PERCEPTION OF ELECTORATE ON THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AS AN INSTRUMENT OF POLITICAL PROPAGANDA

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this research work has been read and approved as meeting the requirement for the award of Higher National Diploma (HND) Mass Communication Department, Institute of Information and Communication Technology, Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin.

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DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to Almighty Allah, the Giver of knowledge of my parents, Mr and Mrs Olubuade , my supervisor, Mr Yisa Idris and to those who ignore their selfish interest to work for the success and interest of the less privileged people.

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ABSTRACT

Social media serves as a powerful tool for politicians to engage with voters and drive the conversation in their favor. Still, the authenticity and accuracy of online information can be questionable as there are currently no mechanisms in place to regulate or sanction the spread of false or misleading information on social media, making it even more challenging to combat the proliferation of political propaganda. Also, the prevalent availability and lack of mechanisms to checkmate it allows individuals and political actors to spread misleading information which causes a significant problem. Therefore, the trust of this paper was to examine the role of social media platforms specifically Facebook and Twitter, as well as the gaps and challenges in identifying the dissemination and amplification of political propaganda in Nigeria. The study utilized qualitative research and was analyzed descriptively. The study revealed that social media promotes political propaganda and manipulates the perception of the electorate which changes the outcome of elections. Ultimately, the paper argues that a comprehensive approach is needed to regulate the spread of political propaganda on social media platforms in Nigeria, which include; the creation of digital literacy programs that focuses on media literacy and online etiquette, deeper cooperation between the Nigerian government and social media platforms to curb the spread of political propaganda, the establishment of legal frameworks to punish offenders, mitigating political propaganda are some of the recommendations highlighted in this study.

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION
1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Social media are webbed-based instruments that allow users to build a profile and create a network attached to that profile as well as interact with others applying this application (Xenos, Vromen, & Loader, 2014; Himelboim, Golan, Moon, & Suto, 2014; Enli & Skogerbø, 2013; Yousif & Alsamydai, 2012; Jackson & Lilleker, 2011). This means that through social media people create their online profile which enables them to interact more easily with others, as well as disseminate opinions and information. These social media include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google+ and MySpace (Boulianne, 2015). Recently, evidence has shown a research focus on the utilization of social media in political campaigns and advertising (Fountaine, 2017; Borah, 2016; Chadha & Guha, 2016), which is referred to as the online political campaigning/digital political campaign (Kruikemeier, Van Noort, Vliegenthart, & De Vreese, 2016; Boulianne 2009, 2015; Saxton & Waters, 2014; Schultz, Bendick, Holm, & Hertel, 2011; Wang, Li, & Luo, 2016).

Social media has become one of the most influential platforms in almost all areas of society and the political system is not exempted from this. Moreover, it is now an effective tool used by politicians to reach out to potential voters with political campaign messages. (Mamman, (2019); Chadwick & Howard 2010; Jenkins et al. 2016). According to Yang & DeHart (2016), social media is a platform where citizens keep tabs on political development, engage in the political process, and access political information. This rise of social media has been a boon to political propaganda. They use these platforms as an alternative outlet to traditional news media because it is free, easy, and allows them to reach certain segments of the population that the propagandist believes will be predisposed to supporting their propaganda. There are also techniques within social media that help, such as the use of fake accounts or troll farms to help spread their message or lend it credibility (Zimmer, 2015).

Online political campaigning has been described as a type of campaign that requires political candidates getting acquainted with a social media strategy to keep them in the minds of voters, so as to influence both individuals' lives and society as a whole (Khang, Ki, & Ye, 2012). Through online political campaigning, political aspirants and electorates publicise their political ambitions and agenda, as well as induce voters support. This suggests that to reach voters, political candidates and parties increasingly use social media because it offers the opportunity to communicate directly to citizens, as well as permits them to disclose personal information, i.e. personal campaigning (Kruikemeier et al., 2016, Vergeer, Hermans, & Sams, 2013; Bor, 2014; Briones, Kuch, Liu, & Jin, 2011; Diga & Kelleher, 2009; Lovejoy, Waters & Saxton, 2012).

Political communication serves five essential functions; which people must adhere to for the transmission of information to occur. The first function is to supply the public with knowledge about current events. The second function is to educate the broader audience on the significance and implications of said events and phenomenon. The third function is to establish a

space for deliberating on political issues. The fourth function involves the creation of various publications, while the final function is to supply the press with political agendas and initiatives (Alhassan, 2018). It has been alluded to that there is no politics without the media as it serves as a powerful tool for shaping public perception and disseminating information. With the rise of social media, this influence has intensified, creating an environment where political propaganda thrives. The role of traditional media in setting public agenda and influencing cognitive patterns has been well established in literature (Brügger & Milligan, 2019). With the advent of social media, this function has been magnified and amplified to an unprecedented extent. The accessibility of the internet and low barriers to entry on social media platforms has made it easier for political actors to manipulate public opinion. This has raised concerns about the spread of false or misleading information without effective regulation (Obisesan, 2022). According to Waisbord (2018), political propaganda involves strategic dissemination of information to achieve specific goals, often relying on emotions rather than evidence.

In Nigeria, propaganda refers to the dissemination of biased or misleading information, particularly in politics (Guess & Lyons, 2020). Social media has become a powerful tool for political propaganda. While it offers a means for direct communication with constituents, it also enables the spread of distorted and unsubstantiated information, leading to adverse effects such as influencing voting decisions, creating prejudice, and driving inaccurate conclusions and actions (Mamman, 2019). In this sense, propaganda is not only about spreading false or misleading information but also about influencing the way people think, feel, and behave. Social media serves as a powerful tool for politicians to engage with voters and drive the conversation in their favor. However, the authenticity and accuracy of online information can be questionable as there are currently no mechanisms in place to regulate or sanction the spread of false or misleading information on social media, making it even more challenging to combat the proliferation of political propaganda (Çela, 2015). With a significant portion of the population active on social media, it has become a dominant channel for communication, influencing public opinion and political socialization. The overload of information poses challenges in processing and discerning factual events as the internet's accessibility allows easy creation and sharing of information, blurring the line between political propaganda and genuine news. The rise of public opinion and its manipulation became a significant concern within the realm of the press. Nigerian politicians utilize social media platforms to connect with voters, target skeptical demographics, and employ propagandistic tactics (Oparaugo, 2021). The lack of guarantee for factual information and difficulty in verifying online events raise concerns about the validity of statements (Inobemhe et al., 2020). With approximately 90 million Nigerians on social media, these platforms have become essential for communication, shaping public opinion and political socialization (Peters, 2022). The abundance of information poses challenges and the primary objective of this research is to examine how social media influences people's beliefs, interests, and the prevalence of fictional and misleading information propagated by political actors for their personal benefits.

Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to examine the role of social media, specifically Twitter and Facebook, in the dissemination and amplification of political information and the need to regulate this information to meet the conduct of social ethics in our environment.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Indeed, online political campaigning via social media has received increased academic attention (Boulianne 2009, 2015). Nonetheless, evidence has shown that the majority of the studies that have documented the role that social networks have played in political campaign have predominantly focussed on the benefits of social media in enhancing political campaigns, civic engagement and political participation (Kalsnes, 2016; Ajayi & Adesote 2015; Conway, Kenski, & Wang, 2015; Oelsner & Heimrich, 2015; Himelboim et al., 2014; Ross & Bürger, 2014; Coleman, 2013; Kreiss, 2014; Jackson & Lilleker, 2011; Gutman & Dalton, 2009; Nagourney, 2008). Other researchers have established that the internet use has positive effects on citizens' involvement in politics and thus, consequently, contributes to the quality of democracy (Tolbert & McNeal, 2003; Shah, Cho, Eveland Jr, & Kwak, 2005).

Recently, studies have likewise demonstrated that the use of social media for political purposes during election campaigns have an important political impact (e.g. vote intention, Bond et al., 2012; Spierings & Jacobs 2014). On the other hand, researchers have also documented the language and propaganda utilized in conventional political campaigns (Udende, 2011; Omozuwa & Ezejideaku, 2008; Ngoa, 2011), with a less focus on online and computational propaganda. This calls for more research to look into the negative impact and propaganda techniques in online political campaigning via social media (Anggraini, Mustofa, & Sadewo. 2014; Olabamiji, 2014), so as to increase the understanding of social media utilization in political campaigns. Thus, despite the increase in interest on the impact of social media use in political campaigns, it has been observed that the propaganda in the digital campaign processes, as well as the negative role and impact of social media in contemporary political campaigns, have been less well studied, although the literature is growing. In this view, this present study will first report literature that concerns social media and political campaigns, thereby offering the opportunity to demonstrate the collective intellect that has been accumulated from the extensive body of research that has utilised various participants, samples, and methods. It will then extend beyond reporting the prior literature on the use of social media in political campaigns and demonstrate the current negative role of social media in political campaigns as well as document the modern propaganda techniques (i.e. the use of social bots) prevalent in the digital campaign.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The fulcrum of this study is to critically examine the perception of electorates on the use of social media as an instrument of political propaganda. The study is however specifically guided by the following objectives;

1. To determine if social is used to promote propagandist statement and agenda.

2. Investigate the rate at which social media is used to promote propagandist agenda.

3. To show if social media users are influenced by propagandist statements being promote on social media.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Is social media used in promoting propagandist statement and agenda?

2. To what degree is social media use in promoting propagandist agenda?

3. Are social media users influenced by propagandist statements being promoted on social media?

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study increases the understanding of social media use in political campaigns through analysing the existing body of knowledge as well as unifies, corroborate and synthesize streams of inquiry into a more coherent body of knowledge that provides insight to further investigations. The outcome of this study is hence beneficial for future researchers and practitioners in this area of investigation. Being a relatively new field in the ever-dynamic field of communication in Nigeria, the study will provide additional knowledge on the subject matter. It is hoped that the study in its practical value will educate politicians and political parties on the importance of social media in contemporary political communication, since social media tools are yet to be fully explored for political campaigns in Nigeria.

Also, this study will provide insights to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and civil society organizations in designing programmes that would promote the use of new media technologies in the political process in Nigeria. Lastly, the findings of this study would serve as a springboard for future research in the field of political communication.

1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study will be carried out among social media users in Kwara state polytechnic institution Ilorin Kwara state Nigeria to know their perception towards political information on the social nedia. The geographical location is Kwara State in Nigeria, as such; every other states in the country are excluded from this research work.

The study will not cover areas that are not relevant to the research question, and the scope will be defined to avoid ambiguity and ensure that the study is focused on relevant aspects of the research question.

1.7 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

PERCEPTION: This is the individual's recognition and interpretation of societal happenings such as the use of social media as an instrument to promote Propaganda. Perception varies in people and they are determined by several factors amongst which is sociological, physiological and economical variations.

ELECTORATES: Simply put, these are the people in a country or area who are entitled to vote in an election.

SOCIAL MEDIA: Social media are online tools that allow communication of information online and make participation and collaboration possible. Specifically, social media here is used to refer to Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Blogs, MySpace, Friendster, Linkedin and many others.

INSTRUMENT: This is the instrumentation/weaponisation of social media to promote propagandist agenda.

POLITICAL PROPAGANDA: Propaganda is the dissemination of information—facts, arguments, rumours, half-truths, or lies—to influence public opinion. Deliberateness and a relatively heavy emphasis on manipulation distinguish propaganda from casual conversation or the free and easy exchange of ideas.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews the relevant literatures that are pertinent to the topic of this study. It is important to review literature because it shows what previous researchers have discovered. Literature review is usually quite long and primarily depend upon how much research has previously been done in the area one is planning to investigate (Oyewole and Olorede, 2014). The review is however divided into three categories; Conceptual Review, Empirical Review and the Theoretical Review.

2.1 CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

For better understanding of our discussion, we begin this section with conceptual clarifications.

2.1.1 AN OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL MEDIA

According to Sherman (2000) the term "social media" was in 2007 coined by Danah in Boyed of the school of information at the University of California and Nicole B. Ellison of the Department of Telecommunications, information studies and media at Michigan State University. Even though the term is usually regarded by several people to mean the same with similar concepts like new media and social networking sites, however, the two concepts are not actually the same. In order to rightly contextualize the concept of social media, it is imperative to consider what social networking sites are. Boyd and Ellison (2008, P. 21) opined that "social networking sites are web based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulates a list of other users with whom they share a common connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system". Boyd and Ellison's definition provides us with an understanding for describing social media. According to them, social media is a medium that allows individuals to share important information with friends. Social media therefore, is a subset of information communication technologies.

Corroborating Boyed and Ellison's definition, Chijioke (2013) asserted that "social media are simply internet based interactive platforms through which people can create and exchange information in a participatory manner on a real-time basis." He went further to note that they are online democratic and participatory communication channels that allow inhibited exchange of information and documents among users. According to Arthur (2011), social media are internet based tools and services that allow users to engage with each other, generate content, distribute, and search for information online. It is the interactive or collaborative nature of the medium that makes them "social". Social media are the channels via which individuals connect with one another to share, trade, and comment on content through online communities and networks (Oparaugo, 2021). In order to build highly participatory platforms for individuals and

groups to share, create, discuss, and alter user generated content, social media uses mobile and web-based technology (Oparaugo, 2021).

Through virtual networks, it makes it easier for people to share ideas and information (Dollarhide, 2023). It might manifest as video sharing, social gaming, business networks for professionals, virtual worlds, review sites, and more (Dollarhide, 2023). Communication between organizations, communities, and individuals undergoes significant and pervasive changes as a result (Adescope & Ogan-Charles, 2015, in Oparaugo, 2021). Social media refers to websites and apps that facilitate communication, participation, information sharing, and working together (The Economic Times, n.d). Social media is used by people to maintain contact with their friends, family, and neighbours. Carr and Hayes (2015) defined social media as "internet-based channels that enable users to opportunistically interact and selectively self-present, either in real-time or asynchronously, with both broad and narrow audiences to derive value from user-generated content and the perception of interaction with others." Oparaugo (2021) adopted this definition. The internet provides countless niche social networks where participants can congregate around a shared interest (Oparaugo, 2021). There are active social media networks for both broad and niche themes, ranging from security and compliance to colon and digestive health (Didiugwu et al. 2015, in Oparaugo, 2021). Social media are platforms for social engagement that make communication methods easily accessible and scalable.

The transformation of communication into interactive discourse is made possible by the employment of web-based and mobile technology (Joseph, 2013, in Oparaugo, 2021).
In a nutshell, this study defined social media as online tools that allow communication of information online and make participation and collaboration possible. Specifically, social media here is used to refer to Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Blogs, MySpace, Friendster, Linkedin and many others. The advent of the internet which brought about the development of different forms of social media platforms is increasingly supporting democratic participation and free flow of information between individuals in emerging democracies. Citizens are not merely consuming information content, but are privileged to become content producers, thereby encouraging participatory democracy which is the hallmark of democracy.

2.1.2 OVERVIEW OF PROPAGANDA
Propaganda can be defined as a social group's coordinated efforts "to secure the conformity of the audience with the activities being contemplated, undertaken, or promoted by the group. It is a coordinated series of messages made with the intention of influencing the views or actions of many individuals and groups (Vamanu, 2019). Propaganda is purposeful and premeditated; it relies on manipulation, specifically through the dissemination of misleading information, and its purpose is to promote political agendas by provoking and regulating behavior. The objective of propaganda is to encourage audiences to take concrete actions, or to

accept and not object to a particular course of action. Stanley (2018) asserts that propaganda frequently includes a "call to action," he expresses a similar action-oriented attitude.

Another way to look at propaganda is as a form of persuasion that emphasizes self-interest. Facts are fabricated or misrepresented by propagandists in order to advance their own interests. The definition of propaganda provided by O'Donnell and Jowett (2015) suggests that propaganda is a deliberate and systematic effort to influence people's perceptions, thoughts, and actions to achieve a specific goal or outcome. Propagandists may use various tactics, such as withholding information, manipulating emotions, or presenting false information, to achieve their desired response from their audience. In line with Szanto's observation, as cited by Akoja and Jiboku (2020), propagandists may deliberately withhold important facts and distract people from other information that contradicts their propaganda. By doing so, they can manipulate people's perceptions and beliefs to achieve their desired outcome.

Propaganda can involve false ideas or statements used to gain support for a political leader or party. However, as noted by Ebeze and cited in Akoja & Jiboku (2020), propaganda is not always composed entirely of lies. Propagandists often use different tactics, such as half-truths, limited truths, and truths taken out of context, to manipulate public opinion. Propagandists may selectively choose information that supports their agenda and present it in a biased way, emphasizing the positive aspects and downplaying the negative. This can lead to a distorted view of reality, as people may only be exposed to one side of the story.

2.1.3 CONCEPTUALIZING POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

According to Agudosi (2007), political communication is the dissemination of information about the functioning of a political entity in order to influence the behaviour of the audience in a variety of ways. He went further to say that it is also the interactive process concerning transmission of information among politicians, the news media and the public. On the same view, Graber and Smith (2005) opined that political communication involves the construction, sending, receiving, and processing of messages that potentially have significant direct or indirect impact on politics.

Political communication is an increasingly important area in communication and media studies. A study by Okoro and Diri (2009) has shown the importance of the media in contributing significantly in creating public awareness and mobilizing participation in the political process. The media therefore help citizens to reach informed decisions about what course of action to take and also offer the populace the platform to be educated on political relevant information. It is on this premise that Rush and Althoff (1972) cited in Akasoro (2011) conceived political communication to be: The process by which politically-relevant information is transmitted from one part of the political system to another, and between the social and political systems. It is a continuous process involving the exchange of information between

individuals and groups of individuals at all levels of society, and includes not only the expression of the views and wishes of members of society, but also the means by which the views and proposals of those in power are transmitted to the society and the latter's reaction to those views and proposals.

From all the above definitions given by various scholars, political communication is essentially important in a democratic society since the mass media are the purveyor of political information and education of the electorates.

2.1.4 THE EMERGENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND ITS IMPACTS ON POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

The evolution of media is typically divided into the broadcast era and the interactive era (Jeong, 2015). Media distribution during the broadcast era was largely centralized, with many individuals relying on a sole company, such as a radio or television station, for their news and media consumption (Milligan, 2017). Response to the media often suffered from significant delays, indirectness, and a lack of personalization (Sajithra & Patil, 2013). On a much smaller scale, mediation was employed to promote communication between people through personal correspondence, telephone conversations, or sporadically on a relatively larger scale utilizing resources such as duplicated family newsletters (Rufai, 2021).

The development of digital and mobile technology ushered in a new era of media wherein interaction took precedence in the functions of media, making it easier than ever before for individuals to participate in substantial interaction (Treem et al, 2016). Currently, a speaker has the ability to speak to a large audience and receive instant responses. In the past, individuals who were part of the general public had limited and occasionally suppressed means of expressing themselves, but now they have the opportunity to voice their concerns to a wider range of people. Furthermore, there is greater availability of media choices than ever before, thanks to the affordability and easy access provided by new technologies. Instead of depending only on a few news outlets, individuals can now access information from various sources and actively participate in discussions through message boards (Chang & Park, 2020; Rufai, 2021).

Social media have become an increasingly important tool for political communication and engagement. The ability to reach large audiences quickly and cheaply has made social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube popular among politicians, political parties, and activists. The news media landscape has changed dramatically over the past decades. West (2017) argued that, through digital sources, there has been a tremendous increase in the reach of journalism, social media, and public engagement. Checking for news online, whether through Google, Twitter, Facebook, major newsstudys, or local media websites has become ubiquitous, and smartphone alerts and mobile applications bring the latest developments to people instantaneously around the Social media has transformed political communication by allowing politicians and political parties to bypass traditional media gatekeepers and

communicate directly with their constituents" (Brown, 2018). In his article titled "The Role of Social Media in Political Communication," Professor M. Jones, who specializes in African and social history, emphasized that political messaging and advertising have become essential through social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook. For example, during the 2020 US presidential election, both candidates used social media to communicate their campaign messages and reach out to voters. The use of social media also provides politicians and political parties with real-time feedback on their policies and messages, enabling them to adjust their messaging and campaign strategies accordingly.

Social media has had a significant impact on election campaigns, particularly in terms of fundraising, organizing, and mobilizing voters (Garcia& Hernandez, 2019). Social media platforms have become essential tools for political fundraising, with candidates and political parties using platforms such as Facebook and Twitter to raise funds from small donors. Social media has also enabled political campaigns to more effectively organize and mobilize supporters, with campaigns using social media platforms to coordinate events and activities (Garcia & Hernandez, 2019).

Social media has also had a significant impact on citizen participation in politics. Social media platforms have become important channels for political engagement, with citizens using platforms such as Twitter and Facebook to express their views, share information, and connect with like minded individuals (Lee & Kim, 2018). Social media has also enabled citizens to mobilize around specific issues and causes, leading to the formation of online communities that can influence public opinion and policy decisions, (Chen & Liang, 2020). Furthermore, social media has facilitated easier access to political information for citizens and enhanced their ability to engage with political leaders. Social media platforms have become important sources of news and information, with many citizens using platforms such as Twitter and Facebook to stay informed about political developments, (Kim & Lee, 2019).

According to Lilleker (2020), a scholar specializing in political communication, social media has also enabled citizens to communicate directly with political leaders, with many politicians using social media platforms to engage with their constituents and respond to their concerns. Political communication experts agree that both traditional and internet-based media have a significant impact on how individuals engage in politics (Dimitrova & Bystrom, 2013). Social media allows for two-way communication, enables political organizations and candidates to connect with voters and receive feedback in real-time. As a result, it is now common for political contenders to maintain profiles on social networking sites and other mobile social networks such as Twitter (Mustapha, Gbonegun & Mustapha, 2016).

2.1.5 THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN SOCIAL MEDIA AND POLITICS

The interplay between politics and social media describes the power dynamics that take place as users of social media platforms compete to further their objectives and ideologies (Amenyeawu, 2021). The politics of social media may be capable of influencing both individual and collective preferences, views and belief systems depending on the objectives of those utilizing it. This might have a huge impact on the information people absorb, possibly changing the power centers that shape meaning (Brügger & Milligan, 2019). Social media has given users, especially nonprofessionals, access to ready-made tools that make it easier than ever for them to generate and exchange information, organize trending and explosive events, find others who share their interests, collaborate to produce work together to produce information, insight, and knowledge, and expand on the work and contributions of others to develop original and novel ideas (Broersma, Marcel, and Graham, 2016).

The perception, configuration and functioning (structural patterns, information dissemination, and regulated streams) of networks have inherent political biases, lack neutrality, and can undermine democracy in terms of their conception, usage, and regulations (Calderaro, 2018). These factors are inevitably biased because the values of specific stakeholders that control others' behavior on social media acting in accordance with their values of social media as egalitarian, impartial, objective, and democratic went hand in hand with this ability. In reality, though, the fundamental components of social media—its architecture (platforms and networks) are anything but this (Mirza & Yousuf, 2021). To grasp the political dynamics of social media, it is important to consider three fundamental forms of power. The first power mode relates to the ability to shape the choices made by other social actors. This is consistent with the theories advanced by political scientists in the 1950s and 1960s, such as Robert Dahl (1957) who defines power as influence on another person's behavior arguing that if person A has power over person B that he can then persuade person B to do something that person B would not otherwise do (Mirza & Yousuf, 2021). Social media has a powerful ability to influence public opinion and alter not only the message but also values, misuse of power, and the nature of political struggle. According to Calderaro (2018), there is a lot of interest among people regarding the impact of social media and other internet communication platforms on political activity.

The second crucial power mode is the framing and control of the political scene, agenda and discourse, which influences the development and operation of social media, as well as how potential issues are kept out of the political process and public spaces. Political scientists from the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s notably Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz helped conceptualize the second mode of power. Thus, any adequate analysis of power must consider both the first form of power—the influence of social media on decisions—and the second—the interpretation of nondecisions—such as silencing calls for change or providing additional topics to agendas—as decisions (Garzia, 2017). For instance, Twitter only allows 140 characters for each tweet. The content that is distributed throughout the service has been significantly

impacted by this design. Users must be brief, concise, and straightforward in their posts when they are only allowed 140 characters, if not outright blunt. Twitter is mostly utilized for live event updates, which is no accident. Its designers intentionally set it up in this manner, copying SMS usage patterns and utilizing the actions of users as a mechanism for revealing current activities. Twitter has prioritized a specific sort of material (live tweets in real time) over alternative content, thereby creating such polished and nuanced arguments, by limiting the agenda (to 140 characters) (Van Dijck, 2011). The third power mode is concerned with behavior (actions and also inactions) that try to shape and influence the views, thoughts, and preferences of an individual (latent or manifest). This is accomplished, for instance, by getting people to accept the status quo because it is seen as "logical," "immutable," or "beneficial" because there don't seem to be any alternatives. This conception is in line with Lukes (2005), who claimed that power is the capacity to influence the psyche and give phenomena context. Although this type of power is challenging to monitor, it has the most influence of the power modes because the changes it causes occur within the perceiver (individual or group) that is being affected. It entails a fundamental shift in belief systems, causing person A to believe that decide to take actions that support the bias of the system, advancing the interests of person B at her own expense, typically through compliance (Karamat and Farooq, 2020).

2.1.6 THE EFFECTS OF POLITICAL PROPAGANDA ON ELECTIONEERING PROCESS

Despite the many benefits of social media in politics, there are also challenges and concerns associated with its use (Kim & Lee,2019). The new digital platforms have unleashed innovative journalistic practices that enable novel forms of communication and greater global reach than at any point in human history. But on the other hand, disinformation and hoaxes that are popularly referred to as "fake news" are accelerating and affecting the way individuals interpret daily developments (West, 2017). Driven by foreign actors, citizen journalism, and the proliferation of talk radio and cable news, many information systems have become more polarized and contentious, and there has been a precipitous decline in public trust in traditional journalism.

The potential for social media to spread misinformation and disinformation, particularly during election campaigns is widely open. Social media platforms have been used to spread false information and propaganda, which can have a significant effect on public opinion and election outcomes. It also has the potential to amplify extreme views and polarize political discourse over time (Woolley& Guilbeault, 2018). Social media algorithms tend to prioritize content that generates high levels of engagement, which can lead to the spread of extreme and polarizing content. Over the past years, the rapid development of social media has led to a surge in fabricated news. Fake news has become pervasive, causing significant impacts on individuals and society. Several characteristics define fake news, including its high volume, variety (rumors, satire news, false advertisements, etc.), and velocity (short-lived nature and real-time focus).

It is crucial to uncover the origins and motives behind the widespread dissemination of fake news on social media. The creators and spreaders of fabricated news can be categorized as either human or non-human entities. Non-human entities include social bots and cyborgs, which are algorithms engineered to imitate human conduct and content on social media platforms. While some social bots serve legitimate purposes, many are specifically programmed to spread rumors, spam, malware, misinformation, and noise. As a case in point, during the 2016 U.S. election, a large number of social media bots were deployed to promote either Trump or Clinton and disseminated fake news through tweets. Cyborgs, on the other hand, refer to accounts that involve a combination encompassing individuals assisted by bots and bots assisted by individuals. These accounts, whether fully automated or human-controlled, mislead social media users by spreading false information, damaging trust and belief within the online community.

Real humans play a crucial role in the diffusion of fake news. Social bots and cyborgs are merely vehicles for spreading false messages created by humans. Whether disseminated manually or automatically, malicious online users intentionally generate fake content, making it challenging to discern between false and accurate information based solely on the examination of textual and linguistic elements.

The purpose of political propaganda is to influence public perception and manipulate people's thoughts and actions in favor of particular agendas or objectives (Vysotskiy & Pavlov, 2020). It is worth noting that mass media political campaign messages have a significant influence on how voters think, decide, and make choices when participating in Nigerian elections (Abagen, 2009). By reporting and presenting information, statistics, facts, and analytical articles concerning pivotal political matters, the media holds meaningful sway over the formation of understanding and awareness in the electoral proceedings. Therefore, it seems evident that voting constituents depend on the media they engage with to inform their decisions (Oriavwote, 2000).

The availability of online information, including political propaganda, has an impact on the voting behavior of individuals. Similarities can be observed between marketing, advertising, and politics, with voters seen as consumers of political services. Choosing political parties is comparable to making consumer purchasing decisions in the business realm. Political stimuli influence the process of making decisions for voters, and if political candidates fail to meet voters' expectations, dissatisfaction can arise, resulting in a reluctance to vote for them in future elections. One key characteristic of propaganda is that it is mobilized by the speaker for their own benefit rather than for the audience's benefit (Bennett & O'Rourke, 2006). In simple terms, propaganda can distort the truth and lead people to make political decisions based on false or misleading information (Zollmann, 2019). When the truth is undermined, citizens find it difficult to discern what to believe, leaving them vulnerable to government lies. This can lead to disengagement from politics and a lack of accountability for government actions (Tavernise & Gardiner, 2019).

It's important to note that even well-intentioned internet users have the ability to contribute to the spread of misleading information and false narratives. In some cases, legitimate users share and propagate false news without realizing its inaccuracy. This further amplifies the dissemination of fake news within social collectives, where acquaintances and supporters of these authorized users evolve into the next wave of propagators. This creates an "echo chamber" effect, enabling the widespread propagation of false information. The anonymity of the Internet allows users to evade responsibility for their posts, shares, and comments, resulting in the far-reaching dissemination of unidentified messages with significant consequences. The intended recipients targeted by false news can vary based on the specific purpose of the deceptive information. This notion is supported by research done by Zhang & Ghorbani (2020) on the characterization and detection of internet based fabricated news.

Sometimes, fake news stories are amplified and disseminated quickly through false accounts, or automated "bots. West, (2017) believe that most bots are benign in nature, and some major sites like Facebook ban bots and seek to remove them, but there are social bots that are "malicious entities designed specifically with the purpose to harm. These bots mislead, exploit, and manipulate social media discourse with rumors, spam, malware, misinformation, slander, or even just noise. This information can distort election campaigns, affect public perceptions, or shape human emotions. Recent research has found that "elusive bots could easily infiltrate a population of unaware humans and manipulate them to affect their perception of reality, with unpredictable results. In some cases, they can "engage in more complex types of interactions, such as entertaining conversations with other people, commenting on their posts, and answering their questions." Through designated keywords and interactions with influential posters, they can magnify their influence and affect national or global conversations, especially resonating with like-minded clusters of people (West, 2017).

The prevalence of online disinformation during Nigerian elections has complicated the electoral landscape. Political analysts and digital rights activists argue that those spreading fake news have become more sophisticated and organized, strategically disseminating content across multiple social media applications at an unprecedented speed. The rapid circulation of fictitious content on networking sites like Twitter and Facebook makes it increasingly challenging for citizens to distinguish between fact and fiction.

With over half of Nigeria's population of 216 million connected to the internet, the country Boasts the largest user base on social media platforms in Africa. In early 2022, approximately 325.4 thousand users in Nigeria were on Twitter, and over 26 million people used Facebook (DataReportal). The widespread accessibility and usage of these social media applications contribute to the extensive spread of fabricated information, raising concerns about its impact on voters' decision-making during elections. Idayat Hassan, the director of the policy advocacy group Centre for Democracy and Development, highlights the potential consequences of the relentless dissemination of fake news. She emphasizes that the speed and ubiquity of fictitious

news across various platforms can leave voters uncertain about their choices when casting their ballots. The emergence of fabricated stories and fraudulent content predominantly stems from technology dependent platforms like social media and the internet, instead of established media outlets (Wasserman & Madrid-Morales, 2018).

Governments around the world are strictly regulating information on social media in the interests of addressing fake news. Then, starting from the premise of social media as a "watchdog" of democracy and moving on to the contention that fake news is a phenomenon of "mature" democracy, it is important to know the effects new digital platform has caused within and outside political terrain.

2.1.7 SOCIAL MEDIA'S INFLUENCE ON MODERN POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS AND ELECTIONS

Recent studies have focused on the effectiveness of social media adoption and use, as well as how it affects political campaigns (Conway BA et al. 2015, in Apuke and Tunca, 2018). However, research suggests that traditional mass media still play a significant role in the campaign ecology (Chadwick, 2017; Neyazi TA et al. 2016, in Apuke and Tunca, 2018) because it serves as a venue for television debates and press conference advertising (Enli, G. 2017, in Apuke and Tunca, 2018). However, social media has grown in popularity and has been deemed "platforms for interaction and information exchange" (Himelboim, I. et al. 2014, in Apuke and Tunca, 2018), has introduced a new pathway for inducing political attitudes and participation and enhancing participatory communication, as well as faster dialoguing and engagement (Ross, T & Burger, T. 2014, in Apuke and Tunca, 2018).Social media platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter have become popular e-campaigning tools that enable political candidates to speak to voters simultaneously in a more individualized, responsive, and dialog-based manner, strengthening the relationship between voters and candidates (Oelsner, K. & Heimrich, 2015, in Apuke & Tunca, 2018).

Simply said, social media is a channel for communicating with voters directly through websites and other social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter, bypassing traditional media (Apuke & Tunca, 2018). It was revealed that political candidates use social networking sites to engage voters by maintaining constant touch with their followers and encouraging participation and likeness through engaging remarks (Apuke & Tunca, 2018). According to studies (Apuke & Tunca, 2018), the majority of political parties and leaders keep accounts on social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram where they post information about their agendas. In fact, it's impossible to overstate the importance of using web-based social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube during political campaigns (Ajayi AI & Adesote SA, 2015, in Apuke & Tunca, 2018). Social media platforms like Facebook, for instance, enable users to express their political opinions, back a particular candidate, and engage in political discussion with others (Boulianne, S. 2015; Okoro, N. & Nwafor, K.A., 2013; Abbot, J. et al. 2013; Okeke, C. et al. 2016, as referenced in Apuke & Tunca, 2018).

Actually, studies have shown that using social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter for political campaigning places more of an emphasis on the individual politician than the political party, leading to more individualized campaigning, mobilization, and interaction with the electorate and supporters (Enli & Skogerbo, 2013, in Apuke & Tunca, 2018). Additionally, According to Kent & Taylor (1998), referenced in Apuke & Tunca (2018), the majority of political online campaigns use online relationship nurturing techniques that call for disclosure or openness, data sharing, interactivity, and involvement.

2.1.8 PERCEPTIONS OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCE ON ELECTION

Change is coming. The public realm has been dramatically democratized by social media, the newest wonder child on the block (Premium Times, 2022). You may start a political story that will have an unheard-of impact on society with 100 naira in data on your smart phone. Any political player who downplays the influence of social media does so at his or her own risk (Premium Times, 2022). However, in recent years, it hasn't totally taken the position of the traditional media as the center of political disputes and the fires of political restyling (Premium Times, 2022). Social media is now a key tool in political conflict in Nigeria. According to statistics, 33 million people used social media in Nigeria in January 2021 (Premium Times, 2022). Nigeria has a social media concentration of over 40% of the population, or close to 90 million people, with a cell phone connection rate of over 48% and an Internet access rate of 36% (Premium Times, 2022). As of 2021, 89 million people were eligible to vote in the nation (Premium Times, 2022). Since the majority of voters have access to social media, it is safe to say that social and internet media have almost completely supplanted the combination of other media as important channels for communicating about social and political issues (Premium Times, 2022). Social media has the potential to be a catalyst for democracy and a barrier to authoritarianism. It gives political actors the tools to maintain political dialogue in the interim between elections, engage with voters in an unfiltered way, and reinvigorate the political system (Premium Times, 2022). Following a global trend, Nigerian politicians are increasingly connecting with their supporters directly using social media for normal political communication (Premium Times, 2022).

Political communication in Nigeria has never been so diverse, fractured, energetic, chaotic, creative, and simultaneously polarizing as we move closer to 2023, when politicians and political parties are hopping on the social media bandwagon. Political actors are redefining themselves as serious political candidates at both the local and national levels by regular, amusing, and smart engagement with audiences on social media (Premium Times, 2022). Sincere political participation and education can be distinguished from razzmatazz by certain of their viewers (Premium Times, 2022). Social media has become a crucial arena for shaping public opinion and advancing an agenda (Premium Times, 2022). The ability of social media to affect and determine voting behavior may be limited but considerable, however the jury is yet out on how much of an impact it will have on political outcomes (Premium Times, 2022).

2.2.9 FACEBOOK, TWITTER , YOUTUBE INFLUENCE ON POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

It has been shown that the use of Facebook in a political campaign has attracted a good number of studies. For example, research has revealed that in the Nigerian 2015 general elections, Facebook was massively employed due to its participatory nature. It was utilized as a platform for political campaigns, electioneering crusades, ideological trumpeting exercises, and mobilization of voters (Chinedu-Okeke & Obi, 2016). This means that Facebook adoption in political campaigns helps political aspirants to disseminate information easily as well as mobilise voters. This notion is consistent with Anggraini et al. (2014) study that examined political campaigns through Facebook on the Indonesian 2014 presidential election. The study found that Facebook has the ability to influence public opinion and a powerful tool in the formatting of one's cognition. However, a survey carried out on the 2011 Finnish parliamentary election campaign established that although candidates frequently utilized Facebook for campaigning, nevertheless, there was a very low degree of Facebook utilization among citizens and this affected their voting decision (Strandberg, 2013).

Whereas, another study that investigated the 2014 elections of the European Parliament showed that the lead candidates and their published debate on television and Facebook had a high influence on the electorate support (Nulty, Theocharis, Popa, Parnet, Benoit, 2016). This suggests that the use of Facebook in the electioneering campaign induces electorate participation and support for a particular candidate, and this increases the chances of a candidate winning an election.

Indeed, evidence has shown that the continuous experimentation of Twitter for political campaigning across several countries has kept on evolving over the years (Bruns, 2017), and this has prompted some growing body of research. For instance, evidence from an investigation that examined the Nigerian 2015 general elections reported that Twitter was mostly used and this mobilized and influenced people to vote a particular candidate (Bartlett, Krasodomski-Jones, Daniel, Fisher, Jesperson, 2015). This implies that the utilization of Twitter for political campaigns assists political aspirants in mobilizing and influencing the electorate to vote for them. Recapitulating the impact of Twitter in political campaigns, Graham et al. (2016) reported that during the 2010 British and Dutch general election campaigns, Dutch politicians utilized Twitter than UK candidates. The study further demonstrated that the public responded to this by engaging in further dialogue. This implies that the use of Twitter encourages interactivity and dialogue. However, Graham et al. (2013) found that in the 2010 UK electioneering campaign, most politicians used Twitter primarily in a one-way communication pattern. This is consistent with Vergeer et al. (2013) who argue that although European Parliament candidates of 2009 employed Twitter to communicate and associate with citizens, nevertheless, the candidates reluctantly utilized Twitter, and even those who actually used it did so for electioneering

campaign purposes only and not subsequently. Yet, the findings of Bimber (2014) suggest that Twitter was highly utilized to sustain citizen enthusiasm and initiative in the 2008 and 2012 U.S. presidential election campaigns.

In recent decades, there has been a continuous experimentation of YouTube in political campaigns, and this has attracted a considerable number of studies which reported mixed findings. For example, Carlson and Strandberg (2008) establish that the acceptance and utilization of YouTube in the Finnish 2007 National election did not give a positive result because the videos did not attract public interest. In the same study, it was discovered that YouTube played a marginal part in the elections and only a few supporters uploaded and broadcasted videos. Yet, YouTube was used as a platform for minor electoral actors and ordinary citizens. In contrast, Lev-On (2012) found that YouTube creates more participatory politics and more substantial links between citizens and candidates, particularly at the grass root level. This is concurrent with Enli (2017) study who advocated that over the years the utilization and focus of images and videos have grown in electioneering campaign. This was evident in the 2016 US presidential election campaigns where Hillary Clinton regularly posted videos to circulate information in order to attract and influence electorates.
In general, a survey has discovered that YouTube, Facebook and Twitter have become a more prominent communication channel for campaigning across the world (Pew Report, 2016). Larsson and Kalsnes (2014) remarked that of all the social media networking sites Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are the most utilized for electioneering campaign due to its popularity and large users.

2.2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
2.2.1 USES AND GRATIFICATIONS THEORY

Uses and Gratifications Theory provided the framework for this study. According to Baran and Davis (2003), the origin of the theory is often credited to Herta Herzog. They went further to establish that Herzog's article entitled "motivations and gratifications of daily serial listeners" was the first published research to provide an in-depth examination of media gratifications. Sweetser and Kaid (2008) opined that the theory has been more recently used to determine the gratifications of entertainment media. The theory also has a long history of investigating political information seeking motivations.

Blumer and McQuail (1969) found that gratifications sought from watching political broadcasts clustered into three constructs; political reason such as reinforcement or vote guidance; surveillance for keeping up with the issues; and excitement such as seeing which political party would win. With the development of the internet and its subsequent deployment for the dissemination of political information, researchers have applied the uses and gratifications perspective to online political information seeking. Kaye and Johnson (2002) examined gratification for seeking political information online and found that primary

motivations to be guidance, information seeking and surveillance, entertainment and social utility. These scholars also link the media to political attitudes and behaviours. To buttress this assertion, Kaye and Johnson (2002) in a study reported that higher levels of self-efficacy are associated with information seeking and surveillance, and higher interest in politics is correlated with accessing political information online for social utility and information seeking surveillance.

The theory according to Anaeto, Onabanjo and Osifeso (2008, p.71) is concerned with what people do with the media instead of what the media do to people. The major trust of the theory subscribes to the assumption that consumers of mass media content influence the effect of the mass media on them. Hence media consumers are not passive but active in determining what they use the media for. Folarin (2005) observed that mass media audiences have some certain needs that are dear to them that is why they are exposed to, attend to, and retain media messages because of the perceived gratification derivable from such messages. The theory is relevant to this study because users of social media feel that the medium will satisfy their curiosity and meet their information needs, and thus make them active participants in the political communication process. Therefore, they are able to select specific messages on a variety of social media platforms to connect to political activities within and outside their geographical location.

2.2.2 FRAMING THEORY

Framing theory is a theoretical framework propounded by Erving Goffman in 1974 which states the media draws attention to specific occurrences before contextualizing them with a specific explanation. This work provides a detailed examination of how cognitive frameworks influence an individual's interpretation of societal dynamics. The author effectively utilized the metaphor of a picture frame to vividly demonstrate and support this theoretical concept (Mass Communication Theory (Online), 2017). The concept of framing entails the deliberate selection of particular aspects of an observed reality and accentuating them within a communication text in order to support a particular problem recognition, causal analysis, ethical evaluation, and/or proposed interventions. (Scheufele, 2019).

According to the framing theory, the way information is presented to an audience (referred to as "the frame") influences how people process and interpret it. Frames, which are conceptual representations, are employed to shape and structure the meaning of messages. The frame acts as a framework that helps individuals contextualize their experiences in life, symbolized by a picture that captures their perception. Framing involves the procedural aspect by which a source of communication establishes and constructs the manner in which information is presented. The dominant utilization of frames is observed in the way news or media outlets shape the presentation of their content. A frame describes how the media, who act as gatekeepers, arrange

2.3 REVIEW OF EMPIRICAL STUDIES

According to Clark and Aufderheide (2019), social media are increasingly becoming popular among politicians and their organizations as a means to disseminate political messages, learn about the interest and needs of constituents and the broader public, raise funds, and build networks of support. Lending credence to this assertion, Hong and Nadler (2011) observed that in a very short space of time, politicians in modern democracies across the world have eagerly adopted social media for engaging their constituents, entering into direct dialogs with citizens and enabling vivid political discussions. Raiz (2010) equally posited that in the past five years, elections conducted in Africa witnessed a massive use of social media during electioneering campaigns by key political figures, political parties and civil society organizations. This development has made researchers in recent times to investigate the influence of social media in the sphere of political communication. This perhaps explains why researchers like Graber and Smith (2005) contend that a great deal of research efforts has gone into assessments of the role played by new media in providing information to those citizens and politicians alike who need to fulfil their civic duties.

A number of studies have been conducted by scholars on the growing influence of social media during political campaigns, for instance, a study by Kushin and Yamamoto (2010) attempted to determine whether social media usage actually impact on political self-efficacy and involvement of electorates during the 2008 US presidential election. Their findings show that there was a drastic rise in the use of social media by political candidates as well as the electorates. According to them, 27% of young people reported obtaining political information from social media. Corroborating their finding, Owen, Soule, Nairne, Chalif, House., and Davidson, (2011) remarked that the 2008 US election marked a breakthrough year for political use of new media and social networks specifically. They further opined that social networking websites played an especially innovative and important role in the protracted primary race between Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton. Obama's subsequent victory at the main election was largely attributed to his massive use of social media during the electioneering campaigns.

Similarly, Warren (2009) investigated the use of social networking site Facebook in the 2008 presidential election in America. The study was specifically design to analyze whether Facebook might be a practical campaign tool to target young voters, particularly college students. A survey research method was adopted for the study to collect data from 212 students at the University of Central Missouri to determine if Facebook was a viable campaign tool. The study concludes that college students that participated in the political activities on Facebook felt more motivated to vote in the 2008 presidential election and the students who had Facebook account had better identified with the candidates due to their presence and the information they received on facebook.

McLaughlin and Osborne (2020) Cited in Alakali, Titus, Akpan and Tarnongo (2013) revealed that nearly three-quarter (73%) of American internet users, or 54% of all voters went online in 2010 for news or information about midterm elections or communicating with others about campaign and the information voters are getting online, appears to have sway. In addition, one third of respondents said the information they saw online made them to vote for or against a particular candidate. This underscored the role of socialism in the US presidential election.

In another related study, Larsson and Moe (2011) conducted a study on Twitter use during the 2011 Swedish election and found that Twitter also serves as a channel for disseminating political information and not for political dialog with the electorates. Larsson and Moe study revealled that Swedish political elites see Twitter as a medium to communicate political contents to the people and not necessarily as a tool to engage the electorates in political conversation. On the contrary,

Williams and Gulati (2009) research on the extent of Facebook use by congressional candidates during election campaigns, discovered that the number of facebook supporters can be considered a valid indicator of electoral success. In the context of Dutch election, Utz (2009) showed that social networking sites provided an opportunity for politicians to reach individuals interested in politics. Their view of candidates' profiles further strengthened their exiting attitudes. Confirming Utze's study the Pew Research Centre (2014) examined the use of new media techniques in Iowa and New Hampshire. The aim of the study was to determine whether or not the websites of political candidates were being utilized by potential voters. They found that 30% of likely voters in Iowa and 29% in New Hampshire said they visited candidate's websites. Roughly the same percentage has viewed political candidate's videos online as well. Meanwhile, quite few of the respondents have joined a social networking page such as Facebook or MySpace.

The 2024 general elections provided political aspirants the avenue to use social media tools to connect with voters and constituents for the first time in Nigeria political arena; for instance, Ekine (2010) reported that President Tinubu had nearly 3000,000 followers on his Facebook account following the step of president Barrack Obama of the United State. Corroborating further, Okoro and Nwafor (2024) conducted a study titled "social and political participation in Nigeria during the 2024 general elections: The lapses and the lessons". The objectives of the study were to find out the role played by social media in the political participation of Nigerians, observe the lapses in the use of social media during the elections, and the lessons learnt from social media use in the course of the election. The findings of their study revealed that 93% of the respondents attested to the fact they used social media for political participation during the election.

Respondents also said they used different social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, SMS calls, and YouTube to participate during the election. The study also identified some lapses in the because of the use of social media in the electioneering process.

Furthermore, civil society groups and activists were not left out in the political process. Groups such as "Safe Nigeria Group", "Vote or Quench", "Enough is Enough", "Light up Nigeria" and "Sleeves up Nigeria", and "Reclaim Naija", among others were formed in order to mobilize and create awareness for mass participation in the election. Since these groups were mostly dominated by young people, they heavily employed social media to initiate and put up youth presidential debates, and shared intelligence to push forward the campaign for credible elections on social media platforms. In doing this, the mainstream media struck a working relationship with social media platforms that enhance both citizen's participation and professional journalist practices. Journalists from various media organizations in the country engaged with citizens on Facebook and citizen's contributions informed the journalist's questions during interviews with political institution such as INEC. For instance, there was convergence of different media of communication like the print media and television and social networking sites to monitor, cover and report election proceedings from different polling stations. In regard to this, Channels Television features regular live coverage through their websites, ipad, iphone, and other devices.

During the elections, the organization established a four-person social media team, with one each handling the website, Twitter, Facebook, and the fourth feeding information from the newsroom to the other three members of the team (Asuni & Farris, 2011). This therefore facilitated simultaneous transition on Television, Twitter, and Facebook respectively. In the same vein, Thisday News Study and Tell magazine were able to used Facebook to update people with proceedings of the election as well as provided the avenue for members of the public to post their comments on Facebook and interprets concepts, events, and issues they cover (Arowolo, 2017).Framing is employed to symbolize the communicative element that influences people's inclination to attribute one meaning to another. Efficient communication with a broad audience can be achieved through skillfully structured framing of meanings and topics. Politicians have the ability to effectively frame their visions in a manner that enables the public to comprehend their importance and embrace them. In general, framing has the effect of creating a social reality that people will use to interpret facts and occurrences. Similar to old media, social media can offer "a primary organizing idea or story narrative that offers meaning to an expanding strip of events. The frame makes clear the central contention and the problem. (Gamson & Modigliani 1987 as cited in Lechman & Jack, 2019) However, in old forms of media, the ability to frame is in the hands of journalists, editors, publishers, producers, networks, etc., and there is a distinct line between framers and audiences. This distinction is blurred by social media since "the people traditionally identified as the audience" participate in the framing (Rosen 2012). When using social media sites, it is frequently difficult to identify the subject of framing or the entity entrusted with the power to undertake framing activities.

The content that individuals view on social media platforms is not created by these platforms; rather, the algorithms in charge of our timelines decide what information we see. Individuals who possess the skill to utilize algorithms and have the power to shape narratives on social media platforms. This can be advantageous as it empowers individuals who are not typically in positions of authority to present their own perspectives, thus exposing audiences to a broader range of viewpoints, influences, concerns, and potential solutions (Lechman & Brighton, 2019). Social media also raises the possibility of misinformation and manipulation. It becomes more challenging to determine the true writers, the audience reach, and the goal of the content as propagandistic content saturates our newsfeeds. Undoubtedly, framing theory serves as a helpful filter for assessing false information on social media. In order to "promote a certain problem description, causal interpretation, moral judgment, and/or treatment prescription," research may attempt to locate the original source of information and track how audiences accept the frame (Entman 1993). Political propaganda, which involves the strategic framing of messages to advance specific political agendas, is prevalent in Nigerian social media, particularly during elections and other politically charged events. The framing theory provides a valuable framework for analyzing how social media and political propaganda operate in Nigeria, and how they shape public perceptions and attitudes (Tandoc et al., 2018).

CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter will attempt to describe the method employed both in data analysis and in data collection. The chapter discusses the following research design, research method, population of the study, sample size and sample techniques, research instrument, validity of the research instrument, reliability of research instrument, method of administration of research instrument, method of data analysis and presentation of data. It presents a set of guidelines for this study and states explicitly the sampling procedures to be adopted, the stages involved, and other procedures anticipated in the methodological design phase.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

This refers to the skeletal structure or the architectural blueprint of a research process. The study design here takes cognizance of the type, timeline and purpose of research as proposed by Babbie (2013). This research piece adopts a descriptive-explanatory and survey design. This implies firstly, that the purpose would be both to describe certain features of the population using data collected and also explain relationships and associations between and among selected variable. Finally, it's survey research; which implies the use of Questionnaires.

3.2 RESEARCH METHOD

The research design to be adopted for this study is the survey research method. As the name implies, survey is a research method, which focuses on a representative sample derived from the entire population of the study. The reason for choosing the survey method is because it aims not only at collection of data but also at discovering meaning in the data collected so that the fact can be better interpreted, explained and understood.

3.3 POPULATION OF THE STUDY

Nwodu (2023) defined the population of the study as the total number of elements within a given environment which the researcher set out of the study.

Based on the research case study, this project suggests that the researcher should use the populace of Ilorin metropolis Ilorin, Kwara.

Recently, Ilorin is one of the most densely populated cities in Nigeria, with an estimated 974,000 residents. According to Metrotrends 2024, The metro area population of Ilorin in 2024 was 1,030,000, a 3% increase from 2023. The study population consists of selected male and female students in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State. For the inclusion criteria, the respondents needed would be included, while concerning the exclusion criteria, the respondents not needed for the study would be excluded. In other words, only the local government chosen would be considered for the study. This implies that every element, subject, objects, etc. is capable of providing useful and relevant data in explaining a certain phenomenon of a given study.

As a result of the large population of the people, It is selected purposively due to accessibility and proximity to sample size. For this research, the researcher will randomly select one hundred (100) respondents from Ilorin East. To this end 100 respondents will be purposely selected for the study from the population of the people.

3.4 SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLE TECHNIQUES

The selection of the sample size of this study employed purposive Sampling Techniques and these help to generate unique insight into the phenomenon under investigation. Sampling involves simple random and purposive selection of sample for the study. For the purpose of the population targeted the research sample will be limited to a manageable size of one hundred (100). Therefore, the adoption of the purposive sampling techniques is to select 100 respondents in the Ilorin East local government area. This study makes use of purposive sampling for the Ilorin East residents which is the unit of analysis and simple random sampling was used to select 100 respondents from Ilorin East residents which makes a total sample size of 100 Ilorin East residents.

The study could not be carried out on all the respondents in the Ilorin metropolis. However, this is to take the sample as the systematic simple random sampling due to the large population. 100 respondents will be selected from the chosen local government area which is Ilorin east, precisely respectively to administer the questionnaires.

3.5 DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Research instruments are said to be different tools or devices used in collecting data. Therefore, in this research, questionnaires are being used as the instrument for data collection. Questionnaire is mostly used in conducting surveys and it is as important as the whole research itself. According to Saadudeen (2015), Questionnaire is used to determine the outcome of a research exercise. This study employs the usage of a close-ended question to formulate its questionnaire.

3.6 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENT

The instrument (questionnaire) to be used for this study will be designed and given to experts in research for their input. It will also be given to the project supervisor for validation before it is produced for mass usage. To test the reliability of the instrument the researcher conducted a pilot study involving 100 students of Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin. This was done to confirm if prospective respondents can understand and respond to the instrument appropriately. It was also to confirm that data to be generated using the instrument will help provide answers to the research questions.

3.7 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

This study will be using structured questionnaires for sampled electorates. The questionnaire has a set of questions divided into themes that take into account the study objectives. A questionnaire is suitable for this study because it has the ability to generate standard data from all sampled respondent

The area of the study is television as a campaign tool in the electorate choices of elections in Ilorin kwara state. The population of the study is made up of different Ilorin metropolis residents and voters and government agencies in Ilorin, Kwara state.

3.8 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis of data focuses on the five research questions formulated in this study. Data collected and collated will be analysed using simple percentages for easy understanding while the presentation was done with the aid of tables and charts. They will be presented in frequency tables so as to provide a visual aid for the data collected. Moreover, tables and charts are the most effective, simplest, and understandable methods of analyzing complexes.

CHAPTER FOUR
DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

Data analysis is the most crucial part of any research. Data analysis summaries collected data. It is a process used by researchers for reducing data to a story and interpreting it to derive insights. In this chapter data are organized into tables so that statically and logical conclusions can be gotten from the collected data and findings will be discussed. In this research work, the simple percentage tabular presentation in presenting the primary data generated from the field. Doing this would enable easy, convenience, clarity and vetted comprehension The researcher presents all the questionnaire items that would provide answers to the researchers identified problem and all presentations and analysis shall be in conformity with questionnaire items and responses.

4.1. ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Data presentation is defined as the process of using various graphical formats to visually represent the relationship between two or more data sets so that an informed decision can be made based on them. It also refers to the organization and presentation of data into tables, graphs, charts etc. However, the organization and presentation of data shall be according to questionnaire items and responses, in the (15) Fifteen questionnaire items developed from the three framed researcher questions, the researcher aimed at using them to provide an answer to his topic problem.

A total of one hundred (100) copies of the questionnaire were produced and distributed to the researcher sample populace. All presentations are done in simple percentage tabular mode, while simple descriptive analysis technique was used to describe what items were contained in the tables.

DISTRIBUTION TABLE

Respondent	Frequency
Number of questionnaire distributed	100
Number of questionnaire returned	100
Number of discard	Nil
Number of questionnaire not returned	Nil
Number of questionnaire presented and analyzed	100

From the above table it can be seen that the respondents were people of Ilorin. Number of questionnaire distributed were 100, the percentage was 100%, number of questionnaire returned was 100, no of discard was Nil, number of questionnaire not returned Nil and number of questionnaire presented and analyzed are 100.

4.2. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS
SECTION A- BIO DATA OF THE RESPONDENTS
QUESTION 1: Distribution of sex respondens
Table I

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Male	52	52%

Female	48	48%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Work 2025

In the response to the question on the distribution of respondents according to their sex, 52 respondents representing 52% of the population are male while 48 representing 48% are female.

QUESTION 2: Distribution of the age of respondent
Table II

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
16-20	24	24%
21-25	72	72%
26-30	3	3%
31 and above	1	1%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Work 2025

In the above table, 24 respondents on 24% fall between the age bracket of (16-20) years and 72 respondents on 72% fall between the age bracket of (21-30) years. For the age bracket of (36-45) years we have 3 respondents on 3% and then 21 respondents 1% for the age 46 years and above.

QUESTION 3:Marital Status
Table III

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Single	82	82%
Married	17	17%
Separate	1	1%
Divorce	0	0%
TOTAL	100	100%

Source:Field Work 2025

The table 3 above shows the Marital Status of the respondents. According to the table 82 (82%) of the respondents are single, 17 (17%) are married, 1 (1%) of the respondents is separated while 0 (0%) is divorce.

QUESTION 4: Occupation of Respondent
Table IV

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Self employed	12	12%
Civil servants	0	0%
Employed	5	5%
Student	83	83%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Work 2025

Table above shows the occupation of the respondents, according to the table 12 (12%) are respondents for self employed, 0 (0%) are civil servants, 5 (5%), are employed, while 83 (83%) are students.

SECTION B
QUESTION 5: To what extent do you get exposed to political content on social media?
Table V

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
High	55	76%
Moderate	25	24%
Low	20	
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Work 2025

From the table above, It shows the extent respondent get exposed to political contents on social media in which 55 (55%) of the respondents exposure to political content on social media is high, 25(25%) of the respondents exposure to political content on social media is moderate while 20 (20%) of the respondent exposure to social media is low.

QUESTION 6: How do you perceive these political campaign messages on social media?

Table XI

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Highly Influential	40	40%
Minimal Influential	29	29%
Not influential	31	31%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Work 2025

The table above shows how influential respondent perceive political campaign messages on social media in which 40(40%) of the respondent are highly influential, 29 (29%) of the respondent are minimal influential while 31(31%) of the respondent are not influential towards social media campaign messages.

QUESTION 7: How do you perceive the contributions of social media to the processes of political participation in Nigeria?

Table VII

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGES
Positive	55	55%
Negative	32	32%
I can't say	13	13%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Work 2025

From the above table, it shows how respondent perceive the contribution of social media to the political participation in Nigeria in which 55 (55%) of the respondent agree that social media are being positive, 32 (32%) of the respondent are negative while 13 (13%) of the respondent can't say.

QUESTION 8: Do you agree social media is actively used in the promotion of propagandist statements and agenda?
Table VIII

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	67	67%
No	23	23%
I can't say	10	10%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Work 2025

From the above table, it shows that 67(67%) of the respondents agree that social media is actively used in the promotion of propagandist statements and agenda while 23(23%) of the respondent disagree and 10 (10%) of the respondent can't say.

QUESTION 9: To what extent is social media being used to encourage the electorate/candidates political relationship?
Table IX

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
High	62	62%
Moderate	28	28%
Low	10	10%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Work 2025

From the above table, it shows the extent in which social media I'd used to encourage electorate/candidates political relationship in which 62(62%) of the respondents consider that high, while 28 (28%) respondent consider that moderate anc 10 (10%) of the respondent consider that low..

QUESTION 10: Do you agree social media users influenced by propagandist statements being promoted on social media?
Table X

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	40	40%
No	50	50%
I don't know	10	10%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Work 2025

The above table shows that social media users are influenced by propagandist statements being promoted on social media in which 40 (40%) of the respondents agree while 50 (50%) of the respondents disagree with that and 10 (10%) don't know.

QUESTION 11: Do you agree with political opinions formed as a result of exposure to propagandist statements on social media propaganda campaign?
Table XII

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	40	45%
No	35	35%
I can't say	25	8%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Work 2025

The above table shows respondent response on political opinions formed as a result of exposure to propagandist statements on social media propaganda campaign in which 40 (40%) of the respondents agree with that, 35 (35%) of the respondents disagree with that, 25 (25%) of the respondents consider it can't really say whether yes or no.

QUESTION 12: Is there correlation between social media exposure to Propaganda and new political opinion?
Table XII

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	40	40%
No	20	20%
Not Sure	40	40%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Work 2025

The above table shows the views of the respondent on if there correlation between social media exposure to Propaganda and new political opinion in which 40 (40%) of the respondents agree, while 20 (20%) of the respondents disagree, and 40 (40%) of the respondent are not sure.

QUESTION 13: To what extent have social media being used as tools for political propaganda?
Table XIII

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
High	67	67%
Moderate	23	23%
Low	10	10%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Work 2025

The above table shows how much social media is being used as tools for political propaganda as 67 (67%) respondents' responses are high, 23 (23%) of the respondents are moderate and 10 (10%) of the respondents are low.

QUESTION 14: To what extent have social media being used more than the conventional mass media as tools for political propaganda?

Table XIV

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGES
High	50	50%
Moderate	35	35%
Low	15	15%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Work 2025

From the above table, it shows the respondents response on the extent social media being used more than the conventional mass media as tools for political propaganda as 50(50%) of the respondent response are high, 35(35%) of the respondents are low while 15 (15%) of the respondent are low.

QUESTION 15: How effective is social media as tools of ensuring free, fair and credible election in Nigeria?
Table XI

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
High	83	83%
Moderate	17	10%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Work 2025

The above table shows the respondent response on how effective is social media as tools of ensuring free, fair and credible election in Nigeria as 83 (83%) of the respondent are high concerning the effectiveness of social media as tools to ensure free and fair election while 17(17%) of the respondent response are moderate.

4.3 ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

RESEARCH QUESTION 1: IS SOCIAL MEDIA USED IN THE PROMOTION OF PROPAGANDIST STATEMENTS AND AGENDA?

Table 8 answered this research question as it was gathered in Table 8, It shows that 67(67%) of the respondents agree that social media is actively used in the promotion of propagandist

statements and agenda while 23(23%) of the respondent disagree and 10 (10%) of the respondent can't say.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2: TO WHAT DEGREE IS SOCIAL MEDIA USED IN THE PROMOTION OF PROPAGANDIST AGENDA?
Table 14 answered this research question in which Table 14. It shows the extent of social media being used more than the conventional mass media as tools for political propaganda as 50(50%) of the respondent responses are high, 35(35%) of the respondents are low while 15 (15%) of the respondents are low.

RESEARCH QUESTION 3: ARE SOCIAL MEDIA USERS INFLUENCED BY PROPAGANDIST STATEMENTS BEING PROMOTED ON SOCIAL MEDIA?
Table 10 answered this research question. The above table shows that social media users are influenced by propagandist statements being promoted on social media in which 40 (40%) of the respondents agree while 50 (50%) of the respondents disagree with that and 10 (10%) don't know.

RESEARCH QUESTION 4: ARE POLITICAL OPINIONS FORMED AS A RESULT OF EXPOSURE TO PROPAGANDIST STATEMENTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN?
Table 11 answered this research question. The above table shows respondent response on political opinions formed as a result of exposure to propagandist statements on social media propaganda campaign in which 40 (40%) of the respondents agree with that, 35 (35%) of the respondents disagree with that, 25 (25%) of the respondents consider it can't really say whether yes or no.

RESEARCH QUESTION 5: IS THERE CORRELATION BETWEEN SOCIAL MEDIA EXPOSURE TO PROPAGANDA AND NEW POLITICAL OPINION?
Table 12 answered this research question as it shows the views of the respondent on if there correlation between social media exposure to Propaganda and new political opinion in which 40 (40%) of the respondents agree, while 20 (20%) of the respondents disagree, and 40 (40%) of the respondent are not sure.

4.4 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS
 The purpose of this study is to examine "PERCEPTION OF ELECTORATE ON THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AS AN INSTRUMENT OF POLITICAL PROPAGANDA". The result obtained from the statistical analysis in this study was used to provide an answer to this research study, as data were presented into tables using simple percentage tabular presentation in the chapter four of this study to provide an answer to the question raised in this study.

 Definite questions were asked in the questionnaire to generate answers to each of the questions posed in this study, 100 questionnaires were administered to the respondent and all the copies of the questionnaire were returned.
This study sought to examine the views of the electorate of political post on the impact in which social media has which serves as an instrument of political propaganda. The main instrument for

data collection of this survey is questionnaire, which was used to find out the perception of the sampled population. However, after carefully analysing the data collected using statistical table, the findings will be discussed in the following order.

From the research conducted where we had a population size that constitutes both males and females, people from different age bracket ranging from less than 20 to 36 years and above, sex, marital status, educational qualification and occupational status, we were able to deduce that the simple random sampled respondents for this research were respondents who were able to make use of social media.

Based on the outcome of data gathered from the respondents who answered the research questions and the analyzed data presented in table, it was found that the respondents proved that to a greater extent, social media have been used to encourage the electorate/candidates' political relationship. This is based on the result of both the empirical and conceptual clarifications as well as the analyzed data from the respondents as they relate to research question. Also, findings made from data presented and analyzed in the table confirmed that, to a greater extent, social media have been sued as tools for political propaganda. Based on the outcome of the data generated research revealed that, to a greater extent, social media have been used more than the conventional mass media as tools for political propaganda.

CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1   SUMMARY

The research study is based on "PERCEPTION OF ELECTORATE ON THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AS AN INSTRUMENT OF POLITICAL PROPAGANDA". This research work is divided into five main chapters from chapter one of this study to chapter five, which clearly reviewed some steps and approach for easy presentation of its contents.

Chapter one is based on the background of the study with emphasis on social media are highly regulated in the economy because the news and other information they report can have positive or negative effect on peoples' perception regarding phenomenon or political landscape of a nation.
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The chapter Two of this research work deals with review of relevant literature. The review made a notable attempt towards examining the stands of various authors and scholars as with the influence and impact of social media platforms on the publication of daily propaganda. This chapter also has several reviews of related studies (empirical review). The chapter also includes a theoretical framework which discusses a couple of mass communication theories and its relevance to this study. In a nutshell, the work of scholars, their postulations, theoretical assumptions and literary documents that were consulted and reviewed was done for reasonable generalization, coupled with the findings of the study itself.
Uses and gratification theory and framing theory are used as in the project to explain and expatiate the generalized hypothesis.

Chapter three of this work deals with the research methodology adopted. The researchers used descriptive design survey, a component of survey method of research for collecting the required data. Simple Random Sampling Technique coupled with the descriptive survey method of research which involves the use of questionnaires as research instruments was deployed. The total of 100 respondents that were selected randomly formed the sample of this study.

In chapter four, the data gathered through the use of questionnaires as aforementioned in the third chapter of this study was analysed using a statistical table. Also, interpretations of the findings were made in line with responses gotten from respondents. The data were analysed

based on the one hundred (100) questionnaires that was issued out and completely returned by respondents.

Consequently, data obtained from respondents shows that social media have been sued as tools for political propaganda. Based on the outcome of the data generated, research revealed that, to a greater extent, social media have been used more than the conventional mass media as tools for political propaganda.

The study revealed that social media promotes political propaganda and manipulates the perception of the electorate which changes the outcome of elections. Ultimately, the paper argues that a comprehensive approach is needed to regulate the spread of political propaganda on social media platforms in Nigeria, which include; the creation of digital literacy programs that focuses on media literacy and online etiquette, deeper cooperation between the Nigerian government and social media platforms to curb the spread of political propaganda, the establishment of legal frameworks to punish offenders, mitigating political propaganda are some of the recommendations highlighted in this study.

5.2   CONCLUSION

Fake news and sophisticated disinformation through social media are especially problematic in democratic systems, and there is growing debate on how to address these issues without undermining the benefits of digital media as well as infringing the right to freedom of expression. The misuse of social media for propaganda purposes has led to the proliferation of fake news, hate speeches, and divisive narratives, impacting public discourse and trust in institutions. It is evident that social media plays a crucial role in shaping political landscapes, making it imperative to address the challenges associated with the spread of political propaganda as the potential consequences of false or misleading information are concerning.

Therefore, in order to maintain an open, democratic system and to safeguard the integrity of democratic systems, it is important that government, media practitioners, business, and consumers work together to solve these problems. Governments should promote news literacy

and strong professional journalism in their societies. The news industry must provide high-quality journalism in order to build public trust and correct fake news and disinformation without legitimizing them. Technology companies should invest in tools that identify fake news, reduce financial incentives for those who profit from disinformation, and improve online accountability. Educational institutions should make informing people about news literacy a high priority. Government, through the National Information and Technology Development Agency, should monitor the content shared on social media platforms. Given that many individuals tend to believe and rely on what they read or see on these platforms. Clear legal frameworks and penalties should be established for individuals or groups found guilty of intentionally spreading false or misleading information on social media platforms. This can act as a deterrent and discourage the dissemination of political propaganda. Finally, individuals should follow a diversity of news sources, and be skeptical of whatwatc they read and watch.

5.3   RECOMMENDATION

- Politicians in the State in particular and Nigeria in general should truthfully use political propaganda and not as an instrument of political manipulation to the detriment of society in general.

- Both the electorate and political parties/their candidates should use social media as tools for positive political socialization and not for negative political purposes.

- Both social media and conventional mass media should be converged to encourage the masses to be politically involved for the benefit of those who are living in the state in particular and Nigeria in general.

- Promoting critical thinking and media literacy. People need to be able to critically evaluate the information that they see on social media, and they need to be aware of the ways that propaganda can be used to manipulate them.

- Supporting fact-checking organizations. Fact-checking organizations play an important role in combating the spread of misinformation on social media. They can help identify and debunk false claims, and they can provide people with accurate information.

- Encouraging diversity of voices. Social media platforms should be designed to promote diversity of voices. This means giving equal weight to all viewpoints, regardless of their popularity.

- Holding social media companies accountable. Social media companies need to be held accountable for the content that is hosted on their platforms. They need to take steps to remove harmful content, and they need to be transparent about how they are handling the issue of misinformation.

- The challenges of regulating social media are complex, but it is important to find ways to address them. Social media has the potential to be a powerful force for good, but it can also be used for harm. By working together, regulators and social media companies can help ensure that social media is a safe and positive space for everyone.

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