable mobilisation effects during 2023 presidential election.

Scholars highlight-platform level affordances (hashtags, trending topics, multimedia posts) as tools campaigns use to set the public agenda and frame issues rapidly. Parties' informal supporter networks and independent influencers used short-form content (videos, tweet threads, info graphics) to package complex policy positions into sharable units.

2.9 The extent to which social media impacts public opinion during the Nigerian 2023 presidential election.

Empirical surveys carried out around the 2023 elections, show that increased political awareness and participation. Social media (platforms like Facebook, Twitter/X, WhatsApp, Instagram) helped many citizens follow campaign events, manifestos, debates, issues. In Benue state for example, platforms were used to mobilise voters and increase awareness. Young people were especially engaged via social media gave them both information and a venue for discussion and activism. Social media campaigns emphasised some issues over others (economy, job creation, education). Parties used framing (highlighting certain topics, downplaying others) to influence what issues the public thought were important. A portion of voters said that what they saw on social media affected their view of candidates, sometimes changing their preferences. These came up in many studies as countervailing forces, social media also facilitated rumours, false claims, and propaganda. These could shape public opinion wrongly or intensify divisions. People's prior beliefs, education, media literacy, and access to internet/smartphones all moderated how much they were affected. Those already politically active or better informed were more likely to be swayed or at least engaged via social media.

Twitter / X emerged as particularly influential among certain demographics, especially youth, urban, and educated. But Facebook, WhatsApp etc also played big roles depending on the region. Some platforms are more used for peer sharing others for official campaign posts. In rural or less connected areas internet access is lower social media penetration is uneven. So social media's role is stronger in urban, better-connected zones also power cuts, affordability of data etc can limit usage. These limit how much opinion-shaping social media can do in some communities.

2.10 Outcomes/ Implications for Public Opinion during the Nigerian 2023 presidential election

The Nigerian 2023 presidential election, saw a more informed electorate in certain areas/demographics than in past cycles, with voters having more access to direct statements by candidates and reactions to issues in real-time on social media.

There was strong public pressure for transparency (e.g. demands that results be uploaded via BVAS/IREeV, etc) and more public scrutiny of electoral misconduct. Social media gave people a tool to monitor and demand accountability.

Social media increased polarisation in some cases, especially along party lines sometimes amplified by rumor and misinformation. It contributed to more heated online debates

possibly heightening tensions although it's not always clear how much that translated into offline conflict.

2.11 Limitations and Challenges of social media during Nigerian 2023 presidential election

- **Misinformation/ Fake News:** Many studies show false or misleading information spread via social media. Some voters accept this uncritically others are sceptical. This reduces trust, or can lead to distorted opinions.
- **Selective Exposure:** People often follow or engage with like-minded voices, opposing views may be filtered out. This reinforces pre-existing views and can reduce the chance of changing opinion.
- **Regulation and oversight issues:** Difficulty verifying content origins, regulating what candidates/ parties post and fund sources, fact-checking sometimes lagging.
- **Digital divide:** Access (internet, devices, cost), literacy, and language are barriers. Some populations remain less reached or influenced via social media.
- **Offline structures still matter:** Traditional media (radio, TV), face –to-face interactions, family, religious leaders, community leaders still carry weight. Many people use social media in addition to these not instead of.

2.12 Platforms, affordance and digital

Recent empirical studies on the 2023 Nigerian presidential election indicate that different social media platforms played distinctive roles, thanks to their affordances. In social media and political mobilisation, the labour party candidate Peter Obi in selected North-Central states were X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. Facebook and X seem particularly prominent overall for example the study “Evaluating social media influence on political mobilisation” found Facebook as the dominant platform for political engagement among respondents. Affordances such as hashtags, retweet/ shares, forwarding, visual content (videos, infographics), closed groups/chats (WhatsApp) and influencer networks were all found to be important in spreading political messages, generating discussions and coordinating offline action meanwhile limitations emerge platform algorithm biases, unequal reach (e.g. rural vs urban, literate vs less literate users) and variable content moderation policies that shape what content spreads or is suppressed. Understanding platform affordances thus helps explain how content is spread which messages get amplified and how mobilisation is possible.

2.13 Summary of Reviewed Literature

An attempt has been made in this research to examine relevant literature pertinent to the impact of social media on political mobilisation and public opinion: a case study of the Nigerian 2023 presidential election.

Conceptual framework was fully expounded and it was discovered that social media helped in shaping how people perceive and represent events, particularly in relation to their primary features. It amplified voices, increased engagement and shifted some opinions especially among youth, urban dwellers and those more digitally literate but it's not plausible to say social media alone decided the election other factors (party loyalty, ethnicity, religion, regional issues, personal networks, candidates' personality/ features) still had large effects. The influence was growing compared to previous elections, both in scale and in how campaigns used it strategically. The Nigerian 2023 election seems to mark a point where social media is more central in campaign strategy.

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CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research methodology that was used in the study under the following subheadings:

1. Design of the study
2. Population of the study
3. Sample and sampling procedure
4. Research instrument
5. Validity of the instrument
6. Reliability of the instrument
7. Method of data collection
8. Method of data analysis

3.1 Design of the study

An Investigative survey research method was adopted to enable the researcher to carry out systematic investigation into the impact of social media on political mobilization and public opinion: specifically in the context of the Nigerian 2023 presidential elections and obtain information across the study population.

3.2 Population of the study

The population of the study comprises of active social media users preferably young people aged 18 and above, members of political parties and electoral observers.

3.3 Sample and sampling procedure

The sample consisted of 50 young people who were actively involved in the Nigerian 2023 presidential election using a simple random technique.

3.4 Research Instrument

The research instrument is a structured questionnaire designed by the researcher. The instruments are divided into sections: Section A and Section B. Section A contains particulars of the respondents (demographic data), such as young people both online and offline, while section B, titled the checklist and questionnaire contains 20 items. The items contained in the questionnaire revolve round the research questions raised in the Chapter one of this study, and responses obtained from the respondents will help to validate the research checklist.

3.5 Validity of the Instrument

In order to ascertain the validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was given to the research supervisor and two lecturers in the department of political science to scrutinize

and for necessary corrections to ensure content and face validity. Corrections made on the draft were incorporated in the final draft.

3.6 Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instrument was determined by administering the questionnaire to 20 youths who were not part of the main study. The data collected from the youth were subjected to Cronbach's alpha reliability statistics, and the reliability of the instrument was established at 0.75.

3.7 Method of data collection

The questionnaires were administered personally by the researcher with the assistance of two trained researchers to the respondents who were randomly selected from the sample youth. The respondent would be assured of confidentiality and urged to answer the questions honestly in the best of their knowledge. Instructions were given to the respondent on how to fill the questionnaire and the questionnaire would be collected the same day to avoid the incident of loss.

3.8 Method of data analysis

The data collected would be properly organised and tabulated. The responses were statistically analysed by the use of frequency count, simple percentage, mean and standard deviation.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter contains the data presentation, analysis and interpretations of the various data collected for this study. Consequently, it entails the application of both mathematics and statistical techniques to provide the basis for analyzing the research objectives listed in chapter one. Hence, it is a vital part of this study since it forms the basis for conclusion and policy recommendations.

4.1: Descriptive analyses of respondents demographic

Gender distribution of respondents	Frequency	Percentages %
Male	25	50.0
Female	25	50.0
Total	50	100
Age distribution of respondents	Frequency	Percentages %
18-25 years	10	20.0
26-35 years	15	40.0

36-45 years	10	20.0
46 and above	10	20.0
Total	50	100
Educational qualifications of respondents	Frequency	Percentages %
Secondary school	5	11.4
OND/NCE	15	17.1
Bachelor's degree/ HND	25	58.4
Postgraduate	5	13.8
Total	50	100
Occupation		
Student	10	25
civil servant	10	25
business/ self employed	25	35
Unemployed	5	15

Total	50	100
Did you vote during 2023 presidential election?	Frequency	Percentages %
Yes	45	90
No	5	10
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

From Table 4.1, 50 percent of the total respondents are male and also 50 percent of the total respondents are female. This implies that both genders share equal percentage. It was also revealed that 20.0% of the total respondents are between the age brackets of 18-25 years; 40.0% of the total respondents are between the age brackets of 36-45 years. 20.0% of the respondents are between the age range of 36-45years and lastly 20.0% are 46 years and above.

Table 4.1 also analysis the educational qualifications of respondents. It was revealed that 11.4 of the respondents are secondary school holder cert, 17.1 are OND/NCE cert holders, 58.4% are Bachelor's degree/ HND and the last 13.8% are postgraduates' graduates.

Furthermore, the table also revealed the occupation of the respondents, it was revealed that 25% of the respondents are students, 25% are civil servants, 35% of the respondents are business/ self-employed and lastly 15% are Unemployed.

Lastly on the table, it was revealed that 90% of the respondents participated in the last general election while 10% did not participate. This implies that most of the respondents participated in the last general elections.

SECTION B: ANALYSIS FROM THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Q1: Which social media platforms did you use most during the 2023 election? (you may tick more than one)

Social media platforms	Frequency	Percentage %
Facebook	5	10
WhatsApp	15	25
Instagram	5	10
TikTok	5	10
Twitter/X	20	45
YouTube	0	0

Total	50	100
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Source: Field Survey, 2025

The table above revealed the social media platform the respondents used mostly during the 2023 general elections. It was revealed that 10% of the total respondents used Facebook, 25% used whatsapp, 10% used instagram, 10% tiktok, 45% of the total respondents used Twitter/X, while none of the respondents used YouTube. From the analysis above, it was clearly revealed that most of the respondents used Twitter/X during the general elections.

Q2: On average, how many hours per day did you spend on social media during the election period?

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
less than 1 hour	10	10
1-3 hours	20	40
4-6 hours	25	45
more than 6 hours	5	5

Total	50	100
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Source: Field Survey, 2025

The table above revealed how many hours per day did the respondents spent on social media during the election period. It was revealed that 10% of the total respondents spent less than 1 hour, 40% spent 1-3 hours, 45% spent 4-6% hour and lastly, 5% of the total respondents spent more than 6 hours during the election.

Q3: What was your main purpose of using social media during the election?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage %
To get political news/information	20	40
To share or forward political content	10	20
To engage in political discussions/ debates	10	20
To support a candidate/ party campaign	10	20
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The table above revealed the main purpose of the respondents using social media during the election; it was revealed that 40% of the respondents agreed that to get political news/information during election, it was also revealed that 20% of the respondents revealed that to share or forward political content, 20% agreed that to engage in political discussions/ debates and lastly, 20% of the respondents agreed that to support a candidate/ party campaign.

SECTION C: Political Mobilisation

Q4: Did social media content encourage you to attend rallies, campaigns or political meetings?

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	20	20
No	30	80
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The table above revealed if social media content encourage the respondents to attend rallies, campaigns or political meetings. It was revealed that 80% of the respondents said no while 20% of the total respondents said yes. According to the analyses, it was revealed

that majority of the respondents agreed that social media never encourages them to attend rallies and the rest.

Q5: Did you donate money, volunteer or support a political campaign due to social media influence?

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	10	10
No	40	90
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The table above revealed if the respondents donate money, volunteer or support a political campaign due to social media. It was revealed that 90% of the respondents said no while 10% of the total respondents said yes. According to the analyses, it was revealed that majority of the respondents agreed that social media never encourage them to donate money or support any political party.

Q6: Did social media influence your decision to actually vote in the 2023 election?

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	25	50
No	25	50
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The table above revealed if social media influence their decision to actually vote in the 2023 election. It was revealed that 50% of the respondents said no while 50% of the total respondents said yes. According to the analyses, it was revealed that the respondents shared the same percentage of 50 each in response to the question above.

Q7: Please rate the extent to which social media mobilized you politically during the election

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Very high	15	30
High	25	50

Moderate	5	10
Not at all	5	10
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The table above revealed the extent to which social media mobilized the respondents politically during the election. It was revealed that 30% of the respondents agreed to a very high extent, 50% of the total respondents agreed that is to a high extent, 10% of the total respondents said moderate while the last 10% said not at all.

Section D: public opinion formation

Q8: Which of the following best describes how social media influenced your opinion about presidential candidates?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
It shaped my opinion strongly in favour of a candidate	20	40
It shaped my opinion strongly against a candidate	10	20
It reinforced my already existing opinion	15	30

It had little or no effect	5	10
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The table revealed best describes how social media influenced respondents opinion about presidential candidates. It was revealed that 40% of the respondents agreed that it shaped my opinion strongly in favour of a candidate, 20% agreed that it shaped my opinion strongly against a candidate, 30% agreed it reinforced my already existing opinion and the last analysed 10% agreed it had little or no effect.

Q9: Did you encounter political misinformation or fake news on social media during the 2023 presidential election?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Very often	20	40
Sometimes	10	20
Rarely	15	30
Never	5	10

Total	50	100
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Source: Field Survey, 2025

The table revealed if the respondents encounter political misinformation or fake news on social media during the 2023 general election. It was revealed that 40% of the respondents agreed very often, 20% said sometimes, 30% said rarely and 10% said never.

Q10: If yes, did misinformation affect your opinion about any candidate or party?

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes, strongly	10	20
Yes, slightly	10	20
No	30	60
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The table above revealed if the information heard on social media affected the respondents opinion about any candidate or party. 20% of the respondents said yes, strongly, 20% said yes, slightly while 60% said no.

Q11: In your opinion, how credible was political information on social media compared to traditional media (TV, radio, newspaper)?

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
More credible	10	20
About the same	10	20
Less credible	30	60
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The table revealed that 20% of the respondents agreed that the political information on social media compared to traditional media is more credible, 20% said about the same, 60% said less credible.

Q12: Do you think social media played a positive role in Nigeria’s 2023 presidential election?

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	30	60

No	15	35
Not sure	5	5
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The table revealed that revealed if social media played a positive role in Nigeria’s 2023 presidential election. It was revealed that 60% of the respondents agreed yes, 35% agreed no while 5% were not sure.

In your opinion, should social media be more regulated during future elections in Nigeria?

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	30	60
No	15	35
Not sure	5	5
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

60% of the respondents agreed that social media should be more regulated during future elections in Nigeria, 35% said no and 5% said not sure.

Discussion of One Sample t-test Statistics Result

One sample T-test statistics result

	Test Value = 0.05				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Lower	Upper
Social media does not have a big effect on how people joined political activities during the 2023 Nigerian presidential election.	28.324	94	.000	3.662	3.41	3.92
Social media does not influenced public opinion, meaning it shaped the way people saw the candidates and political parties	25.862	94	.000	3.255	3.92	4.125

	Test Value = 0.05			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Lower	Upper
Social media does not have a big effect on how people joined political activities during the 2023 Nigerian presidential election.	28.324	94	.000	3.662	3.41	3.92
The use of social media does not increased political participation, especially among youths and first-time voters in the 2023 election, and social media was a major source of both true and false information, which affected how people made their political choices.	37.642	94	.000	3.742	3.04	3.84

Source: Computed by author using SPSS 2025

Hypothesis I

Recall: $H_0: \beta_1 = 0$: Social media does not have a big effect on how people joined political activities during the 2023 Nigerian presidential election

$H_1: \beta_1 \neq 0$: Social media have a big effect on how people joined political activities during the 2023 Nigerian presidential election

Decision: Accept H_1 if $t > 0.05$ – statistics

Where $t > 0.05$

t- Statistics = 0.74

$0.05 < 0.074$

Therefore, we accept H_1 implying that social media have a big effect on how people joined political activities during the 2023 Nigerian presidential election

Hypotheses II

Recall: $H_0: \beta_1 = 0$: Social media does not influenced public opinion, meaning it shaped the way people saw the candidates and political parties.

$H_1: \beta_1 \neq 0$: Social media influenced public opinion, meaning it shaped the way people saw the candidates and political parties.

Decision: Accept H_1 if $t > 0.05$ – statistics

Where $t_{0.05}$

t - Statistics = -0.054

$0.05 < .054$

Therefore, we accept H_1 Social media influenced public opinion, meaning it shaped the way people saw the candidates and political parties.

Hypotheses III

Recall: $H_0: \beta_1 = 0$: The use of social media does not increased political participation, especially among youths and first-time voters in the 2023 election, and social media was a major source of both true and false information, which affected how people made their political choices

$H_1: \beta_1 \neq 0$: The use of social media increased political participation, especially among youths and first-time voters in the 2023 election, and social media was a major source of both true and false information, which affected how people made their political choices

Decision: Accept H_1 if $t_{0.05} < t$ – statistics

Where $t_{0.05} = 2.145$, and

t - Statistics = 0.101

$0.05 < 0.101$

Therefore, we reject H_0 The use of social media increased political participation, especially among youths and first-time voters in the 2023 election, and social media was a major source of both true and false information, which affected how people made their political choices.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presented the summary conclusion and recommendations of the study based on the results of the findings.

5.1 Summary of Findings

This study titled “impact of social media on political mobilisation and public opinion: a case study of the Nigerian 2023 presidential election” was structured into five chapters to effectively carry out this research. The study raised three objectives that guided the study. Based on these objectives, research questions were formulated, significance of the study was also discussed, scope and delimitations were also discussed.

Chapter two reviewed literature related to the research topic. The review critically examined and analyzed the views of some psychologists, and other concerned scholars on the concepts, types and theories of the main variables. The theoretical frame work used in the study was the agenda-setting theory.

In chapter three the design and methodology of the study were discussed. The research design was a cross-sectional survey design. The population of the study comprises of active social media users’ preferably young people aged 18 and above, members of political parties and electoral observers were sampled using the random sampling

technique. The instruments used for data collection is the questionnaire. The returned questionnaires were analyzed using simple percentage table.

Chapter four presented the analysis of the data collected which were analyzed through the use of descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings in this study after the analysis gave the following results:

1. It was revealed social media has a big effect on how people joined political activities during the 2023 Nigerian presidential election.
2. It was also revealed that social media influenced public opinion, meaning it shaped the way people saw the candidates and political parties.
3. Lastly, the study revealed that the use of social media increased political participation, especially among youths and first-time voters in the 2023 election, and social media was a major source of both true and false information, which affected how people made their political choices.

5.2 Conclusion

Based on the summary of findings, the study therefore concludes that the findings of this study show that many individuals in Nigeria are quite active on social media particularly on Twitter. These platforms are essential in both offline and online political activities, thus enhancing political knowledge and increasing political participation and inclusion in Nigeria. More political actors, including the government agencies, need to

embrace these platforms because they are ideal for reaching out to a majority of the residents in Nigeria.

Furthermore, social media is plays a big role in raising awareness and drawing attention to political issues. From the findings, it can be stated that the more the individuals access political information on social media, the more they engage in online political activities like commenting, sharing or liking a political post, video, link or tweet. The more they engage in political activities on social media the greater their level of offline forms of political participation. Some of these activities include discussing with family and friends, voting or intending to vote and encouraging others to vote. Therefore, the study concluded that majority of the resident's use Twitter, which they utilize for their political discussions, among the residents of Edo State using social media for political purposes during elections is very often and the role of social media use in participatory politics among the residents of Edo State is among the major source of political information.

5.3. Recommendations

The following recommendations are suggested as a result of the findings of the study:

1. Dealing with information overload on social media platforms is crucial. Exploring tools to help users manage this overload will lead to a more focused consumption of election-related content. Investing in technical infrastructure to tackle issues

like misinformation and technical glitches is vital. This investment ensures a smoother user experience during elections, reducing potential challenges related to the technical aspects of social media platforms.

2. Regularly reviewing and updating policies on social media platforms is crucial for their relevance and effectiveness in combating misinformation and encouraging a healthy political discourse. Collaborating with government agencies, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders is encouraged to collectively tackle challenges and promote responsible social media use during elections. Implementing these recommendations collectively aims to improve the positive impact of social media in the electoral process while effectively addressing associated challenges.

Suggestion of Further Studies

Furthered studies should be carried out on:

1. Long-term impact of social media on democratic development in Nigeria, with comparative analysis across different election cycles.
2. The influence of social media on political corruption on economic development in Nigeria.

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APPENDIX

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY

**THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON POLITICAL MOBILISATION AND
PUBLIC OPINION: A CASE STUDY OF THE NIGERIAN 2023 PRESIDENTIAL
ELECTIONS.**

Dear Respondent,

This instrument is designed for academic purposes only. It is structured to find out **the impact of social media on political mobilisation and public opinion: a case study of the Nigerian 2023 presidential elections.**

Please respond sincerely to the questions by ticking [] where applicable. Your responses, which are needed for research purposes only, will be treated with a high level of confidentiality. Thank you.

Section A: *Demography*

Instructions: please tick [] where applicable.

1. Age:

18-25

26-35

36-45

46 and above.

2. Gender:

male

female

3. Educational level:

secondary school

OND/NCE

Bachelor's degree/ HND

postgraduate

4. Occupation:

student

civil servant

business/ self-employed

unemployed

5. Did you vote during the 2023 presidential election-?

yes

no

Section B: social media usage

6. Which social media platforms did you use most during the 2023 election? (You may tick more than one)

Facebook

WhatsApp

Instagram

TikTok

Twitter/X

YouTube

7. On average, how many hours per day did you spend on social media during the election period?

less than 1 hour

1-3 hours

4-6 hours

more than 6 hours

8. What was your main purpose of using social media during the election?

To get political news/ information

To share or forward political content

To engage in political discussions/ debates

To support a candidate/ party campaign

Section C: Political Mobilisation

9. Did social media content encourage you to attend rallies, campaigns or political meetings?

Yes

No

10. Did you donate money, volunteer or support a political campaign due to social media influence?

Yes

No

11. Did social media influence your decision actually to vote in the 2023 election?

Yes

No

12. Please rate the extent to which social media mobilized you politically during the election:

Very high

High

Moderate

Not at all

Section D: public opinion formation

13. Which of the following best describes how social media influenced your opinion about presidential candidates?

It shaped my opinion strongly in favour of a candidate

It strongly shaped my opinion against a candidate

It reinforced my already existing opinion

It had little or no effect

14. Did you encounter political misinformation or fake news on social media during the 2023 presidential election?

Very often

Sometimes

Rarely

Never

15. If yes, did misinformation affect your opinion about any candidate or party?

Yes, strongly

Yes, slightly

No

16. In your opinion, how credible was political information on social media compared to traditional media (TV, radio, newspaper)?

More credible

About the same

Less credible

17. Do you think social media played a positive role in Nigeria's 2023 presidential election?

yes

No

not sure

18. What were the major positive impacts of social media on the election? ()

19. What were the major negative impacts of social media on the election? ()

20. In your opinion, should social media be more regulated during future elections in Nigeria?

Yes

No