

**THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON VOTERS TURNOUT IN THE 2023
GENERAL ELECTION IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF OVIA NORTH EAST AREA OF
EDO STATE**

BY

OKONDO EHIS

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CERTIFICATION

We the undersigned persons certify that this research project work was carried out by **OKONDO EHIS** of the Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City.

Dr. Iyase Ambrose
(Project Supervisor)

Date

Dr. G.O. Igiebor
(Ag. Head of Department)

Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to the glory of God Almighty.

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First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Almighty God for life, sound health, strength, wisdom, guidance and protections.

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Abstract

The impact of social media has been fundamental in increasing citizen's political participation in recent elections in Nigeria. The objective of this study is to examine if social media has been a tool to rejuvenate the interest of the citizens in political participation with a specific focus on the 2023 election in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State. Democratic procedural theory was used to demonstrate how social media revitalized the interest of citizen in political participation. The research design is mainly qualitative study. A well constructed questions tailored along the objectives of the study in form of an in-depth interview were used to collect data form 10 knowledgeable experts who resides within the local government. It was found out that the social medial has increased voters' participation in the 2023 election. The study also unveiled that social media has helped to sensitize citizen to make aim informed decision in the 2023 election. The study recommends amongst others, the government and other concerned organization should help to spread internet to the rural area of Nigeria to enable more political participation. The lastly, the study recommend the reduction of harsh Dracula laws that discourage citizens political process participation, thereby fostering freedom of speech and online community building.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Elections have generally been acknowledged as a cardinal pillar of a democratic political system (Omotola 2010). This is particularly the case where elections satisfy acceptable democratic standards, or, better still, what Lindberg (2004, 2006) calls the democratic qualities of elections, namely competition, participation and legitimacy. Elections that fall short of these standards can only serve to undermine the consolidation of democracy (Rashida, 2023). Political participation is considered a prime criterion for defining democratic citizenship and the role of citizens in the political process (Dalton 2006). Political participation is, in itself, multifaceted, including, among other things, membership of a political party, involvement in political campaigns, contributions to political debates, funding political activities, contesting elections. Voter turnout has also been seen as an important indicator of the state of health of any democracy, old or new, consolidated or in transition, where a high turnout is usually associated with a healthy democracy and a low one with an unhealthy one (Freitag, 2010).

The historical concept of voter turnout in Nigeria is a complex narrative reflecting the nation's journey through colonial rule, military interventions, and its ongoing democratic consolidation. It highlights the evolving relationship between citizens and the electoral

process, marked by periods of high enthusiasm and significant decline, influenced by a myriad of political, socioeconomic, and systemic factors (Shola & Gbenga, 2011)

Voter turnout is a crucial aspect of democratic elections, measuring the percentage of eligible voters who actually cast their ballots (Diogo, Mara & Anabela, 2022). It is an important indicator of the health of a democracy, as it reflects the level of citizen engagement and participation in the electoral process. The issue of low voter turnout in Nigeria's elections is a complex problem that has been observed in recent years (Diogo, Mara & Anabela, 2022).

In the 2023 general elections, voter turnout was lower than expected, with less than 25 million people voting out of over 87 million who collected their Permanent Voter's Cards (PVCs). This low turnout has raised concerns about the integrity of the electoral process and the willingness of citizens to participate in the democratic process (Rashida, 2023). Low voter turnout undermines the legitimacy of elected officials and the overall democratic process (Rashida, 2023). When a significant portion of the electorate abstains from voting, it can lead to a government that does not accurately represent the will of the people (Shola & Gbenga, 2011)

Social media is a collective term for websites and applications that focus on communication, community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration. People use social media to stay in touch and interact with friends, family and various communities. Businesses use social applications to market and

promote their products and track customer concerns. As the globe experiences a social media revolution, it is evident that platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snap Chat, Skype, etc., are heavily used for communication. The online exchange of knowledge and information among various groups of people is one of the most significant benefits of using social media. The increase in communication skills among people, particularly among students and learners in educational institutions, is supported by this online information sharing. In addition to mediating communication in various ways, online tools and technology are also changing the way we interact and even how we think about and discuss it. The influence of social media has given rise to a new type of communication where information can be easily shared and dialogues are brief (Bari-ika, Essien & Simeon, 2020).

McLuhan (1958) prognosticated that the world was shrinking in time and space, when he coined the phrase global village. The boom of internet in 21st century has brought an ineluctable demand for change in the perspectives and mode of communications. The business of media-mediated communication has gone beyond the analogue era, and is currently at a fine digital sophistication level in advanced countries, and in many developing countries of the world, courtesy of the internet.

Fidler (2007) gave the coinage mediamorphose that for conventional media to remain relevant, they needed to take advantage of the internet to meet the needs of the virtual

audience in the global village. Many conventional media platforms around the world have keyed into this concept and are making more presence online via social media platforms than in terrestrial media. With ownership of a smartphone, the global space is converged in a man's palm; besides having access to news across international awareness is the sensitivity of the people to public policies, and the agendas driving politicians. It is the knowledge and understanding of a social system and the subsystems that make it up.

Social media has the ability to deconstruct and break down barriers in the electoral process. New media, especially social media in Nigeria, mediated these barriers due to physical separations and a lack of resources that may affect physical political engagement (Chinedu-Okeke & Obi, 2016). Through the technology of smart phones and the internet, those in rural areas were able to participate in political debates, get information, and vote. In addition, social media ensured the flow of information in real-time, ensuring that the voters were abreast of the campaign activities, the stance taken on certain policy issues, and any news related to the elections (Udanor et al., 2016).

Etido Dan-Ralph and Babatunde (2025) stated in the work that social media played a significant and multifaceted role in Nigeria Election, primarily serving as a major platform for political campaigns, information dissemination, and voter mobilization

efforts. Platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp can be utilized by political parties, candidates, and citizens to share information, discuss issues, and encourage participation leading up to the election. These platforms can be effective in reaching and engaging younger demographics, with specific campaigns aimed at encouraging youth participation and the collection of Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs).

Social media served as a valuable space for citizens to voice their concerns, engage in political debates, and hold political leaders accountable (Udanor et al., 2016). The influence of social media on the 2023 general elections in Nigeria extended beyond voter engagement and political discourse. It also played a crucial role in election monitoring, transparency, and accountability (Michael, 2023). By sharing information in real-time, social media helped expose instances of voter intimidation, ballot box snatching, and other electoral irregularities. Social media acted as a watchdog, enhancing accountability and ensuring the democratic process remained intact (Etido, et al., 2025)

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

Political participation is an important element of contemporary democracy (Bernard, 2011). It is generally assumed that within a democratic political system, citizens should have sufficient opportunities and enjoy liberalized polity to communicate their

yearnings and preferences in the political decision making process. In the process of political participation, citizens' mobilization is also important to achieve a healthy democracy. Citizens have to be mobilized in order to participate in the political process, especially during elections and the business of governance. With the emergence of the Internet, leading to a barrage of social media, various authors have identified new possibilities and platforms for mobilizing citizens (Fuchs, 2014).

Moreover, many researchers have claimed that the use of this new medium could lead to a more democratic functioning of society (Arthur, 2012). With the boost and the growing importance of the Internet, this medium comes to play an important role in contemporary political communication, campaigns and elections (Fuchs, 2014). This informs why many political parties, institutions and organizations nowadays invest a lot of effort and funds not only to be present but to also be active in an online political platform. It may then be argued that the boom of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) has really reshaped the current political communication and mobilization strategies in Nigerian political landscape as elsewhere. It is in view of this that this study attempts a critical analysis of the importance of social media and voter turnover in Nigerian environment. To achieve this goal, the author adopts a theoretical method to provide a succinct perspective on social media, political participation, digital democracy and public sphere.

1.3 Research Question

1. Has social media help to encourage voters' turnout in election in 2023 Election in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State?
2. Has social media help to empower and sensitize voters to make an informed decision in 2023 election in Ovia North East local Government Area of Edo State?
3. What ways can social media be use to encourage citizens political participation elections in Nigeria?

1.4 Objective of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to examine the impact of social media on voters turnout in the 2023 general election in Nigeria: a study of Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State. The specific objectives are as follows:

1. examine if social media help to encourage voters turnout in the 2023 election in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State
2. find out if social media helped to empower and sensitize the voter to make an informed decision in 2023 election in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State
3. find out ways to enhance the use of social media to build citizens political participations in Nigeria.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study will critically focus at evaluating the significant impact of social media on the voter turnover in Nigeria particularly the 2023 general election. The data for empirical analysis in this study will be collected from the youth and political party member who are residing in Edo State, particularly Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State.

1.7 Significant of the Study

Studying the effects of social media on voter turnover is vital for the Nigerian government as it helps understand engagement trends, enhances democratic processes, addresses misinformation challenges, informs policy development, promotes civic responsibility, and fosters national unity. This study will be relevant to researcher who will want to carry out more research on this particular topic.

1.8 Definition of Terms

Social Media: Websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.

Vote: A formal indication of a choice between two or more candidates or courses of action, expressed typically through a ballot or a show of hands.

Voters Turn Out: The percentage of people who show up to cast their ballot in an *election*. It is a key indicator of civic engagement and the health of a democracy. This metric is typically calculated by dividing the number of ballots cast by the voting-eligible population (VEP), which includes citizens of the right age who are not disenfranchised due to felony convictions or mental incapacitation

Community Building: The process of fostering connection and a sense of belonging among individuals within a specific area or group with shared interests, goals, or needs

Election: The selection by vote of a person or persons from among candidates for a position, especially a political office or to make a collective decision on a political proposition. This decision-making process typically involves casting votes within a predetermined procedure or voting system

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Concept of Social Media

Many social networking sites were created in the 1990s and examples include Six Degrees, Blackplanet, Asian Avenue, and Move on (Edosomwan, Prakasan & Kouame, 2011). These are online niche social sites where people could interact, including sites for public policy advocacy and a social network based on a web of contacts model. (Adeniyi, 2023). Boyd and Ellison (2007) state that the first recognizable social network site was launched in 1997 called Sixdegrees.com. It allowed users to create profiles, list their friends and, beginning in 1998, surf Friends lists. While Six Degrees attracted millions of users, it failed to become a sustainable business and, in 2000, the service closed. Importantly, notable among the global social media platforms include the ubiquitous Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Myspace, YouTube, Instagram, Wikipedia, Google+ and a host of others. In Nigeria, Mark Zuckerberg's Facebook appears to be the most popular social media network among the general public.

The terms "social media" have been defined in different ways by different authors. For instance, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) define social media as a group of Internet-based

applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 that allow the creation and exchange of user generated contents. It includes web-based and mobile based technologies that are used to turn communication into interactive dialogue among individuals, organizations, and communities. Typical examples of social media platforms include websites such as Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube and the interactive options on these websites, such as the “re-tweeting” option on Twitter. These instruments are referred to as media because they are tools which can also be used for the storage and dissemination of information. However, unlike the traditional media such as television and radio, most of the social media tools allow their users to interact as re-tweeting on Twitter and comment options on Facebook. Looking at social media from a more practical point of view, Sweetser and Lariscy (2008) define social media as a read-write web, where the online audience moves beyond passive viewing of web contents to actually contribute to the contents.. The opportunity to enjoy user-to-user interaction distinguishes social media from the traditional media which is characterized by top-down news dissemination arrangement (Clark & Aufderheide, 2009). Social media have a close relationship with the term web 2.0 as both constructs have been popularly used to describe various types of World Wide Web (www) applications including, but not limited to blogs, microblogs like Twitter, social networking sites, video, image and file sharing platforms and wikis

(Fuchs, 2014). Shirky (2008) defines social media as the communication channels that increase our ability to share, to co-operate with one another; and to take collective actions, all outside the framework of traditional institutions and organizations.

Another attribute of the social media which distinguishes it from the traditional media is the choice it accords its users. Choice enables people to access the information they like to learn about through the social media, eliminating the gatekeeper role of traditional media. On one hand, the choice offered by social media reduces the shared experience that viewers of particular traditional media channels usually have. On the other hand, it creates a network of individuals with like interests and similar preferences. Two primary tools that have enabled people to socialize and connect with one other online are social networking sites and electronic messaging. Research has shown that more than half of America's teens and young adults send electronic messages and use social networking sites, and more than one-third of all Internet users engage in these activities (Jones & Fox, 2009).

In Nigeria, the Internet users are estimated, as at October 2014, at 67,101,452 with 16% growth rate when compared with the 2013 figure, and is 2.30% of the country's share of the world Internet users (Internet Live Stats, 2014).

Nigeria is also the third most active African country on Twitter (Mejabi & Fagbule, 2014). Most people who use social media tools access them mainly through computers and mobile devices such as phones and Tablet PCs. Research has once suggested that majority of phone purchases in the coming years will be more for using online networks rather than making phone calls (Baekdal, 2008). Another important function of the new media is that, it is a core platform for political participation and communication. Politics has re-evolved in the recent decades with the advent of the new technology (Okoro & Nwofor, 2013).

Since 2008, Barack Obama broke a new ground by using the social media in his political campaigns. This is often described as the first electoral campaign in which the use of the social media had a decisive impact (Okoro & Nwafor, 2013). Ever since then, many nations, groups, individual and politicians have deliberately adopted social media in their political campaigns/participation and business of governance in general (Okoro & Nwafor, 2013). In Nigerian political sphere, the new media have become a veritable tool for interacting and mobilizing citizens for active participation in the political process and democratic projects. This resonates with the submission of Okoro and Nwafor (2013) who espouse that it is through the new media that people are able and can now participate freely in discussions relevant to public good.

However, it is important to note that the social media have their shortcoming which majorly reflects in the abuse by users worldwide including Nigerians. According to Akinyetun (2022), Nigeria seems to be developing a Digital Technology Masturbation Syndrome (DTMS). Technology masturbation is a derivative of two words, namely: technology and masturbation. This is defined as the use of digital technology to stimulate the release of one's innermost thoughts, values or desires. Prior to the emergence of the digital revolution, many people had a number of negative thoughts, values and desires suppressed in their subconscious being. Social media now appear to be a viable tool to be used by technology masturbators to release subconscious values, thoughts and desires into their conscious world. As a result, certain unimagined activities in our society now become daily occurrences among the Nigerian youths due to the availability of the social media (Chukwuebuka, 2013). In the same vein, politicians in Nigeria are joining the online community to communicate with their audiences because they believe they are a key demographic who shape and influence perception. Thus, telephone communication is now tending toward one-to-many sharing rather than the usual one-to-one conversation. Social media technologies take on different forms including magazines, Internet forums, weblogs, social blogs, podcasts, pictures, and video. Considering that social media come in diverse forms,

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) attempt a classification of social media into six distinct categories:

- a. Collaborative projects such as Wikipedia
- b. Blogs and Microblogs such as Twitter
- c. Content communities such as YouTube
- d. Social networking sites such as Facebook
- e. Virtual game worlds such as World of Warcraft
- f. Virtual social worlds such as Second Life

In an article about predicting the future on social media Sitaram Asur and Bernardo A. Huberman. They demonstrate How to demonstrate how social media content can be used for prediction actual results. She further explained how her feelings Using further information extracted from Twitter, The predictive power of social media. In paper work and Social Networking” by Andrea Broughton, Tom Higgins, Ben Hicks and Annette Cox talk politics at length Practices related to the use of social media by employees. led to the fact that they were already engaged What It Means Like Any Social Media Topic for their organization and how they formulate, Communicated the policy to employees of his two major employers in the UK. The first organization is British Telecom (BT) and the second organization is The organization was Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs Commission (HMRC). In the newspaper "Predicting

the Strength of Ties with Social Media," Eric Gilbert and Karrie Karahalios (d) present a predictive model that maps social media data to attachment strength. This model is Record of over 2,000 social media connections and very good performance, Identify strong and weak ties with better than 85 degree accuracy Selwyn (2012) regarded social media as an application tool that allowed users to exchange and interact with one another; provided a means to create, edit and share new forms of visual, textual, and audio content; and a platform to categorize, label and recommend existing forms of content.

Kern (2010) defined social media as a platform of modern and electronic communication and a means through which users open online communities to share ideas, information, personal messages, and other related content messages. This indicates that social media are online technology platforms that help to connect people that are both far and near. With the online connection, the users can communicate with each other, even on different continents, read books, listen to music, save and check relevant photos and much more. Adaja and Ayodele (2013), in their study, described social media as web-based and mobile tools which are used to turn communication into interactive dialogue between communities, organizations, and individuals. For this study, social media is defined as online platforms that allow users to: Disseminate information, receive information, and interact with many people. Social mediahe

platform allows users to access various types of relevant information, specific purpose. Social media has provided tools used to share information. Interaction between different people. When Social Media Platforms allow you access informing and interacting with each other means that the communication process is authentic involvement.

Boyd (2006) found social media to be the most important and important online platform. For communication that simply connects many people around the world. most popular In Nigeria, Blackberry Messenger, WhatsApp, Facebook, Myspace, Twitter Skype, 2go, Friends Star and others (Embi, 2012). However, as already mentioned, for the purposes of this study, Social media is limited to Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter and YouTube. nothing on social media Members only, can be used and operated from mobile phones and computers device.

Cohen (2007) pointed out that these social media platforms can be targeted. education department. Many secondary school principals have discovered the benefits of social media A platform that is a key element in school leadership practices Information dissemination. Dembo (2015) found that social media School leaders create a positive school culture and move plans forward. This research Use to ensure effective use by the above social media and school leaders Communication to achieve middle school goals.

2.2 The Concept of Youth Political Participation

Youth political participation is a concept made up of two distinct terms: youth and political participation, which requires explaining if the concept if to make any meaning. The notion of youth has been defined in a number of ways in the literature. For instance, while the United Nations defined youth as anyone between the age brackets of 15-24, the World Bank defined youth as individuals aged 12-24 (United Nations, 2013).

Akinyetun, 2021 maintains that youth is a period of “transition from dependency to independence, while Hilker and Fraser maintain that youth is a transitional stage between childhood and adulthood, rather than as a rigid construct based on age (Akinyetun, 2021). Meanwhile, due to the political, socio-cultural and economic realities in Africa, these age brackets have been described as too narrow. As a result, Nigeria’s 2009 National Youth Policy defined youth as persons of age 18 to 35 years (National Youth Policy, 2019). Therefore, youth as used in this study refers to persons between the ages of 18 and 35 years. As well, the terms youth and young people are used interchangeably.

Political participation is yet another contentious concept in the literature. According to (Akinyetun 2021), political participation refers to “those activities by private citizens

that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel and/or the actions they take”. Van Deth (2014) describes the concept using a range of features: 1) it is an activity; 2) it is voluntary and not ordered by a ruling class or required by law; 3) it refers to people in their role as non-professionals or amateurs; and 4) it concerns government, politics, or the state.

According to Sida (2010), youth political participation refers to the involvement of young people in political activities, civic life, active citizenship, and policy making. This could take several forms, including serving on a local government council, voting in an election, or participating in the budget process of a local government.

As Ibezim (2019) notes, youth participation in politics in Nigeria is bedeviled by a myriad of challenges, chief among which is, a lack of understanding of the benefits that youth political participation holds. The author goes further to state that unemployment, social exclusion, limited capacity, resource, and tools are other problems facing youth.

According to Luhrmann (2013), as the 2011/2012 Arab States popular uprisings have showed, the inclusion of youth in formal politics is essential. In countries in transition (i.e. Nigeria), novel ideas and innovate leadership can help to overcome dictatorial practices.

It is also important to pay attention to individual capacity development. While doing so, the capacities of organizations and the degree to which an environment enables individuals and institutions to participate in political processes should be given utmost consideration. This argument is corroborated by Mengistu (2017) who asserts that due to abysmal youth political participation in Africa, and by extension Nigeria, the majority of young people are vulnerable to enlistment for violence against a government. The complicity of young people in the establishment of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone, is a case in point.

Youth political participation is more than just voting in an election. As Farthing (2012) argues, youth political participation could take the following forms:

- a. Participation as a rights-based practice;
- b. Participation as a mechanism of empowerment of young people;
- c. Participation as a guarantee of efficiency in policy, practice and services; and
- d. Participation as an instrument of young people's development.

Beyond the conventional forms of political participation such as voting, campaigning, holding a membership, performing voluntary work, and taking part in civic responsibility, demonstrations, and community participation (Galsyan, 2019), new

forms of participation have been documented in the literature (Pleyer & Karbach, 2014). They include:

- hacking and distributed denial of service (DDOS) attacks: This is a form of protest aimed at shutting down online servers and restricting access to internet services;
- clicktivism and slacktivism: This is an invitation to click specific links to express agreement with a particular statement. Although, it could sometimes be voluntary;
- online campaigning: Social network is increasingly becoming popular for its use in starting a cause and gain followership;
- crowd sourcing and crowd funding: This rests on the use of the ‘crowd’ as feedback mechanism for ideas, feedback, project design, and financial support.
- liquid democracy/Liquid Feedback: As a new system, it allows users to make a collective decision by granting each individual the chance of voting and ‘democratically’ choosing their representative; and
- Bar Camp: This is an online conference system where the participants themselves design the programme and its sessions (Pleyers and Karbach 2014).

The above is evidence that the concept of youth political participation is evolving over time and is therefore worthy of continued research and policy making. Political

participation is about having the wherewithal and opportunity needed to influence decision making as well as engaging in actions and activities so as to contribute to building a better society. There is sufficient evidence from around the world to argue that young people have asserted their role, influence and importance in governance by championing political causes and making giant strides. Young people are leaving their footprints in the sands of time by revolutionizing the status quo and provoking governance structures that seek to deepen democratic precepts (Rhize, 2016).

2.2 Political Participation and Democratization: Nigeria's Youths Context

The change of military administration in Nigeria in 1999 resulted in the Eastern, Southern, and Western regions of Nigeria finding a way to implement the structures or institutional democratic liberal government (Jackson, 2015). This has called for a renewed discussion regarding the extent to which political engagement is important for an effective working democratic government system (Buser, 2013).

Initial methods by researchers to determine the accomplishment of democratisation in every region evaluated the implementations of deliberative and procedural features of democratic government (e.g., free and fair elections, structure, and institutional building) have progressively evidenced that regardless of the presence of these essential democratic establishments, the quality of democratic government over these

regions varies significantly. Therefore, works concerned with evaluating democratic government calibrated to the procedural basis were criticised by numerous recent studies (Ohiola & Ojo, 2014).

The fundamental point is that the emphasis consolidation put on the result instead of the process means it compared multi-party voting with democratic government, while disregarding the need for a more level democratic government system through citizenship engagement. It is especially challenging based on the findings of various studies on citizenship engagement in newer democratic governments, which observe citizenship to be nonparticipatory not only from the formal forms of political engagement, for example, voters and political parties, but also from the form informal structures, such as demonstrations and political protest (Mengistu, M. M. (2017), and the inclusion of interest groups (Vite & Dibang-Achua, 2019).

While procedural democratic government could have been achieved, there are some intractable limitations in responsibility and accountability in terms of true representation by elected delegates (Reeves, 2016). According to Vite and Dibang-Achua (2019), these have prompted scholars to re-examine the connection between political engagement and democratisation, and to begin to evaluate the quality of the democratic system in Nigeria, considering the scope of possible criteria presented in the articles on consolidation democracy (Vite, 2018). Therefore, unlike consolidation,

the research of quality democracy is basically concerned with procedures of democratisation instead of its results (Vite, 2018). Research on quality democracy considers not only the existence of institutions of democratic government, but how viable these are to guarantee responsibility and accountability, support engagement and to continuously enhance political and social-economic equality (Dzur, 2016).

Inside the extended criteria utilised by quality democracy, dynamic, or active political engagement by citizens is often observed as a significant model of better democratic government (Vite, 2018). This is demonstrated by the meaning or definition of quality democratic government system given according to Nkechi (2014), who observed that quality democratic government is high when we view in citizenship engagement broadly not only by elections but also in the life of political gatherings and civil society associations in the debate of public issues, in speaking with and needed responsibility and accountability from the voted representatives, in observing representation in authorities and direct participations with issues of concern at the grass root.

Stressing the significance of diverse representation and the connections between citizenship and delegates, it becomes clear that this democratic method is beyond the procedural base indicators utilised by some accounts of democratic government consolidations and tries to find the same ground with supporters of the democratic

participatory system. Irrespective of the broad nature of democracy, its quality or standards have been effectively utilised by researchers in classifications of various types of quintessentially democratic government (Gaffney & Marlowe, 2014).

Thus, this can be presented by utilising quantitative approach as an indicator which is appropriate in measuring and analysing the level to which the Federal Government of Nigeria has implemented procedural democratic system, instead of measuring the unpredictable nature of connections between citizens and government (Udoffia & Godson, 2016). Therefore, some research reveals less about the link between political engagement and the procedures of democratisation. Specifically, by depending on data or information that assesses the quantity of political participation in each region compared to a national scale, these studies do not have the ability to give detailed data about region and age particular political engagement patterns, and the influence of the procedures of democratisation in Nigeria (Vite, 2018).

Comprehending how and why youth engage or withdraw from politics is necessary to assay the quality of democratic government. Research in established democratic government systems has observed that the political involvement of youth often varies from that of the older individuals or identities and that the failure on the part of governments to recognise their involvement can prompt sentiments of estrangement and exclusion (Andrews, n.d.). Hence, this can present a gap in the correspondence

among citizenship and decision makers and highlights the slow responsiveness of policy to the needs of citizens. These are the main considerations for enhancing quality democracy (Nkechi, 2014).

Young people are less visible and included in newer democratic governments compared to mature democratic systems (Freeman, 2013). This mirrors the poor manifestation of citizenship engagement in post-military populations, wherein it is unclear whether the purpose for non-participation stems from the basic political, social-economic modifications caused by democratisation or whether it is an underlying contrast with the patterns of young people's engagement observed in standard (established) democratic systems. This assertion needs to be clarified so that decision makers can respond to the necessities of youth in a newer democratic government system and accordingly enhance the nature and quality of democratic government in Nigeria (Vite, 2018).

Why Youths Participates in Politics in Nigeria Citizenship participation in politics is a significant element of democratic governance all over the world including Nigeria. The structure and amount of citizenship in political participation can have influence on the degree and quality of government and governance.

2.3 Edo Senatorial district 2023 Election and Impact of Social Media

The Edo Senatorial district in 2023 are poised to be significant, reflecting broader trends in Nigerian politics and the increasing influence of social media on electoral processes. Understanding the dynamics at play requires a detailed examination of several factors, including the political landscape, voter engagement, and the role of social media.

Edo State has a rich political history characterized by vibrant party politics and a diverse electorate. The upcoming elections will likely see key players from major parties such as the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) vying for control. The incumbent governor's performance, public sentiment regarding governance, infrastructure development, security issues, and economic conditions will significantly influence voter preferences. In recent years, there has been a notable shift in how candidates campaign and engage with voters. Traditional methods such as rallies and town hall meetings are increasingly supplemented by digital strategies that leverage social media platforms.

Voter engagement is critical for any election's success. In Senatorial district, efforts to mobilize voters have intensified, particularly among younger demographics who are more active on social media. This demographic shift is crucial since younger voters

tend to prioritize issues like education, employment opportunities, and good governance.

The use of social media allows candidates to communicate directly with voters, bypassing traditional media gatekeepers. Campaigns can disseminate information quickly and respond to voter concerns in real-time. This direct line of communication can enhance transparency and accountability but also poses risks related to misinformation.

Social media's impact on elections cannot be overstated. Platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok have become essential tools for political campaigns. They facilitate:

- **Information Dissemination:** Candidates can share their manifestos, policies, and updates instantly with a broad audience.
- **Engagement:** Voters can interact with candidates through comments or direct messages, fostering a sense of community.
- **Mobilization:** Social media campaigns can encourage voter turnout through reminders about registration deadlines and polling dates.

- **Misinformation:** While social media can promote accurate information dissemination, it also allows for the rapid spread of false information or propaganda that can mislead voters.

In Nigeria specifically, there have been instances where misinformation has influenced public perception during elections. Therefore, combating fake news becomes essential for maintaining an informed electorate.

2. 4 Social Media and Political Participation

Arthur (2012) asserts that social media have great potentials for encouraging collaborative political participation. Accessible social media platforms offer ordinary citizens the opportunity to interact more directly and actively with their political systems. Social media tools also possess the potential to allow diaspora communities to get involved in socio-political processes. People engage in social media for various reasons which include airing their views and expressing anger and dissatisfaction. It is argued that social media are effective in mobilizing citizens to become engaged in politics and polity of their environments more than mobilizing them to vote at a poll on an election day (Arthur, 2012). Furthermore, research has found that youths who pursue their interests on the Internet are more likely to be engaged in civic and

political issues and are more likely to be exposed to diverse political viewpoints (Arthur, 2012).

In Nigeria today, it is notable that various Nigerian political actors who are engaged in electoral processes are increasingly using social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and blogs in their campaigns. Political parties, independent political advocacy and interest groups have also found efficacy in the use of social media networks such as Facebook, Twitter and political blogs as mediating platforms to engage citizens. Observations further show that, citizens have employed social media to participate in the electoral process and general political engagement, particularly in the current democratic dispensation. Staging election campaigns through social media platforms may be described as a modern political strategy, which has blossomed and achieved clear political victories. For instance, the United States President, Barack Obama ran a widely popular election campaign in 2008 that strategically employed social media to a good effect. The Obama campaign was actively launched in more than 15 social networks and had 5 million active supporters through these media.

In Nigeria, President Goodluck Jonathan of Nigeria successfully utilized Facebook and Bulk SMS to interact with Nigerian citizens during the 2011 presidential elections. Jonathan even took the unprecedented decision of announcing his presidential candidacy on Facebook. The bid was announced on 15th September, 2010 to over 217,

000 Facebook followers. By the Election day on 16th April 2011, Jonathan had over half a million fans on Facebook. It is noteworthy that in Nigeria's electoral process in 2011, social media tools were employed for political campaigns by most notable political parties such as the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP), Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) and Congress for Progressive Change (CPC).

Beyond the electoral process as noted above, Arthur (2012) notes that social media play a key role in facilitating the interactive relationship between citizens and political representatives. These communication platforms allow citizens to interact with their political leaders at local community, municipal, provincial and national levels (Arthur, 2012). The level of reciprocative communication between representatives of political parties and social media users may still be considered a matter for debate but despite the contestation, various political entities variably utilize these platforms to interact with, and push information to citizens. It should be noted that this interactivity is the hallmark of the social media. Interactivity involves user engagement with information and with other users. These online tools allow people to communicate, collaborate and openly share information, thereby bringing to the fore the power and agency of citizens to make political contributions (Arthur, 2012). Social media also possess the potential to facilitate citizens' engagement with institutions (Arthur, 2012).

According to Ifukor (2010), modern democratic principles demand that the people are involved in political governance, especially on issues that affect their lives directly or indirectly. In the study of Ifukor (2010), which examines the political discourse and social interaction by members of the publics, it was found that blogs or discussion forums have been used or are being used as a medium for political involvement and participation. In an earlier study, Ifukor (2008) had examined the use of political blogs as a platform for social mobilization in the 2007 General Elections in Nigeria and found weblogs as an influential political tool for mobilization whereby Nigerian bloggers have utilized them to educate, enlighten, and encourage eligible voters to perform their civic duties.

Another area of social media and political participation is election monitoring by the citizen journalists. In the past elections in Nigeria, various organizations, institutions and individuals set up social media platforms that enabled the citizens to oversee the electoral process and reported electoral malpractices to authorities through their mobile phones, computers and other electronic devices (Nnanyelugo & Adibe, 2013). Omokiri (2011) notes that through the social media platforms, overwhelming number of videos, photos, tweets and comments were shared during the past elections in Nigeria. The use of the social media in politics has continued to grow in many parts of Africa in recent times. The year 2011 alone witnessed a massive use of mobile phone for bulkshort

message services (SMS), Facebook, and Twitter during general elections in Nigeria (Adibe & Odoemelam, 2012).

Other African countries that witnessed the massive use of social media include South Sudan for the independence referendum, Tunisia, Egypt and Libya during the Arab uprisings (Adibe & Odoemelam, 2012). Consequently, given the participatory, interactive and cost-effective nature of the social media, it may be argued that they have become veritable channels for carrying out electioneering campaigns and other electoral activities in the 21st Century.

2.5 Theoretical framework

Procedural Democratic Theory (PDT)

Procedural Democratic Theory (PDT) is a framework that emphasizes the processes and procedures through which democratic governance is achieved, rather than focusing solely on the outcomes or substantive policies. The origins of procedural democratic theory can be linked to ancient Greek philosophy, particularly the works of Plato and Aristotle. While Plato was skeptical about democracy due to its potential for mob rule, Aristotle provided a more favorable view, emphasizing the importance of civic participation and deliberation in governance. His concept of “polity” highlighted a mixed government system where citizens could engage in political processes.

The procedural democratic theory (PDT) of governance posits that citizenship engagement with political issues ought to be limited to voting participation or representation of the Electorate (McCaffrie & Akram, 2014). After selecting their delegates, citizens ought to allow them to perform their work of making policies by not interfering. Traditionally, elections are seen as a means of control for corrupt and greedy political representatives (Thiery, 2011).

However, from the 1980s, there were calls for a more dynamic and active citizenship participation in democratic governance (Ebeling, 2015). The procedural perspective of the democratic system implicitly acknowledged that normal citizens are unable to engage properly with political issues, while supporters of participatory democracy promote more active engagement and democratic responsibility or accountability (Ebeling, 2015). Honneth (1998) argued that dynamic or active citizenship engagement can be a very useful guarantee against poor democratic systems, as advocated by McCaffrie and Akram (2014).

However, the procedural view is not fundamentally intended to preclude genuine democracy, nor is participatory democracy without problems. There are earnest democratic arguments for procedural government, whereby resolutions or decisions reached and made because of political discussions and thought may support the

relations between citizenship and elected delegates, and thus contribute to civil awareness (Doldor, 2014).

While democratic participatory theories suggest that citizens inherently yearn to engage (Jackson, 2015), Vite (2018) claimed that some citizens might decline to engage effectively in political issues, and would rather actualize a “furtive” democratic system in which they attempt to avoid notice or attention while elected delegates make policies for them, allowing them to pursue their own activities. In a period of low levels of formal political participations in acceptable democratic governments, the theory seems to relate more closely with reality compared to participatory democratic government (De Minico, 2013).

Moreover, this study is bolstered by evidence that individuals are not interested and indifferent towards political issues, as previous theories of procedural and furtive democracy neglect to address the question of how to guarantee that elected delegates will not mishandle whatever authority is accorded to them (De Minico, 2013). If citizenship is only engaged in elections, there may be long time periods before the activities of elected delegates will be checked (Dzur, 2016). Nevertheless, McCaffrie and Akram (2014) offered an attractive argument about the doubtful demand of a participatory society, as it does not persuasively challenge the supporting logic for empowering active or dynamic political engagement (Froissart, 2014).

The deliberative (improving collective decision-making) democratic government is the transformation of the ideals proposed by supporters of the participatory democratic government in the 1970s (Vite, 2019). It is a philosophical paradigm that has been shaped for some years, particularly in response to the seeming deficiencies of modern day liberal democratic government (Vite, 2018). In particular, the distance of the political elite from grassroots citizens and the role of celebrities surrounding party political issues can alienate citizens from engaging in political dialogue (Kosterina, 2016). The necessity for a new kind of political engagement to handle these matters is fundamental to the deliberative (improving collective decision-making) democratic system. These depend on urging citizens to debate and deliberate about political matters in an informal way (Balestri, 2013; Campbell, 2013; Emery, 2016). The significance of this structure is in increasing the quality rather than the amount of engagement, which is a significant departure from previous experiences of participatory democratic systems (Kosterina, 2016). Nevertheless, beliefs vary incredibly among supporters of the deliberative democratic based system towards how to execute, implement, and evaluate the achievement of deliberations (Campbell, 2013; Theis, 2016).

Furthermore, these concerns support the significant criticism of deliberative democratic government. Hauptmann (2004) argued that the needs it placed on equality

and logical agreement are not realistic (Crick, 2014). For instance, Crick (2014) asserted that deliberation within citizenship can be profitable for increasing the quality of democratic government and policy making, as it stresses the formal methods, which can exclude lot of potential members. Therefore, rather than enhancing access to engagement it conceivably promotes inequality in the system.

In reaction to this, Crick (2014) recommended that informal deliberative methods ought to frame the routes intended to enhance co-operations among political representatives and citizenships. Crick (2014) accepted the claims of McCaffrie and Akram (2014), acknowledging their concerns that many citizens would choose not to be politically inclusive, but he disagreed that this would be because political engagement was unattractive. Crick (2014) proposed government by political amateurs (non-professionals), introducing citizens into political participation through approaches to which they can relate (Crick, 2014). As the ideals of dynamic or active engagement are generally valuable to a democratic system, less emphasis is placed on the quantity of engagement than in established theories of participatory democratic system, and the model is comprehensive, involving citizens in many accounts of deliberative democratic-based systems. Also, this strikes a persuasive balance among deliberative and participatory theories of a democratic system receptive to the characteristics of liberal democratic based systems (Deveaux, 2016). In one sense,

Crick's (2014) reasoning confers the burden of political amateurs (non-professionals), here the youths to participate in Nigeria's political space.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter deals with the methods and procedures that are employed in the research study to collect and present the data. For the purpose of this study specific attention will be given to the following heading: research design, population of the study, sample and sampling technique, sources of data, research instruments, method of data collection, method of data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

Research design is the arrangement of conditions for the collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy procedure (Asika, 2005). The research design for this study is the descriptive survey research design. This study basically adopts the descriptive survey research design in which well-structured questionnaire will be designed and distributed to the respondents. A survey could be defined as the systematic gathering of information from respondents for the purpose of understanding or predicting some aspects of the behaviour of the population of interest.

3.2 Population of the Study

Population is made up of all conceivable elements, subjects and observations relating to a particular phenomenon of interest to the researcher from which sample and conclusion are drawn. Thus, the population of the study comprises of adult male and female who voted in the 2023 elections in Ovia North East Area of Edo State. According to the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) 2023, pegged the total registered voters at 50, 554.

3.3 Sample size

The sample size of the study is 10 registered voters who had voted in 2023 elections, who are also knowledgeable in the research scope and area of the study.

3.4 Sample Technique

The study employed the sampling technique which is tinted towards the simple random sampling techniques in getting appropriate data from the study area. To get the sample size of the study, convenience sample method will be employed. This is due to limited time, low financial strength of the researcher. The sample of this study is 10 respondents which will be selected from across Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State.

3.5 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

In this study, adequate consideration was given to issues of face and content validity of the instrument used. To ensure face and content validity, the instrument was given to supervisor and two other experts in Faculty of social Sciences. They basically required review and criticize the items on the instrument in terms of their clarity, appropriateness of the language and instructions that the respondents are expected to adhere to. They also aided in determining whether the items in the questionnaire can elicit the relevant information that they are expected to generate from the respondents. Their criticisms will as incorporated in modifying the items on the instrument used. In addition, content validity was further ensured by making sure that each item in the questionnaire addressed a specific problem of the study as identified from the trial testing of the instrument to ensure its reliability.

3.6 Sources of Data

The research relied heavily on primary and secondary sources of data. The secondary sources included published journals, articles, internets, newspapers, books, and other related publications on the subject matter. The primary sources were through

administration of carefully designed in-depth interviews using interview guide to moderate or prompt the interviewee.

3.7 Method of Data Analysis

The study shall employ thematic analysis in analyzing the data. All interviews will be transcribed in readable and understandable forms and coded as it relates to the themes and the will be divided into sub-themes which will be finally discuss as it concerns the objectives of the study. This is justified to the study because the study focuses on the use of qualitative method in data collection.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.1 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Respondent Interview Extract	Coding
<p>Respondent 1 (Male 40 years) Yes, 2023 electioneering campaign was fought on social media. The youth were more eager to vote in the election and there was the rise of social media in campaigns, rallies and meetings. Social media gave access to political party candidates or aspirants the opportunity to hold meeting online to push the political ideology to others even when they far apart</p>	<p>Social media was a platform where the 2023 election was fought It helps sensitize the youth It gave a platform to political party to campaign Avenue to hold series meeting It was a means of citizen sensitization</p>
<p>Respondent 2 interview extract (Female 36 years) I was following my candidate online Information about voting, what the opposition is doing and how to vote, the meaning if invalid vote were constantly thought before the election.</p>	<p>Following candidates online Social media help to socialize the people through their candidates Medium to learn voting process</p>
<p>Respondents 3 (Male 45 years) interview extract Since the beginning of campaigns and rallies in 2022, I use to follow up on my political party train because they always post it on the social media platform. I don't need to go to the party office the schedules will be posted online and we just follow</p>	<p>Social media helped built direction and circular crucial information Create awareness amongst the youths</p>
<p>Respondent 4 (Male 28 years) interview extract The foundational reason for social media is to facilitate community building. In 2023</p>	<p>Social media united Nigerians in 2023 election It a platform for community building Change the perception of electorate</p>

<p>election in Nigeria, social media was able to media community of like-minds who wants Nigeria to be a better place politically</p>	<p>through online community</p>
<p>Respondent 5 (Female 37 years) interview extracts</p> <p>Political participation surged in 2023 election due to the social media presence. For me I discovered that social media was a weapon to deactivate political apathy in the Nigeria political system.</p> <p>Many citizens due to their involvement in online political activities were now regarded or called 'Netizen'. The opinion were able to sharp decision making of the hands face of the policy makers</p>	<p>Social media deactivated political apathy</p> <p>Help to guide decision makers in decision making</p> <p>Citizens now refers to as netizens</p>
<p>Respondent 6 (Female 22 years) interview extract</p> <p>The strength of social media cannot be over emphasized because during the election some people under a given political party because they believe that they were not on ground. But the results of the 2023 election shows that the candidates and his political party have won more major cities and beyond</p>	<p>Social media influenced high percentage of Nigeria decision in the 2023 election</p> <p>Created resounding victories for candidates believed to be using media</p>
<p>Respondent 7 (Male) Interview Extract</p> <p>Of course social media was able to guide a lot of citizens to vote not based on political party but vote for candidites based on the content and capacity. U see, for me I voted a different political parties and candidates in the past elections.</p>	<p>Voting based on capacity and content of the candidates</p> <p>Voting for different candidates in different political parties</p>
<p>Respondent 8 (Male 32 years)</p>	

<p>interview extract</p> <p>Social media usage can improve in Nigeria when government can limit poverty. My Sister, I am not talking about the Southern part of Nigeria,, go to the north you will understand. Most people don't have access to browsing (internet enabled) due to poverty or state of lack</p>	<p>Poverty a major constrain in the use of social media</p> <p>Northern Nigeria is most affected</p>
<p>Respondent 9 (Female 26 years) interview Extract</p> <p>As a woman, I believe to improve social media in Nigeria is ensure all citizens have access to social media, so as to allow them participate from the comfort of their home in political process and issue of national concerns</p>	<p>Citizens easy accessibility to social media</p> <p>Contribute to national issue from the comfort of their homes</p>
<p>Respondent 10 (Male) interview Extract</p> <p>Limit the draconian laws that limit the freedom of citizens to freely engage on critical topics as it concerns them</p>	<p>Limit the harsh laws that does not guarantee the freedom of citizens online</p>

Source: The Researcher, 2025

TABLE 2: Themes and Codes of the study

Themes	Code
Social Media and how its helped in voters turnout during the 2023 election	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media was a platform where the 2023 election was fought • It gave a platform to political party • It was a means of citizen sensitization
Social Media and voters sensitization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create awareness amongst the youths • Citizens now refers to as Netizens • Social media influenced high percentage of Nigeria decision in the 2023 election • Change the perception of electorate through online community • Medium to learn voting process
ways to enhance the use of social media to build citizens political participations in Nigeria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty a major constrain in the use of social media • Limit the harsh laws that does not guarantee the freedom of citizens online • Citizens easy accessibility to social media • Government should truly give freedom of speech without any constrains

Source: Researcher, 2023

4.2 Discussion of Findings

The 10 respondents in the 10 polling units of ward 10 in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State all agreed that social media triggers voters turn out the 2023 election. The disposition of those interviewed shows that social media was very significant in causing contrary change in the political consciousness amongst the

youths of voting age. The effect of social media in the 2023 election turnout is huge that it cannot be compared to other previous elections in Nigeria

The interviewee 01 from Ekiadolor Community observed a strange phenomenon during the 2023 election – the connection between and the youth and their social media space and coming up with different information and songs to propel support for a particular political party in the locality. According to her Social media became a tool to breed and bring out the consciousness of youth in political participation in Nigeria.

The second interviewee agreed that she use to follow her candidate online, in other word she use to monitor the rallies and campaign train and election related matter using twitter and facebook and she constantly abreast of the latest happening in the political sphere in Nigeria. In the vain the interviewee a 46 years old man also agreed that the information that pertain how to vote, when to vote, change in the voting model and encouragement and sensitization on voting process were learned through social media. To him social media make turning out to vote easy and encouraging particularly in the 2023 elections. Therefore, the interviewees view aligned with objective one (1) which is to examine if social media help to encourage voters' turnout in the 2023 election in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State. Apparently social media helped encouraged voters turnout in the 2023 election in Nigeria

The objective two (2) is to find out if social media helped to empower and sensitize the youth to make an informed decision in 2023 election in Ovia North East of Edo State, the data from the field has to large extent expose the positive position that the advent of social media has been able to help promote, sensitize and empower voter to make an informed decision in the 2023 general elections. The Respondent 6 emphasised how social media has constructed his opinion on a particular political party and that he was encouraged to exercise is franchise with him having to make an informed decision. Thus the results corroborate the results of Obinna (2024) in attempting to justify the positive role of social media in politics.

The objective three (3) find out ways to enhance the use of social media to build citizens political participations in Nigeria. Interviewee 1,6,8,3 and 10 all pointed to poverty as constrain to liberate Nigeria from the limited access to social media, especially in the Northern part of the Nigeria. Therefore government should empower citizens with phones and internet to have access to unlimited online and social media exploration. More so, the Nigeria Government to a large extent needs to relax stringent laws that minimize citizens' freedom online. According to the interviewees this will allow citizens to effectively contribute their quarter online to the country's democratic consolidation. This reignited the study carried out by Tri and Thanh (2023)

CHAPTER FIVE

5.1 Summary

1. The impact of social media on voters turnout in the 2023 presidential election in Nigeria in a specific case of Ovia North East local Government Area of Edo State. The impact of social media cannot be over emphasized. Scholars like Etido, Dan-Ralph and Babatunde (2025) have stated in the work that social media played a significant and multifaceted role in Nigeria Election, primarily serving as a major platform for political campaigns, information dissemination, and voter mobilization efforts. With this in mind the study give outlined three major objectives to actualize. They include the to examine if social media help to encourage voters turnout in the 2023 election in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State, find out if social media helped to empower and sensitize the voter to make an informed decision in 2023 election in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State and find out ways to enhance the use of social media to build citizens political participations in Nigeria. A qualitative research was used whereby interview guide was formulated to illicit data from 10 Respondents and thematic analysis was to interrogate the study and fooling are the findings.

5.2 Findings of the Study

- i. The study discovered that social media has help to encourage voters turnout in the Ovia North Area of Edo State especially the youth who are within the voting age of 18 -50 years.
- ii. The study established that social media helped citizen make the an informed decision in the 2023 elections in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State through constant sensitization, campaigns and rallies follow ups on social media.
- iii. The study also indicates that government stopping the harsh laws against media and allowing citizens to freely express themselves on social media as well as the spread of internet to every hither land (local areas) will help increase citizen political participation in subsequent elections

5.3 Conclusion

In Nigeria particularly in Edo State many voters have key into social media as a means of getting information and connecting with people. Electioneering campaign period is not also different and social media has been a tool to conduct help political party, candidates and other affiliates engage in the mobilization, sensitization and engaging with members and intending voters.

This study

The Procedural Democracy Theory was used to illuminate the idea of citizenry participation in politics as expressed by McCaffrie and Akram (2014). The core principles represent citizen participation or involvement in political processes and as such the theory was linked to social media creating the opportunity for the citizens to engage in politics through online platform and the comfort.

The study concluded that social media has helped to increased turn out voters in the 2023 election and through sensitization model it has helped citizens to make informed decision in the 2023 election particularly in Ovia North East Area of Edo State. The study final concluded that spread of internets to the rural areas will allow people to participate and contribute their thoughts to democratization in Nigeria.

5.4 Recommendation

The rise of social media might be a major threat many administration because it tend to unit populace due instant dissemination of information and instant involvement of citizens on trending in different political platforms like facebook, Twitter, Instagram, facetime, Tiktok etc. However the benefit of social media outweighs the challenges. Therefore the study discovered that social media has been able to encourage voters turn out in the 2023 election and greatly influenced citizens to make an informed choice during the 2023 election in the Edo State. From the study there are ways to improve respondents have describe to help social media increase political participation in Nigeria

First, the government should push for internet services across the length and Breadth of the Nigeria especially in the rural areas to encourage citizenry direct participation in electoral process and also involve governance in general. There are regions in Nigeria that lack internet services and as such cut off from online activities. Having access first hand access to government policy become a dream rather than reality. In Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State, there are several community without internet service that government to connect to pool of citizens that are already socializing politically online

Secondly, the study recommends that government should reduce their harsh online laws restriction on the internet. Freedom of speech should be allowed in the internet space. Government constant intimidation of ‘netizens’ should be minimize to create an atmosphere where citizens can make demand, support or reject government policies. Citizenry should be encouraged to contribute that development and policy of their government.

Lastly, the government should engage in empowerment and sensitization program to be able to enlighten the citizens the need to social media in the contemporary disposition. Provision of means to access the internet should be avail to citizens like phones and internets and others accessories. There should frequent seminars on the use of internets especially in the rural areas. The sensitization exercise should also include the neglected categories of people in the society whom are the senior citizens.

5.5 Contribution to Knowledge

The study largely explores the impact of social media and voters turn out in the 2023 election. It is a unique study because it is the first time this kind of study is carried out in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State. The study unearth that social media has helped to raise the consciousness and awareness of the youth about the

political occurrence in the country. Citizens of Nigeria sometimes show lackadaisical attitude towards elections and other political processes but the study revealed that, the advent of social media has cause re-orientation of citizens who are not only interested in government policy but are also willing to participate in the political processes.

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Appendix A

Interview Question Guide

1. Name of Participant
2. Sex
3. Age
4. Religion
5. LGA
6. Community
7. Polling Unit
8. Do social media help to enhance voter's turn out in the 2023 general election?
9. Do you think social media help citizens to have clear information on political issues in 2023 general election?
10. Do you think social media has helped to foster commitment to voting in Nigeria?

11. Do you think social media has help to sensitize the public the right way?
12. Do you think social media has influenced voting positively?
13. Do you think social media encouraged more Nigeria to participate in 2023 general election?
14. Has social media influenced your voting especially in 2023 election in Nigeria
15. Has social media help reduce political apathy in Nigeria
16. Do you think social media has help citizens have access to quality information to make them vote based on the content of the candidates?
17. Was social media a helpful means for political campaigns and rallies to reach out to intending voters?
18. Has social media help to create deeper political awareness in Nigeria especially in the 2023 electioneering period?

APPENDIX B

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON VOTERS TURNOUT IN THE 2023 GENERAL ELECTION IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF OVIA NORTH EAST AREA OF EDO STATE

- I..... voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I agree to my interview being audio-recorded
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous.
- I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in...*[list all forum in which you plan to use the data from the interview: dissertation, conference presentation, published papers etc.]*

Signature of the participant

Date

.....

.....

Researcher's information

Name:

Purpose of the Research:

Name of the Supervisor:

Number:

Signature of the Researcher

Date

.....

.....