

**PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF SOCIAL MEDIA USE FOR POLITICAL
CAMPAIGN IN 2023 NIGERIA ELECTIONS**

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**UNIVERSITY OF BENIN,
BENIN CITY,**

AUGUST, 2023.

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
MASS COMMUNICATION, FACULTY OF ARTS, UNIVERSITY OF
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FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF
BACHELOR OF ARTS (B.A) DEGREE IN MASS
COMMUNICATION.**

AUGUST, 2023

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this project is based on a study undertaken by me Oluwakemi Margaret Oguntomi, of the Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, under the supervision of Dr. Mrs. Comfort Ene Obaje. All findings and analysis in the study are the product of my personal research and where the views of others have been used and expressed, they were duly acknowledged.

OLUWAKEMI MARGARET OGUNTOMI
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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this research carried out by Oluwakemi Margaret Oguntomi with the Matriculation number ART1801786 meets the requirements for the award of Bachelor of Arts (B.A) degree in Mass Communication of the University of Benin.

Dr. (Mrs.) Comfort Ene Obaje
Project supervisor

Date

Dr. Daniel O. Ekharefo
Head of department

Date

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to God Almighty for giving me strength, undying love and who by his grace was ever faithful and has never forsaken me. To my wonderful and beloved mother, Mrs Joyce Ivie Ogunтоми for her love, prayers and support towards me.

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All glory to God Almighty for his mercies, grace and favor upon me and for his sustenance upon my life through out the course of my study.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines public perception of social media use for political campaigns in 2023 Nigeria elections. The study sought to discover public perception on the use of social media platforms for political campaign messages. The theories used to support this study were Uses and gratification theory and Agenda setting theory. The study employed the survey method using questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. Findings reveal that social media platforms are used for political campaign messages, social media platforms are seen as a two way communication system that greatly improved feedback of political campaign messages, the users of these social media platforms are exposed to political campaign messages on social media and the general public are accepting of the use of social media for political campaign. The study then recommends that political campaign messages on social media platforms should be monitored so the rise of fake information on social media will be combated, the government should also utilize social media platforms very well as it is a form of communication that is here to stay.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

The advent of mass media has had a profound Impact on the field of mass communication, transforming it in various ways. The emergence of mass media, such as newspapers, radio, television, and later digital platforms, has revolutionized the way information is disseminated and received. It has expanded the reach and accessibility of communication channels, allowing information to be conveyed to a vast and diverse audience. Mass media has become a powerful tool for not only sharing news and information but also shaping public opinion, influencing behavior, and fostering social and cultural change. It is evident that the introduction of mass media has brought about significant changes in the world of communication. Asemah (2009) defines communication as the process through which information, ideas, and attitudes are shared. It involves the exchange of information between individuals or among communities. Idowu (2008, p. 769) further elaborates that communication is the transmission of mutually comprehensible and meaningful messages, or information, between two or more interacting parties.

Political communication is a subfield of communication and political science that is concerned with how information spreads and influences politics

and policy makers. Grabber (2005), Cited in Ekharefo (2014) sees political communication as:

Receiving and processing of messages that potentially have A significant direct or indirect on politics. The Message senders or message receivers may be politicians, Journalists and members of interest groups or private Organized citizens. The key element is that the message has a significant political effect on the thinking, beliefs, and Behaviors of individuals, groups, institutions and whole Societies and environment in which they exist.
(P.459)

Every communication is aimed at influencing the receiver. Be it mass communication or interpersonal communication, the major purpose of communication is to influence the receiver of the message. The mass media are communication channels through which information are disseminated to the audience. Through these channels, messages travel from the source to the receiver.

With the transition of our traditional world into a new digital world, ways by which communication can be improved were thought of by creative minds and that was how the Internet was born. The Internet has seen a fast track of users since its creation due to the changes the world of communication has seen through its use. The Internet is a globally connected network of billions of devices through which communication is made and information shared. Agba (2002) notes that the internet is the most technologically

advanced medium of communication; it is a multimedia information super highway that facilitates business, sports, politics, entertainment and other endeavors across international boundaries. The introduction of the Internet saw the creation of the sensation we know as the social media.

The Social media refers to a computer-based technology that facilitates the sharing of ideas, thoughts, and information through virtual networks and communities. Social media is internet-based and gives users quick electronic communication of content, such as personal information, documents, videos, and photos. This includes applications like Twitter, Snapchat, Facebook, Instagram, Telegram , WhatsApp and many others.

The social media is a platform through which information is shared. It is a strong weapon for the transmission of political activities in Nigeria and the world at large. This is because the social media can go a long way in influencing people to accept a particular idea either by the government or an individual. One of the significant roles of the media during Election period is to influence the public's attitude, perception and behaviour to vote for the political individual or group that they believe will bring positive change to a community. These social media platforms can galvanize the people to support government policies and act as a watchdog on political systems.

The audience play a vital role in the world of Social media. They are known as the users. They help in the creating of content, in the sharing of news stories, facts, ideas and so on. They reach the receivers of this same information through these platforms. Without the audience (users), Social media would not function. Because of the vastness and diversity of the social media platform, it is used for education, for sharing of information, for business ventures, political campaigns and so on. Social media play a key role in circulating news through different platforms across geographical areas. It is a channel through which political communities are able to know the reactions of the public to political messages. The use of the media for electoral campaigns in Nigeria started with the traditional media. Because of how successful this venture was, it now saw the use of social media for this very reason. For example, during the 2011 presidential election in Nigeria, People's Democratic Party (PDP) used the social media a great deal for their campaigns.

Across the world, political groups and individuals have used the social media to carry out political campaigns as to increase the support of the public. In Nigeria, it can be seen that social media has played a great work in stimulating and swaying the public's attention during election periods. We see politicians, Political parties and even individuals using this various social media platforms to connect with citizens of Nigeria. Social media has provided

political parties a means by which they can reach their supporters, it helps in reporting election campaigns and so on. During general elections, it is common to see politicians making frantic efforts to make connections with Nigerians via social media platforms.

The 2023 elections saw the use of various social media platforms for its' electoral campaign as it is the fastest means of disseminating information. According to Statista research department (2022), Nigeria registered approximately 109 million active internet users as at January 2022 which is more than half of Nigeria's population. These social media platforms are user-interactive, affordable and faster than traditional media. It is more personal as it makes it possible for the supporters to interact more easily with their respective political candidate or parties. These platforms have been used by Nigerian politicians to reach potential voters who are registered members on these sites. These various political parties have social media handles by which they broadcast political messages. These social media platforms are used because it is believed that the media is persuasive in nature and it can be used to convince the audience to accept a particular idea.

It is against this background that this research will investigate public perception of social media use for political campaign in 2023 elections.

1.2. Statement of the problem

Social media has given a huge assistance to the world of politics. Since the creation of the mass media, the political world has used it for its own benefit which has clearly worked in its favor. With the use of social media for political means, we have access to political campaigns easily and directly. The political party does not need to come to your house to seek your vote, they can just send you a message on your social platform, not just the political groups or candidates that benefit from this. We also have the Government who spreads political messages easily to increase political participations among citizens of Nigeria through the social media. Social media platforms help to spread information about elections to political parties, groups or individuals.

Although it has been said that social media is the fastest and surest way to meet your audience, as a lot of individuals interacts with these social media platforms on a daily basis as opposed to other mediums, It is imperative that we know how well these messages were received by social media users. This is because using the social media has its own limitations. According to (Ozohu-Suleiman, 2017), issues covered by the Nigerian media can be seen as loop-sided given the inherent power in the media to shape public understanding of issues. This research there by seeks to know how well the political campaigns of the 2023 elections were received by the students of the University of Benin through social

media platforms and how it helped in influencing their decisions during the Election period.

1.3. Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study are:

1. To determine the level of public exposure to political messages on social media platforms.
2. To find out how persuasive political campaign messages on social media are.
3. To find out how informative political campaign messages on social media are.
4. To ascertain public perception of the use of social media for political campaigns during the 2023 Elections.

1.4 Research questions:

The study is guided by the following research questions

1. What is the public exposure to political messages on social media platforms?
2. How persuasive are political campaign messages on social media?
3. How informative are political campaign messages on social media?
4. What was the public perception on the use of social media for political campaigns during the 2023 Election period?

1.5 Significance of the study

The outcome of this study will be beneficial to the Government, political groups, political parties and political individuals in helping them understand how or where political messages are lacking. It helps them know if the right platforms were used for the right audience in the 2023 Elections and what not to repeat and what to retain in the next Electoral campaign. It will make the political world more aware of the messages sent to the social media platforms and its effectiveness.

It shows the perception of the general public on these political messages, so as to know how well it affects the public's perspective on the Elections carried out in Nigeria. It will also help in knowing how well the public is exposed to political messages on Social media platforms. Consequently, this study will add to the body of knowledge that exists on "Public perception of the use of social media for Political campaigns in Nigeria". It will also assist researchers carry out their own research on topics related to Public's response on the use of Social media for communication and information purposes.

This research will be useful to students, Academics, Researchers and even the Government in finding out how effective the Social media platforms are in using them for communication and sharing information on different ventures and

in this particular study, Political ventures. Hence, this study would serve as a reference material.

1.6 Scope of the study

The study examines the public perception on the use of Social media platforms for political campaigns using the 2023 Nigeria Elections as its area of concentration. The public will be drawn from the University of Benin students.

1.7 Limitation of the study

The researcher faced several challenges and it is represented as follows; The study is focused on specific social media platforms, potentially missing out on the dynamics and perceptions on other platforms not used. Another is the sample size used, This study's sample size is too small to draw generalizable conclusions about the entire Nigerian population. A larger sample would provide more robust results. Lastly, although all questionnaires was administered, when received, not all were used for this research due to wrong information given by respondents.

1.8 Operational definition of Terms

Election: This is a process by which people choose a person or a group of individuals to rule or lead them. This activity is carried out within a certain period of time. In Nigeria it is conducted by INDEPENDENT NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION (INEC).

Perception: In this study, this is viewed as the method or way by which a particular message is received, understood and reacted to by the general public. In this research, we want to find out the perception of the public on political campaigns on social media.

Political Campaign: These are set of activities constructed by political individuals or political groups over a period of time as a means of promoting a political candidate for power in an electoral office or position. The activities include ways by which to influence voters decision in an upcoming election.

Public: This are seen as members of a particular society or community. But in this context, the public are referred to as citizens of Nigeria. That is People who live and call the country Nigeria their home.

Social Media: This is an internet form of communicating that makes use of platforms like Facebook, Instagram, etc. By which people create, share and/or exchange information.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Preamble

In this chapter we will be reviewing the various concepts. The review is presented under the following subheading:

2.2 review of concepts

2.3 review of opinion/ related literature

2.4 review of empirical studies

2.5 theoretical framework.

2.2 Review of Concepts

2.2.1. Social Media

Different scholars have defined the term social media by their own understanding but generally we know that it conforms to the meaning about the use of social media platforms to create and share information to the general public. Since its creation, social media has managed to transform the way we live our lives and presumably the way we think. Social media is an internet based form of communication that consists of websites and applications that allow users to share content and participate in social networking. Content refers to the information that

an individual puts out into the world, whether in the form of a YouTube video or Instagram photo while Social networking occurs when individuals interact with one another's content.

Social media consist of two words 'social' and 'media'. With respect to the social dimension of Social Media, the concept of self-presentation states that in any type of social interaction people have the desire to control the impressions other people form of them (Goffman, 1959) and The Merriam Webster Dictionary (2023) defines 'social' as a tending to form cooperative and interdependent relationships with others while 'media' refers to all channels of communication including everything from printed paper to digital data through which people share and receive information. Social media refers to online platforms and websites that enable users to create, share, and interact with content. Social media platforms have become an integral part of modern society, shaping the way people communicate, share information, and express themselves.

Many individuals prefer to draw connections between the development of communications technology in the 19th century and the launch of social media. But the arrival of the internet in the 1970s marked the beginning of the real history of social media. The 1960s and 1970s saw the launch of the internet as a result of efforts by both private and public entities to figure out how to make computers talk to one another. This might be seen as the birth of online social media, in a way.

Personal computers didn't become more commonplace until the 1980s and especially the 1990s, which helped pave the way for the development of social media.

The advent of blogging In the 1990s additionally ushered in the era of social media. People started to realize the full significance of the internet when they realized that the typical person could log on to the internet and publish about their thoughts, feelings, actions, and personal news. They also realized that anybody could read these messages at any time and reply to them. Which then brought about the creation of social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Myspace that were among the very first social media sites.

Social media is new media that involves interactive participation where by you are able to interact with friends, family and you even get to meet new people and participate in information getting, sharing and creating. Unlike the old media, when getting feedback was hard because information was sent directly to receivers without a means by which they could share their ideas about a particular information that was shared. The onset of social media has allowed individuals to share their opinions and to get feedback from people immediately which has helped grow society.

Social media allows an unprecedented volume of personal, informal communication in real time from anywhere in the world. It allows users to keep in

touch with friends on other continents, yet keeps the conversation as casual as a Facebook wall post. In addition, blogs allow us to gauge a wide variety of opinions and have given “Breaking News” a whole new meaning. Now, news can be distributed through many major outlets almost instantaneously, and different perspectives on any one event can be aired concurrently.

Jacka and Scott (2011, p.5) defines social media as “a set of web 2.0 based broadcast technology which enable democratization of content, giving people the ability to emerge from consumer of content to publishers”. Web 2.0 is not a new version of the web; rather, the term is a reference to the increased focus on user-generated content and social interaction on the web, as well as the evolution of online tools to facilitate that focus. For example you don’t need to watch Channels news to get Tinubu’s inauguration speech. You can just search Tinubu on Twitter and likely end up with thousands of tweet linking to everything from Channel News Twitter handle to YouTube videos of Tinubu’s speech.

According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, p.61), social media are “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the theoretical and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that enable the creation and exchange of user-generated content.” Indeed, many people have successfully navigated the social media ecosystem, demonstrating the potential for these tools to produce outstanding outcomes. High levels of interaction, the significance of user identity

development, and a willingness to sharing content across developing networks set social media apart from traditional online usage.

Social media is used by billions of people worldwide to connect and share information. Social media gives you the personal freedom to interact with loved ones, learn new things, explore new interests, and be entertained. By engaging with other professionals in your business, you may use social media to expand your professional network and deepen your knowledge in a certain field. Social media gives your business the opportunity to interact with customers, get their opinion, and build brand recognition.

Social media engagement is the connection of people through online technology to communicate with one another through a range of media. New websites are another characteristic of social media. Many of the most recent are geared toward mobile communication and offer services to tablet and smartphone users. Social media has become increasingly popular throughout the majority of the world thanks to the dynamic and ever-evolving nature of technology. While Facebook, YouTube, Google+, Twitter, and LinkedIn are some of the most popular social media platforms worldwide, Snap Chat, Instagram, and Pinterest are expanding quickly.

Social media have the capacity to significantly alter culture. Social media allows voices that traditional media gatekeepers have a tendency to disregard to be

heard. A relatively small number of items were chosen as news during the majority of the 20th century by newspaper and wire service editors, radio news directors, and television assignment editors (among others), and most occurrences slipped through the gatekeeping process. While social media platforms can propagate information that can sway public opinion and behavior, they also provide new ways to share events and news. This is one way that social media and conventional media might interact.

across ideological lines, influencing discussion and engagement (Soo-bum and Youn-gon, 2013).

Through the creation and consumption of partisan content, social media can be a tool for people to establish politicized identities and affiliate with political parties and causes. Social media has changed the entire landscape of political campaigns in countries around the world. Political parties are spending money on social media to help them achieve their main campaign objective: winning the election. Studies have shown that social media mostly served as a tool for information dissemination, opinion reinforcement, and support for mobilization and fundraising. Positive messages are spread using social media, which also shows a more human side of the candidates.

In a nutshell, social media is an internet based platform that is utilized in all aspects of our lives to facilitate successful communication among individuals around the world for specific purposes.

2.2.2 Political campaign

Political campaigns are the means by which candidates and political parties prepare and present their ideas and positions to voters in order to achieve support in the period preceding election day. According to the Merriam Webster Dictionary (2023) Campaign is a connected series of operations designed to bring about a particular result. So political campaigns involve activities that political candidates perform to incite voters into following and supporting them in the next upcoming election.

Any activity done by an individual that involves working to support any position or candidate running for office in a general election at the state, or federal level is referred to as political campaign activities. This involves making a contribution of money, your time, or anything else of value to sway public opinion and voting decisions in the favor of the candidate or candidates you are supporting. Our democracy cannot function without political campaigns. They assist us in selecting the individuals we wish to serve as our representatives in positions of authority and which political party has the best policies for our welfare.

Political campaigns have been divided into positive and negative campaigns. A candidate is doing all things to get the support of voters in activities like donating of money for fundraising in a community, building of infrastructural buildings, visiting of communities, making an impressive speech that consists of promises that will be fulfilled when they come into power. On the other side, these parties are creating propaganda to paint their opposing parties in a bad light so as to reduce support from the general public and the advent of social media has made these activities easier to pursue.

Political campaigns are essential to any election happening. It is in these activities that voters get to know political candidates on a more personal level and vice versa. The crowd that social media platforms have pulled over the years and still keeps pulling gave political parties and political candidates the idea to use social media to their advantage. Which in recent years have seen the wonderful results gotten from it. The US election of 2016 which saw Donald Trump emerge as the 45th president of the United States of America was as a result of social media. Sources attributed Donald Trump's win to the existence of Twitter and Facebook which are social media sites, that were capable of persuading citizens of America to vote for the Republican Party.

Political parties and political candidates now have profiles and handles on social media platforms, which has helped them greatly in their political campaigns.

There was a time when political campaigns was attributed to just television and radio. Although it was capable of reaching the public, feedback was hard to come by, so political campaign was going on with blind eyes as they did not know if the campaign was capable of swaying the public or not. Also the cost was exorbitantly high. But with the creation of social media platforms, the political candidate just need a picture posted with a short motivational comment attached with the picture and he or she gains supporters in a matter of minutes.

Social media platforms created a huge advantage for political campaigns. It gave a cheaper way to reach the public, its use is the easiest among all forms of media as there is no different departments in a media organization to be referred to before you can do your campaign. The social media platforms are also very functional as political parties and political candidates get immediate feedback on situations from the public and they tend to reach the public easy and faster. In our present world to hold a successful political campaign is with how many memes, videos and comments a public relations department of any political party can create on a daily basis before election day.

2.2.3 Political communication

Communication is an essential aspect of politics in any given society. According to Pippa (2015), Political communication is an interactive process concerning the transmission of information among politicians, the news media, and

the public. The process operates downward from governing institutions toward citizens, horizontally in linkages among political actors, and also upward from public opinion toward authorities.

Burton (2010) describes political communication as the dynamic interaction among political actors, the media and the audience, having its principal focus on the nature of the relationship between the media and the government on the one hand, and media and society on the other. Thus, in the political sphere of every democratic society, the media play a crucial role in the communication between players.

It is the engagement of voters by the government, political parties, and politicians for a variety of political objectives. It carries out an investigation of how political information is willfully disseminated and how it affects the public, the media, and decision-makers in the society. Political communication has undergone a significant change as a result of social media. Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have changed how political parties and candidates communicate with their supporters as well as how the public consumes political news.

Political communication includes, but is not limited to, how (political) information is conveyed to the electorate, how political parties and politicians are covered by the media, how political issues are impacted by media coverage, how

politicians interact with one another, and interpersonal communication on political subjects.

Oso (2007) Captures the benefits of the Internet in political communication. Firstly, that the Internet can facilitate the development of (alternative) narratives, which challenges the meta-narratives of the powerful. As such, marginalised social groups can undermine the hegemony of the ruling class through the articulation of their counter or alternative oppositional narratives. Secondly, it can be used to mobilise global attention and support and get its course on the media agenda by using the net to publicize it's cause.

Thirdly, it grants citizens access to public information and facilitate 'real time' conversation between people of similar interest and goals regardless of geographical constraints. Fourthly, that it connects and brings people together in a virtual space, providing an opportunity for them to exchange ideas as equals. Fifthly, that the internet recommends itself to all utopian advocates as a perfect instrument for democratic participation mainly because it cannot be controlled from a central point. Sixthly, that the internet can foster self-government, reduce reliance on traditional political authorities and institutions, facilitate popular public discourse and reutilize participatory democracy.

The development of the Internet has made it easier for people to organize politically, communicate with their elected officials, have discussions, and educate

one another about political problems. Principal political figures may, in turn, successfully communicate with their constituents online. Thus, the internet offers a fresh platform for exchanging political ideas and hearing from the public (Barnes, 2003, pp. 291-311).

The age of political Information is evolving quickly. Particularly now that people can monitor what is occurring in the world around them through new channels like social media. Although political communication was achieved also through the traditional media; political campaigns, political discussions among others was in existence through the traditional media but the world has evolved into a global village with the introduction of technologies that has made life easier and the audience of these traditional media had to evolve too.

The large audience on social media platforms saw Political figures using these sites to build the political stratosphere in a given society. According to Norris (2000), The consumption of news media will have a positive effect on democracy and the exposure to political news will produce a virtuous circle of trust in democratic institutions. News availability on a wide scale on the media as greatly increased political communication among citizens in a country.

The social media, a media branch and a vehicle for political communication, would be examined in the light of its role in sustaining order and disseminating societal ideals and demands in the pursuit of political change.

Therefore, in this age of globalization, the internet plays a critical role in influencing voting behavior globally as well as in fostering political activity and forming political attitudes.

2.2.4 Election

An election is the process of casting a ballot to select a candidate to serve as their political leader or representative in the government. The primary means through which the majority of people can affect governmental choices in a democracy is through their ability to vote. According to Heywood (2004), Election is a device for filling an office or post through choices made by a designated body of people (electorate). A formal election is when a candidate for public office is chosen or when a political proposition is approved or disapproved by a majority of voters.

According to Collins Dictionary (2023 13th Ed), Election is the selection by vote of a person or person's from among candidates for a position, especially a political office. The act of electing one or more people, things, courses, or rights from a larger number is known as election. It also refers to the process by which a party chooses a candidate for a certain position.

For us to better understand Election, we need to know what democracy is all about. As they are tied together. The popular definition of democracy was given by Abraham Lincoln. He defined democracy as the government of the people, by

the people and for the people. But in scholarly terms, Democracy is a form of government in which key decisions affecting a state or other policies are made directly or indirectly by the “people,” a group that typically consists of all (or nearly all) adult citizens but only makes up a the minority of the population.

Larry Diamond (2004) gave an overview of what in his opinion is democracy. He describes democracy as a system of government with four key 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 in which the laws and procedures apply equally to all citizens.

Elections in the 21st century has seen a great improvement in activities such as electronic voting; where voters choose their options using a computer in electronic voting, a type of computer-mediated voting and ‘I’ voting; where voters under this scenario could cast their ballots from any computer with Internet access, including one at home. This methods was primarily used in the 2020 US elections due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Gone are the days where an individual stands in a

long queue waiting to cast their vote when you can do that safely at home without concerns or inconvenience.

Elections in Nigeria is the way by which we appoint ourselves a new government. That is the very day that our rights as citizens of Nigeria is greatly exercised. On the 25th of February 2023, we saw Nigerians come out in their numbers to vote for the candidate they saw as capable of ruling Nigeria effectively. This would have been hard to achieve without Nigeria becoming a democratic state.

2.2.5 Public Perception

Public perception is simply the type of information obtained from a public opinion survey. That is, “public opinion” is merely the aggregate views of a group of people (usually a randomly selected sample) who are asked directly what they think about particular issues or events. Elifnur (2023).

Public Perception according to Collins Dictionary (2023, 13th Ed) is the way you think about it (an idea) or the impression you have about a particular subject matter. Public Perception is simply the type of information obtained from a public opinion survey. That is, ‘public opinion’ is merely the aggregate views of a group of people (usually a randomly selected sample) who are asked directly what they think about particular issues or events Dowler et al. (2006).

Public Perception is the way the communal in a geographical area view a particular issue, and their opinion about it. For everything that happens there are opinions about it. With the fast growth of information communication technology, it is rightful that the opinion of the general public is heard on how it affects them. Which brings us to our topic which is on Public perception on the use of social media platforms for political campaigns in the 2023 general Elections hosted in Nigeria.

2.3 Review of Related Literature

2.3.1 Social media as an Agent of Political Communication.

In recent years, social media has become increasingly used in politics. Many countries and politicians around the world have continued to embrace the platform to encourage their citizens and candidates to actively participate in the political process since Barack Obama broke the world record for social media use for political purposes during the 2008 US presidential elections.

It was said that during the 2011 and 2015 elections in Nigeria, social media was heavily utilized by four important participants in the electoral process: the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), politicians and political parties, the voters, and civil society organizations. Stakeholders used social media to accomplish a variety of connected goals. The considerations lead to the

conclusion that social media platforms have fundamentally aided political communication in Nigeria.

Social media is used greatly in all aspects of life and political communication is one of them. The surge of social media in today's world led to its' use as a political communication tool. In this area of expertise, social media has been used specifically for this various purposes; Political socialization, Political mobilization, Political sensitisation, Political participation, Free speech and many others. For us to truly understand the use of social media as a tool for political communication, we must understand the various purposes and how social media is interwoven with them.

1. Political socialization:

Political socialization is the process by which individuals come to comprehend their political selves, ideologies, and actions. The attributes of patriotism and good citizenship are mostly the result of political socialization. "Political socialisation may thus be defined as the process by which the individual becomes acquainted with the political system and which determines his reactions to political phenomena. Michal Rush and Philip Althoff.(1971).

Political scientists have come to the conclusion that political attitudes and actions are not inherited genetically. Instead, individuals make decisions about where and how they fit into the political principles and systems of their nation

throughout the course of their lives through the process of political socialization. The norms and conduct that support a peaceful and effective political system are transmitted from one generation to the next through this learning process. Most obviously, it affects how people choose their political stance.

Due to changes in communication, individuals in need of political information turn to the internet. The media not only shapes public opinion by offering news, analysis, and a range of viewpoints, but it also makes people aware of contemporary sociopolitical issues including corruption, terrorism, insecurity, and many more. Wattenberg (2008) argues that media nowadays socialize young people in a different way than they did in previous generations.

The Internet is now a source of political information, quickly surpassing traditional media in importance. A wide range of political information, analysis, and opinion are available on the websites of the majority of significant television and print news organizations today. Peer groups, politicians, and government organizations are increasingly using social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, etc. to discuss and spread political news and commentary.

In Nigeria, The main agent of political socialization is the social media and our political parties and political individuals are using these platforms effectively to drive political socialization. Political parties in Nigeria use social media to build political socialization through the improvement of our political culture; a

collection of beliefs and customs held by a people that influences their political behavior. Social media has been used to reshape Nigeria's political system through public awareness campaigns and mobilization. It has also made it possible for alternative voices that fight against political suppression in Nigeria to no longer be silenced but capable of drawing the attention of citizens so easily.

Citizens must be able to access a democratic political system when their interests are at stake, value and imbibe tolerance for opposing viewpoints, and actively support the rule of law in order for democracy to survive and flourish in a country. These citizens must also possess the necessary knowledge, abilities, attitudes, values, and behaviors. In order to be properly informed about the political system, their rights, and obligations, including involvement in the process of establishing government, they must also be willing and able to participate in local and national politics through political socialization and these are all achieved through social media.

2. Political sensitization

This is described as an agenda by which individuals (citizens of a country), become aware about everything and anything politics in a given country or society. It is seen as being aware about political activities in a country and participating in

it. It is seen as a change in an individual towards the political system in a society, in wanting and participating in activities (e.g. voting), to change it for the better.

2023 Elections saw an increase in political participation. This was as a result of political sensitization as measures were taken to increase the sensitization of the people so the deserving government will be put in power. A good example of political sensitization in Nigeria was the one organised by GUTS foundation in 2022. They had a goal to sensitize the youths in Nigeria against the upcoming 2023 elections. They believed that the youths had the power in their numbers to change the political system in Nigeria. This was achieved through targeted events and awareness campaigns that was hosted in Abuja.

The main goal was to educate the youths on the online voting registration system and to make sure the number of youths who are registered as voters are greatly increased in number than the previous 2019 Election process. They found a way to catch the minds of our youths by bringing up something that would not fail. The concerts that had influential artiste in Nigeria performing in it, that was hosted by the GUTS foundation was a huge success.

Therefore, social media can be utilized efficiently to target specific voters, motivate citizens to cast ballots, and spread information quickly. Governments in a contemporary democracy can use social media to involve the public in decision-making.

3. Political participation.

According to Carole (2015), Political participation refers to voluntary activities undertaken by the mass public to influence public policy, either directly or by affecting the selection of persons who make policies. Examples of these activities include voting in elections, helping a political campaign, donating money to a candidate or cause, contacting officials, petitioning, protesting, and working with other people on issues.

Political participation means “citizens’ involvement in the acts, events or activities that influence the selection of and/or the actions taken by political representatives” (Okoro and Nwafor, 2013, p.33). By enabling citizens to engage with their representatives and with one another, social media can be utilized to increase political participation. Any activity a citizen does to affect their political system is considered political participation. It is the act of engaging in the political process by voicing one’s ideas and political beliefs. Political involvement is a word frequently used in the social sciences to refer to an action made by a citizen to affect the resolution of a political issue.

There are numerous ways for citizens to get involved in politics that do not include running for office only. Voting alone is only one aspect of electoral participation. The ability to participate in public affairs, the right to free speech, assembly, and association, as well as the ability to register as a candidate, run for

office, and hold office at all levels of government, all contribute to political participation.

Everybody participates in politics at some point in their lives, perhaps without even realizing it. The most participated activities include: Choosing a candidate during an election, registering to vote, creating a blog post or article regarding politics, helping a campaign as a volunteer, assisting a cause through volunteerism consultations with elected authorities and members of the public to express one's views, directing or participating in an activist or interest group, participating in civic action such as boycotts, protests, being an elected official, filing out a petition, investing in a cause or campaign, when composing a letter to a public figure or representative, political party affiliation or party formation and many others.

In Nigeria, political participation is shown through 'voting'. The 2023 Elections saw a huge political participation attitude especially from the youths as they came out in their numbers to vote unlike in our previous Elections. Social media platforms was a huge success in making it happen. Online platforms and social media are used by citizens to participate in politics. Access to unbiased information about social, economic, and political issues important to the community or country is increased thanks to online platforms. Which made it possible in mobilizing our youths to vote for a changed Nigeria.

Social media has given rise to entirely new forms of action and interaction that can only happen in a digitally networked space, such as online petitions or commenting on politicians' posts (Sloam 2014). Some scholars argue that although social media platforms is capable of improving political participation, it is also capable of influencing its users in participating in wrongful activities which is placed under the term 'politics' or 'political system'. According to Sloam (2014), Social networks allow for non-institutionalized and horizontal modes of engagement, which are often favored by young adults. Overall, the various forms of participation can be described as either institutionalized (e.g., voting) or non-institutionalized (e.g., protest behavior). This distinction is relevant because "young adults are disproportionately more likely to participate through non-institutionalized means." (Weiss 2020, p. 3), particularly in the online world.

4. Political Mobilization

The word describes actions intended to compel a large number of individuals to express themselves and engage in a specific political activity in order to further political objectives. These are activities that intend to motivate masses of participants to express themselves and to undertake a particular political action. Political mobilization charts a group's development from being apathetic spectators to active participants in public and political affairs. The report further conceptualized political mobilization as an increase the level of awareness, of a

people, to specific set objectives intending to achieving those objectives (Political Bureau 2012).

One of the fundamental components of a functioning democracy is political mobilization, which can spur democracy and change in an authoritarian system. It was essential to historical revolutions and the anti-colonialist movement. It has played a significant role in several social movements in the modern era. Extreme right reactionaries also employed mass mobilization. By organizing the populace, fascism emerged in Germany and Italy.

In Nigeria 2004, 2007, 2011, 2015, and 2019 political campaigns, presidential candidates went out full throttle to mobilize voters, leaving nothing to chance. They deployed various strategies to persuade voters to cast the ballot in their favor, during the highly competitive political campaigns. The Impact that social media has today on its users, and more specifically the engagement that those users have with the same platforms are enormous when we talk about social media and political mobilization.

In recent years, social media has developed into a potent tool for political mobilization in Nigeria. Nigeria is one of the biggest and best-connected nations in Africa, with a population of over 200 million and more than 98 million internet users (Nigerian Communications Commission, 2021). This has given political players a way to connect with a big audience and mobilize them for political

objectives. Nigerians now frequently use social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp for communication. 84% of adult Nigerians own a mobile phone, and 70% of them utilize social media, per a Pew Research Center survey (National Democratic Institute, 2021). This has given political actors the chance to engage a huge audience and mobilize them for political objectives.

In Nigeria's general elections in 2019 and 2023, social media significantly aided voter turnout. Social media platforms were utilized by political parties and candidates to spread their campaign messaging, interact with voters, and rally supporters. For instance, President Muhammadu Buhari's campaign team reached out to young people, who make up a sizable section of the electorate, using social media sites like Twitter and Facebook (Olayinka, 2020). Social media was also employed by the People's Democratic Party (PDP) campaign team to rally supporters and disseminate their message (Onoja, 2020).

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations also used social media to encourage voters during the elections. For instance, the organization "Enough is Enough Nigeria" used social media channels to encourage young people to vote. In order to inspire young people to register to vote, choose the best candidates, cast their ballots on election day, and protect their votes, the group devised the hashtag #RSVP, which stands for Register, Select, Vote, Protect (Onoja, 2020).

Scholars argue that social media platforms are not the best options for political mobilization. One of the reasons is that social media are primarily used for entertainment and social networking purposes, which has the potential to distract rather than mobilize (Heiss and Matthes 2021). Also with the large number of individuals on social media platforms. It is very easy for groups that the government has declared as terrorists to be able to easily persuade the public to join their cause. So with this problem mentioned, the government should create an avenue by which there are individuals or groups given the job to monitor these social media platforms so any occurrence is reported and removed immediately.

5. Free Speech

Free speech has many different meanings, but at its core, it refers to the legal right to openly express or seek out ideas and viewpoints without concern about censorship or legal repercussions. Individuals have the freedom to express themselves however they see fit, which is a component of freedom of expression. The idea of freedom of speech encourages people to express their thoughts and opinions openly and without concern about legal repercussions, censorship, or other forms of retaliation.

Free speech has made it possible for the voice of the people to be heard. The social media has played a great part in promoting free speech. It allowed individuals to give their opinions on certain political activities or political system

without being held responsible or arrested. Political activist uses online platforms to share their opinions on the government. But this progression has allowed fake information and hate speech to spread at a very fast rate. In countries around the world, there is a subtle fear that hate speech which is seeing a large spread through social media platforms, is capable of challenging national security as other states and terrorists groups will use hate speech to drive their cause.

For the general public, free speech has two sides. Online expression is guaranteed under the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (As Amended). For both identifiable and anonymous individuals. Both individuals may express unfavorable thoughts online, yet it would still be regarded as exercising their right to free speech. While negative opinions have the opposite effect on readers, positive opinions also do. Digital platforms do not filter content like other media do. Due to this lack of responsibility, it leaves a lot of leeway for false information, unsupported viewpoints, and even hazardous ideas. Finding a compromise for digital platforms becomes extremely challenging because removing this material would violate people's freedom of expression.

In Nigeria, we see the government trying desperately to combat hate speech. A good example was the ban on twitter by the then president of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari. Which lasted for 222 days. Although effort was made, nothing regarding hate speech and fake information changed for the better. The

advancement of technologies everyday is making it possible for social media platforms to fight fake information through artificial intelligence. Despite the fact that this will go a long way in fighting fake news, the spread of hate speech will need a much stronger hand to fight it and reduce it.

Freedom of speech is very good in the development of a country, so it should not be prohibited or disallowed. That is why Antonio Guterres, the United Nations Secretary general on May 2019 said that ‘Addressing hate speech does not mean limiting or prohibiting freedom of speech. It means keeping hate speech from escalating into something more dangerous, particularly incitement to discrimination, hostility and violence, which is prohibited under international law.’”

Social media is changing the manner in which political communication was traditionally being done and now, politicians and political parties are using social media for new ways of interfacing with voters. There is no denying that traditional media only has a small audience. Thus, social media must be used to promote political communication in order to connect with a bigger audience across the length and breadth of the country. Users may readily express their opinions about various politicians and parties on social media because it is a two-way channel of communication, and this serves as a very important factor when voting.

As was already said, social media has recently become a powerful medium for communication, opening up opportunities to increase engagement in civic and

political activities. All of the aforementioned tasks, such as encouraging others to sign online petitions, tweeting quick messages, blogging about issues, and submitting videos to YouTube, etc., can be completed with only a few clicks on any social media site.

2.3.2 Social Media as a means of Political Advertising.

Political advertising refers to information disseminated by a state official, political party, member, or participant in a political campaign on their behalf and/or in the interest of that entity, in any form and by any means, during the time of a political campaign or between political campaigns, where such information is intended to motivate voters to cast ballots in elections or where it is disseminated with the intent to influence such motivation.

Political advertising is a marketing function similar in intent and purpose to product marketing (Nwosu, 1992, p.66). As noted by Olujide, et al (2010), political advertising is the use of media by political candidates to increase their exposure to the public. Politicians have adopted political advertising as a form of wooing their supporters. Political advertisement is done in return for supporting or opposing a candidate for election to the public office (Edegoh et al.2013).

Massive use of political advertisement in television, radio, social media, posters, billboards, cars and aircraft paintings was done to mobilize and inform voters on various contenders for different public offices. Political parties and candidates must give voters enough information about their platforms, party platforms, and clear visions in order for voters to actively choose their candidates based on complete knowledge for any democratic system to succeed. Political parties use the social media during campaigns to accomplish this. Political parties are the most typical path to elected office. The majority of candidates rely on their parties for their nomination, their base of electoral support, aid during the election campaign, financial resources, and on-going support after their victory.

Political parties and their candidates are becoming more and more conscious of the power of advertising and how it may inform voters and influence their decision to support one candidate or party over another. Because it closes the communication gap between political parties, political candidates, and electorates, the usage of political advertising campaigns has grown in popularity and is crucial to the electoral process and voting behavior. As a result, political parties and politicians all over the world invest a lot of money in political advertising campaigns to position themselves as the electorate's favorite brand.

Social media platforms during political campaigns offer online versions of actual political rallies and party conventions so that supporters who cannot

physically attend are still considered at a reduced rate. Even the media sector recognizes the potential of social media during elections given how it has enabled citizen journalism and blogging to turn non-professional journalists and news commenters into alternative commentators and opinion leaders

Political advertising has significantly increased in Nigeria. This is a result of political parties and their candidates recently realizing the value of advertising in helping electorates better understand the candidates as better brands and in expressing their platforms in the form of manifestos. Political advertising is now the method that is most frequently utilized to promote one candidate while disparaging the opponent. The 2023 gubernatorial elections in Nigeria, witnessed political parties and candidates flooding social media platforms with ad campaigns all struggling to win electorates votes.

In Nigerian politics, it appears that social media and the internet are having a significant impact on how the nation is governed. As the first head of state in Nigeria to formally announce his intention to run for office on Facebook, President Goodluck Jonathan created history. The president's choice shifted the political dynamic in the nation's election-related issues. Politicians now use social networking sites to appeal to the younger generation and influence the nation's current phase.

Any politician or political party that truly wants to target a profitable and viable audience must embrace social media networks as the trend. The numerous electoral campaigns taking place in this millennium can only be won by doing that. Additionally, since young people will be tomorrow's leaders and view politicians negatively, social media is vitally needed to influence their opinions and worldview.

Social media platforms are used by political candidates and parties for political campaigning, to mobilize support for different candidates running for elected office, to make their manifestos public, and to advance party beliefs. Social media play useful and significant roles not only for mobilizing voters but also in integrating all other facets of campaigns, including rally, organizing and delivering campaign messages to potential voters consistently, at relatively no cost. Morah and Uzochukwu (2019).

In Nigeria, social media is used by politicians due to a number of reasons and one of them is low cost and in some cases no cost at all, unlike when traditional media was predominantly used in the country and millions of naira were pumped into these companies so as to carry out their political campaigns. Another reason is the perceived "political value" of social media. Social media is the language of young people; with more than 60% of the Nigerian population being youth, and with the majority of this youth group sourcing its political news from

social media, the only way to reach the youths is through online platforms. Another reason is the quick, mobilising and social adaptation power of social media; information travels faster on digital media, and political advertisement can have a ripple effect beyond their primary audience. Similarly, monitoring engagement and consumer interaction with a political advert is easier on digital platforms than on traditional media. Another reason is the use of social media platforms to create negative advertisement (propagandas) so as to reduce the support of their opponents and increase theirs.

During the 2023 political campaigns, our social media platforms was filled with advertisement messages such as slogans, vox pop, logos, short advertising videos where we saw the candidate interacting with people, advertising messages, audio recordings and so on. A presidential candidate Atiku Abubakar used the slogan ‘Vote for Nigeria to Recover’ and this was used on all his social media platforms and even the online platforms belonging to People Democratic Party (PDP). So every rally or campaign done, the slogan was used and an hashtag created.

2.4. Review of Empirical studies

Studies on the use of social media has advanced and explained how social media is used by people for different purposes.

“Public Perception of Social Media Contributions to Political Participation Processes in Delta State, Nigeria by Aghogho (2015)” examined public perception of the contributions of social media to political participation processes in Delta State, Nigeria. It adopted the survey method using a sample of 500 respondents selected through a multistage sampling technique. A Likert scale questionnaire was used to collect data which were analysed using descriptive statistics. The study was anchored on the Social Judgment Theory (SJT) and the Technological Frame of Reference theory.

The study revealed that 475 respondents used the social media and 55.4% were exposed to political issues on social media very often while 16.4% were always exposed to political issues on social media. The respondents held both positive and negative perception towards the peculiar nature of political news and information shared on the social media. Findings revealed that although the social media were perceived to have positively influenced Nigeria’s democracy by enhancing the flow of political information and awakening public political consciousness, the news and information being disseminated on social media platforms were noted to have increased the spate of hate speech and stoked political unease. The study shows that the social media can have positive and negative use.

Shadrach .I. and Apuke. O. (2020) in their work “ Investigating the Effectiveness of Social Media Usage for Political Dialogue in Nigeria” show that there is a high usage of social media, predominantly Facebook and Twitter for political discourse among Nigerians, yet, most of the discussion carried out on this platform lacks the substance of objectivity and it is filled with attacks, counterattacks and hate speeches showing religious, ethnic and political biases which indicates that instead of contributing to the political system of the country, social media in Nigeria has generally in the political sphere enhanced division and hatred among Nigerians.

The work Is anchored on Public Sphere Theory and a survey research method taken among 300 participants across the tertiary institutions in Taraba State in northeast Nigeria. The findings also revealed that though political leaders reach citizens via social media and citizens are exposed to campaign messages from political leaders, the leaders rarely respond to citizens on social media. Hence, political social media in Nigeria has not created effective two-way communication between citizens and the political leadership.

The point of convergence between these related studies is that they both focus on public perception and the concept of social media use for the distribution of political messages. While the point of divergence is that this work is concerned with public perception of social media use for political campaign in 2023 elections.

2.5. Theoretical Framework

The imperatives of having a strong and applicable theory in any research endeavor cannot be over emphasized; especially in communications“ research. This is because anchoring a study on pertinent theory (or theories) makes analysis of the subject-matter viable (Nwaoboli et al., 2021). This study is anchored on Users and gratification theory and Agenda setting theory.

2.5.1 Uses and Gratification Theory

It was propounded by Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch in 1974. The Uses and gratification approach views the audience as active; meaning that they actively seek out specific media and content to achieve certain results or gratifications that satisfy their personal needs (Rossi, 2002). The importance of use and gratifications has been rediscovered with the rise of computer-mediated communication. In actuality, uses and gratifications has always offered a state-of-the-art theoretical framework in the early phases of each new mass communication medium: newspapers, radio, television, and now the Internet.

The primary communication theory that describes how and why people use the media has been the Uses and Gratification Theory for many years. The theory seems dated to many. The development of social media has given this aging theory new life, nevertheless. Researchers, marketers, students, celebrities, and several

other entities from the worlds of business and politics are now interested in social media. This is related to the idea that many people are online as a result of the strength of globalization in order to deal with and survive the demands of 21st-century technology. Millions of individuals use social media today because it allows them to watch, read, search for, and share anything they want, whenever they want, on any topic. The theory helps us understand why people use the media.

Five basic assumptions were stated in a study of Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch in 1974. The five assumptions provide a framework for understanding the correlation between media and audiences. They are that the audience is conceived as active, In the mass communication process, much initiative in linking need gratifications and media choice lies with the audience- members, the media compete with other sources of need satisfaction and Methodologically speaking, many of the goals of mass media use can be derived from data supplied by individual audience-members. Finally, Value judgments about the cultural significance of mass communication should be suspended, while audience orientations are explored on their own terms.

The Uses and gratification theory, therefore reminds us that people use the media for many purposes. In 1972, McQuail, Blumler and Brown suggested the following individual needs categories:

- i. Diversion needs: The media can be used to divert attention from loneliness, anxiety, troubles, etc. Radio, television, newspapers, etc. Serve as the means of emotional release. When you are emotionally disturbed, you can use mass media to divert these .
- ii. Personal relationship needs: The mass media serve as substitute to our friends, husbands, children, wives, etc. Not around us. This means substitutes of media for companionship.
- iii. Personal Identity/ Individual Psychology needs: Psychologically, everybody wants to look important. Because of the need to look important, people buy tips, newspapers, magazines, television, video machines, etc. We use the media for value reinforcements and self understanding.
- iv. Surveillance Needs: People use the media to survey the environment so as to know what is happening within and without. With the mass media, people can monitor trends. This enables the people to get the information that may help accomplish certain tasks.

The Uses and gratification theory is relevant to this study because it focuses on the use of social media for political purposes either be it as citizens of a country in political participation or as political candidates in political mobilization

and campaigns. It examines the extent to which social media can be used as a political communication tool around the world.

2.5.2 Agenda Setting Theory

Agenda setting theory can be traced to Walter Lippmann's thesis on public opinion, published in 1922 (Asemah, Nwammuo and Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2017). Although, Lippmann himself did not formulate the word "agenda setting", his argument centers on the idea that the mass media are the primary link between events in the ideal world and the actual images that radiate from the minds of the public (Asemah et al., 2017, p.247). The theory was therefore, formulated by McCombs and Shaw (1972) on the premise that the mainstream or conventional media set the agenda for the public to follow. However, Ikpe (2012) as cited in Asemah et al., (2017) observed that the paradigm has now shifted from agenda-setting to agenda-building.

The theory's main premise is that the public follows the agenda that the media sets. According to the theory, the majority of the images we keep in our minds, the majority of the things we consider or worry about, and the majority of the topics we discuss are based on what we have read, heard, or seen in various forms of mass media. The media influences our thoughts and feelings about many topics, leading us to believe that some topics are more crucial to our society than

others. The media may not tell us what to believe, but they may tell us what to think about, according to the agenda-setting argument.

The public is expected to follow the agenda set by the media, whether it be in print, online, or on social media. As a result, important issues in our society are brought up in the media, and people start to think accordingly. Additionally, it suggests that the public shares the media's importance for whatever it is that they deem essential. The public will ponder and talk about this more than anything else if, for instance, the media devotes more of their time and space to covering political campaigns and the forthcoming elections. Last but not least, the agenda-setting theory asserts that individuals frequently consider topics brought up by the media and overlook those that most trouble them..

This theory is used in areas like political advertising or political communication in general. It is relevant to this study in helping the public understand how social media platforms in the creating and distributing of political messages have shaped and molded the general public and their opinions on issues that affect the society.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Preamble

In this chapter, the researcher presents the various methods and techniques that were adopted and used in generating practical data for this study. In this chapter, the research design, population of the study, the sample size, the sampling technique, the research instruments, validity, methods of data collection and analysis are discussed.

3.2 Research Design

The research design is a strategy for answering your research questions. It determines how you will collect and analyze your data. According to Ohaja (2003, p73), the topic usually gives a clue to the research design that should be adopted.

The survey method was adopted. This is because data collection and analysis of the general public is best done with the survey research design. The survey method provides empirical data on a population of respondents by which valid conclusion can be made.

3.3 Population of the Study

A population according to Asika(2002, p.39) cited in Asemah(2017) “ is made up of all conceivable elements, subjects or observations, relating to a

particular phenomenon of interest to the researcher.” The population of this study was drawn from students of the University of Benin.

In carrying out the study, students from the mass communication department (full-time) were considered. At the time this research was conducted, the 100-level students totaled 174, the 200-level students totaled 250, 300-level students totaled 229 and the 400-level students totaled 256, which made up a total of 909 full time undergraduates of the department of Mass Communication in Ekehuan campus, University of Benin.

3.4 Sample Size

This is the number of persons selected from the population that the researcher will study on. According to Wimmer and Dominick (2011 p.102), the size of the sample required for a study depends on at least one or more of the following seven factors: project type, project purpose, project complexity, amount of error tolerated, time constraints, financial constraints, and previous research in the area. Thus, the sample size will be determined using the Taro Yamane formula which is $n = N/[1+N\epsilon^2]$

N = Sample size

N = Population size

E = level of significance at 0.05

Therefore

$$N = 909 / [1 + 909 (0.05)^2]$$

$$N = 909 / 1 + 909 (0.0025)$$

$$N = 909 / 1 + 2.2725$$

$$N = 909 / 3.2725$$

$$N = 277.76$$

$$N = 278$$

With this outcome, the researcher decided to make it 280 for easy administration.

3.5 Sampling Technique

Sampling is the procedure of drawing samples from a population. The sampling technique adopted for this study is the simple random sampling and purposive sampling. In simple random sampling, a sample is chosen so that every member of the defined population has an equal probability of being included for the sample. In purposive sampling, the sample is drawn from respondents that possess a required attribute that is needed in the completion of the study and in some cases, those who use social media platforms.

The respondents which totaled a sample size of 280 were picked at random and purposely by the researcher.

3.6 Research Instrument

This is a tool or device that is used for collection of data. In this study, the research instrument used is the questionnaire. A questionnaire is a list of questions or items used to gather data from respondents about their attitudes, experiences, or opinions. It was divided into two sections. The first part was the demographic

section and the second part was the psychographic section consisting of 17 questions using the Likert scale format.

3.7 Validity of Research Instrument

Validity refers to how accurately a method measures what it is intended to measure. In this study, face validity will be used whereby the questionnaire will be shown to the project supervisor and then validated that the questions in the questionnaire is capable of answering the research questions.

3.8 Reliability of Research Instrument

Reliability of an instrument is the ability of a research instrument to consistently measure what it is intended to measure. The researcher will conduct a test and retest method on 10 respondents out of the 280 total respondents so as to ascertain the public perception on the use of social media platforms for political campaigns.

3.9 Method of Data Collection

The data was collected with the use of questionnaires. The questionnaire was administered to the respondents face to face. The researcher collected the instrument immediately after it was administered.

3.10 Method of Data Analysis

The data collected were analysed using the quantitative analytical technique.. This involves the use of frequency tables and simple percentage for presentation of your analysed data in your research work. Which allows for easy analysis of figures and easy comparison of data

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Preamble

This chapter will look at and analyze the data received from questionnaires provided to selected students of the department of Mass Communication picked at random that uses social media platforms. The total of 280 questionnaires was recovered and 28 had invalid information leaving us with a total of 252 respondents to work with.

4.2 Presentation

Section A:

Table 1. Sex of Respondents

SEX	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Male	96	38
Female	156	62
Others	0	0
TOTAL	252	100

Table 1 shows that 38% of the respondents are Men while 62% of the respondents are women

Table 2. Age of Respondents

AGE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
18-20	100	40
21-25	136	54
26-30	16	6
31 and Above	0	0
TOTAL	252	100

Table 2 shows that 40% of the respondents are people with the ages of 18-20 while 54% of the respondents are between the ages of 21-25, 6% of the respondents are between 26-30 and 0% are 31 and above. This demonstrates that the majority of my respondents were younger people.

Table 3. Class level of Respondents

LEVEL	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
100	56	22
200	44	18
300	36	14
400	116	46
TOTAL	252	100

Table 3 shows that 22% of the respondents are students in 100 level of the department of Mass Communication, 18% of the respondents are students in 200 level, 14% of the respondents are students in 300 level and 46% of the respondents are students in 400 level. This shows that more questionnaires were distributed among the final year students in the department of Mass Communication.

Table 4. Marital status of Respondents

MARITAL STATUS	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Single	228	91
Married	24	9
TOTAL	252	100

Table 4 shows 91% of the respondents are single while 9% of the respondents are married.

Table 5. Religion of Respondents

RELIGION	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Christianity	212	84
Islamic	40	16
Traditional	0	0
TOTAL	252	100

Table 5 shows that 84% of the respondents were Christians while 16% of the respondents were Muslims.

Section B

Table 6. Use of social media

QUESTION	OPTIONS	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Do you use social media?	Yes	232	92
	No	0	0
	Partially	20	8
	TOTAL	252	100

Table 6 shows that 92% of the respondents showed affirmation that they do use social media platforms while 8% of the respondents claimed that they partially use social media platforms.

Table 7: Extent to which social media platforms are used.

QUESTION	OPTIONS	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
If yes, to what extent do you use social media	Very High	128	51
	High	84	33
	Low	16	6
	Very Low	12	5
	Undecided	12	5
	TOTAL	252	100

Table 7 shows that 51% of respondents claimed that the frequency at which they use social media platforms is very high, 33% of respondents claimed that they

use social media platforms at a high frequency, 6% of respondents claimed to use social media platforms at a low frequency, 5% of respondents claimed to use social media platforms at a very low frequency and another 5% of respondents were undecided.

Table 8: Social media platforms accessed more often.

QUESTION	OPTIONS	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Which of these social media platforms do you access more often?	WhatsApp	132	52
	Twitter	32	13
	Instagram	28	11
	Facebook	16	6
	YouTube	20	8
	TikTok	24	10
	TOTAL	252	100

Table 8 shows that 52% of respondents uses WhatsApp more often, 13% of respondents uses Twitter more often, 11% of respondents uses Instagram more often, 6% of respondents uses Snapchat, 8% of respondents uses YouTube more often while 10% of respondents claimed that they use TikTok more often.

Table 9: The use of social media platforms for Political campaigns

QUESTION	OPTIONS	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Social media platforms are used for political campaigns?	Yes	224	89
	No	8	3
	Undecided	20	8
	TOTAL	252	100

Table 9 shows that 89% of respondents have seen or have used social media platforms for political campaigns, 3% of respondents claimed that social media platforms are not used for political campaigns while 8% of respondents are undecided.

Table 10: Familiarity of the 2023 election political campaigns on Social media platforms

QUESTION	OPTIONS	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Were you accustomed to seeing 2023 election campaign messages on social media platforms?	Yes	204	81
	No	20	8
	Partially	28	11
	TOTAL	252	100

Table 10 shows that 81% of respondents were very familiar on seeing political campaigns on social media platforms, 8% of respondents were not familiar on seeing political campaigns on social media platforms while 11% of respondents claimed that they were partially familiar on seeing political campaigns on social media platforms.

Table 11: Occurrence of 2023 election campaign messages on social media platforms

QUESTION	OPTIONS	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
How often did you see 2023 election campaign messages on social media platforms?	Always	48	19
	Often	124	49
	Sometimes	72	29
	Rarely	8	3
	Never	0	0
	TOTAL	252	100

Table 11 shows that 19% of respondents saw political campaigns on social media platforms always, 49% of respondents saw political campaigns on social media platforms often, 29% of respondents shows that they sometimes saw political campaigns on social media platforms while 3% of respondents saw political campaigns on social media platforms rarely.

Table 12: Exposure on the 2023 election political campaign messages on social media platforms

QUESTION	OPTIONS	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Which social media platform exposed you to the 2023 political campaign messages more often?	WhatsApp	52	21
	Twitter	120	48
	Instagram	60	23
	YouTube	4	2
	Facebook	8	3
	TikTok	8	3
	TOTAL	252	100

Table 12 shows that 21% of respondents were exposed to political campaigns more often on WhatsApp, 48% of respondents were exposed to

political campaign messages more often on Twitter, 23% of respondents were exposed to political campaign messages more often on Instagram, 2% of respondents were exposed to political campaign messages more often on YouTube, 3% of respondents were exposed to political campaign messages more often on Snapchat while another 3% of respondents were exposed to political campaign messages more often on TikTok.

Table 13: Extent to which political campaign messages on social media platforms influenced your support for a particular party or candidate in the 2023 elections.

QUESTION	OPTIONS	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
To what extent did these political campaign messages influence your support for a particular party or candidate in the 2023 election?	Very High	40	16
	High	128	51
	Low	52	20
	Very Low	24	10
	Undecided	8	3
	TOTAL	252	100

Table 13 shows that 16% of respondents influenced on social media platforms were very high, 51% of respondents were influenced on social media platforms at a high rate, 20% of respondents were influenced on social media platforms at a low rate, 10% of respondents were influenced on social media platforms at a very low rate while 3% of respondents are undecided.

Table 14: 2023 election campaign messages were informative on social media platforms.

QUESTION	OPTIONS	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
2023 political campaign messages on social media platforms were very informative.	Strongly Agree	76	30
	Agree	104	41
	Disagree	32	13
	Strongly Decided	4	2
	Undecided	36	14
	TOTAL	252	100

Table 14 shows that 30% of respondents strongly agreed that 2023 election political campaign messages on social media platforms were very informative, 41% of respondents agreed that the political campaign messages on social media platforms were informative, 13% of respondents disagreed that political campaign messages on social media platforms were informative, 2% of respondents strongly disagreed on 2023 election political campaign messages being informative on social media platforms while 14% of respondents are undecided.

Table 15: 2023 election campaign messages were persuasive on social media platforms.

QUESTION	OPTIONS	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
2023 political campaign messages on social media platforms were very persuasive.	Strongly Agree	64	25
	Agree	116	46
	Disagree	32	13
	Strongly Disagree	12	5
	Undecided	28	11
	TOTAL	252	100

Table 15 shows that 25% of respondents strongly agreed that political campaign messages on social media platforms were very persuasive, 46% of

respondents agreed that political campaign messages on social media platforms were persuasive, 13% of respondents disagreed that political campaign messages on social media platforms were persuasive. 5% of respondents strongly disagreed on the 2023 election political campaign messages being persuasive on social media platforms while 11% of respondents are undecided.

Table 16: Acceptance on the use of social media platforms for political campaign messages

QUESTION	OPTIONS	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Do you agree with the use of social media platforms for political campaigns?	Strongly Agree	88	35
	Agree	128	51
	Disagree	20	8
	Strongly Disagree	0	0
	Undecided	16	6
	TOTAL	252	100

Table 16 shows that 35% of respondents strongly agreed on the use of social media platforms for political campaigns, 51% of respondents agreed on the use of social media platforms for political campaigns, 8% of respondents disagreed on the use of social media platforms for political campaigns and 6% of respondents are undecided.

Table 17: Satisfaction on the use of social media platforms for 2023 election political campaign messages.

QUESTION	OPTIONS	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Were you	Very Satisfied	68	27

satisfied with the use of social media platforms for the 2023 election campaign messages?	Somewhat Satisfied	132	52
	Somewhat Dissatisfied	28	11
	Very Dissatisfied	4	2
	Undecided	20	8
	TOTAL	252	100

Table 17 shows that 27% of respondents were very satisfied on the use of social media platforms for 2023 election political campaign messages, 52% of respondents were somewhat satisfied on the use of social media platforms for political campaign messages, 11% of respondents were somewhat dissatisfied on the use of social media platforms for political campaign messages, 2% of the respondents were very dissatisfied on the use of social media platforms for political campaign messages while 8% of respondents were undecided.

4.3 Discussion of findings

This section discussed the findings of the study in relation to the four research questions raised by the researcher.

RQ 1: What is the public exposure to political campaign messages on social media platforms?

The findings show that there is high exposure to political campaign messages on social media platforms by the public. This is analyzed using Table 10, Table 11 and Table 12. In table 10, which shows the number of respondents who were familiar with seeing political campaign messages during the 2023 election period, shows that 204 respondents representing 81 of the total sampled population

said yes to seeing political campaign messages about the 2023 elections on social media platforms, 20 respondents representing 8% of the total sampled population said no to seeing political campaign messages about the 2023 elections on social media while 28 respondents representing 11% of the total sampled population said that they saw political campaign messages on social media platforms on a partial level. This conforms to the fact that a huge number of our population who have access to social media platforms sees political campaign messages on social media, especially during election period.

In table 11, the respondents were asked on how often they saw 2023 political campaign messages on social media and it shows that 48 of respondents representing 19% of the total sampled population agreed that they saw these political campaign messages always, 124 of respondents representing 49% of the total sampled population agreed to seeing it often, 72 of respondents representing 29% of the total sampled population said they saw these political campaign messages sometimes, while 8 respondents representing 3% of the total sampled population said they saw the 2023 election campaign messages on rare occasions.

Social media have developed into genuine and significant tools for political campaign planners in carrying out election campaigns and other electioneering operations, political engagement and mobilization, among other things, due to its participatory, interactive, and cost-effective character. Due to this factors in every

election to come, politicians and political parties will use social media platforms for political campaigns and every user of these platforms should be ready to come across political campaign messages on them.

In table 12, it shows public exposure to political campaign messages on social media platforms is at a high frequency due to the use of these social media platforms by Politicians for their campaigns. The table shows that respondents who had access to social media platforms were exposed to political campaign messages. It shows that 52 respondents representing 21% of the total sampled population were exposed to political campaign messages on WhatsApp, 120 respondents representing 48% of the total sampled population are exposed to political campaign messages on Twitter, 60 respondents representing 23% of the total respondents were exposed to political campaign messages on Instagram, 4 respondents representing 2% of the total sampled population were exposed to political campaign messages on YouTube, 8 respondents representing 3% of the total sampled population were exposed to political campaign messages on Facebook and another total of 8 respondents representing 3% of the total sampled population were exposed to political campaign messages on TikTok.

This is not far from the truth, since data indicates that as of January 2022, approximately 109 million individuals in Nigeria were active internet users. Social media has grown to be one of the most efficient ways to disseminate information

to the younger population due to the frequency and degree of exposure that young people have to it. Therefore, political parties and their candidates have exploited social media platforms due to the rate at which youngsters have access to these media in an effort to boost public exposure to political campaign themes. This finding is consistent with a study by Arijenwa et al., (2022), which discovered that youths use social media platforms at the highest rates.

RQ 2: How persuasive are political campaign messages on social media?

Social media platforms are very persuasive as they are designed to change the attitude or behavior of users and also influence their opinions on certain political views. (Friedman et al., 2022). This is represented in table 15 and table 13. Table 15 which showed us respondents' agreement to the 2023 election campaign messages on social media platforms being able to persuade them to participate in everything politics. It points out that 64 respondents representing 25% of the total sampled population strongly agreed that they were persuaded by political campaign messages on social media platforms, 116 respondents representing 46% of the total sampled population agreed that it was persuasive, 32 respondents representing 13% of the total sampled population disagreed on political campaign messages on social media platforms being able to persuade them to participate in political activities, 12 respondents representing 5% of the total sampled population strongly disagreed on political campaign messages being persuasive while 28

respondents representing 11% of the total sampled population were undecided. Persuasion is needed in political campaigns that is why the social judgement theory developed by Muzafer Sherif, Carolyn Sherif and Carl Hovland in 1961 supports that it is easier to persuade someone that agrees with the persuader.

This is supported by an article by Weeks et al. In 2015 that asserts that Citizens are increasingly turning to social media to not only interact with one another but also consume, produce, and distribute news and political information and also Social media “prosumers”—individuals who are interacting with others, reading news in social media and in apps, as well as creating and sharing political content—potentially carry considerable political influence within these platforms, and by carrying out this activities there is a high chance of persuading the public during election campaigns.

In table 13, It shows the extent to which political campaign messages influenced the support of respondents for a particular party or candidate in the 2023 elections. It points out that 40 respondents representing 16% of the total sampled population said the degree at which it changed and influenced their support was at a very high rate, 128 respondents representing 51% of the total sampled population affirmed that the influence on their support for a particular party or candidate was high, 52 respondents representing 20% of the total sampled population said the influence on their support was at a low rate, 24 respondents

representing 10% of the total sampled population affirmed that the influence on their support for a particular party or candidate in the 2023 elections was very low while 8 respondents representing 3% of the total sampled population were undecided.

This supports the findings of Okoro and Santas (2017) in their work ‘An appraisal of the utilization of social media for political communication in the 2011 Nigerian presidential election. They aimed to know if using social media affected voters’ decisions on presidential candidates. The study’s participants are students from three universities in North-Central Nigeria with mass communication programs. 299 young people were chosen at random to complete copies of the survey that was given them. The findings demonstrated that social media had a significant influence on the majority of respondents’ presidential candidate preferences during the 2011 election. Similarly, respondents thought that the two most well-known presidential candidates picked were well-liked as a result of their usage of social media in their campaigns. Additionally, respondents claimed that their use of social media during the 2011 presidential elections had an impact on their voting behavior.

Additionally, respondents claimed that the use of social media during the 2011 presidential elections had an impact on their voting behavior. In addition, the experiment testing the hypothesis showed that political campaign on social media

influenced voters' choice of candidates. The results of this study led to the conclusion that social media should be used in future elections because it has changed the political communication environment in Nigeria. This shows that social media plays a part in influencing an individual in his or her support for a particular candidate or party.

RQ 3: How informative are political campaign messages on social media?

The degree to which political campaigns are informative on social media platforms varies and is influenced by the tactics used by candidates and parties. While other campaigns could rely more on emotionally charged or spectacular content, some campaigns prioritize meaningful issue discussions and voter engagement. In order to make educated judgements during elections, voters play a crucial role in searching out and critically evaluating information on social media.

This was analyzed using table 14. It shows the acceptance level of the respondents to how informative political campaign messages on social media platforms are. Table 14 shows that 76 respondents representing 30% of the total sampled population said they strongly agreed that political campaign messages on social media platforms during the 2023 elections were informative, 104 respondents representing 41% of the total sampled population replied that they agreed to political campaign messages on social media platforms being informative, 32 respondents representing 13% of the total sampled population

disagreed, which shows that political campaign messages on social media platforms are not informative enough, 4 respondents representing 2% of the total sampled population strongly disagreed on political campaign messages on social media platforms being informative while 36 respondents representing 14% were undecided. This study shows that one of the most important contributions of online communication media to politics and democracy in Nigeria continues to be the information power shift made possible by social media.

According to Benkler (2006), social media in the framework of politics, allows users to become spreaders of information and producers of political contents in a way that is much easier than in the past. Also according to Currah (2009) The Internet has become the main source of information here. However, we should note that in the rise of digital information, the risk of receiving fake information is high. So the public should take note, that even if we do get more than enough information on social media about the political candidates and political parties you are supporting, know that not all information is true and verification should be made before further procedures is taken.

RQ 4: What was the public perception of the use of social media for political campaigns during the 2023 Nigeria Election period?

From the findings, it was discovered that public perception of the use of social media for political campaign messages is multifaceted and influenced by

various factors, including the individual's relationship with social media, their political beliefs, concerns about misinformation, and the quality of political discourse on these platforms. But from the findings, it was discovered that the public agreed and accepted the use of social media platforms for political campaign messages but it should be monitored by creators of content.

The answer to this research question is found in table 16 and table 17. Table 16 showed us the acceptance of the respondents on the use of social media platforms for political campaigns. It is shown that 88 respondents representing 35% of the total sampled population strongly agreed to social media platforms being used for political campaigns, 128 respondents representing 51% of the total sampled population agreed to seeing political campaigns on their social media platforms, 20 respondents representing 8% said they disagreed on social media usage for political campaigns while 16 respondents representing 6% of the total sampled population were undecided on the situation. This conforms to the a study of the influence of social media exposure on knowledge and behavior of COVID-19 preventive measure by Putu Agu et al, carried out in 2022. The study conformed that the frequency of exposure to information through social media directly affects people's knowledge and behavior.

Table 17 showed the satisfaction level of respondents with the use of social media platforms for the 2023 election campaign messages. Data from the table

shows that 68 respondents representing 27% were very satisfied in seeing political campaign messages on social media platforms, 132 respondents representing 52% of the total sampled population were somewhat satisfied with the political campaign messages on social media platforms, 28 respondents representing 11% of the total sampled population were somewhat dissatisfied with political campaign messages on social media platforms, 4 respondents representing 2% of the total sampled population were very dissatisfied with political campaign messages on social media platforms while 20 respondents representing 8% of the total sampled population were undecided about the situation. This shows that the general public who are also active users of social media platforms agree that social media platforms should be used for political campaigns as the information gathered from there is effective in persuading them during election period.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

The main purpose of this study is to ascertain the public perception of social media use for political campaign in 2023 elections. In generating data for the study, a survey research design was used and in order to better understand the problem, four research questions were generated. The study was anchored on two limited effects media theories which are: Uses and Gratification theory and Agenda setting theory. The following findings were made based on the study.

1. From our sample size of the study, it can be deduced that students of the university of Benin have access to social media platforms and majority of them; (92%) of respondents are active users. These social media platforms are used by political parties and political aspirants for dissemination of political campaign messages. This is seen with the high level of occurrence of seeing political campaign messages is at (68%) and (81%) of respondents agreed to seeing political campaign messages on social media platforms, especially during election period because statistically, millions of people use social media platforms and it is an easy way to reach a large number of individuals at a low cost. It shows that if an individual uses a social media platform especially during election period, he or she has a high probability of coming across political campaign messages on the platform.

2. The researcher discovered that through social media platforms, all kinds of information can be sourced from there and it is very possible to keep users of social media platforms informed about particular situations that are ongoing in the society. In this case, information on political activities can be sourced from social media and (71%) of respondents are in agreement.
3. The researcher also found out that social media platforms are capable of persuading its active users on issues happening in a society by engaging users, keeping them active on trending issues and giving them platforms to share their opinions and give feedback. This is seen in relation to the Agenda setting theory. Social media platforms are capable of setting an agenda that its users consciously and sometimes unconsciously follow. In this study, social media platforms have been adopted by political aspirants to persuade active users of social media platforms to participate in political activities through political campaign messages, there by setting an agenda in which active users of these platforms follow and (71%) of respondents are in agreement that they were persuaded on political matters through social media platforms.
4. The researcher however observed that although the level of acceptance of the public about the use of social media platforms for political

campaign is high,(86%) of respondents are in acceptance. There is still some level of dissatisfaction with the political campaign messages seen on these social media platforms.

5.2 Conclusion

Social media has greatly improved political communication greatly. It is crucial to note that social media platforms are used by millions of people around the world and it is quite important in any democratic society due to its capability of political campaign messages reaching thousands of persons in seconds without cost. The general public are able to access more than enough information about political activities on their social media platforms easily. Active users of social media platforms had access to 2023 political campaign messages through them..

Social media enables two-way communication. It provides access for people to communicate about activities and situations happening in the country and receive immediate feedback from respondents. Unlike the traditional media, where political parties and aspirants shares a one-sided message without getting responses from the intended receivers. Due to the large number of individuals on social media platforms, the creators of different messages are growing at a rapid level and this leads to high exposure of messages by users of these social media platforms. As it is easy to share a message with just one click of the button.

5.3 Recommendations

From the research carried out, the researcher gives the following recommendations based on the findings noted in the study

1. Due to much information on social media, it is very easy for users of social media platforms to receive or share fake information, and in this case, individuals can share fake information about political activities and receive wrong political campaign messages at a very fast rate. As it is very hard to regulate fake news, the government should create a regulating body to check and verify political information on these social media platforms before it spreads and if it is wrong information, it should be removed immediately and an apology made to respondents.
2. Political communication is the only way to improve citizens participation in political activities in a country. Social media is the most used and accessed form of communication. The only way for political communication to improve in Nigeria, the government should know how to use these social media platforms effectively. This can be done by the establishment of websites, blogs, chat rooms, etc. where citizens can interact, discuss, share ideas and opinion.
3. Political parties and aspirants should put more effort in making political campaign messages more informative, satisfactory and they should

know the right platforms that is used more often by the public. So these platforms accessed more often should be used effectively by political parties and aspirants.

4. Social media is here to stay so the use of social media platforms by Nigerian citizens for political participation and communication should be promoted. This can be accomplished by offering a welcoming environment where internet and ICTs can be used, as well as ways for people to learn how to utilize social media platforms.

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APPENDIX
QUESTIONNAIRE

Department of Mass communication,
University of Benin,
Faculty of Arts,
Benin City.

March, 2023

Dear Respondent,

REQUEST FOR COMPLETION OF QUESTIONNAIRE

My name is Oguntomi Oluwakemi Margaret, a final year student of the department of Mass communication, University of Benin. I am conducting a research on “ Public perception of social media use for political campaign in 2023 elections”. This research is required in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of a Bachelor of Art (B.A) degree in Mass communication.

I hereby appeal to you to assist me in filling the questionnaire as your response will be needed in completing this research work. Also, I pledge that any

information given will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will be used for research purposes only.

Thank you for your anticipated cooperation.

Yours faithfully,

Oguntomi Oluwakemi Margaret
Researcher.

QUESTIONNAIRE

INSTRUCTION: Please read and carefully tick. To indicate your answer that best explains your disposition.

SECTION A: Demographic Data

1. What is your gender? Male () Female () Others ()
2. What age bracket do you belong to? 18 – 20 () 21 – 25 () 26 – 30 () 31 and above ()
3. What level are you in? 100 () 200 () 300 () 400 ()
4. What is your Marital Status? Single () Married () Divorced ()
5. What is your Religion? Christianity () Islamic () Traditional () Others ()

SECTION B :Psychographic Data

6. Do you use social media? Yes () No () Partially ()
7. If yes, To what extent do you use Social media? Very High () High () Low () Very Low () Undecided ()

8. Which of these Social media platforms do you access more often? WhatsApp () Twitter () Instagram () Facebook () YouTube () TikTok ()
9. Social media platforms are used for political campaigns. Yes () No () Undecided ()
10. Were you accustomed to seeing 2023 election campaign messages on social media platforms? Yes () No () Partially () Undecided ()
11. How often did you see 2023 election campaign messages on social media platforms? Always () Often () Sometimes () Rarely () Never ()
12. Which social media platform exposed you to the 2023 political campaign messages more often? WhatsApp () Twitter () Instagram () YouTube () Facebook () TikTok ()
13. To what extent did these political campaign messages influence your support for a particular party or candidate in the 2023 election? Very High () High () Low () Very Low () Undecided
14. 2023 political campaign messages on social media platforms were very informative. Strongly agree () Agree () Disagree () strongly disagree () Undecided ()
15. 2023 political campaign messages on social media platforms were very persuasive. Strongly agree () Agree () Disagree () strongly disagree () Undecided ()
16. Do you agree with the use of social media platforms for political campaigns? Strongly agree () Agree () Disagree () Strongly Disagree () Undecided ()
17. Were you satisfied with the use of social media platforms for the 2023 election campaign messages? Very satisfied () Somewhat satisfied () Somewhat dissatisfied () Very dissatisfied () Undecided ()

