

**SOCIAL MEDIA AND YOUTH POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN EDO  
STATE: A CASE STUDY OF THE 2023 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN  
OREDO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA**

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## **DECLARATION**

I, **FELIX OSAYUWAMEN SCHOLASTICA**, with matriculation number, **SSC2105696** hereby declare that this project is entirely my work and composition. The work embodied in this project has not been previously submitted for award of any degree elsewhere. All references made to works of other persons have been duly acknowledged.

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## **CERTIFICATION**

This is to verify that this project was carried out by **FELIX OSAYUWAMEN SCHOLASTICA** in the Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Science, University of Benin, Benin City, under my supervision.

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**Date**

## **DEDICATION**

This project is dedicated to God Almighty, the source of all wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, I dedicate this work.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I want to sincerely thank God Almighty for his loving kindness, His unwavering guidance and protection, strength and mercies on me throughout my academic journey in the University. There were tough times and it looked as though I would quit, but He stood by me, gave me strength and made all crooked ways smooth.

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## ABSTRACT

*Social media has become a force in democratic ideals around the world, drastically changing how people communicate politically and engage in public discourse around the world. Scientific analysis has focused on the exponential rise in social media users over the years. There were 5.24 billion social media users globally at the start of the year 2025, with annualized growth of 4.1 per cent of new users. In July 2024, for instance, about 123 Nigerians (more than half of the population) are registered internet users, with about 84 per cent of internet traffic generated through mobile devices. Among the users, the youth dominate the demographic population of internet users. This study attempted to examine the impact of social media on youths' political participation in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State. Participation in politics remains pivotal in the sustenance of a nation's democracy. The study utilized a structured questionnaire to draw data from a random sample of 400 respondents. A theory of Uses and Gratification was deployed to assess youths' motivation for social media use during the election. The findings showed that different forms of social media technologies were used by the youth to participate in the 2023 presidential elections in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State, such as WhatsApp, TikTok, Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. Secondly, the findings showed that social media use facilitated the youth's dissemination of political information in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State by enabling them to get and send information, campaign for their preferred candidate and debate with their social media users. The third finding showed that social media use influenced the youth's choice of candidate in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State by helping them to choose their right candidate in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State. The last finding revealed that different challenges were encountered by the youths while using the social media platforms. These include the government's unnecessary social media censorship, high data tariff, persistent network glitches, epileptic power supply, fake news and cyber stalking and bullying. The study recommends a need for increased advocacy on the use of social media during elections; a need to address the menace of fake news, cyberbullying and stalking and false information using social media platforms; and a need for the Nigerian government to ensure that the youths' fundamental rights of free speech and association are preserved.*

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background to the Study

Social media has become a force in democratic ideals around the world, drastically changing how people communicate politically and engage in public discourse around the world. Scientific analysis has focused on the exponential rise in social media users over the years (McAlister, Beatty, Smith-Caswell, Yourell, & Huberty, 2024). Social media use for political goals has changed from being limited to the spread of information to being a vibrant forum where people may express their opinions, participate in political discourse, and communicate with political players. Data Reportal (2025) reported that there were 5.24 billion social media users globally at the start of the year 2025, with annualized growth of 4.1 per cent of new users. In July 2024, for instance, about 123 Nigerians (more than half of the population) are registered internet users, with about 84 per cent of internet traffic generated through mobile devices (Statista, 2024). The 2023 Nigerian presidential election campaign marked the peak of social media's rise to prominence as a legitimate platform for raising political awareness and connecting with voters (Bassey, Josiah, Akpede & Santas, 2024).

Historically, the 2008 presidential campaign of then-Senator Barack Obama was the catalyst for the desire to use social media to engage with the public, especially the

younger generation (Goodman, Wennerstrom & Springgate, 2011). Barack Obama reached five million Americans through 15 different social media platforms. As of November 2008, he had roughly 2.5 million Facebook supporters, 115,000 Twitter followers, and 50 million YouTube video viewers (Costa, 2009). As a result, during election campaigns, Nigerian political parties employ tactics like using social media platforms to garner votes from the public in addition to promoting their policies and programs. Social media's widespread availability has democratizing impacts since it gives people the chance to interact and take part in political processes. By giving people a familiar platform to monitor and influence government actions, social media encourages political participation (Omotayo & Salami, 2018).

It is important to remember that prior to the use of social media for political involvement, there was only one choice for communication between the many political players, including the government, political parties, candidates, and voters. In particular, the public's ability to communicate with the officials was limited or nonexistent. According to Okoro & Nwafor (2013), voters were mostly silent and unable to provide input on the political process. Furthermore, the majority of voters were not participating in the political conversation. Similarly, the majority of political interactions tend to favour those with the greatest resources or connections. But social media offers anyone with a phone a voice. In a time where economic power is linked to

political power, social media's ability to facilitate collective action is allowing more individuals to have a say in how the nation is managed (Lin, 2022).

Social media's distinct qualities—its reach, immediacy, and interactivity—have an impact on political communication, voter behaviour, and the election process as a whole. It has had a significant impact on the political scene, influencing the opinions and decisions of candidates, voters, and entire countries. There are two sides to the idea that social media influences elections. It both strengthens and tests the democratic process at the same time. In addition to providing previously unheard-of chances for participation, information sharing, and mobilization, it also presents risks in the form of false information, polarization, and outside meddling (Chen, Oh & Chen, 2021).

The youth are the most beneficiaries of social media globally. Young people primarily use social networking sites to communicate with friends, family, and the wider public. Approximately 72% of American millennials (ages 18 to 29) used social networking sites like Facebook and Myspace as early as 2010, according to Lenhart et al (2010). In February 2024, more than one-third of the world's internet users were in the 25–34 age range. The largest group of online users globally were website visitors in this age range. Additionally, 18 to 24-year-olds made up 19% of all internet users worldwide. Approximately 4.2% of all internet users globally were 65 years of age or older (Statista, 2024). Examining the complex interactions between youth and social media in the context of the recently concluded 2023 presidential elections is essential.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The youth represent the largest demographic population in Nigeria. With approximately 230 million people living there as of a recent estimate, Nigeria has the world's highest youth population, with a median age of about 18. Nigeria's population is disproportionately young, with over 42% of people under the age of 15 and 70% of the country's total population under 30 (Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development/National Bureau of Statistics, 2020). Research has examined how Nigerians utilize social media to get involved in politics. For example, Chinedu Okeke and Obi (2016) investigated the extent to which voters in South-eastern Nigeria use social media for electioneering and discovered that social media political campaigns significantly influenced voters' participation and decision-making in Nigeria's 2011 and 2015 elections. Similarly, Okoro & Santas (2017) evaluated how social media was used for political communication during the 2011 Nigerian presidential election to ascertain whether social media usage affected voters' selection of presidential candidates. The findings showed that social media usage influenced most respondents' selections of presidential candidates. Similarly, the respondents said that the two presidential candidates who were chosen were well-liked due to their use of social media during their campaign.

Ekwueme & Folerin (2017) examined social media's influence in Nigeria's 2015 presidential electioneering. Results indicated that social media was crucial in raising

awareness, encouraging participation, and disseminating information about candidates. Apuke & Tunca (2018) investigated the effects of social media use on the campaigns and electoral procedures for the general elections in Nigeria in 2011 and 2015. Results indicate that social media was used because it was interactive and because it was used to change many young people's opinions and raise their political consciousness.

Additionally, Adegbola & Gearhart (2019) employ a secondary analysis of a global survey (N = 1,775) gathered by Pew Research to examine the connection between media use and political participation in three nations: the US, Kenya, and Nigeria. The findings show that media use was predictive of political engagement and that the impact of conventional and new media use on political engagement varied by nation. In particular, higher levels of political participation in all three nations were linked to using social media and online news sources. Accordingly, these studies have demonstrated how social media has transformed Nigerian political communication strategies, resulting in a notable shift towards the use of technology in electoral processes.

Although a number of studies have examined how social media affects society's political dimension, only a small number (e.g., Abdulrauf, 2016; Onyechi, 2018; Dagona, Karick & Abubakar, 2013) have looked at how young people in Nigeria use social media to participate in politics. In the context of the 2023 general elections, only a few studies have examined the impact of social media on youth political participation in the 2023 presidential election in Nigeria (Akporue & Efebeh, 2025), while other few studies

focused on the impact of social media on youth political participation in the 2023 general election in Nigeria, without special focus on the presidential election (Oni, Mohammed, Collins-Dike & Ridwan, 2024; Ezeigbo, 2024),

### **1.3 Research Questions**

The following research questions form the bedrock of the study:

1. What social media technologies were used by the youth to participate in the 2023 presidential election in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State?
2. Did social media use by the youth facilitate the dissemination of political information in the 2023 presidential election in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State?
3. Did social media use by the youth influence their choice of candidate in the 2023 presidential election in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State?
4. What challenges were encountered by the youth in political participation through social media use in the 2023 presidential election in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State?

## **1.4 Research Objectives**

The following research objectives form the basis of the study:

1. To understand whether social media technologies were used by the youth to participate in the 2023 presidential election in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State
2. To examine whether social media was used by the youth to facilitate the dissemination of political information in the 2023 presidential election in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State
3. To interrogate whether social media use by the youth influenced their choice of candidate in the 2023 presidential election in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State
4. To understand the challenges encountered by the youth in political participation through social media use in the 2023 presidential election in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State.

## **1.5 Significance of the Study**

First, the findings of this study will help policy makers, political actors and election bodies understand the significance of social media in facilitating youth political participation in Nigeria. The awareness will drive policies that will guarantee digital

freedom and robust political engagement among the youths in Edo State and, by extension, Nigeria.

Second, the study will expand the frontiers of knowledge on social media and youth political participation in Nigeria. For long, the popular perspective has been that the youths are not interested in participating in political decision-making in Nigeria. This study will help correct such a perspective while paving the way for more robust engagement with critical stakeholders in Nigeria on how to improve digital democracy in Nigeria that will continue to spur the youth to participate politically. Additionally, this study will fill the gap existing in the literature regarding the impact of social media on youth participation during the 2023 presidential election in Edo State and Nigeria

Lastly, this study will serve as a reference point for future studies on digitalization and youth political participation, while escalating the debate needed for improved research in the subject area.

## **1.6 Scope of the Study**

The study covers social media and youth political participation in the 2023 presidential election in Oredo Local Government Area, Edo State.

## 1.7 Definition of Terms

**Political Participation:** Political participation is the action taken by people or organizations to influence the people in power or the way they should do it.

**Presidential Election:** A presidential election is the process by which voters select a candidate for the presidency, impacted by a number of variables, including the traits of the candidates and the mood of the public, as opposed to equally likely outcomes.

**Social Media:** Social media are web-based tools that facilitate the production and sharing of user-generated content.

**Youth Political Participation:** This refers to the series of political activities engaged in by the youths to influence those in power or their actions.

**Youth:** In the Nigerian context, Youths are defined as citizens between the ages of 15 and 34. For election purposes, youths are defined as citizens between the ages of 18 and

34

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews related literature on social media, youth, political participation, social media and political participation in Nigeria, the 2023 presidential election and social media and 2023 political participation. The latter part of the chapter examines the Uses and Gratification Theory in relation to social media use and youth political participation in Nigeria.

#### **2.2 The Concept of Social Media**

Social media platforms like Facebook, Weibo, and Instagram have grown in importance as a source of information and communication due to the internet's expansion and popularity (Bentz, Chase & DeLoach, 2021). According to Statista (2022), people are using social media for longer periods of time. Global internet users spent a record 147 minutes a day on social networks in 2022, up from 145 minutes in 2021. Social media is used by users to interact with friends, express themselves, exchange thoughts and experiences, leave comments, and peruse content posted by others (such as their activities) (Vogel, Rose, Robert & Eckles, 2014). According to a number of studies, social comparison that is based on conventional offline scenarios might also happen in the context of social media (Taylor & Strutton, 2016). Social media users have many

opportunities for social comparison since they may quickly and continuously access a wealth of information about others who are presenting their "good selves" (Taylor & Strutton, 2016; Wallace, James & Warkentin, 2017).

Social media improves information accessibility in a number of ways. On social media platforms, users can quickly access and share information in the form of short movies, infographics, images, and other multimedia formats. Users with different learning styles or accessibility needs are more likely to be able to access and process information on social media thanks to these diverse delivery methods and new technologies like screen readers and automatic captions (Tajudeen, Jaafar, & Sulaiman, 2016). Additionally, using social media can assist users in learning new digital skills, including typing, debugging, and content production (Trifonova, 2021). Users can expand their degree of digital literacy by using the skills they acquire on social media platforms to other online contexts. Despite the seemingly low entry barrier, using social media requires having an internet connection and a computer, phone, tablet, or other device. These rules are, by definition, discriminatory and have the potential to maintain the isolation and marginalization that already exists. The "digital divide," a term used to characterize the difference between the population of countries like Nigeria without access to computers or the internet and the population who does, is greatest for people based on levels of income, education, gender and location (whether rural, semi-urban or urban) (USAID, 2023; Okocha & Edafewotu, 2022). In Nigeria alone, out of an estimated population of

226.5 million people in January 2024, an increase of 5.3 million between early 2023 and the beginning of 2024, there were only 103.0 million internet users at the start of 2024, with internet penetration standing at 45.5 per cent. Moreover, despite increasing ownership of cellular mobile connections by 225.4 million people (Kemp, 2024).

Social media is a low-barrier-to-entry information source that allows people with divergent opinions, prejudices, and goals to spread both accurate and inaccurate information. Because of this, most consumers still see news from social media platforms as erroneous (Shearer & Mitchell, 2021). Social media users can, however, have a deeper understanding of current affairs and a more sophisticated sense of judgment when consuming information from any source by reading and sharing commentary and ideas. According to Meredith Farkas, the expert isn't always right, but neither is the crowd (Chronicle of Higher Education, 2007). Social media increases representation and the need for users to verify information from several sources by making it easier for users to get information from a greater range of sources. By using online programming, resources, and support services, information professionals may help consumers distinguish between reliable and false information by applying their knowledge of information literacy.

Even though social media is not entirely representative, a variety of historically marginalized groups are using these channels to get current information. According to

Shearer & Mitchell (2021), the Pew Research Centre discovered that a majority of frequent news users on Facebook and Reddit are White adults, but approximately half of the 11% of US adults who use Instagram for news are Black or Latinx. Information professionals should conduct additional research on this discrepancy, and consumers should be aware of the many groups that are represented on various platforms. Nevertheless, social media platforms may improve access to information for both privileged and underprivileged groups, and they will only become more significant in the information ecosystem.

In more recent times, researchers have developed interest in investigating social media envy as a result of constant users' comparison of social media information with themselves and because of its widespread and profound influence on the consuming intentions and behaviors of social media users (e.g., Liu, He, Feng, Huang & Liu, 2024; Jin & Ryu, 2020; James, Lowry, Wallace & Warkentin, 2017). Social media envy is an unpleasant sensation that develops when users compare themselves negatively with others on social media because they want what others (friends, social media influencers, etc.) have and lack (James et al. 2017; Jin & Ryu, 2020). Studies have indicated that there are favourable and unfavourable effects associated with social media envy. Depending on whether the jealousy is malevolent or benign, social media envy can have either positive or negative effects (Wenninger, Cheung & Chmielinski, 2021; Wu & Srite, 2021).

Both benign and malignant jealousy on social media are unpleasant, upward comparison-based emotions that can elicit distinct behavioural tendencies and serve distinct purposes (Lange, Weidman & Crusius, 2018). While benign envy increases consumer want for the coveted possessions of others posted on social networks (Liu, Wu & Li, 2019; Xiong, Huang, Okumus, Cheng & Fan, 2022), malevolent envy increases anger against the envied individual and decreases inclinations to use IT (Wu & Srite, 2021; Lin, 2018). Therefore, it is critical to comprehend the causes of benign envy as well as its positive effects on social media, to reduce the bad effects of malevolent envy on social media and to maximize its potential for good.

### **2.3 The Concept of Youth**

The word "youth" is ambiguous. As a result, no universally accepted definition exists for it. Depending on the circumstances, what constitutes youth differs from nation to nation, culture to culture, and continent to continent. Planning, research, policy, and interventions are all significantly impacted by the disparities in how youth are conceptualized (Borges, 2020). Apam (2010) defines youth as both an age group and a social construct. Youth, according to the United Nations (1992), are those between the ages of 15 and 24. The World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) both adhere to the UN definition of youth. They define young people and adolescents as individuals between the ages of

10 and 19 and 10 and 24, respectively (Apam, 2010). According to the United Nations Youth Fund, those who are between the ages of 15 and 32 are included (United Nations, 2011).

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2010), youth is a period of transition from childhood dependence to adult freedom.

Furthermore, according to van Morgan & Morgan (2010), youth are classified as those who are between the ages of 15 and 35. This term aligns with the African Union's (AU) definition of youth (Altschuler, Strangler, Berkley, Burton, 2009). Van-Morgan and Morgan (2010) noted that the AU adopted this definition in recognition of the limitations of the UN age division (Ashiru, 2010; Xenos, Vromen, and Loader, 2014).

It is argued that the process of defining a youth and the transition from childhood to maturity can take place at different ages and over various periods of time, depending on the social, political, economic, and cultural setting. According to Apam (2010), the fact that people in Africa are now considered youths if they are 30 years of age or older is a sign of the growing phenomenon of youth dependence. For statistical purposes, the United Nations and others use the 15–24 age range. This classification is too limited for Nigeria, however, given several factors. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) follows the global norm of 15–24 years. Every nation defines youth according to its own circumstances. In Nigeria, those between the ages of 18 and 35 are considered youth,

along with those in Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Senegal, and Togo. This concept aligns with the nation's historical, political, and contemporary socioeconomic events. However, the maximum age for young people to be a member of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) is thirty years old.

## **2.4 The Concept of Political Participation**

Definitions of political engagement vary among academics. According to the following definitions, the prevailing perspective restricts participation to activities that could have an impact on other people. According to Huntington and Nelson (1976, 3), "by political participation we mean activity by private citizens intended to influence government decision-making." As stated by Verba et al. (1995, 38), by political participation, we simply refer to "activity that has the intent or effect of influencing government action – either directly by affecting the making or implementation of public policy or indirectly by influencing the selection of people who make those policies." The limitation to private citizens is intended to keep out of the idea any official activities carried out by people who pursue politics and governance in their careers. Some scholars define participation as political activity and regime-supporting acts (Milbrath, 1965). According to these academics, reading about politics entails political participation, whereas the prevailing definition does not (since it does not directly affect other people).

There is also a definitional controversy in the field of whether or not actions that influence policy without the actor's intention also qualify as political engagement. The more widely held opinion is that Verba et al. (1995, 38–39) limit their research to voluntary activity, which they define as follows: “By voluntary activity we mean participation that is not obligatory – no one is forced to volunteer – and that receives no pay or only token financial compensation”. On the other hand, Huntington and Nelson (1976, 7) specifically include both autonomous and mobilized participation, which they describe as "activity that is designed by someone other than the actor to influence governmental decision-making." By such definition, even if a worker has no intention of influencing the government, they would still count him as a participant if he attends a demonstration because his boss threatens to demote him otherwise (Uhlener, 2015). It might be challenging to experimentally differentiate between autonomous and mobilized activity in reality. The two are interchangeable when addressing inquiries concerning how involvement affects political results. Nevertheless, the distinction is helpful when concentrating on the reasons for participation or how participation affects the actor.

The term "political participation" describes the voluntary actions taken by the general population to directly or indirectly influence the choices made by those who formulate public policy. These include, but are not limited to, voting in elections, supporting political campaigns, contributing to a cause or candidate, contacting elected officials,

petitioning, protesting, and collaborating with others on concerns ((Uhlener, 2015). Certain activities are grouped into participation modes. Richer and more educated individuals participate at higher rates than those who are less fortunate (Loveless, 2025; Ahearn, Brand & Zhou, 2023; Bovens & Wille, 2021), but this link is less pronounced in nations where powerful political parties or other organizations offer substitute resources. Studies have shown that individuals apply the abilities they learn in organizations to political participation (Thompson, Buch & Kuvaas, 2017; [Schulz & Bailer](#), 2012). Additionally, recent research has shown that recruiting or mobilization increases participation (Abramson & Claggett, 2001; Grabarek, 2011). (Both phrases describe an individual's attempts to boost another's activity.). People now include both protest and traditional engagement in their "political action repertory." Participation trends in authoritarian governments and less developed economies offer additional concerns, although they largely adhere to these general guidelines.

## **2.5 Social Media and Elections in Nigeria**

Social media's introduction has significantly changed communication in a number of ways. Its cost-effective, interactive, and participatory features have democratized mass media, supporting Marshal McLuhan's vision of a "global village," in which happenings throughout the world are instantly and widely acknowledged. Organizations and countries all around the world utilize social media to mobilize millions of people in support of their causes, in addition to individuals. It has developed into a powerful tool

for motivating and involving citizens in political discourse and democratic processes. This supports the claim made by Okoro & Diri (2009) that the media encourages unrestricted engagement in conversations about the general welfare.

Social media's growth has allowed politicians to reach their followers, gauge their political significance and acceptability, and even intensify politics to achieve their political objectives or philosophies ((Adeyinka & Ijaiya, 2024). Nigerian politicians use social media extensively, especially during election and campaign seasons. Social media use during elections seems to be significantly changing conventional electioneering strategies. The rapidly growing availability of Internet-ready smartphones and other communication devices, as well as the constantly expanding access to the Internet, are the foundations of this quickly spreading phenomenon. These technologies are quickly encroaching on most civilizations. Because of this access, people can share information with their peers simultaneously, which speeds up the dissemination of information compared to traditional media sources.

The usage of social media platforms by Nigerian voters, especially the younger generation, who are progressively growing more tech-savvy and energetic, is the result of the growing use of phone and internet technologies. To engage with this target group, Nigerian politicians were forced to use the media platform that made it easy to reach them (Adeyinka & Ijaiya, 2024). In terms of political communication, political marketing, the campaigning process, and voter participation in political election

debates, social media has gained considerable traction globally. Many individuals worldwide are becoming more conscious of the significance of social media in electioneering. In actuality, social media is a major source of political communication for them. In order to accomplish their political goals, politicians now use new media instead of more conventional ones like print (newspapers) and electronic (radio and television) during electioneering (Ekwueme & Folarin, 2017).

To accomplish their campaign objectives, politicians have embraced the use of social media. The Obama campaign in 2008 amply illustrated this point by utilizing social media platforms and content (including YouTube videos, Facebook fan pages, Twitter accounts, and so forth) to rally millions of volunteers and voters. This helped his 2008 presidential campaigns succeed and he was elected as the first black president of the United States. Biswas, Ingle, and Roy (2014) claim that since his election, a large number of people have had more exposure to social media. Unquestionably, the emergence of new technology during the past ten years has brought about significant changes in politics. Social media has been used by politicians more and more to influence people and spread political agendas. During the general elections in 2011, Nigeria experimented with using this technology for political discourse. Many Nigerian politicians and voters were able to express themselves using the platform and have their opinions known during the election process. Notwithstanding the achievements, numerous mistakes were noted, and there are numerous lessons to be learned for the

nation's upcoming elections. Both the public and politicians have acknowledged the vast potential that social media offers for introducing voters to their political messaging and for gathering public opinion about them (Adeyinka & Ijaiya, 2024). Social media use has democratized, demythologized, and eased communication between voters and politicians.

Social media platforms were utilized by candidates, political parties, and governmental organizations to spread awareness and run campaigns. The opportunity to broaden its lines of communication and interact with people on Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter was seized by the Independent National Electoral Commission of Nigeria (INEC). With the creation of the INEC Situation Room, anyone with information regarding misconduct or election-related concerns could get in touch with the organization immediately. Approximately 4,000 tweets were sent to the Commission during the course of the three days of the presidential election. Lastly, according to Apuke & Iyendo (2017), Nigerians used social media to improve the efficiency of election observation. Political players in both mature and emerging democracies benefit greatly from the hybrid nature of online media outlets, which give politicians access to a wide range of target audiences.

Social media became a crucial instrument for mobilization and campaigning during Nigeria's general elections in 2023, particularly in hotly contested contests. Social media was used by political groups to attack opponents and create false impressions of support,

frequently spreading misinformation in the process (Nkem & Emeka, 2023). But it also provided a crucial forum for people to express their views and start important conversations about the elections. Regretfully, authorities have occasionally used the Cybercrimes Act to restrict free speech online (Ederagobor, 2025). Nigerian politicians have progressively adopted social media as a direct route of connection with their supporters, following worldwide trends. Social media has become a commonplace platform for political communication, giving elected officials a real-time way to interact with voters and express their opinions.

The rise in social media's influence over elections in Nigeria highlights a significant change in how people view and participate in the democratic process. Digital technologies may have gained significant attention for the first-time during Nigeria's 2015 general elections. The All Progressives Congress (APC), the opposition party at the time, created a social media site for its followers called "The Broom" and capitalized on the digital area that was mainly unoccupied and uncontrolled by the ruling party (Vanguard, 2014). A large number of Nigerians gathered on social media sites like Facebook and Twitter before these crucial elections to express their annoyance with government policies and behaviour. At that pivotal moment, the collective pressure of Nigeria's diverse social media users significantly changed the political landscape of the nation (Maho, 2017). In fact, people on social media used their online presence to plan demonstrations, as the "Enough Is Enough" campaign in April 2010. Goodluck

Jonathan, who was then vice president, was promoted to acting president as a result of this mobilization, which also set off the "doctrine of necessity" that persuaded the National Assembly to approve his appointment (Hammed, Abikan & Abdulrauf, 2015).

Nigeria's general elections in 2023 might go down in history because of their special connection to technology. Numerous surveys and reports were posted on social media sites, providing a dynamic but sometimes disorganized picture of the political environment. However, the lack of strict regulations and monitoring on these platforms has sparked worries about the unrestricted dissemination of unconfirmed material, making the fake news issue worse (Nkem & Emeka, 2023). In order to influence public opinion and draw a clear line between party members and political opponents, the two main political parties, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the All Progressives Congress (APC), established a noticeable and growing online presence in 2019. Because social media makes it simpler to propagate false information, experts predicted that its influence would be felt during the 2023 elections. Another risk is cross-posting, a feature of social networking sites that makes it easier to be seen or heard on multiple platforms simultaneously. This enables one to be visible and simultaneously reach several audiences (Nwafor & Nnaemeka, 2023).

TikTok had not been popular in Nigeria during the last elections, and Twitter Spaces had not yet been launched. Experts, therefore, forecast their influence on the elections since they facilitate the spread of false information. This is particularly the case with

TikTok, which, in spite of its small user base, has grown in popularity throughout the 2023 election campaign (Nwafor & Nnaemeka, 2023). Politicians now use TikTok, particularly to reach new audiences, together with their social media advisers. The politicians or campaigns are often the focus of their stage challenges or inflammatory political music. The aesthetically pleasing information may resonate with those who have limited reading and writing skills. Alternatively, Nigerian electoral politics heavily utilize Twitter. Every political party hosts almost daily debates that are steered by party members or sponsored social media influencers in an attempt to disparage rival candidates, increase awareness of their own, and persuade supporters and prospective voters to vote (Bassey et al., 2024).

## **2.6 Social Media and Political Participation in Nigeria**

Globally, social media platforms have changed how people communicate with one another (Erubami, 2020). The author claims that the open and rapid flow of information, which is a key indicator of social media technologies, has improved the realization of man's intrinsic right to freedom of speech and expression and encouraged liberty. Global trade, culture, religion, and, most importantly, politics have all been touched by these digital instruments (Ashiekpe & Mojaye, 2017; Okoro & Nwafor, 2013). As demonstrated by the "political tsunami" that ravaged several African nations following the 2011–2012 popular Arab Spring, social media has been instrumental in the overthrow of numerous autocratic and tight-knit political regimes and the installation of

more democratic ones (Ufuophu-Biri & Ojoboh, 2017). The Arab uprising was mostly orchestrated using Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, which were utilized to plan demonstrations that brought an end to the protracted rule of Hosni Mubarak in Egypt, Ben Ali in Tunisia, and Muammar al-Gaddafi in Libya (Erubami, 2020). According to Okoro and Nwafor (2013), social media has created an environment in which people can freely express their opinions about the government, given citizens the ability to check and balance public officials, enabled regular citizens to demand accountability, transparency, and probity from the government, and promoted greater political participation among users, or "netizens."

A fundamental tenet of democracy is political participation, which includes both active and passive engagement in the governmental processes that impact citizens' daily lives (Agu, 2015). Such engagement takes the shape of a variety of actions taken by a nation's citizens with the main objective of influencing the policies, programs, and/or structures of the government (Castertrione & Pieczka, 2018). Given that a lack of political participation fosters political indifference among individuals and promotes government failures, the significance of citizens' political engagement cannot be overstated (Erubami, 2020). According to Erubami (2020), social media gives people lots of chances to maintain their political interest and involvement by giving them a voice that transcends time and location. According to Madueke, Nwosu, Ogbonnaya, Anumadu,

& Okeke. (2017), they encourage a higher degree of political engagement between the populace and the government.

Social media has been utilized by nations, organizations, and individuals worldwide to attract voters' attention and encourage greater public political engagement (Erubami, 2020). Erubami (2020) went on to explain that social media's ability to boost and encourage political engagement in Nigeria has also been amply established. He claims that it is typical to witness politicians, political parties, and the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) frantically attempting to engage Nigerians on their different social media platforms during general elections. In addition to their general effectiveness for electioneering campaigns, he said social media has been used to organize some of the most powerful social campaigns against perceived government failures, like the Occupy Nigeria protest against the Nigerian government's removal of fuel subsidies in January 2012 and the #BBOG (Bring back Our Girls) campaign on Twitter and other social media platforms to raise awareness of the virtually forgotten story of more than 200 Chibok Community School girls kidnapped by Boko Haram terrorists in northeastern Nigeria (Okoli, Dunu, Okafor & Ezech, 2025).

## **2.7 Youth and Political Participation in Nigeria**

What is common is that young people are a dynamic and active social group that plays a number of roles in determining the course of society (Anyanwu & Onuoha, 2022). They claim that young people are viewed as tomorrow's leaders in numerous literary works. According to Obieze (2006), referenced in Anyanwu & Onuoha (2022), however, youths exhibit some traits regardless of their age group. These traits include physical, biological, intellectual, emotional, and rising independence, as well as sexual attraction. According to Akin (2014), referenced in Anyanwu & Onuoha (2022), youth is a certain stage of life that is the most vibrant and rapid, during which the quest for identity and character is evident and marks the start of a new existence. For this reason, youth development is characterized by the identity-building phase. According to Bates, Hobman, and Bell (2020), it is also regarded as a stage of life during which biological, psychological, and social changes take place.

Conversely, participation can be characterized as a process wherein participants influence and participate in public life decision-making (Boulianne, 2020). Public participation is described as a "praxis by which the citizens attempt to have an impact upon the institutions which are capable of implementing policies about the lives of citizens" by Wohlfart (2012, 149), referenced in Anyanwu & Onuoha (2022). Along with the cultural setting, participation is not static but rather repetitive and adaptable. Only in democracies is participation—which more broadly refers to taking part in social

processes—completely feasible (Anyanwu & Onuoha, 2022). According to them, generations with a strong civic consciousness may create a social structure that respects human rights, internalizes global ideals, and is democratic, responsible, transparent, and participative. Young people's involvement in all facets of social life is crucial in this regard (Ruess, Hoffmann, Boulianne & Heger, 2021).

All facets of society must be incorporated in political systems for them to be represented (Anyanwu & Onuoha, 2022). According to them, a sizable section of the populace has little to no voice or influence over decisions that impact the lives of group members when young people are disenfranchised or disengaged from political processes. They claim that the erosion of political systems' representativeness is a major effect. Young people must therefore participate in formal political processes and have a voice in shaping the politics of today and tomorrow if they are to have a lasting impact (Anyanwu & Onuoha, 2022). They believe that inclusive political engagement is essential to creating stable, peaceful communities and creating policies that address the unique demands of younger generations, in addition to being a fundamental political and democratic right. Young people must understand their rights and be provided with the information and skills needed to engage meaningfully at all levels of political participation if they are to be fairly represented in political institutions, procedures, and decision-making, especially during elections (Anyanwu & Onuoha, 2022).

Young people may quickly feel disempowered when they encounter barriers to engaging in official, institutionalized political processes (Anyanwu & Onuoha, 2022). According to them, many people tend to think that their voices won't be heard or that, even if they are, they won't be taken seriously when this occurs. They contend that the issue becomes cyclical because if politicians are unable to win over young people's votes, they may become disinterested in addressing their goals. Despite their awareness of the need for social justice and equity, environmental preservation, and cultural diversity, young people are consequently increasingly shut out of decision-making processes and discussions regarding important socioeconomic and political issues (Anyanwu & Onuoha, 2022). Since youth participation in politics is a crucial component of modern democracy, young generations should maintain democratic values at the forefront of their aspirations in order to develop a pluralist and libertarian democracy in our nation (Pelevin, Taubaev, Tileubergenov & Vasiliev, 2018). Therefore, voting once every two years should not be the only way that people participate in a nation's democratic system (Anyanwu & Onuoha, 2022). Since these behaviours are essential for securing permanent positions in decision-making processes and practices, citizens must participate in political parties and nongovernmental groups (Anyanwu & Onuoha, 2022).

## **2.8 The 2023 Presidential Election in Nigeria**

Nigeria holds presidential elections every four years, and in order to win, a candidate must receive a majority of the vote in addition to more than 25% of the votes cast in at least 24 of the 36 states in the nation. Only the candidate who receives the most votes overall and the candidate themselves are permitted to compete in a run-off that takes place within 21 days if no contender satisfies these requirements. Since Nigeria's democratic transition in 1999, there has never been a need for a run-off election.

Nigeria had presidential elections on February 25, 2023. Bola Tinubu, the candidate of Nigeria's ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) party, defeated two of his closest opponents to gain 36% of the vote in the most contested race in decades. On March 1, the Independent Nigerian Election Commission (INEC) declared the final results following a tumultuous, nearly four-day process. With 8.79 million votes, Tinubu easily defeated newcomer Peter Obi with 6.1 million and main opposition rival Atiku Abubakar with 6.98 million. This was also a triumph because none of these candidates had ever served as an officer before. Nonetheless, women made little less than 10% of the applicants (Burke, 2023). Nevertheless, preliminary figures showed that Nigeria had its lowest-ever voter turnout of 27%. Turnout was undoubtedly dampened in large part by the rising insecurity that had afflicted the pre-election. For instance, INEP documented more than 134 assaults on its staff or offices (Gavin, 2023). Even though it criticized inadequate planning and a lack of transparency, which had no bearing on the

outcome, the ECOWAS, which had sent out over 240 poll monitors, deemed the elections to be mostly peaceful. It urged opposition leaders to advocate for peace and resolve any issues they may have through the constitutional process.

Electoral violence plagued the pre-election. More than 200 violent incidents involving party members and supporters were documented in the 12 months leading up to the election, with almost 100 fatalities reported (Kohnert, 2023). With over 150 occurrences and over 100 recorded deaths between 2018 and 2019, and an estimated 115 events and over 90 deaths between 2014 and 2015, this almost matched the lead-up to the previous two election years. In the run-up to the 2023 elections, the majority of violence against INEC offices and employees occurred in the South East and the Niger Delta (Kohnert, 2023).

The Nigerian electoral roll has around 93.4 million registered voters overall. Compared to four years earlier, that was more than 11 million. According to a revised record published by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) on January 11, 2023, 53,264 voters who were deemed ineligible had been eliminated (Macaulay, 2023). Due to his ill health and the fact that his term is over, incumbent President Muhammadu Buhari, a "Northerner" and former commander in the Nigerian army, is unable to run for office again. Opinion polls indicated that three candidates had a reasonable possibility of victory (Macaulay, 2023). First, the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) party was represented by 70-year-old Bola Tinubu. In the South West, he was

regarded as a political "godfather." Second, the 76-year-old Atiku Abubakar was a candidate for the People's Democratic Party (PDP), the biggest opposition party. He was the Northern establishment's candidate. He ran unsuccessfully for president five times while serving as governor of Adamawa State in northeastern Nigeria. Third, Peter Obi, 61, ran for the obscure Labour Party in an attempt to overthrow the two-party system that had governed the nation from 1966 until 1999, when military rule ended, with Shehu Shagari's 1979–1983 interregnum.

Like their neighbours in Benin and Togo, Nigerians were fixated on the idea of "changing" the current security and socioeconomic landscape. Obi had strong social media support, particularly from young Nigerians, despite being a PDP member until last year. He is a successful businessman who presided over the state of Anambra in the southeast from 2006 to 2014 as its governor (Macaulay, 2023).

Theoretically, Buhari and the governing elite would have circumvented the constitutional term restriction, as his African counterparts have often done in countries like Rwanda, neighbouring Benin, and Togo (Versteeg, 2020; Kohnert, 2019). However, Buhari's inability to restore national security and his alleged indecisiveness and lame-duck nature caused him to lose support within his own party (Obadare, 2019). Furthermore, the presidency must alternate between the three main ethnic groups and geographical areas—the Hausa-Fulani in the north, the Yoruba in the southwest, and the Igbo in the southeast—in accordance with the "iron rule" of informal Nigerian

politics of power-sharing, which was carried over from colonial times (Orji, 2008). Since the two presidents that came before Buhari, Umaru Musa Yar'Adua (2007–2010) and Goodluck Jonathan (2010–2015), represented the North and the East, it would be Yorubaland's turn for a candidate, Bola Tinubu, who did win. However, the new president's position is not one to be envied. He has an almost insurmountable task ahead of him. With a present population of about 200 million and projected to reach over 400 million by 2050 (Vigneron, 2018), Nigeria is the most populous and resource-rich country in Africa. However, it is beset by a persistent internal conflict. As a result, it continues to be a weak subregional power.

All of these efforts must be completed against the backdrop of deteriorating macroeconomic stability brought on by Nigeria's 2020 recession, brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic (World Bank, Nigeria, 2023). Nigeria has not been able to profit from the rising global oil prices since 2021. The economically unsustainable petroleum subsidy continues to rely on the gross oil receipts even after oil production hit an all-time low. Millions of Nigerians are forced into poverty by the rising rate of inflation. 40% of Nigerians were living below the poverty line in 2018, while another 25%, or 53 million, were at risk. Poverty reduction and inclusive growth were negatively impacted by rising inequality. Lack of employment is the main cause of poverty, which exacerbates regional inequality, social and political discontent, and rising insecurity

since many people regard joining criminal gangs as their only option for making a living (World Bank, Nigeria, 2023).

## **2.9 Social Media and the 2023 Presidential Election in Nigeria**

In the 2023 election, social media played a significant role in voting trends and in the development and spread of political campaign ideologies in Nigeria. Regarding the social media usage trends during Nigeria's general election in 2023, the majority of users posted election-related and political campaign messages on social media first, then shared and commented. Table 2.1 details the total number of tweets for all presidential candidates in the 2023 general elections in Nigeria, while Table 2.2 details the number of tweets mined for each candidate monthly. Social media political campaign ideological themes were more frequently utilized to disparage, degrade, and smear opponents during political campaigns than to build their arguments on issues. Therefore, hate speech, lies, shifting responsibility, instilling fear, worry, and apathy in others, and promoting ethno-religious and cultural feelings were all propagated via social media.

**Table 2.1: The total number of tweets for all presidential candidates in the 2023 general elections**

Candidate	Hashtags	Number of tweets
Atiku Abubakar	#atiku	76,774
	#Atikulate	516
Bola Ahmed Tinubu	#bat	112,700
	#batified	2983
Peter Obi	#obi	37,979
	#ObiDatti	136,749

Source: Odegbile & Oyelami (2024)

**Table 2.2: The number of tweets mined for each candidate monthly**

Candidate	Hashtags	Number of tweets
Atiku Abubakar	#atiku	76,774
	#Atikulate	516
Bola Ahmed Tinubu	#bat	112,700
	#batified	2983
Peter Obi	#obi	37,979
	#ObiDatti	136,749

Source: Odegbile & Oyelami (2024)

Voters' perceptions of the 2023 Nigerian general election were influenced more negatively than favourably by the ideological themes that dominated social media during political campaigns. The ideology that dominated social media during campaigns did not, for the most part, provide potential voters with valid reasons for supporting or opposing a political candidate or party; instead, it was primarily blame-shifting, abuse of one another, the dissemination of false information and fake news against one another, and the dissemination of distorted information, all of which instilled fear in voters and encouraged voter apathy. This suggests that rather than motivating voters to

cast ballots in Nigeria's elections, the prevailing ideology on social media during the 2023 political campaigns encourages their indifference. Technology played a significant role in the general and national assembly elections of 2023, as seen by the numerous polls, both real and fake, that flooded social media with news about events across the country.

In the run-up to the general elections in 2023, social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Telegram, and others could need to take into consideration the frequency of lies and half-truths. Influencers actively shaped narratives to either mould or distort public opinions, depending on the topics they were asked to manage and the sides they supported (Adebomi, 2024). Although no one was spared on social media, some influencers played the part of spin doctors, skillfully crafting and modifying narratives to suit the circumstances. According to a widely shared social media broadcast message ahead of the general/national assembly elections in 2023, the Apex bank of Nigeria, CBN, would shut down all electronic banking networks to stop vote buying (Azeez, 2023). Additionally, information falsely attributed to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) was spread by other sources, who claimed that voters without Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs) could still cast ballots by going to election officials because the Bimodal Voter Accreditations System (BVAS) would validate them based only on dubious identification. This assertion was swiftly denied by INEC, which made it clear that only those having PVCs may cast ballots. The voices of people and well-

known figures hiding behind technology and artificial intelligence spread far too many falsehoods.

Social media is competitive, with several political candidates fighting for the same audience's attention. The results of the 2023 elections seem to have been influenced by this fierce competition as well as creative online crowdsourcing. Social media undoubtedly contributes significantly to the construction of political narratives and the spread of information, but its impact on elections is twofold. A complex environment is created by ethical issues, the abundance of unverified information, and the active participation of influencers, highlighting the necessity of regulation and monitoring to maintain the integrity of political processes.

## **2.10 Theoretical Framework**

### **Uses and Gratification Theory**

According to the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), people are proactive, goal-oriented media consumers who choose media to meet particular needs like escape, entertainment, social connection, or information (Katz & Foulkes, 1962). When it comes to social media, UGT explains why users intentionally select sites like Facebook or TikTok for a variety of reasons, such as preserving relationships, creating an identity, finding news, or just killing time. This is in contrast to previous media theories that emphasized the user's understanding of their motivations and demands for particular media consumption, viewing users as passive recipients of media messages.

A wide range of research has used UGT, including studies on social media and internet use (Korhan and Ersoy, 2016; Malik et al., 2016; Tanta et al., 2014), mobile device use (Ahad and Anshari, 2017; Kousari et al., 2007), and other online applications like e-learning and e-commerce (Azam, 2015; Mondri et al., 2008). Gratification is defined as the apparent satisfaction of several requirements, such as social, emotive, and cognitive needs (Palmgreen, 1984). When talking about UGT, it's important to distinguish between gratifications obtained (GO) and gratifications sought (GS) (Bae, 2018). According to Bradley (1974), GS represents a person's expectation of the possible satisfaction that could result from a particular behaviour. As an alternative, GO describes the real satisfaction that a person felt and obtained from the action (Katz et al., 1973). GS is more commonly researched as the desire to pursue media-associated gratifications; in the present study, gratifications described only refer to GO, allowing for the investigation of its impact on real behaviour.

According to a study by Lee & Ma (2012), the most often recognized and researched gratifications under UGT are information seeking, status seeking, socializing, and entertainment. Entertainment refers to the ability of social media to meet an individual's needs in terms of escapism, enjoyment, emotional release, and anxiety relief (McQuail, 2010); socializing is the interpersonal communication, the development of social ties, and the sense of belonging to a community that an individual could achieve through media use (Papacharissi and Rubin, 2000); status seeking is the satisfaction of gaining

recognition and attaining status and reputation among other social media users (Kaiser and Müller-Seitz, 2008); and information seeking is the satisfaction of accessing timely and pertinent information from social media. The aforementioned satisfactions have been linked in numerous studies to activities related to social media (Lee & Ma, 2012; Park et al., 2009; Wang et al., 2012). The current study will employ the same predictors to examine the potential gratifications from social media use in the context of youth political participation, given how frequently the four aforementioned gratifications were acquired by social media users in earlier studies.

It makes sense that the satisfactions that come from social media could encourage activity related to social media. However, it could seem pointless to associate social media rewards with non-media-related activities (like birding). According to Perse & Ferguson (2000), GO is comparable to satisfaction after using a medium. However, in studies of other circumstances, satisfaction is a predictor of environmentally conscious behaviour. Powell & Ham (2008) researched ecotourism in the Galapagos Islands and proposed that people's conservation behaviours may be positively influenced by their high degree of pleasure and enjoyment from nature-based tours. Similarly, Cheng et al. (2018) used route analysis to show that tourists' happiness with a tour experience can directly influence their environmentally conscious behaviour at Xi'an, China's ancient cultural sites. In fact, additional behaviours that are not directly related to media have been effectively studied using UGT. For instance, self-status-seeking, information-

seeking, and entertainment gratifications from Facebook use were found to encourage civic and political engagement among Texas college students (Park et al., 2009).

Previous research has mainly found that the four predictors of information seeking, status seeking, socializing, and entertainment are positive predictors of behaviour regarding social media use because gratifications give people positive feelings and satisfy their cognitive, affective, and social needs (Lee & Ma, 2012; Park et al., 2009; Wang et al., 2012). Similar to this, feeling more satisfied also promoted ecologically friendly actions. This theory, therefore, helps explain youths' uses of social media to participate in political activities in Nigeria, particularly in the 2023 presidential elections in Edo State.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter explains the steps taken to gather and analyse data. Research methodology is the methodical, scientific technique to conducting research, examining issues, and compiling data and information for a certain goal (Kholeif, Abdel-Kader and Sherer, 2008). It covers the methods and strategies for locating, gathering, evaluating, and interpreting data in order to respond to research inquiries and resolve issues (Hazari, 2023). Therefore. This chapter explains certain concepts relating to the study's methodology such as research design, population of study, sample size and sampling technique, instrumentation, validity of instrument, reliability of instrument, method of data collection and technique of data analysis.

#### **3.2 Research design**

Research design is the overarching plan or approach for carrying out a research study. Along with outlining the study's aims and objectives, it also describes the procedures and methods that will be used to gather and process data (Hunziker & Blankenagel, 2021). The study adopted a survey research design. By this, it utilized designed questionnaire. The design was considered appropriate for this study as the researcher sets out to determine the relationships that existed between variables. In this context,

surveys are defined as a method to gather information from a sample of individuals (Ponto, 2015), with systematic sampling serving as the foundation for source selection and interviews serving as the information source (Zimba & Gasparyan, 2023). They serve as tools for determining how societal traits are distributed. Survey items and questions are regarded as markers for a hidden construct (such as opinions or attitudes) or dimensions. Personal information is not of interest to survey researchers. Rather, it is more curious about data pertaining to larger organizations, even societies. We refer to these target groupings as populations. Inferences about the population under study are drawn from the data obtained from interviewing people.

### **3.3 Population of the Study**

A population is the whole group you wish to make inferences about (Thacker, 2020). A population in a study doesn't always relate to human beings (Hu, 2014). This study was conducted in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State. The local government area was purposively selected because of the dominance of youth demography. It therefore provided a target population for which the study applied. The population of Oredo Local Government is 374, 671 (National Population Census, 2006).

### **3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Technique**

The particular group that you will gather data from is called a sample (Thacker, 2020). The sample size is always smaller than the population's total size (Thacker, 2020). A

sample size of four hundred (400) respondents that comprised youths between the ages of 18 and 34 was randomly selected. The choice of the sample was drawn from Taro Yamane’s formula for sample size determination, as defined:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + (N \times e^2)}$$

Where; n= Sample size; N = Population, 1= Constant value and e =Margin of error given as (0.05). Hence, given that the population (N) = (42,500), e = 0.05

$$n = \frac{374,671}{1 + (374,671 \times 0.05^2)} = 399.57 = \text{aprox. } 400.$$

### **3.5 Instrumentation**

The main instrument for data collection in this research was the structured questionnaire. Structured questionnaire is one tool used to gather information from respondents (Cheung, 2014). This kind of questionnaire consists of standardized closed questions with predetermined answers that respondents must select from (Cheung, 2021). The questions were posed in a predetermined order and had a predetermined phrasing. Part A of the questionnaires sought to know the bio-data of the respondents. Part B contained questions bordering on social media and youth political participation in the 2023 presidential election in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State.

The closed-ended questions were designed to elicit direct responses from the respondents as well as for ease of analysis. It involved Likert format of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD) and Undecided (U).

### **3.6 Validity of the Instrument**

Validity is the degree to which an instrument measures what it was designed to measure (Sullivan, 2011). Consequently, if an instrument measures what it was intended to measure, it is deemed "valid" (Cook & Beckman, 2006). Quantitative data collection is linked to validity, which must be established using a variety of statistical concepts and methodologies (Sullivan, 2011). In determining the validity of the instruments used in this study, the copies of the instruments were face validated by the researcher's supervisor. The corrections made were effected before the proper administrations of the questionnaires were made.

### **3.7 Reliability of the Instrument**

In terms of assessment tools, reliability is the consistency of the results obtained from them when administered to the same people in the same environment (Sullivan, 2011). For the most part, consistency or dependability refers to outcomes. Evaluation of validity includes reliability as well. To determine the reliability of the instrument, it was trial tested on 20 final year UNIBEN Political Science students who were conversant

with the 2023 general elections in Edo State. The Cronbach Alpha method was adopted to measure the internal consistency coefficient of the questionnaire.

### **3.8 Method of Data Collection**

Data for this study were generated from two sources: primary and secondary sources. The primary source consists of the major source of data that was obtained through the administration of a structured questionnaire in line with the statement of the objectives. The secondary source involved the use of archival materials such as journals/articles, publications, conferences, newspapers and internet materials.

### **3.9 Techniques of Data Analysis**

The data generated was analyzed using simple percentages for the analysis of the respondents' bio-data. Also, charts and graphs were used to represent the data generated in the field. The data were coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 25.0).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents data generated in the field. As earlier stated, the results are presented in simple percentages and graphs. The occurrence or non-occurrence of an event as contained in the questionnaire was determined by the item that received the highest percentage. However, out of 400 distributed questionnaires, 392 questionnaires were returned, and 8 were lost in the process.

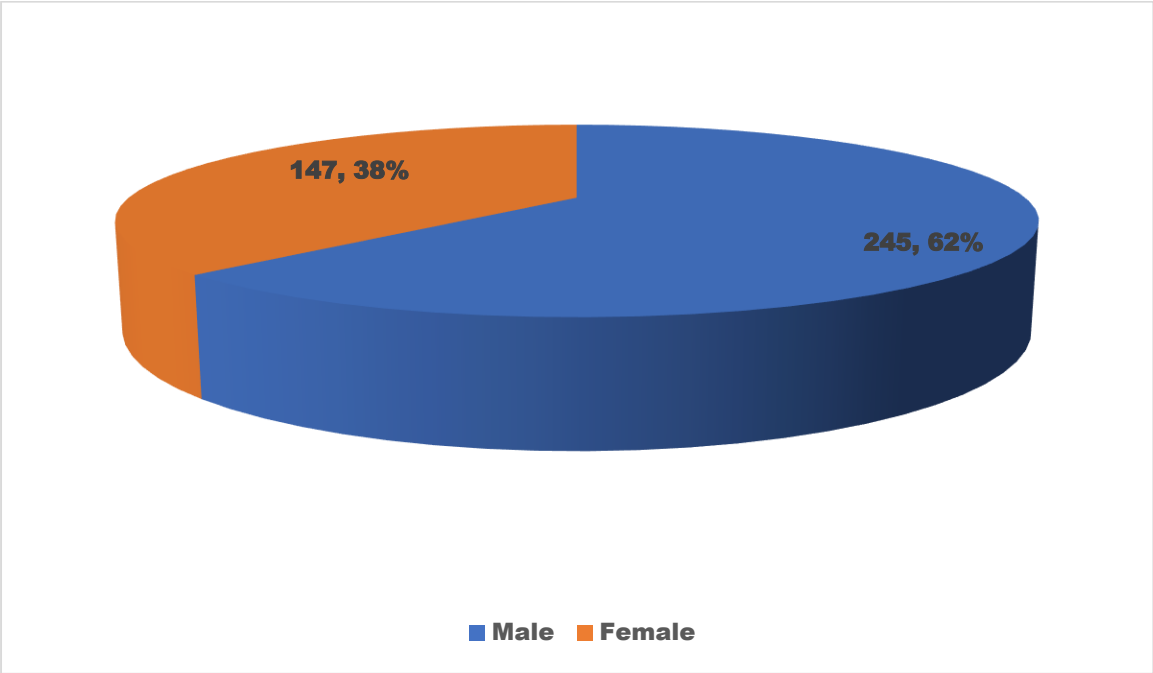
#### 4.2 Bio-Data of Respondents

**Table 4.1: Sex of the Respondents**

		SEX			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	245	62.5	62.5	62.5
	Female	147	37.5	37.5	100.0
	Total	392	100.0	100.0	

Source: Survey Data (2025)

**Chart 4.1: Sex of the Respondents**



Source: Field Work (2025)

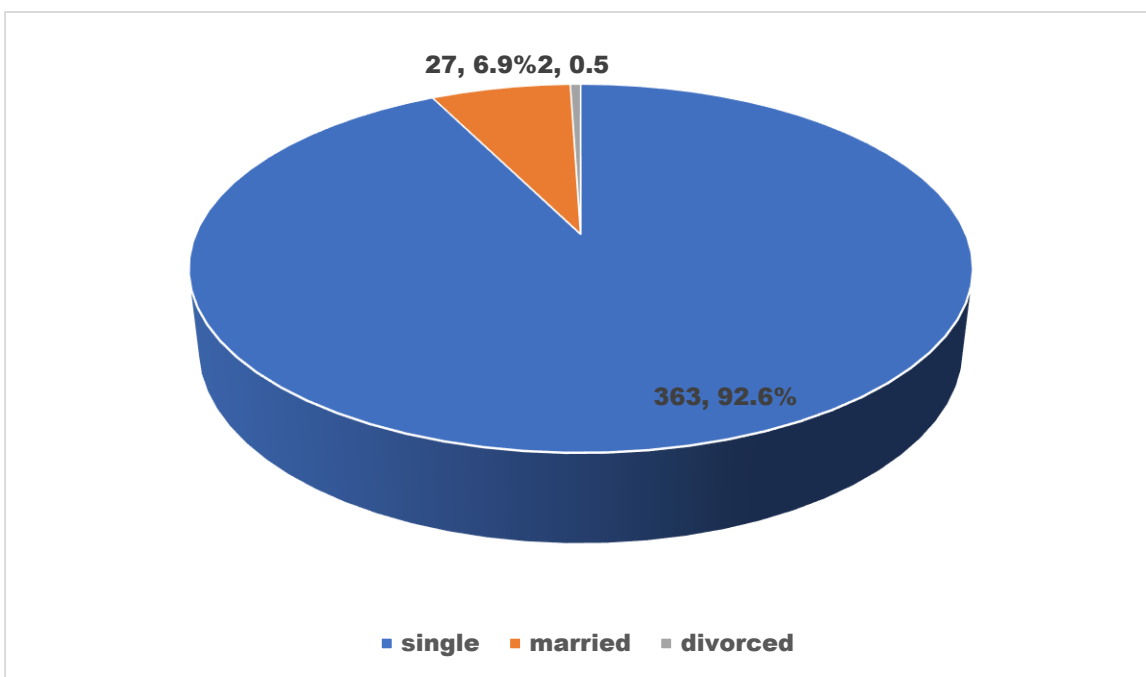
From table 4.1 and chart 4.1 above, the results of the survey according to sex distribution of the respondents presented show that out of the 392 respondents surveyed, 245, representing 62.5% of respondents, are males, while 147, representing 37.5% of the respondents, are females. Thus, more males participated in the study than the females.

**Table 4.2: Marital Status of the Respondents**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Single	363	92.6	92.6	92.6
Married	27	6.9	6.9	99.5
Divorced	2	0.5	0.5	100.0
Total	392	100.0	100.0	

Source: Survey Data (2025)

**Chart 4.2: Marital Status Distribution of the Respondents**



Source: Survey Data (2025)

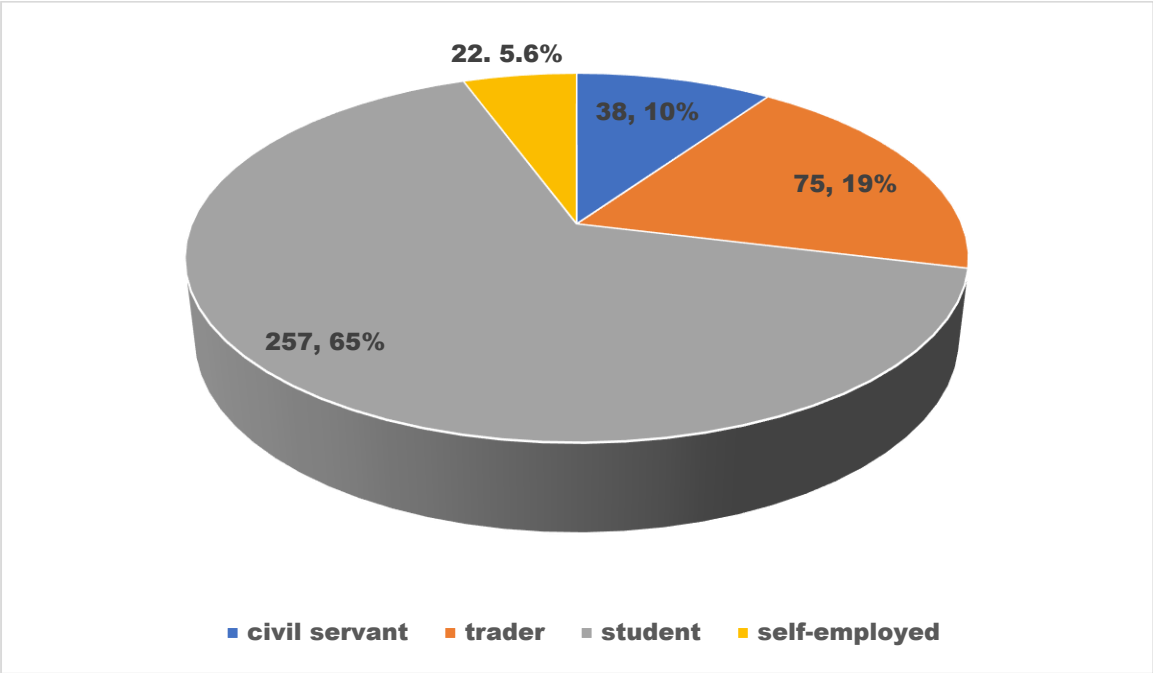
The results of the survey, according to the marital distribution of the respondents, presented in Table 4.2 and Chart 4.2, show that 963 respondents, representing 92.6 per cent, are single, 27 respondents, representing 6.9 per cent, are married, and 2 respondents, representing 0.5 per cent, are divorced. Thus, respondents who are married participated the most in the survey.

**Table 4.3: Occupational Distribution of the Respondents**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid civil servant	38	9.7	9.7	9.7
Trader	75	19.1	19.1	28.8
Student	257	65.6	65.6	94.4
self employed	22	5.6	5.6	100.0
Total	392	100.0	100.0	

Source: Survey Data (2025)

**Chart 4.3: Occupation of the Respondents**



Source: Survey Data (2025)

The results of the survey, according to the occupation of the respondents, presented in Table 4.3 and Chart 4.3, show that 38 respondents, representing 10 per cent, are civil servants, 75 respondents, representing 19 per cent, are traders, 257 respondents, representing 65 per cent, are students, while 22 respondents, representing 5.6 per cent, are self-employed. Thus, respondents who are students participated the most in the survey.

**Table 4.4: Highest Educational Qualification of Respondents**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid SSCE/GCE	69	17.6	17.6	17.6
NCE/ND	128	32.7	32.7	50.3
BSC/HND	162	41.3	41.3	91.6
Masters	24	6.1	6.1	97.7
PhD	2	.5	.5	98.2
professional certificate	7	1.8	1.8	100.0
Total	392	100.0	100.0	

Source: Survey Data (2025)

**Chart 4.4: Educational Qualification of Respondents**



Source: Survey Data (2025)

The results of the survey according to the educational qualification of the respondents presented in Table 4.4 and chart 4.4 show that 69 respondents representing 17.6 percent possess SSCE/GCE certificates, 128 respondents representing 32.7 percent hold NCE/ND certificates, 162 respondents representing 41.3 percent possess BSc/HND certificates, 24 respondents representing 6.1 percent hold MSc certificates, 2 respondents representing 0.5 percent possess PhD certificates while 7 respondents representing 1.8 percent hold professional certificates. Thus, respondents with BSc/HND certificates participated the most in the survey.

### **4.3 ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This section attempted to answer the research questions of the study by factoring the responses of the respondents. The research questions were: What social media technologies were used by the youth to participate in the 2023 presidential election in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State? Did social media use by the youth facilitate the dissemination of political information in the 2023 presidential election in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State? Did social media use by the youth influence their choice of candidate in the 2023 presidential election in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State? What challenges were encountered by the youth in political participation through social media use in the 2023 presidential election in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State?

All the research questions were analyzed using simple percentages.

**4.3.1 RQ1:** What social media technologies were used by the youth to participate in the 2023 presidential election in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State?

Nos	<b>Cluster A: Social media technologies used by the youth to participate in the 2023 presidential election in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State</b>	SA	A	U	D	SD
1	I used Facebook to politically participate in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State	60 <b>31.3%</b>	43 <b>22.4%</b>	10 <b>5.2%</b>	44 <b>22.9%</b>	35 <b>18.2%</b>
2	I used WhatsApp to politically participate in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State	72 <b>37.5%</b>	56 <b>29.2%</b>	6 <b>3.1%</b>	28 <b>14.6%</b>	30 <b>15.6%</b>
3	I used Instagram to politically participate in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State.	65 <b>33.9%</b>	47 <b>24.5%</b>	6 <b>3.1%</b>	36 <b>18.8%</b>	38 <b>19.8%</b>
4	I used TikTok to politically participate in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State	68 <b>35.4%</b>	58 <b>30.2%</b>	6 <b>3.1%</b>	22 <b>11.5%</b>	36 <b>18.8%</b>
5	I used Twitter to politically participate in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State	64 <b>33.3%</b>	50 <b>26.0%</b>	3 <b>1.6%</b>	42 <b>21.9%</b>	33 <b>17.2%</b>

Source: Field Study (2025)

From table 4.3.1 above, the respondents' distribution based on the social media technologies used by the youth to participate in the 2023 presidential election in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State shows that a majority of 60 and 43 (103) respondents constituting 31.3% and 22.4% (53.7%) respectively strongly agreed and agreed respectively that they used Facebook to politically participate in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State. On the other hand, 44 and 35 (79) respondents, constituting 22.9% and 18.2% (41.1%) respectively, disagreed and strongly disagreed, respectively, while 10 respondents representing 5.2% were undecided. Thus, a majority of 103 respondents representing 53.7% agreed that they used Facebook to politically participate in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State, while 79 respondents representing 41.1% disagreed.

When asked whether respondents used WhatsApp to politically participate in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State, 72 and 56 (128) respondents, constituting 37.5% and 29.2% (66.7%) respectively, strongly agreed and agreed respectively that they used WhatsApp to politically participate in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State. On the other hand, 28 and 30 (58) respondents, constituting 14.6% and 15.6% (30.2%) respectively, disagreed and strongly disagreed, respectively, while 6 respondents representing 3.1% were undecided. Thus, a majority of 128 respondents representing 66.7% agreed that

they used WhatsApp to politically participate in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State, while 58 respondents representing 30.2% disagreed.

When asked whether respondents used Instagram to politically participate in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State, 65 and 47 (112) respondents, constituting 33.9% and 24.5% (58.4%) respectively, agreed and strongly agreed, respectively, while 6 respondents representing 3.1% were undecided. On the other hand, 36 and 38 (74) respondents, constituting 18.8% and 19.8% (38.6%) respectively, strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively. Thus, a majority of 112 respondents representing 58.4% agreed that they used Instagram to politically participate in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State, while 74 respondents representing 38.6% disagreed.

When asked whether respondents used TikTok to politically participate in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State, 68 and 58 (126) respondents, constituting 35.4% and 30.2% (65.6%) respectively, strongly agreed and agreed respectively that they used TikTok to politically participate in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State. On the other hand, 22 and 36 (58) respondents, constituting 11.5% and 18.8% (30.3%) respectively, disagreed and strongly disagreed, respectively. Thus, a majority of 126 respondents

representing 65.6% agreed that they used TikTok to politically participate in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State, while 58 respondents representing 30.3% disagreed.

The respondents' distribution based on whether the respondents used TikTok to politically participate in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State shows that a majority of 64 and 50 (114) respondents constituting 33.3% and 26.0% (59.3%) respectively strongly agreed and agreed respectively, while 42 and 33 (75) respondents constituting 21.9% and 17.2% (40.1%) respectively disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. 3 respondents representing 1.6% were undecided. Thus, a majority of 114 respondents representing 59.3% agreed that they used TikTok to politically participate in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State while 75 respondents representing 40.1% disagreed.

**4.3.2: RQ2:** Did social media use by the youth facilitate the dissemination of political information in the 2023 presidential election in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State?

<b>Nos</b>	<b>Cluster B: Social media use and facilitation of the dissemination of political information in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
6	Social media enabled me to get and send information concerning the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area	64 <b>33.3%</b>	50 <b>26.0%</b>	42 <b>21.9%</b>	33 <b>17.2%</b>	3 <b>1.6%</b>
7	Social media enabled me to campaign for my candidate in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area	71 <b>37.0%</b>	58 <b>30.2%</b>	33 <b>17.2%</b>	30 <b>15.6%</b>	-
8	Social media enabled me to debate with other social media users regarding the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area	58 <b>30.2%</b>	70 <b>36.5%</b>	24 <b>12.5%</b>	36 <b>18.9%</b>	4 <b>2.1%</b>

Source: Field Study (2025)

From table 4.3.2 above, the respondents' distribution based on social media use and facilitation of the dissemination of political information in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State shows that a majority of 64 and 50 (114) respondents constituting 33.3% and 26.0% (59.3%) respectively strongly agreed

and agreed respectively that social media enabled them to get and send information concerning the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area, while 42 and 33 (75) respondents constituting 21.9% and 17.2% (40.1%) respectively disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. 3 respondents representing 1.6% were undecided. Thus, a majority of 114 respondents representing 59.3% agreed that social media enabled them to get and send information concerning the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area, while 75 respondents representing 40.1% disagreed.

When asked whether social media enabled the respondents to campaign for their candidates in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area, 71 and 58 (129) respondents, constituting 37.0% and 30.2% (67.2%) respectively strongly agreed and agreed respectively, while 33 and 30 (63) respondents constituting 17.2% and 15.6% (32.8%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. Thus, a majority of 129 respondents representing 67.2% agreed that social media enabled them to campaign for their candidates in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area, while 63 respondents representing 32.8% disagreed.

When asked whether social media enabled the respondents to debate with other social media users regarding the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area, 58 and 70 (128) respondents, constituting 30.2% and 36.5% (66.7%) respectively,

strongly agreed and agreed respectively, while 24 and 36 (60) respondents, constituting 12.5% and 18.9% (31.4%) disagreed and strongly disagreed. 4 respondents representing 2.1% were undecided. Thus, a majority of 128 respondents representing 66.7% agreed that social media enabled them to debate with other social media users regarding the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area, while 60 respondents representing 31.4% disagreed.

**4.3.3: RQ3: Did social media use by the youth influence their choice of candidate in the 2023 presidential election in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State?**

<b>Cluster C: Social media use and Influence on the choice of candidate in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
Social media helped me choose my candidate in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State	78 <b>40.6%</b>	56 <b>29.2%</b>	-	32 <b>16.7%</b>	26 <b>13.5%</b>
Social media helped me to choose the right candidate in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State	56 <b>29.2%</b>	70 <b>36.5%</b>	-	28 <b>14.6%</b>	38 <b>19.8%</b>

Source: Field Study (2025)

From table 4.3.3 above, the respondents' distribution based on social media use and Influence on the choice of candidate in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State shows that a majority of 78 and 56 (134) respondents

constituting 40.6% and 29.2% (69.8%) respectively strongly agreed and agreed respectively that social media helped them to choose their candidates in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State, while 32 and 26 (58) respondents constituting 16.7% and 13.5% (30.2%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. Thus, a majority of 134 respondents representing 69.8% agreed that social media helped them to choose their candidates in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State, while 75 respondents representing 30.2% disagreed.

When asked whether social media helped the respondents to choose the right candidate in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo States, 56 and 70 (126) respondents constituting 29.2% and 36.5% (65.7%) agreed and strongly agreed respectively, while 28 and 38 (66) respondents constituting 14.6% and 19.8% (34.4%) respectively strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively that social media helped the respondents to choose the right candidate in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo States. Thus, a majority of 126 respondents representing 66.7% agreed, while 66 respondents representing 34.4% disagreed.

**4.3.4: RQ4: What challenges were encountered by the youth in political participation through social media use in the 2023 presidential election in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State?**

Nos	<b>Cluster D: Challenges were encountered by the youth in political participation through social media use in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State</b>	SA	A	U	D	SD
11	Government's unnecessary social media censorship	61 <b>31.8%</b>	81 <b>42.2%</b>	-	21 <b>10.9%</b>	29 <b>15.1%</b>
12	High data tariff	56 <b>29.2%</b>	70 <b>36.5%</b>	-	28 <b>14.6%</b>	38 <b>19.8%</b>
13	Persistent network glitches	64 <b>33.3%</b>	50 <b>26.0%</b>	42 <b>21.9%</b>	33 <b>17.2%</b>	3 <b>1.6%</b>
14	Epileptic power supply	71 <b>37.0%</b>	58 <b>30.2%</b>	33 <b>17.2%</b>	30 <b>15.6%</b>	-
15	Fake news	78 <b>40.6%</b>	56 <b>29.2%</b>	-	32 <b>16.7%</b>	26 <b>13.5%</b>
16	Cyber stalking and bullying	64 <b>33.3%</b>	50 <b>26.0%</b>	3 <b>1.6%</b>	42 <b>21.9%</b>	33 <b>17.2%</b>

Source: Field Study (2025)

When asked what the challenges encountered by the youth in political participation through social media use in the 2023 presidential election in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State were, 61 and 81 (142) respondents, constituting 31.8% and 42.2% (74.0%), strongly agreed and agreed that it was the government's unnecessary social

media censorship; 56 and 70 (122) respondents, constituting 29.2% and 36.5% (65.7%), strongly agreed and agreed that it was the high data tariff; 64 and 50 (114) respondents, constituting 33.3% and 26.0% (59.3%), strongly agreed and agreed that it was the persistent network glitches; 71 and 58 (129) respondents, constituting 37.0% and 30.2% (67.2%), strongly agreed and agreed that it was the epileptic power supply; 78 and 56 (134) respondents, constituting 40.6% and 29.2% (69.8%), strongly agreed and agreed that it was the fake news, and 64 and 50 (114) respondents, constituting 33.3% and 26.0% (59.3%), strongly agreed and agreed that it was the cyber stalking and bullying.

#### **4.4 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The first finding shows that different forms of social media technologies were used by the youth to participate in the 2023 presidential elections in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State. These technologies included, in the order of percentage of usage, WhatsApp (66.7%), TikTok (65.6%), Twitter (59.3%), Instagram (58.4%), and Facebook (53.6%). This finding corroborates previous studies on the importance of social media technologies in youth political participation in Nigeria. for instance, Dagona, Karick & Abubakar (2013) found that Facebook use and political participation among Nigerian youth are highly positively correlated, though political participation was not significantly impacted by Facebook use rate. Similarly, Abdu, Mohammed, Alamai, & Halilu (2018) found that youth offline political participation is substantially correlated with Facebook use, engagement with political personalities, perceived

Facebook information quality, and political interest. Olayemi (2022) also found that the dominant social media technologies used by the youths were Facebook and WhatsApp.

The second finding shows that social media use facilitated the youth's dissemination of political information in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State by enabling them to get and send information, campaign for their preferred candidate and debate with their social media users. This finding is consistent with the previous studies that social media enabled youths to perform different tasks during the elections. For instance, Ezeigbo (2024) found that during the election, Nigerian youths utilized social media platforms for a variety of political activities, including campaigning, communication and conversations, political advocacy, election and result monitoring, and more. Edith Ohaja et al. (2023) demonstrated, among other things, that political parties and candidates used social media extensively during their campaigns to share content, have conversations, guide supporters, and communicate with voters; social media had a positive impact on youth voter turnout and political engagement during the elections.

In contrast, the study by Uzuegbunam (2025) found that even while young people are very aware of, exposed to, and use Facebook, they typically utilize it for more frivolous, fun, and personal purposes. The use of social media by young people disengages rather than encourages active involvement with their anticipated role in social evolution and transformation. For some reason, young people have never used Facebook—or any

other social media platform—to promote or garner support for a cause that aims to improve society or bring about social change. Similarly, according to Fujiwara, Müller & Schwarz. (2023), Twitter reduced the Republican Party's vote share in the 2016 and 2020 presidential elections, although its impact on Congressional elections and past presidential elections was minimal. Text analysis of millions of tweets, poll data, and primary elections provides evidence that Twitter's comparatively liberal content may have influenced moderate voters to vote against Donald Trump.

The third finding showed that social media use influenced the youth's choice of candidate in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State by helping them to choose their right candidate in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State. Sulaiman, Abalaka & Ajiteru (2023) found that social media did positively impact young people's involvement in politics and the electoral process, particularly during the general elections in Nigeria in 2019. Young people's choice of political party and candidate was influenced by social media, but surprisingly, this did not ensure that young people would vote for any certain candidate simply because they had a social media account. Similarly, Namo, Agwadu & Amakoromo (2024) found that social media influenced how young people viewed candidates and political parties in general while they were casting their ballots. With a mean score of 2.7, the respondents firmly agreed that social media influenced their selection of political parties and politicians.

The last finding revealed that different challenges were encountered by the youths while using the social media platforms. These include the government's unnecessary social media censorship, high data tariff, persistent network glitches, epileptic power supply, fake news and cyber stalking and bullying. This finding is similar to previous studies in this area. For instance, according to Apuke & Apollos (2017), respondents believed that there were dysfunctions like purposeful misrepresentation of information about the opponent, abusive speech, and misrepresentation of facts regarding personal performance and misinformation as a tactic to influence the candidates' and electorates' Facebook pages in the 2015 general elections.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter summarized the entire study. It stated the topic of the study, objectives, research questions, the theory used and various findings made. Through these findings, the chapter drew its conclusions while leaving behind useful recommendations.

#### **5.2 SUMMARY**

The study attempted to examine the impact of social media on youths' political participation in the 2023 presidential election in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State. Participation in politics remains pivotal in the sustenance of a nation's democracy. It does not only ensure that government performs its duties, but also guarantees the rights of ordinary people to participate in their community development. Activities such as voting in an election, sponsoring a candidate, petitioning or participating in a protest are forms of political participation that influence public policy directly or indirectly through affecting the selection process of those who govern the people.

In the demography of states, the youths present a unique group whose participation in politics is crucial to deepening democracy, ensuring transparency and accountability and succession in power. One of the ways in which they participate in politics is on

social media. Social media has become an integral instrument in electioneering. Previously a developed-countries affair, it has now become a ubiquitous instrument for social engineering, electing and removing political candidates and galvanizing public opinion on any given issue. In the Nigerian context, social media has been gaining ascendancy since 2015, but peaked in 2023 when the presidential candidates were mainstreamed into the cult of digitalization. The youths were identified as the most registered demographic group in the election. Thus, investigating how social media influenced their participation in the election was crucial.

The study found that different forms of social media technologies were used by the youth to participate in the 2023 presidential elections in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State. These technologies included, in the order of percentage of usage, WhatsApp (66.7%), TikTok (65.6%), Twitter (59.3%), Instagram (58.4%), and Facebook (53.6%). Secondly, the finding shows that social media use facilitated the youth's dissemination of political information in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State by enabling them to get and send information, campaign for their preferred candidate and debate with their social media users. The third finding showed that social media use influenced the youth's choice of candidate in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State by helping them to choose their right candidate in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State. The last finding revealed that

different challenges were encountered by the youths while using the social media platforms. These include the government's unnecessary social media censorship, high data tariff, persistent network glitches, epileptic power supply, fake news and cyber stalking and bullying. This finding is similar to previous studies in this area.

### **5.3 CONCLUSION**

The data available to the study showed that different forms of social media technologies were used by the youth to participate in the 2023 presidential elections in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State. These technologies included, in the order of percentage of usage, WhatsApp (66.7%), TikTok (65.6%), Twitter (59.3%), Instagram (58.4%), and Facebook (53.6%). Secondly, the finding shows that social media use facilitated the youth's dissemination of political information in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State by enabling them to get and send information, campaign for their preferred candidate and debate with their social media users. The third finding showed that social media use influenced the youth's choice of candidate in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State by helping them to choose their right candidate in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State. The last finding revealed that different challenges were encountered by the youths while using the social media platforms. These include the government's unnecessary social media censorship,

high data tariff, persistent network glitches, epileptic power supply, fake news and cyber stalking and bullying. This finding is similar to previous studies in this area.

#### **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made.

There is a need for increased advocacy on the use of social media during elections. While there is an increasing number of youths with access to the internet and social media, it is important that they are educated on how to utilize them during elections. Critical stakeholders such as the civil society, education centres, political parties, election management bodies and religious institutions should make it their watchword to educate the youths on how to productively engage in the political process of Nigeria, particularly this time that Nigeria needs popular decisions for rights leaders to emerge.

Furthermore, there is a need to address the menace of fake news, cyberbullying and stalking and false information using social media platforms. The security agents should rise to their responsibilities to apprehend any youth found wanting and prosecute the offender for the offence. This will serve as a deterrent to others and help.\

Lastly, the Nigerian government should ensure that the youths' fundamental rights of free speech and association are preserved. The idea of censorship is antithetical to democratic ideals and must be stopped. The world has become a global village where digital technologies bring information to the doorsteps of people and enhance real-time

communication regardless of space and time. Promoting free speech and association through unhindered access to the digital space would not only promote democracy and popular participation, but also enhance the credibility and legitimacy of the government in power.

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## APPENDIX A

### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR RESPONDENTS

Department of Political Science,  
University of Benin,  
Benin City.

Dear Respondent,

#### **REQUEST FOR YOUR COOPERATION IN COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE**

I am an undergraduate student of the above-mentioned Department and University, researching **social media and youth political participation in Edo State: A case study of the 2023 presidential election in Oredo Local Government Area** as part of the Requirements for the Completion of my Programme.

In order to gather relevant data for the study, it would be highly appreciated if you could respond to these questions as frankly and objectively as possible. All information you supply is strictly for the study and will be treated confidentially.

Yours faithfully,

The Researcher.

## APPENDIX B

### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE RESPONDENTS

#### SECTION A: BIO-DATA

Please **TICK** [√] the option that best suits your description.

1. **Sex:** Male [ ] Female [ ]
2. **Marital Status:** Single [ ] Married [ ] Divorced [ ]
3. **Occupation:** Civil Servant [ ] Self-employed [ ] Student [ ] Trader [ ]
4. **Academic Qualification:** SSCE/GCE [ ] NCE/ND [ ] HND/BSC [ ] MSC [ ] PHD [ ] professional certificate [ ]
5. **SECTION B:** Please **TICK** [√] the option that best suits your description.

Nos	<b>Cluster A: Social media technologies used by the youth to participate in the 2023 presidential election in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State</b>	SA	A	U	D	SD
1	I used Facebook to politically participate in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State					
2	I used WhatsApp to politically participate in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State					
3	I used Instagram to politically participate in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State.					
4	I used TikTok to politically participate in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State					
5	I used Twitter to politically participate in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State					

	<b>Cluster B: Social media use and facilitation of the dissemination of political information in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State</b>					
6	Social media enabled me to get and send information concerning the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area					
7	Social media enabled me to campaign for my candidate in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area					
8	Social media enabled me to debate with other social media users regarding the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area					
	<b>Cluster C: Social media use and Influence on the choice of candidate in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State</b>					
9	Social media helped me to choose my candidate in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State					
10	Social media helped me to choose the right candidate in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State					
	<b>Cluster D: Challenges were encountered by the youth in political participation through social media use in the 2023 presidential election in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State</b>					
11	Government unnecessary social media censorship					
12	High data tariff					
13	Persistent network glitches					
14	Epileptic power supply					
15	Fake news					
16	Cyber stalking and bullying					