

**THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT POLITICS: A
CASE STUDY OF OVIA NORTH EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT, EDO
STATE**

BY

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BENIN CITY, NIGERIA.**

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

OCTOBER, 2023

CERTIFICATION

We, the undersigned hereby certify that this study is an original research essay and was carried out by **JAMES OJES OHIOMAH** and that the research work is sufficient in scope and content in a partial fulfillment for the award of a Bachelor of Science (Hons) Degree in Political Science, University of Benin, Benin City.

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DEDICATION

First of all, I dedicate this project to God Almighty who has been the brain behind all the effort to make this project a success.

I also want to dedicate this project to my entire family who has been my support come rain come sun, be it financially, inspirationally etc just to mention but a few.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research work is to examine the Role of Social Media on Local Government politics: Using Ovia North East as a case study. Three Research questions and Three Research hypothesis was examined in the study. To achieve this, the descriptive survey research design was adopted. The study focused on Ovia North East Local government Area hence, population consists of all adults 18 years and above, residing in Ovia North East Local government Area. The stratified random sampling technique was used to select a sample of 75 adults. To this end, the researcher recommended that social media should be used more on campaigns of those seeking political offices to reveal their manifestoes to a wider reach of electorates. The harmful effect of using social media to discredits political opponents through spreading of disinformation and fake news should be stopped by those politicians involved as the betterment of the country is more than anyones selfish interests. The laws on punishments of those spreading fake news should be properly enforce, to desist those involved in spreading fake news.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

The birth of social media has completely change communication and information dissemination, and has impacted various aspects of society, including politics, etc. This cannot be overstated. Political campaigns around the world have increasingly relied on social media platforms as powerful tools to reach and engage with voters, in recent years. The growing influence of social media in the political landscape has also being experience in Nigeria, one of Africa's most populous and politically dynamic nations.

The 2023 election was a significant moment in Nigeria's democratic history, due to the election of a new president and other government officials as citizens exercised their constitutional right to choose their leaders. The role of social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram in shaping political narratives, mobilizing supporters, and influencing voter behavior came under scrutiny, During this election. Nigeria has experience an unprecedented penetration of smartphones and internet access which has led to a surge in social media usage, transforming the way political information is disseminated and consumed. The immense potential of these

platforms as cost-effective and efficient means to engage directly with voters, especially the younger, tech-savvy demographic has been recognized by Political parties and candidates.

The media and Politics have always worked together. Politicians depend on the media for coverage and promotion, while the media get stories from politics. According to Karadogan and Bekci (Karadoğan, 1996: 54; Bekci, 2013: 7) the media is responsible for information dissemination, bridging the gap between policymakers and the people, transmitting political developments, educating the society, and raising awareness of issues of importance in the society. The media is depended on for coverage and visibility work and activities by Political parties and candidates in African countries like many other nations. During the struggle for independence from colonial rule the Media and political relations started in Africa mainly with newspapers. Television and radio in political campaign communication emerged after the colonial era. The means of communication have changed and continue to evolve since then. It was not only until the mid-2000s that social media gained popularity in Africa, although it dates back to the early 1990s. Today, the second continent with rapid social media growth is Africa. Social media has become one of the popular media channels aside from print, radio,

and television, Since its inception in 1996. Social media has shown rapid growth in user counts and has been an object of scientific analysis, in the past few years (Wigand et al 2010; McAfee 2006). Facebook has 2.80 billion monthly active users, for instance (Facebook, 2021). Social media is extremely relevant to any organization for the promotion of their services and products and an effective tool for public engagement, due to such huge engagement figures there is no doubt. The advantage of social media's vast coverage to give their brands publicity are being harnessed by many organizations. Campaign communications are focusing on not just traditional media but social media as well, therefore political organizations are no different and are beginning to change. With over half of the global population being social media users, it was becoming crucial to prioritize the use of social media in political communication. Lack of social media in communications strategy of businesses and organizations could be deemed as unseriousness, since social media has become so vital. Social media has influence Politics like other disciplines in recent times. Radio, television, and print media contribution to political campaign communication has continue, however; social media plays an important role in today's political campaign communication.

1.2 Statement of Research Problem

The role of social media on Local Government politics: a case study of Ovia North East Local Government Area, Edo state, 2020-2023 is what this study seek to find out. The role of social media on political campaigns in Nigeria has become a matter of significant concern, particularly in light of the 2023 Local Government Election. As social media platforms continue to gain traction as influential tools for political communication, mobilization, and information dissemination, several critical issues and challenges have emerged. This study seeks to address the following key problems related to the impact of social media on the political landscape between 2020 to 2022, with a focus on its impact in Ovia North East Local Government. Through a comprehensive analysis of the challenges posed by social media's influence on politics, this research aims to contribute to the development of effective strategies for promoting transparency, accountability, and a vibrant democratic process in Nigeria.

1.3 Research questions

In other to study and clarify the role of social media on political campaigns in Nigeria's 2023 Local government election through this research, we address the following questions

1. What was the role of social media on political campaigns in Ovia North East Local Government Area in Edo state between 2020 to 2023?
2. Was social media used to raise awareness of citizens ?
3. Did the role played by social media contribute to the winning of the election by the Local government chairman in Ovia North East Local Government Area?

1.4 Objective of the Study

The general objective of this study is to add to existing knowledge by assessing the role of social media on political campaigns during 2023 Local government elections. While the specific objective are as follows:

1. To determine the impact of social media on political campaigns in Ovia North East Local Government Area in Edo state between 2020 to 2023.
2. To check if the use of social media contributed to the victory of the PDP candidate in the 2023 Local Government election in Ovia North East Local Government Area?
3. To determines the prospect of social media in Ovia North East Local Government election.

1.5 Research Hypothesis

H₀ : The effectiveness of social media was insignificant on Local Government politics in Ovia North East.

H_R : The effectiveness of social was significant on Local Government politics in Ovia north east Local Government Area.

H₀ : There is no prospect of social media in the Local Government politics of Ovia North East.

H_R : There is a prospect of social media in the Local Government politics of Ovia North East.

H₀ : The contribution of social media to the victory of the Local Government Chairman was insignificant.

H_R : The contribution of social media to the victory of the Local Government Chairman was significant.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study examines the role played by social media on Local Government politics in Ovia North East Local Government Area, Edo State between 2020-2023.

1.7 Significance of Study

The study provide insight into the role played by social media as a powerful political tool for influencing Local Government politics in Ovia North East L. G. A, Edo State.

The need for a study of this kind is very important because over the years the use of social media as a tool for political campaigns by political parties, candidates and other stakeholders has rapidly increase due to the fact that we are on the information age were news is at everyone's fingertip. By providing insight into the ways social media influence the political landscape in Nigeria, the study can empower citizen to be more critical consumers of information and actively engage in political discussions with a better understanding of the potential biases and challenges posed by social media platforms. By analyzing the impact of social media on politics in Ovia North East Local Government Area, the study can throw light on potential issues connected to the spread of fake news, misinformation and data manipulation. Understanding these problems will lead to the development of methods to promote more transparent and fair electoral processes in Nigeria.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

A formidable tool for social interaction and political electioneering today, is social media. It has continued to be of global significance, politically. Compared to traditional media like television, radio or newspapers, political participation is now easy. It has greater benefits over past ways of organizing political rallies, campaigns and vote lobbying. This has led to social media been a field of academic research, especially in social sciences, concern on studying its impact on electioneering processes of which is mainly the domain of political science.

In the 2023 Local government election The People’s Democratic Party (PDP) won all 18 LGAs in Edo state (Obazee, 2023). Social media played an unprecedented role as a campaign tool in, never before experience in the years preceeding 2023. The Local Government election or more generally all election in the state was generally seen by most Edolites as between the Governor of Edo state Gov. Godwin Obaseki and former Gov. Adams Oshomole, due to ongoing public dispute between them. `Political participation was made possibly easier, due to social media which had its own flaws,

but surpass by its power of expediency. It was used in persuade and appeal to people through various social media platforms to go out and register, support candidates and vote on days of election. Social media was a formidable platform where all electoral stakeholders showcase their political skills using new methods facilitated by internet services. No doubt social media has become important instrument for electioneering such as voter's registration, voters card collection, parties' activities, election campaigns, voting on the day of election as well as other related activities due to its participatory, interactive and cost effective nature.

2.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.2.1 Election, Electioneering and social media

This concept had been defined by different scholars and practitioners in different ways. According to Mackenzie (1968), elections are “ritual of choices and that their binding character are derived from the participation of the individual as a chooser in a social act which offers legitimate authority in the person chosen”. Mackenzie here recognizes the significance of elections as legitimizing the power of elected group of people. It also enables the citizens to partake in the political affairs in their respective localities by exercising their franchise rights to choose candidates of their choice. One possible

shortcomings of this definition was that, it failed to observe the tendency at which elections can be marred by irregularities which consequently usurp the power of the individual voters to elect their representatives and therefore create questions on the legitimacy of office holders elected.

However, Huntington (1991) agreed that, election has great significance in all democratic regimes because it facilitates the competitive choice of office holders in government and enables political participation of the majority of the population in any given society. Democratic systems therefore have a common institutional core that forms their identity and from where they derive their legitimacy. He therefore signifies the basic aspects of election which are: one, it allows candidates to compete under distinct political parties' platforms by persuading voters to vote for them. Second, it also differentiates the various kinds of political systems – democratic or dictatorial regimes and the source of the legitimacy of the former from the latter. The above position by Huntington is permissible to some extent but in Nigerian context as mentioned in the first definition, the issue of competitive choice is can be subjected to scrutiny, because in most cases candidates imposed on the parties' delegates during primaries and on election day various factors such as emotion, rigging, vote-buying, thuggery, etc. is able to influence the outcomes of the election and consequentially kill

the momentum to compete among parties' candidates and reduce the moral of electorates willingness to participate. These definitions above have captured the context of the paper as they implied the role played by the electorates in choosing their leaders which in gives leader the required legitimacy to rule them based on the promises made before the elections by them.

2.2.2 ELECTIONEERING

Okoye Affirmed that (1996) electioneering is the sum total of activities by which politically interested actors seek to canvass and win votes for a preferred candidate or political party. It also involves the partisan activities of the opposition party or parties dedicated towards wresting power from the incumbent party through planed method of campaigns and mobilization. It is the manifestation of 'politicking' in the electoral process. It further involves an effort to attempt to gain partisan advantage in the electoral process by persuading or dissuading prospective voters. The announcement of election timetable begins the act of electioneering, as in the case of Nigeria tensions follows, to the eventual voting on Election Day up to the announcement of the results of the election. Thus, electioneering covers all political activities that are related directly to election. They may be either partisan or nonpartisan in nature. They involve

campaigns, political parties formation, rallies and meetings to the eventual voting processes and declaration of results of the election.

2.2.3 SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media have become an important component of communication and public discourse in the current political societies. According to Stieglitz and Dang-Xuan the fast development of social media had transformed the way and manner people find group of individuals with similar interests, the nature of information, the available news sources, or the possibility to require and share ideas (Stieglitz, Dang-Xuan, 2012). Kaplan and Haenlein affirmed that (2010, p.61) social media can be defined “as a collection of internet-based applications that expand the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that permit the creation and exchange of user-generated content.” It includes web-based and mobile based technologies that are used to turn communication into interactive dialogue among individuals, groups, organizations, and communities. Common examples of social media platforms as defined by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, p.61) are applications such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Flickr, 2go, YouTube and the interactive options on these platforms, such as the retweeting option on Twitter, comment options on Facebook and share on WhatsApp. Since they are tools which can also be used for the storage and dissemination of information, these

applications are referred to as media, they However, are unlike the traditional media such as Television and Radio, interacting and sharing of information with freedom as well as publish their views on the World Wide Web by users is allowed by most of the social media tools.

Mayfield (2008, p.19) defines social media as “online media that promote participation, openness, conversation and connectedness”. This can be link with what Nation (2010) sees as “social instruments of communication which are different from the conventional instruments like newspapers or magazines.” The conventional media can be said to be a ‘one-way traffic’ that disseminates information without enabling feedback response on the political matters or contribution from the user. User-generated participation is the one thing that is most common in most of the above definitions of social media. User-to-user interaction differentiates social media from the traditional media, because it comprises of top-down information dissemination arrangement, openness to users and easy access and enables the exchange of opinions between and among individual users. The above definitions have failed to highlight the negative aspects of social media. Social media has made information channels porous to the extent that individual users can not even distinguish genuine information from fake ones. It has negatively affected

ethic in reporting and has become a channel for falsehood, character manipulation and deformation; and impersonation. These can undermine the manner at which electorates participate in the electoral processes.

2.2.4 STRATEGY O POLITICAL CAMPAIGN.

A significant role in any democratic electoral process is play by political campaigns. It creates a channel for political officers and candidates to engage with the general public and the electorate. Political campaign usually starts with a plan, to communicate their message effectively, political players outline strategies and draw a plan for their campaign. An effective, campaigns should cover all the thoughts and expectations of the electorates, putting into consideration, all the needs socio-economic and political and the aspirations of all the stakeholders on the political context, spelled out clearly in the diction, messages, channels of communication, with specific reference to the targeted audiences and the environment. (Asante, 2020). Over the years political campaigns have evolved however; its close relationship with the media still stands. A crucial factor of political campaigns because it widens the reach of audience. The binding relationship between the media and politics implies that as the media changes, political communication strategies have to evolve as well. According to Trent and

Friedenberg political campaigns have undergone such a radical transformation that those principles and practices accepted by practitioners and theorists even 15 years ago are largely irrelevant today (Trent and Friedenber, 2000). From the above statements, we see that one of the determiners of the progressive changes of political campaigns is technology. The media remains a lasting feature in political campaigns, media evolution directly affects campaign strategies of political parties. For instance, the growth of social media in the Nigeria have seen politicians include WhatsApp, a popular social media application in the world as a channel of communication in their campaign strategy, the only relevant channels sixty years ago were face-to-face interactions and newspapers.

Democracy and participatory politics.

The Webster New Encyclopedia Dictionary (1995) definition of democracy is given as “a government in which supreme power is invested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through representation”. In general terms, democracy is the system of governance by the people and for the people. Larry Diamond (2004) affirms that, a democratic system should have four main elements: i) A system for choosing and replacing the government through free and fair elections; ii) Active participation of

the people, as citizens, in politics and civic life; iii) Protection of the human rights of all citizens, and iv) A rule of law which the laws and procedures apply equally to all members of the society. A vital part of democratic governance is Communication. Political communication therefore plays an essential role in democracy. It has been argued by many scholars that the Grecian democracy unconsciously used political communication to interact with the citizens under the term “rhetoric” (Asante, 2020). Yunis (2004) argues: since it was the politician’s job to present his citizens with cogent advice that would serve their interests, the politician was responsible to the audience for the content of his message. The politician was likely to reap rewards, when a politician won approval for his policies and the policies were successful. The media has been a driving force for political communication over the years since its inception in ancient Greece. In ancient Greece, the electorate is invited to an assembly where they are addressed by each aspiring candidate before a decision was made to choose a leader, this is a good example of participatory politics. Currently we have political campaigns where candidates convey their intent to the electorates by means of rallies, debates, and other political programmes, information dissemination through the media was mostly monologic. The political parties aired their content and what they wanted the electorate to know but they did not know the position of the electorate on their views. By

allowing citizens to actively participate in political elections and discourse by a tap on their phones social media has solidified the concept of democracy. A direct avenue to participate in governance by the electorate is given by social media, unlike newspapers, radio, and television. Digital media has defined and put into perspective the dialogic nature of democracy. Candidates today have social media accounts and update them frequently with messages of campaign. The electorate and general public engages with candidates by sharing, liking, and commenting on their social media post. However, organizations and peers can also share invitations to demonstrations, to sign petitions, or to get more involved in a campaign (Lilleker and Koc-Michalska 2017). The speed with which information travels between people has increased, with the invention of the internet as mail has been replaced by the instant connection of email and social media sites. Social media, According to Daniel can be described as web-based communication tools that enable people to interact with each other by sharing and consuming information. (Nations, Daniel 2021) There are many social media platforms but the popular ones are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Reddit. These various social media platforms have distinct targeted audiences and uses differing tools that enable their users to interact by sharing text audio and visuals. The number of social media users is over 7 billion, this is increasing rapidly. Due to the large number of users on these sites

companies have attracted to include internet advertising in their marketing plans, due to social media's wide reach and that it is often less expensive than TV or print advertising. (Ton, Thao, 2016). The current known number of Instagram users is 1 billion monthly active users (Facebook, 2021), though it's not the social media sites that has the most active monthly users. With these statistics, it is clear that many people use social media today and it is an important tool in reaching out to audience. An important role of the media is to set the agenda. Agenda setting is a theory of mass communication describes how the mass media engages with and influence the public it targets. The basic tenet of the theory is the notion that mass media is the primary interface between the general public and the world. Agenda-setting was mainly done by the media, in the age of traditional media. All political stakeholders, however, in the digital age have agenda setting ability. As suggested by Agenda setting theory the media could influence an election by offering one candidate preferential treatment, such as tripling the volume of coverage about a particular candidate (coverage bias), painting of other candidate in a consistently negative light (statement bias), or not reporting key events that involves opposition candidates (gatekeeping bias). When this theory intersects with social media is morphed. Political parties creating content and engaging

directly with the public are afforded the advantages of setting the agenda to some extent, hence giving themselves more visibility.

2.3 EMPIRICAL FRAMEWORK

2.3.1 Traditional and digital media role on political campaigns.

Considered the fourth arm of government the media forms an integral part of society. The crucial role of the media is disseminating information to the public. The media is the main source of political and socio-economic information in a democratic society. Citizens having access to information is necessary to the health of democracy for at least two reasons. One, it enables citizens to make responsible, informed decisions rather than deciding out of ignorance or misinformation. Two, information serves a check by ensuring that elected representatives uphold their oaths of office and carry out the wishes of those who elected them. (USAID,1999). In a political campaign, the media supports political parties and their candidates with advertisements and coverage. Political advertising is a campaign tool use by politicians in persuading and influencing the electorate. Political advertising includes any advertising displays, newspaper ads, billboards, signs, brochures, articles, tabloids, flyers, letters, radio or television presentations, digital or social media advertising, or other means of mass

communication, used for appealing, directly or indirectly, for votes or financial or other support in any election campaign (RCW 42.17A.005(39)).

Digital media is influencing politics in an unprecedented way and has changed the trajectory of political campaigns and the engagement of the electorate. (Vergeer et al. 2011) argue that with the invention of the internet and subsequently social media, political communication has been revolutionized. Social media's biggest advantage over traditional media is the interactivity that it affords stakeholders. With social media both political parties and candidates usually have their respective accounts where they engage the public. In democratic election campaigns The value of social media especially lies in the extent to which they interlace with old media to provide a multimedia platform that allows for greater democratic participation, inclusion, and expression (Essoungou 2010). The relevance of the mixed approach emanates from its multi-faceted nature, e.g., traversing basic planning, from field organizing to fund-raising, from branding/messaging to press relations, and from registering people to vote to get people out to vote (Michaelsen, 2011, p. 181). In a nutshell, the media's role in politics is critical, and is fundamentally focused on effecting social change by

strengthening the public sphere, promoting participation and representation, amongst other things, in a democratic setting (Lazaroiu, 2012).

2.3.2 IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS IN AFRICA.

The introduction of democracy in Africa over the last couple of decades has affected the dynamics of governance. In the African continent due to its importance in a democracy, the prominence of the media has increased. The advent of new media technologies has transformed the communication process, making it more direct, fast, and complex, besides the added benefit of shrinking the world and expanding access at the same time (Rahul, 2016). Social media platforms can also be described as web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semipublic profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system (Boyd and Ellison, 2008, p211). However, by 2015, it had changed to one in five persons having access to internet connection. (ITU, 2015, ICT Facts and Figures - The World in 2015). For example, in June 2015, Facebook counted 120 million active users

across Africa, of which over 80% were accessing the platform using mobile devices (BBC Afrique, 2015, 'Facebook ouvre un bureau en Afrique').

2.3.3 IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS IN NIGERIA.

The 2023 Nigerian presidential election was on 25 February 2023 to elect the president and Vice President of Nigeria (Jimoh, 2022). Bola Tinubu, a former Governor of Lagos State and nominee of the All Progressives Congress (Oyeleke Sodiq,2022), won the disputed election with 36.61% of the vote, 8,794,726 total votes. Runners-up were former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, Peoples Democratic Party, and former Governor of Anambra State Peter Obi, Labour Party, who both immediately contested the result; Obi claimed he won.

According to Jibrin (Jibrin Ibrahim, 2023) Key players were focused on glorifying or delegitimizing political candidates and undermining the credibility of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). So too are Twitter Spaces, which were recorded and then shared, as podcasts, across social media platforms in ways that increase listenership (Jibrin Ibrahim, 2023). Cross-platform posting remains critical to understanding Nigeria's digital ecosystem, as screen grabs or content from one

platform can be shared across all others, broadening the reach beyond the number of direct users (Jibrin Ibrahim 2023). Content also moves from online forums into offline spaces, with soldiers of mouth spreading online content through streets talks, in motor parks and at newspaper stands. This makes curbing disinformation very challenging in Nigeria (Jibrin Ibrahim 2023). According to Jimoh and Abbas, these networks for the flow of information can also promote democracy (Jibrin Ibrahim 2023). Civic awareness of the continuous voters' registration process and the importance of participating has largely been driven by a sustained online campaign in the run-up to 2023 (Jibrin Ibrahim 2023). The networks for the flow of information also promote democracy. Civic awareness of the continuous voters' registration process and the importance of participating was largely driven by a sustained online campaign in the run-up to 2023, while the platforms can be used to fact check and hold elected and aspiring officials to account (Jibrin Ibrahim 2023)

Jibrin Ibrahim (Jibrin Ibrahim 2023) observe that In the 2019 elections, the Atikulated Youth Force, the social media team of the People's Democratic Party (PDP)'s presidential candidate, and the Buhari Media Centre (BMC), with links to the All Progressives Congress (APC), dominated the online discourse. Such groups are still

present in 2023, although part of the BMC has now evolved to Centre around APC presidential candidate Bola Ahmed Tinubu, with his supporters identifying as being ‘BATified’. However, they have been supplanted in 2023 by Obidients – the label used by the supporters of the Labour Party (LP) (Jibrin Ibrahim 2023).

2.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study uses the assumptions of Uses and Gratifications theory. Usually associated with the works of Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch (1974, p.19-34); which belongs to the limited or indirect effect theories of mass communication. According to these scholars the central focus of this theory is on the analysis of media impacts on audiences as it redirects the traditional research agenda which ask what effects, if any, the media might have on audiences to what people used the media for? The main drive of this theory is that electorates as audience members have specific needs which motivate them to be selectively exposed to, attend to, and retain information from because of the perceived satisfaction (i.e. gratification) they gets from such messages, it noted. This theory, therefore places emphasis on the fact that in the process of communication people are important because they choose content of information, give meanings to them and act

on that meanings (Akinwumi, 2011). Users of social media are accordingly, assumed to be motivated seekers of messages that are important and useful to their needs; and that can give to them satisfaction. They use the technology in ways that meets their needs. Electorates are therefore seen as audience that are assumed to be not passive but active. In similar manner, political actors are also able to select and use media of choice and message content of their choice for electoral processes and other electoral activities.

The theory, nevertheless is used to guide the researcher's efforts in the analysis and critically evaluation of the uses of social media and how it effects electoral process, most especially on the outcome of 2023 general elections. The theory perceives the consumer of media fare as having an active influence on the consumption or reception of messages, since he chooses, pays attention to, interprets, and retains the information from the media on the influence of his needs, beliefs or even his whims and caprices. The focus therefore shifted from media production and transmission to media reception and consumption.

The theory has its own flaws as it concerns only on the uses of information by the audience for self-satisfaction. The possibility of achieving objective and balance reportage of information is distorted, as the case maybe and facilitates the misuse of the platforms for individual interest. Since electorates can only use such messages for their

satisfaction, they would block themselves from getting useful information about other candidates' missions and thus preventing competitiveness.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodology used by the researcher for the study. This study includes; research design, research settings, target population, sampling technique, instrument of data collection, validity and reliability of research instrument, method of data collection, method of data analysis and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Design

Research design is the decision that has to be considered that will facilitate the collection and analysis of data by the researcher. The research design used for this study is the case-study research design. The case study research design was selected for the study because it affords in-depth and detailed study of the subject, this fits the problem and the objective of the study stated in the previous chapter. The case study research design helps to test the applicability of specific theories or model on the real life phenomena, making it especially powerful in study of social dynamics and relationships. A cross sectional descriptive design will be used in this study to assess the role of social media on political campaigns in in Local Government politics as a case study of Ovia North East Local Government Areas in Edo state, Nigeria.

3.2 Research Setting

The location where the research takes place is the research setting. For example, a study could take place in a laboratory, or among in the market. Greater controls and precision is ensured by the laboratory, while the market ensures greater accuracy in representing conditions observed. This research will be carried out by taking a sample survey in Ovia North East Local Government Areas in Edo state. Edo state is located in the South-South geo-political zone in Nigeria.

3.3 Target Population

Gay affirmed that (1987), “the population is the group of interest to the researcher, the group size to which he would like the results of the study to be generalization” The census of all items or subject that possess the characteristics or that have knowledge of the phenomenon being studied is the target Population or Population of the Study. The target population for this study are adults 18 years and above who by age were eligible to vote during the 2023 Local government election.

3.4 Sample Size

The number of respondents picked from the Research Population is the sample or sample size. The sample size consists of 75 respondents with 15 respondents from each age groups, from Ovia North East Local Government Areas in Edo state, Nigeria.

3.5 Sampling Technique

Stratified Random Sampling was used in the Research, so as to ensure a representativeness. The strata in this study were the age group. In this study, stratified random sampling technique was used to choose respondent from each age group, from Ovia North East Local Government Areas in Edo state for data collection.

3.6 Instrument for Data Collection

The tools and methods you use to gather and record information for your research or evaluation project are the data collection instruments. They comprise of surveys, questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, observations, tests, and more. 75 questionnaires were used to collect data, with 15 questionnaires used to collect data in each of the age group from Ovia North East Local Government Areas in Edo state, Nigeria.

3.7 Method of Data Collection

The process of collecting, modeling, and analyzing data using various statistical and logical methods and techniques is called Data analysis. Data was collected through sample survey by using questionnaires. The procedure of collecting data will be done by visiting Ovia North East Local Government Areas in Edo state and questionnaires will be given to respondents to fill.

3.8 Validity and Reliability of Instrument

The procedure for collecting the data was cross examined by my research supervisor to check the adequacy of this method, corrections was also made before the method was considered valid for the study, as well as for reliability.

3.9 Method of data analysis

Data was statistically analyzed by the use of inferential statistics and the quantitative analysis was represented with frequency tables, charts and Chi-Square Test.

3.10 Ethical consideration

All the data collected were treated with utmost confidentiality and use for the purpose of this study only.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the data collected from the respondents. 75 questionnaires were administered and 75 were responded to and returned for analysis.

The first part is the presentation of socio-demographic data of the respondents, simple percentage, pie charts and bar charts were used to analyze the responses; for the second part relevant questions were selected and analyzed for testing.

4.1 SECTION A

4.2 Social-Demographic Data

Table 4.2.1: Distribution of Respondents by Age

AGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
18-25 YEARS	15	20%
26-33 YEARS	15	20%
34-41 YEARS	15	20%
42-49 YEARS	15	20%
50 YEARS AND ABOVE	15	20%
TOTAL	75	100%

Source: Field Work, August 2023

Table 4.2.1 above shows the distribution of adults to different age groups across the data-set. With the respondent of all age groups, occurring 20% of the time with 15, respondents for all age group, this is due to the fact that stratified random sampling was used in the selection of respondent from each age groups.

Table 4.2.2 Distribution of Respondents By Marital Status

EDUCAIONAL STATUS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Never Married	24	32%
Married	48	64%
Divorced/Separated	3	4%
TOTAL	75	100%

Source: *Field work, August 2023*

The distribution by Marital Status shows that 32% of respondents were never married, occurring with a frequency of 24, while 64% of respondents were married, occurring 48 times, in the research sample. Consequently, only 4% of respondents were Divorced/Separated with a frequency of 3.

The finding above shows that most of the respondents were married.

Table 4.2.3: Distribution of Respondents By Religious Affiliation

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
ISLAM	9	12%
CHRISTIANITY	64	85%
NON-RELIGIOUS	2	3%
TOTAL	75	100%

Source: Field work, December 2022

The above table shows the religious affiliation of respondents. With 85% of the respondents affiliated with Christianity, with a frequency of 64, while 12% of the respondents are affiliated with Islam, occurring 9 times, then 3% of the respondents are non-religious with a frequency of 2. The finding above shows that most of the respondents were Christians.

Table 4.2.4: Distribution Of Respondents By Level of Education

EDUCATION LEVEL	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Primary Education	8	11%
Secondary Education	28	37%
Tertiary Education	32	43%
Post-graduate Education	7	9%
TOTAL	75	100%

Source: Field work, December 2022

The above table showing the distribution of respondents by Education level, depicts that 43% of the respondents attained Tertiary Education with a frequency of 32, while 9% of the respondents attained post-graduate education with a frequency of 7, and 37% of the respondents attained Secondary school education, occurring 28 times. Finally only 11% of the population attained only a primary school education, occurring just 8 time.

Table 4.2.5: Distribution Of Respondents By Employment Status

EMPLOYMENT STATUS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Employed	33	44%
Self-employed	27	36%
Unemployed	15	20%
TOTAL	75	100%

Source: Field work, August 2023

In the above table, 44% of respondents are employed, then 36% of respondents were self-employed, occurring 27 times and 20% of respondents were unemployed with a frequency of 15.

SECTION B

4.3 Presentation of Relevant Data

This section presents the data collected on relevant questions according to the Research Questions in chapter one, it utilizes tabular analyses and the use of Bar-charts, line graphs and Pie-charts.

I) Research Question 1: What was the role of social media on political campaigns in Local Government Election of 2023?

The role of social media on political campaigns in the 2023 Local government election can be seen from the numbers of respondents that agree and strongly agree that social media the role of social media was as a medium to canvass for votes, a means to increase the eligibility appeals of candidates, and also a means to discredit political opponents these can be observed from question 8, question 12 and 13. The data is presented below:

Table 4.3.6 Do you agree that the role of social media on political campaigns during the 2023 Local government election was as a medium to canvass for votes?

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
AGREE	52	69%
STRONGLY AGREE	19	25%
DISAGREE	2	3%
STRONGLY DISAGREE	2	3%

Source: Field work, August, 2023

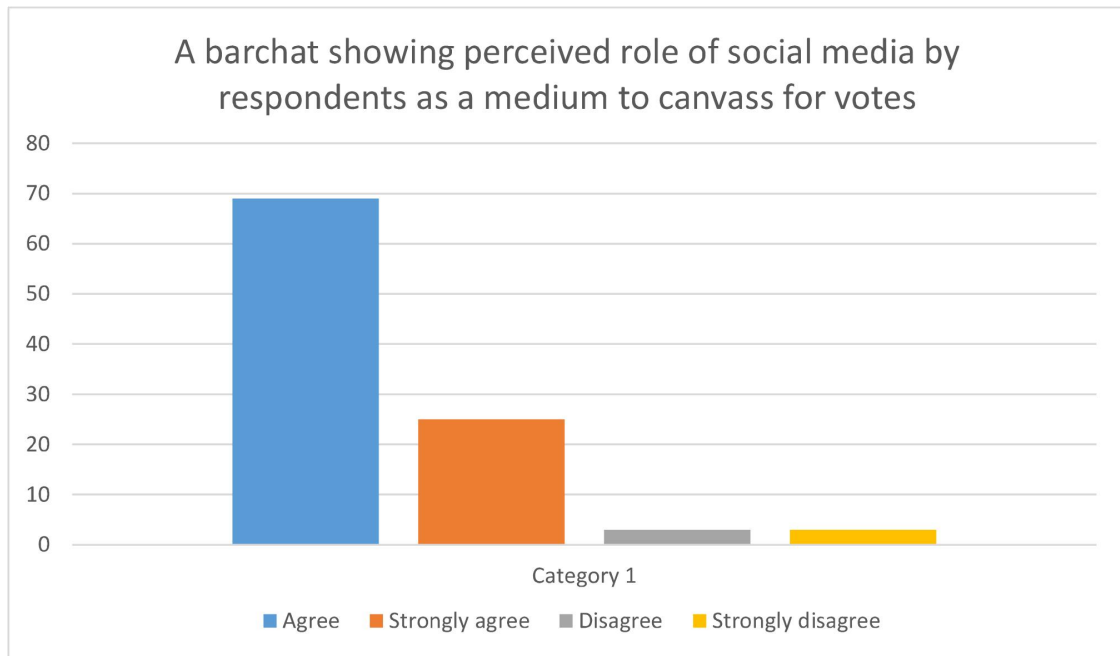


Table 4.2.7 Would you agree that social media campaign of any political party increased the eligibility appeal of any candidate or political party?

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Agree	28	37%
Strongly agree	27	36%
Disagree	11	15%
Strongly disagree	9	12%
Total	75	100%

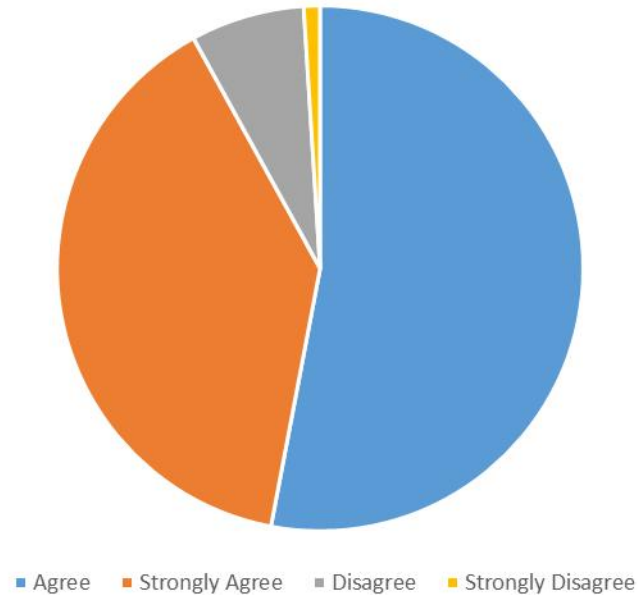
Source: Field work, August 2023

Table 4.2.8 Do you agree that social media was use for other roles on the political campaign like discrediting political opponents during the 2023 Local government election?

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
STRONGLY AGREE	40	53%
AGREE	29	39%
DISAGREE	5	7%
STRONGLY DISAGREE	1	1%
TOTAL	75	100%

source: Field work, August 2023

A pie chart of the responses of social media as a medium to discredit political opponents



DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In answering the research question 1 we see that, 94% of the respondents or 71 respondent affirmed that the role of social media was as a medium to canvass for votes, furthermore 71 % of the respondents or 55 respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that social media campaign political party increased the eligibility appeal of a

candidate or political party, and also 92% of the respondents affirmed that social media was used for other roles on political campaign such as a medium for discrediting political opponents during the 2023 Local government election only 7 % disagreed or strongly disagreed. Therefore, the role of social media was as a medium to canvass for votes, and also to discredit political opponents.

II) RESEARCH QUESTION 2: Was social media instrumental to the victory of PDP candidate in the 2023 Local Government election?

This research question can answered by viewing the be seen from the percentage of respondents that agree and those that strongly agree that that the information they came across from social account of any political party or candidate influenced their decision to support any political party or candidate during the 2023 Local government election and the number of respondents that agree and strongly agree that the information from political campaign on social media influence who they voted for during 2023 Local government election below question 4 and question 5. The data is presented below:

Table 4.2.9. Do you agree that the information you got from social media account of any political parties or candidate influence your decision to support any political party or candidate during the 2023 local government election?

DISTRIBUTION OF VOTERS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
AGREE	15	20%
STRONGLY AGREE	9	12%
DISAGREE	36	48%
STRONGLY DISAGREE	15	20%
TOTAL	75	100%

Source: Field work, August, 2023.

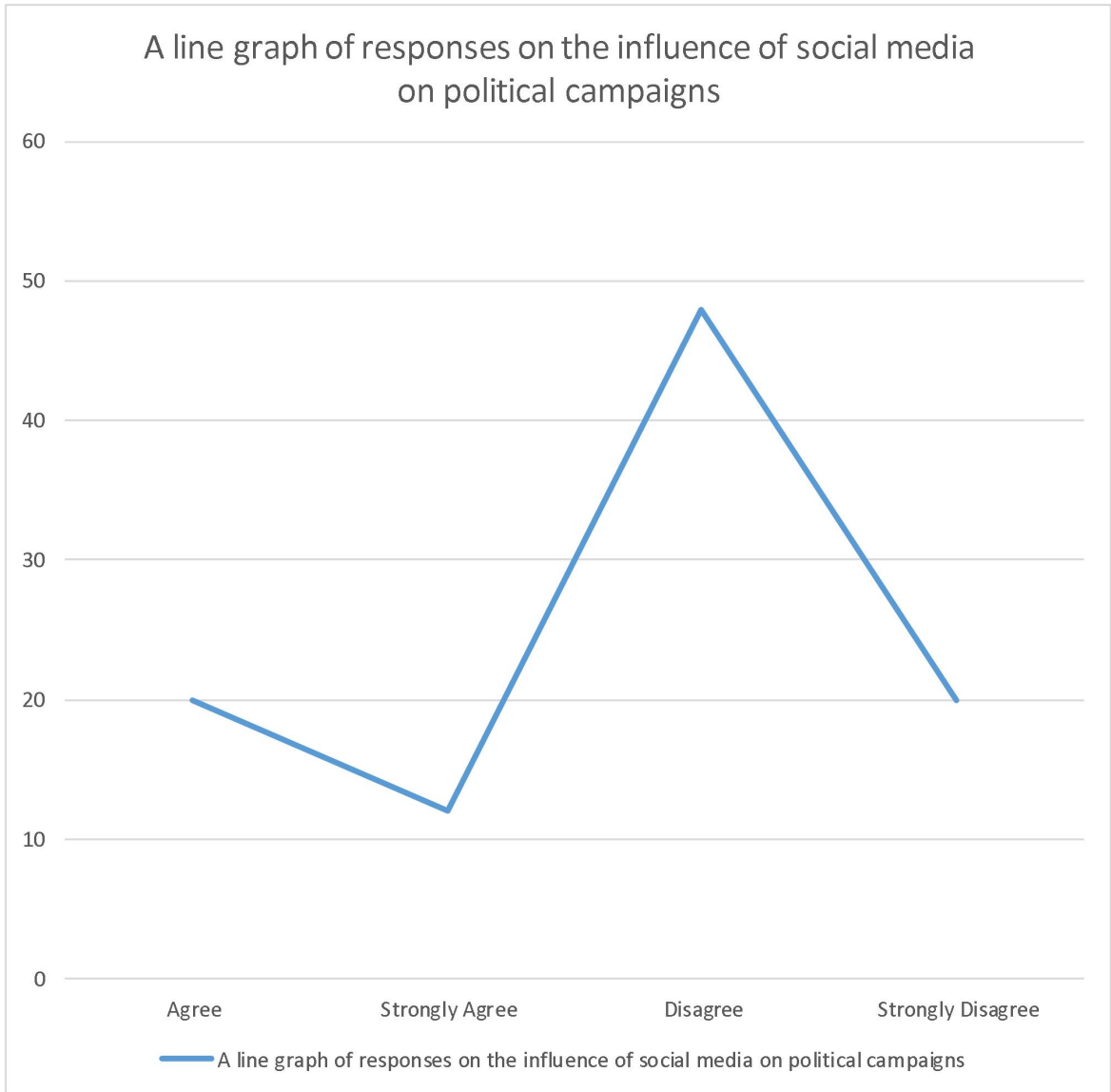
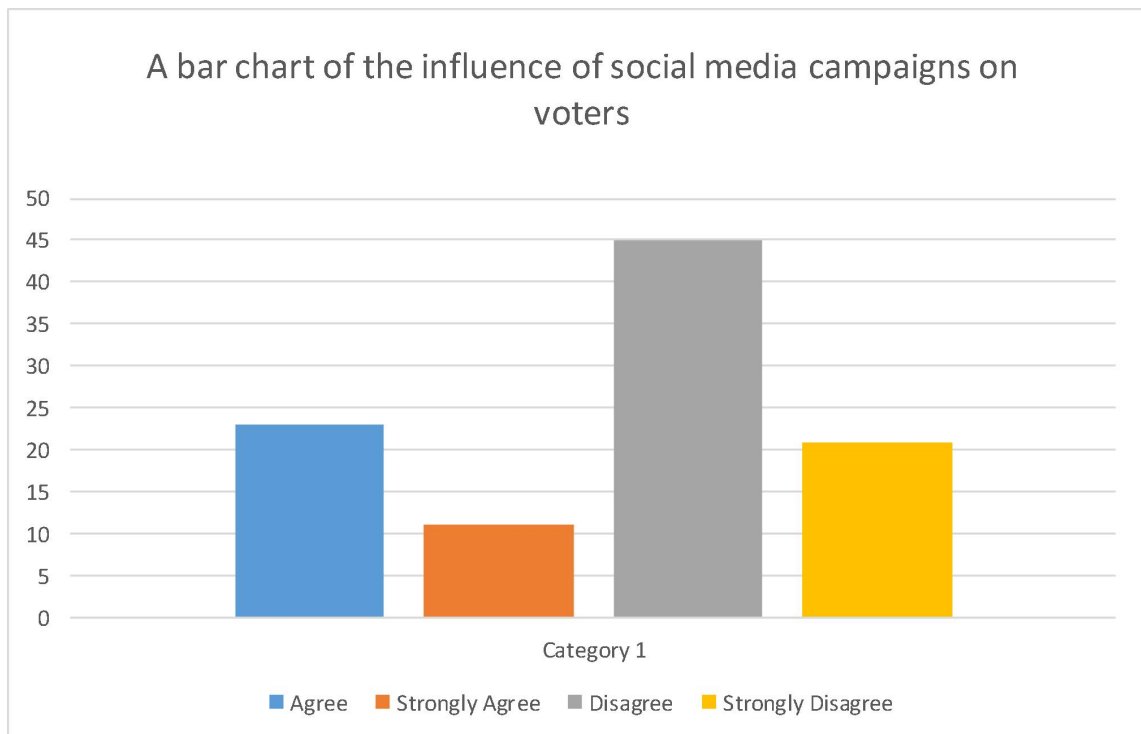


Table 4.3.10. Did the information from political campaign on social media influence who you voted for during 2023 Local government election?

DISTRIBUTION OF VOTERS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
AGREE	17	23%
STRONGLY AGREE	8	11%
DISAGREE	34	45%
STRONGLY DISAGREE	16	21%
TOTAL	75	100%



DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

32% seven percent (24) of the respondents agree that the information they came across from social media account of any political parties or candidate influence their decision to support any political party or candidate during the 2023 Local Government election, and 34% or 25 respondent affirmed that information from political campaign on social media influence who they voted for during 2023 Local Government election therefore we conclude. Therefore, we conclude that social media contributed to the victory of the PDP Chairmanship candidate in the Local Government Election.

III) RESAERCH QUESTION 3: What is the prospects of social media on future Local government election campaigns?

This can be seen from the number of respondents who agreed and strongly agreed that they think that the role social media on political campaigns during the 2023 Local Government election was effective in persuading voters and the number of respondents that affirmed that they agree that social media will be more effective on political campaigns in future Local government elections. This can be seen below.

Table 4.3.11 Do you think that the role social media on political campaigns during the 2023 Local government election was effective in persuading voters?

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
STRONGLY AGREE	24	32%
AGREE	18	24%
DISAGREE	22	29%
STRONGLY DISAGREE	11	15%
TOTAL	75	100%

Source: Field work, August 2023

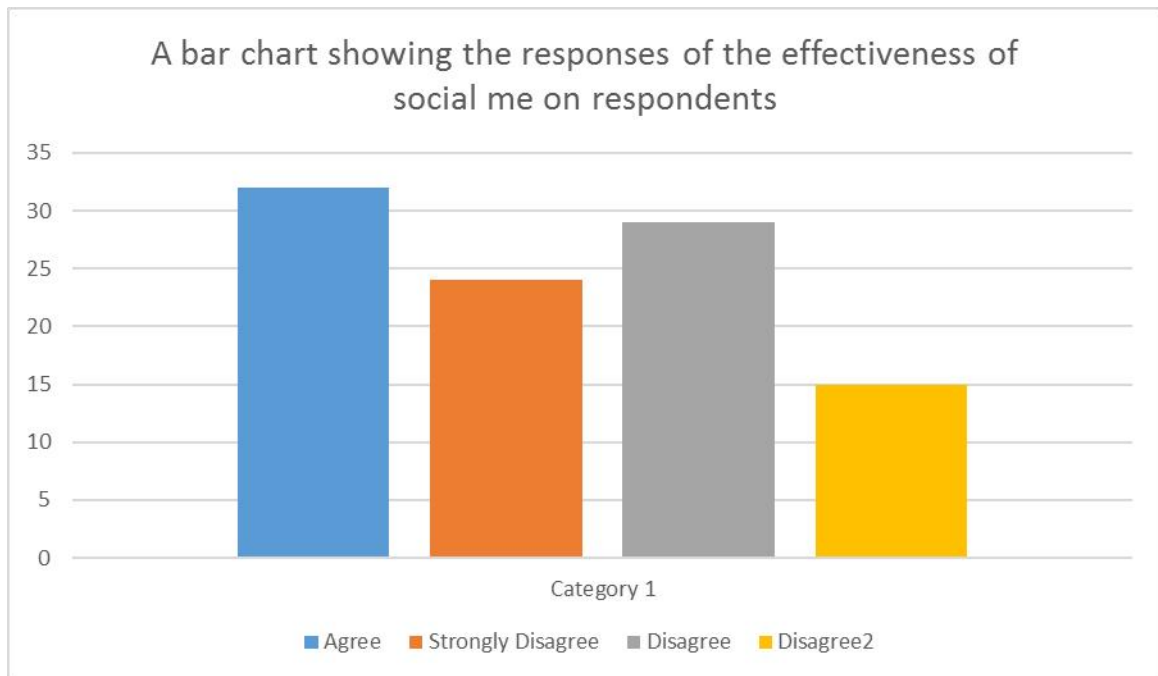
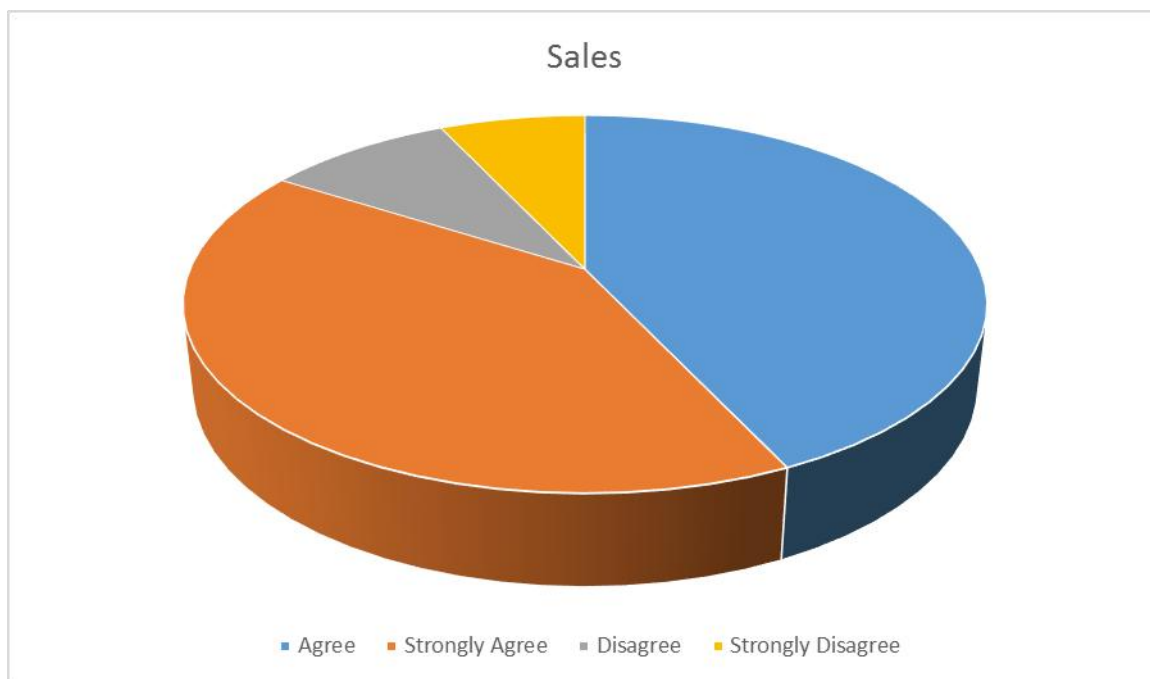


Table 4.3.12 Do you agree that social media will be more effective on political campaigns in future Local government elections?

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
STRONGLY AGREE	32	43%
AGREE	31	41%
DISAGREE	7	9%
STRONLY DISAGREE	5	7%
TOTAL	75	100%

Source: field work, August 2023.



DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

As seen from the table above 56% (42) of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the role social media on political campaigns during the 2023 Local Government election was effective in persuading voters, while 44% (33) of the respondent disagreed or strongly disagreed. Since slightly more respondent affirmed that social media was effective on the political campaign of the 2023 Local Government election and most (84% or 63) of the respondents agree that social media will be more effective on political campaigns in future Local government elections. We conclude that social media has a good prospect of helping to influence future Local government elections.

4.4 TEST OF HYPOTHESIS

I) Null hypothesis 1

To test the first null hypothesis which state that : The effectiveness of social media during the 2023 Local government election campaigns was insignificant using affirmation of respondents supports of political parties and candidates and respondents affirmation of social media campaign influence as categorical variables at $\alpha = 0.5$ (level of significance), the p-value is = 0.046435 which is lesser than the alpha value

0.05 we therefore reject the null hypothesis that the effectiveness of social media during the 2023 Local election campaigns was insignificant.

II) Null hypothesis 2

To test the second null hypothesis which state the prospect of social media in future Local Government election campaign is insignificant., at $p = 0.5$ (level of significance), the p-value is = 0.019274 which is lesser than the alpha value we therefore reject null hypothesis that the prospect of social media in future Local Government Election is insignificant.

II) Null hypothesis 3

To test the second null hypothesis which state the contribution of social media to the victory of the PDP chairmanship candidate is insignificant., at $p = 0.5$ (level of significance), the p value is = 0.4041 which is greater than the alpha value we therefore fail to reject null hypothesis that The prospect of social media in future Local government election campaign is insignificant.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 SUMMARY

This research was conducted for the sole purpose of assessing the role of social media on Local Government Politics: Using Ovia North East L. G. A as a case study for providing a blueprint to understand eligible voters behaviour in Ovia North-East, L. G. A, Edo state. The descriptive method was used in the research and Stratified random sampling method was employed. The structured questionnaire was instrumented in data collection and the respondents were adult 18 years of age, domiciled in Ovia North East Local Government Area in Edo state.

5.2 THE FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. What was the role of social on political campaigns in Ovia North East Local Government Area in Edo State between 2020 to 2023? As was seen above social media is seen by an over whelming majority of respondents respondent as a medium to canvass for votes, and also majority of the respondents agreed that social media campaign by political party increased the eligibility appeal of a candidate or political

party. social media was also use by political parties or candidates as a medium for discrediting political opponents during the 2023 Local government election.

2. What is the prospects of social media on future Local government election campaigns? Social media has a good prospect to influence Local Government politics in the future as was seen from the analysis of the response given by respondents above, we saw that most respondents affirmed that social media campaigns was effective in persuading voters during the 2023 Local government election. Most of the respondents agree that social media will be more effective on political campaigns in future Local government elections.

3. Did the role of social media contribute to the winning of the election by the PDP Local government chairmanship candidate in Ovia North East L.G.A ? As seen from above social media campaign contributed to the winning of the election as some of the respondents (32%) of the respondents agree that the information they came across from social media account of any political parties or candidate influence their decision to support any political party or candidate during the 2023 Local Government election, and also some respondents (34%) affirmed that information from political campaign on social media influence who they voted for during 2023 Local Government

election therefore we conclude. Therefore, we conclude that social media contributed to the victory of the PDP Chairmanship candidate in the Local Government Election though the contribution was not that significant according to the test of hypothesis 2

5.3 CONCLUSION

Social media is an important tool for influencing Local Government politics as can be seen from the fact that majority of the respondents affirmed that social media increased the eligibility appeals of Local government chairmanship candidates, i.e. the chances of them voting for a particular candidate increase due to political campaigns on social media, furthermore some of the respondents affirmed that their voting decision was influence by political campaigns on social media, though this cannot be said to be instrumental for the victory of the PDP Chairmanship candidate in the 2023 Local Government Election, it lead to the persuasion of some the number of respondents in deciding who they voted for. Social media has a good prospect of influencing future Local government politics based on the finding from our study.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Social media should be adopted and made use of more in local government politics, not only for election campaigns but also for other important issues

concerning the Local Government Area as it is able to reach more people very quickly,

- Citizens should ensure to fact check campaign news getting to them in order to prevent falling victim to misinformation and fake news that is always prevalent during election period
- Politicians and Political parties should make stop spreading fake news about their political opponents to discredits them, so that they will be victorious, the betterment of the country is more important than any individual selfish interest.
- Government should ensure to educate people on the need and on how to verify if the news reaching them is genuin

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**APPENDIX
QUESTIONNAIRE
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY**

University Of Benin,
Faculty of social science,
Department of political science
Benin city, Edo State.
14th of September 2023.

Dear respondents,

REQUEST FOR COMPLETION OF QUESTIONNAIRE

The researcher is a student of the above named high institution carrying out a study ON THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT POLITICS. Please I wish to request that you kindly complete the attached questionnaire according to your knowledge, opinion, and best practices. I assure you that any response given will be confidential and use specifically for this study.

Thanks for your anticipated co-operation.

Yours faithfully,

Ohiomah James Ojes.
(Researcher)

SECTION A: SOCIAL-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

1. Age of respondents: 18-25 YEARS [], 26-33 YEARS [], 34-41 YEARS [], 42-49 [], YEARS [], 50 YEARS AND ABOVE []
2. Marital Status: Never Married [], Married [], Divorced/Separated []
3. Religious Affiliation: ISLAM [], CHRISTIANITY [], NON-RELIGIOUS []
4. Educational Level: Primary Education [], Secondary Education [], Tertiary Education [], Post-graduate Education []
5. Employment Status: Employed [], Self-employed [], Unemployed []

SECTION B: PRESENTATION OF RELEVANT DATA

Tick the response you agree with: A [Agree]. SA [Stongly Agree], D [Disagree] , SD [Strongly Disagree]

S/N	QUESTION	A	SA	D	SD
6	Do you agree that the role of social media on political campaigns during the 2023 Local government election was as a medium to canvass for votes?				
7	Would you agree that social media campaign of any political party increased the eligibility appeal of any candidate or political party?				
8	Do you agree that social media was use for other roles on the political campaign like discrediting political opponents during the 2023 Local government election				
9	Do you agree that the information you got from social media account of any political parties or candidate influence your decision to support any political party or candidate during the 2023 local government election?				
10	Did the information from political campaign on social media influence who you voted for during 2023 Local government election?				
11	Do you think that the role social media on political campaigns during the 2023 Local government election was effective in persuading voters?				
12	Do you agree that social media will be more effective on political campaigns in future Local government elections?				