

**AUDIENCE PERCEPTION OF SOCIAL
MEDIA AS TOOLS OF MOBILIZING
YOUTHS FOR ELECTIONS
(A CASE STUDY OF ILORIN EAST ELECTORATE)**

BY

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CERTIFICATION

This project work has been examined and approved as meeting the requirements of Department of Mass communication, Institute of Information and Communication Technology, I State Polytechnic, Ilorin, I State. In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Award of Higher National Diploma (HND) in Mass communication.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this project firstly to God Almighty, for the opportunity HE grant unto me to this very point .

To my parents, for their endless sacrifices and unwavering belief in my potential, this achievement is a reflection of your faith in me.

Also dedicate this project to my beloved brother, whose unconditional love, support, and encouragement have been my greatest source of strength throughout this journey.

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ABSTRACT

This research work examined audience perception of social media as a tool for mobilizing youths for elections, with a focus on Ilorin East electorate in Kwara State. The study aimed to investigate the extent to which social media influences youth political participation, how it shapes their perception of politics, and whether online engagement translates to real-world electoral involvement. The research adopted a survey method, distributing questionnaires to 100 respondents, and utilized both quantitative and qualitative analysis. Findings revealed that a majority of the youth engage frequently with social media, perceive it as a powerful mobilization tool, and are significantly influenced by political content online. The study concludes that social media has become instrumental in enhancing political awareness and participation among youths, although limitations such as misinformation and digital divides remain. Recommendations were made for leveraging digital platforms responsibly to promote inclusive democratic engagement among Nigerian youths.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Ever since, social media platforms have emerged to be viable tools of political engagement around the world. Since, Nigeria is stepping up to the current wave and leading in the internet penetration metrics in Nigerian, it is therefore very important to study how social media platforms have affected the election process. The 2019 electoral year in Nigeria showed social media playing a very vital role. What hitherto could only be watched on television screens or read in the dailies began being Tran social media live and direct through various social media handles such as Face book, twitter and Instagram. The phenomenon has only increased with the 2019 general elections. Politics seemed to have left a murky dark world and entered into the limelight. Various candidates also exploited these social media to showcase themselves and their ideologies to Nigeria and the world as a whole.

The candidates became like the proverbial goldfish without a hiding place. Secrets became open and everything came under the scrutiny of the public. More importantly however, youths, who hitherto had exhibited a lukewarm attitude to politics, became very 2 influences of social media on youth participation in politics in Nigeria: A case of the 2015/2019 general elections the 2015/2019 General Elections active participants, maybe not through direct involvement, but in following the political trends and freely commenting about it online. Before, during and after the 2015 elections and the just conclude 2019 elections, youths through social media showed a lot of interest in the election process. It is worthy to note that the previous administration in Nigeria witnessed a lot of critic social media on social media because social media was an avenue to say one's mind without the fear of

consequences. All the activities of the previous social media such as Face book, twitter, Instagram and Whatsapp. With the affordability of social media art phones and easy access to the apps of these social media at their fingertips, getting current news became easier and posting comments about such news also became easier and the anonymity and spontaneity of these media provided easy platform for at least weeks before ones opinion could be aired. Social media has made it possible ro read a news item and comment upon it immediately. Politics wasn't a field usually veered into by youths as the African culture did not give much leeway to youths airing opinions where elders are. This has prevented a lot of youths in the pas from participating in politics. But with the advent of the immediacy of social media, the trend changed, social media became a forum to air ones opinion, criticize government and make suggestions.

The general elections in Nigeria marked a turning point in the use of social media for awareness, campaigns, discourse and even outright posting of election results. Candidates ranging from presidential to senatorial used the various social media platforms to vigorously campaign and sell their ideologies to the teeming number of Nigerians of these platforms. Hitherto political lethargic Nigerian electorates also used these media to campaign for their candidates, air their political views and engage others in political discussions (Okoro and Nwafor, 2013). The period was a very eventful one in the history of Nigerian politics and political participation as youths were vigorously involved in passing comments about their candidates and making contributions online.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem for a long time, due to many factors, including the nature of communication in Nigeria, youths has little opportunity to be active in

election, or make their views heard. However, with improvement in communication technology, the status appears to be changed. Internet tools like the social media have revolutionaries the way people communicate. In Nigeria youths, who have higher levels of affinity with the social media, are using it to achieve different ends. It holds lots of potential for new, information, entertainment, New Media, Mass Communication, mobilization, interaction and expression. Given these potentials, it is pertinent to find out how the social media impacts the issue of governance and political participation by youths. Some studies have been carried, most focusing on events such as protests. It is however pertinent to examine how the leadership and the political atmosphere has been changed, with relation to youths access to social media.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This work examined audience perception of social media at tools for mobilizing the youths of election in Nigeria.

1. To find out whether or not youth participated actively in the previous general elections in Nigeria
2. To find out youth perception of politics before they got on social media
3. To find out if social media influenced their participation in politics or otherwise
4. To find out whether or not youth online participation in politics translated to real life participation

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the perception of youths about politics before social media
2. How actively did youths participate in the general elections in Nigeria
3. Has social media influenced youth participation in politics

4. Does youth online participation in politics translate to participation in real life

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of using social media for political participation include grinding citizens the opportunity of participate actively and get involved fully in the political discourse by adding their voices on issues posted on social media sites. The platforms also afford electorates a friendlier avenue of assessing candidates for political offices and promoting transparency in governance, thus, advancing the tenets of participatory democracy that sees the media as Debate Avenue which aid tremendously the actualization of involvement in politics.

Social media also offer a range of potentials for innovating governance and finding new ways of governing by creating an opportunity of listening to citizens' opinion pool online, thereby setting ideas about citizenry needs including the possible reaction of people towards public decision-making processes. The platforms equally provide politicians with the opportunity to be informally free with the public as politicians can reach the masses to assess the political atmosphere even before venturing into the campaign. This connection helps politicians to appeal to citizens, communicate their humor, indicate their approach ability, as well as accessibility to the public, thereby making them seem more personable and in constant contact with their supporters.

1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of this study is to find out audience perception of social media as a toll of mobilizing youths for elections.

The study adopts survey method to sample the opinion of the selected population Ilorin east electorates, through the use questionnaire techniques to gather

information on required on the research. However, the sample size of 50 electorates will be selected through stratified and random sampling techniques.

Social media has been used by nations, organizations, and people all around the world to attract voters' attention and increase public political engagement (ERUBAMI, 2020). The ability of social media in Nigeria to promote and amplify political engagement has also been amply proved (Erubami, 2020). Politicians, political parties that independent National Electoral commission (INEC), and more lately, political movements (like the obedient Movement). Are frequently seen during general elections frantically attempting to engage with Nigerians via different social.

1.7 DEFINITION OF TERM

Election: an election is a process in which people vote to choose a person or group to hold an official position. An election is a democratic procedure through which one or more persons or representatives in certain bodies.

Electorates; this refers to the people who a election especially their number e.g. the term size of the electorate.

Social Media; social media refers to the means of interactions among people in which they create, share, and /or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and network.

Youths: this refers as a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood's independence has an experience that greatly shape an individual's level of dependency, which can be marked in various ways according to different cultural perspective

Mobilization: the act or process of marshaling. Organizing, or preparing something for action

Audience perception; is all about what a viewer brings to a given piece of media content in order to give it meaning

Participation: an act of instance of participating or the fact of taking part, in some action or attempt

Voting behaviour: voting behavior pertains to the action or inactions of citizens in respect of participating in the election that take place for member of their local regional or national government.

Politics : politics is the set of activities that are associated with making decisions in groups or other forms of power relations between individuals, such as the distribution of resources or status

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Good governance has been a key concept for democratic development in many countries around the world during the past few decades. The explanations of good governance can be varied. One of these, which is widely accepted, focuses on the capability of the state to perform its key functions in response to the needs of its citizens, and to be accountable for what it does. Emphasis has therefore been placed on a people-centred ideology needs of the people, public interest, transparency, accountability and responsibility of the policy-makers. All these have also become central to establishing sustainable development. Youths can play an important part in every society. They can be a creative force, a dynamic source of innovations, and they have undoubtedly, throughout history, participated, contributed, and even catalyzed important changes in political systems, power-sharing dynamics and economic opportunities.

Titus Fannie, Akpan & Moses (2013) however identify some contrary issues in relation to social media's positive influence on governance. These are two arguments against the idea that social media can make a difference in the national politics of a state. "The first is the fact that the tools themselves are actually ineffective, and second, that these tools can produce as much harm to any process of democratization as they can produce good". The critique that social media can be ineffective stems from the fact that casual participants to activities and actions such as large-scale social protests seek social change through low-cost activities such as joining a particular Facebook group, hash tagging a trending statement e.g. bring back our girls on Twitter or commenting on forums.

2.1 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1.1 Concept of Social Media

Social media refers to the means of interactions among people in which they create, share, and/or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. The office of communications and marketing manages the main Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube accounts. concept of political participation. Social media refers to a variety of technologies that facilitate the sharing of ideas and information among their users. From Facebook and Instagram to X platform (formerly Twitter) and YouTube, more than 4.7 billion people use social media, equal to roughly 60% of the world's population. Users accessed chat and messaging apps and websites, followed closely by social platforms.

Social media have revolutionized the use of the internet as a tool to promote products and promote their sale. opens the possibility of less financially challenging and effective online marketing, offering new approaches to direct contact with potential customers, inspire in developing business and communication strategy. Every day, millions of users publish their articles, photos and videos with the help of services such as YouTube, or WordPress and share them with others. The phenomenon of user generated content is moved to the center of interest in about the year 2005 with the arrival of waves so called Web 2.0. Many experts led by Tim O'Reilly pointed to the rising trend of involving the user directly to the creation of the site. Thus formed web has become more targeted and more useful. Best seen on the web pages, which today are symbols of social media: Facebook, YouTube and Twitter. Probably with the best definition came Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein, who labelled social media as "a group of internet applications built on the

ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content.

2.1.2 Uses of Social Media

Communication

The tools that are used in the communication sector are basically a very well-known form of social media platform. These tools include blogs and websites where you are provided an ability to create articles and blogs to interact, communicate, inform and empower your audiences. Other uses also include social media sites such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram that further increase the chances of communication between individuals with the help of personal details, comments, image, video posts, and a lot more. With the help of these platforms, individuals are able to build strong personal relationships with each other. Businesses can communicate with their audiences in a productive manner.

Collaboration

Most of us use many different tools that have a social aspect attached to them and we use these tools on a regular basis as well. Let us give you an example. Have you ever heard of wikipedia. Well, it is a knowledge platform that provides the people with an ability to update their views. It is basically an encyclopedia that is online and can be used and updated by anyone. Also, there is another example in the form of Google Docs that enables the people to edit and share documents and that too online. You will also be able to download and upload files with the help of this collaborative tool, which is known as social media as it enables multiple users to take advantage of a singular platform. Different individuals can collaborate in the most personalized and result driven manner to get the expected outcomes in a well-synchronized fashion.

Entertainment

Social media serves as a platforms to entertain people. Games like farmville and mafia wars are the primetime games that are played on the social media sites. Also, the entertainment industry is all dependent on the social media platforms as well. Take the example of sites that promote entertainment. There are many channels that promote live entertainment and it is all due to the use of social media. These sites not only increase the interaction between the people but they also keep the people entertained.

Media Sharing

Most popular and well-known sites that can be used for sharing media is YouTube. With over 500 million followers, this website is already on the map due to the amazing things that it offers to its users. Also, Vimeo is another site that helps in sharing media. These are also the sites that help people create the channels and have interactions with one another. Also, there are some sites that can help share music as well. Sites like Spotify and others come with specific features of sharing music, which can be all well and good for the people. With the help of social media, we now have the chance to download and upload media content with ease.

Paid Advertising

Uses of social media are also very effective running paid ads on different social media portals. Social platforms like Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Snapchat, Pinterest, etc., enable you to run paid ads on them.

Social Media channels already enjoy a wide audience base that you can demographically target to optimize the online presence of your brand, product, and services. You can also track the performance of your paid ad campaigns and accordingly, you can tweak your campaign to ensure better results. Social Media ads are also very affordable, and you will be getting better returns on your

investments. Paid ads will be shown to your target audiences that will help in lead generation and conversions.

Wrapping Up,

Social Media certainly has many different uses when it comes to diversity. From AI to brands, every single field is dependent on social media. Whether you agree or not, social media is an integral part of our lives. It is really important that we know all about the importance of social media to take advantage in the most beneficial way. If you want to know what would be the uses of social media for your business then feel free to share your business details with us. Our experts will guide you in the best-personalized manner possible.

- Types of Social Media
- Video social media
- Audio social media
- Business social media
- Shoppable social media
- Private or closed social media
- Inspirational social media
- Discussion forums
- Social media live stream
- Social blogging sites and networks

The uses of social media significantly impact mental health, it can enhance connection, increase self-esteem, and improve a sense of belonging. According to recent research people spend 2 or 3hrs daily on social media. Youtube, tiktok, instagram and facebook have become increasingly popular among youth in 2022, and one-third think they spend too much time on these platforms. The consideration

time people spend on social media worldwide has directed researchers attention towards the potential benefits and risks. Research shows excessive use is mainly associated with lower psychological well-being.

2.1.3 Strength of Social Media

Social media has become one of the pillars of modern society that has a significant impact on the political participation among youth in Nigeria. Nigeria has over than 6.61 million active social media users in January 2023 which forms 58.4% of the population (Nigeria News 2023), social media like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter have developed into effective tools for political activism, social media, mobilization, and communication (Kidd and McIntosh 2016). This study explores how social media has affected youth engagement in politics in Nigeria and its potential implications for the country's democratic development. Social media affects the extent to which youth are engaged in politics in Nigeria through its ability to amplify youth voices and provide a platform for political expression (George and Leidner 2019). Young people may now share their thoughts, discuss politics, and rally around causes that are important to them because of social media.

Also, social media has facilitated building groups of young people around similar interests and problems, which has increased the effectiveness of their activity social media (González-Bailón and Lelkes 2023). Young people in Nigeria are now more politically engaged and educated due to social media. Young people who have access to a variety of information and news sources can keep up with political events and issues. By offering an environment for political discourse and debate, social media facilitates the dissemination of political information and has prompted younger people to participate more actively in politics (Alarqan 2020).

Additionally, social media has made it possible for young people to participate in political engagement and advocacy in ways that were before impossible.

Social media have been used, for instance, to plan protests, rallies, and other political activisocial media activities. Furthermore, they have been utilized to start campaigns and appeals, which have assisted in bringing political issues to light and putting pressure on decision-makers to take action (Valenzuela 2013). Despite its benefits, social media has had a negative effect on young people's participation in politics in Nigeria since it may be used to disseminate rumors and false information that undermine political literacy and obscure political concerns (Vaccari and Chadwick 2020). A negative effect on political stability and social cohesion can result from the use of such platforms to promote hate speech and encourage violence (Ogbuoshi et al. 2019). Additionally, they could result in echo chambers where people are only exposed to information and viewpoints that support their preexisting convictions (Alatawi et al. 2021)

As a result, there might be more political polarisation and division, which would make it harder to reach agreements and engage in productive debate. As a result, social media significantly influenced Nigeria's youth participation in politics, social media have given youth activity to social media, mobilization, and political expression a potent instrument, but they come with risks and difficulties.

2.1.4 Youths and the New Media

The emergence of social media has contributed immensely to expand the limits of good governance. From open government data, and citizens reporting on government abuses, it has also provided a medium to connect citizens with one another and empower them to hold government accountable. Ehidiemen (2013) says social media has a crucial role to play in ensuring Nigerian leaders are held

accountable. The technology of social media is relatively cheap, and it has made it very relatively easy to access and disseminate important information. Social media has also helped activist organize. And Governments have used its emergence to monitor protest and public opinion on its policies.

Citizens now quickly report crime to the law enforcement agencies. With the advent of social media, web developers and tech savvy youths have developed several web and mobile applications to propagate the information and make their findings public knowledge. The beginning of the use of social media actively in socio-political issues or governance is usually pegged at the 2011 general elections, when there were many strategies taken by both politicians and the mostly new media and mass communication young electorate to harness the social media for campaign and information purposes. Nigerian politicians actively utilized social media in their campaigns. They sent bulk text and voice messages in unprecedented numbers.

They made massive use of Facebook pages and other social media platforms to win support and canvass for votes. President Jonathan declared his intention to run for the presidency with an update on Facebook. In less than twenty days, he accumulated over 100,000 fans. Today, his page has grown to become the second most "liked" head of states in the world after US President Barack Obama. However, those who really took the social media by storm in Nigeria during that time were the youths, Young, IT-savvy internet users congregated online to fully discuss, investigate, inform and share ideas about the issues and personalities concerning the elections, the electoral process and the voting day proper.

Organisations like Nairaland, Enough is Enough Nigeria, ReclaimNaija, and Wangonet established platforms enabling citizens to report election-related incidences with pictures, videos, text messages and voicemail. Agboola (2013) adds that the police, who are sometimes complicit in election malpractice, would have

had to be on the watch out as any brutality or unfair play would be reported on the social media. At the same time, traditional media houses also used new media to disseminate information and gather feedback from viewers.

2.1.5 Current Trends in E-Participation in an Election

Many social media sites are being used by youths to participate in governance, make their voices heard and bring their leaders to order. They include foreign/international media applications and platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram. There are also the indigenous platforms, made by Nigerians for Nigeria that have become very popular among Nigerians at home and in the diaspora. These are Nairaland, Reclaim Naija, Budg IT, Bella Naija, LIB etc. With access to internet getting cheaper, more youths are spending substantial time on the internet on a daily basis. Inevitably, they come across social media posts that relate to governance and socio-political issues, and may get involved in the discussion.

This marks the beginning of their participation. In the last few months, issues of insecurity and terrorism have beleaguered the nation. For many young Nigerians, the social media remains a popular source of not just information about updates, but also place to hear assessments and make sense of the situation together with other users. When about 200 girls were kidnapped from Chibok in Borno state, the issue appeared to be losing publicity without the girls being found, until an internet campaign sprung with a classic social media strategy, the "hashtag" represented with "#".

The #bring back our girls campaign has almost become a household phrase now, with people lending their voices from different parts of the world. It began with just some young Nigerian Twitter users, who were determined that the gravity

of the situation was not underemphasized, and sought to raise support for the missing girls through the social media. Also, the 2014 National Dialogue has witnessed a deluge of contributions from internet users. These are predominantly young Nigerians, keen on being aware and involved in national issues. Platforms for discussion have been created on different social media, to inform, aggregate, suggest, rationalise and deliberated on what is happening in the Dialogue. These include Nairaland's National Dialogue Thread, the #nigeriannationaldialogue on twitter, www.nigeriannationaldialogue.com and the conference's Facebook page which currently has over 104,000 likes on Facebook and many more unregistered visitors.

2.1.6 Youth Mobilization and Election

Youth mobilization involves engaging and empowering young individuals to participate actively in various social, political, or community-related activities. In the context of elections, mobilizing youths often aims to encourage their involvement in the political process, including voter registration, turnout, campaign support, and even running for office.

Here are some strategies for effectively mobilizing youths for elections:

- **Digital Campaigns:** Utilize social media, online platforms, and digital communication to reach and engage young voters. Creating shareable content and using social media influencers can be effective.
- **Youth-Centric Messaging:** Craft messages that resonate with the concerns and aspirations of the youth. Highlight policies and issues that directly impact them.

- **Community Organizing:** Establish youth-led community groups or organizations that focus on political awareness and participation. This fosters a sense of belonging and ownership.
- **Education and Awareness Programs:** Conduct workshops, seminars, and information sessions to educate young people about the electoral process, candidates, and the importance of voting.
- **Inclusive Participation:** Encourage young people to actively participate in campaign activities, volunteering, canvassing, and organizing events. This involvement can create a sense of empowerment and investment in the election process.
- **Peer-to-Peer Outreach:** Employ peer networks for outreach and engagement. Young people are often influenced by their peers, making peer-to-peer communication an effective strategy.
- **Accessibility and Convenience:** Facilitate easy access to voting information, polling locations, and registration processes. Utilize technology to streamline these processes.
- **Youth Candidates and Representatives:** Encourage and support young individuals to run for local or regional offices, fostering a sense of representation and encouraging other youths to engage in the political process.
- **Creative Engagement:** Use creative methods such as art, music, and other cultural events to engage young people. These unconventional approaches can attract attention and interest.

- Continuous Engagement: Mobilization efforts should not end with the election. Continuous engagement and involvement in political processes beyond elections are crucial for sustaining youth participation.
- Empowering and mobilizing youths for elections involves understanding their concerns, engaging them through channels they frequent, and fostering a sense of ownership and impact in the political landscape

2.1.7 Electoral Behavior

Before all else, to understand the causal effect of political advertising on voting behavior, it is first necessary to apprehend the history of voting behavior. Academic voting research roots are located at Columbia University. Lazarsfeld et al. (1944) pioneered the study of electoral behavior. Along with another study headed by Berelson et al. (1954), it paved the road for future researchers. Focusing on presidential campaigns and using surveys, both studies found little impact of media on voters' choice. At the opposite, electoral behavior seemed to be strongly influenced by party loyalty. Based on their study, they posit that religious beliefs, family traditions, social class determination and face-to-face interactions determine electoral choices. These studies stimulated further research. Most important of them is probably the so called "Michigan Model".

Campbell and Kahn (1952) developed the potential explanatory power of surveys. Their repeated national survey gave them information about the various influences on the decision of a vote. It became a long-run research project that lasted for years. Campbell et al. (1960) exploited this enormous database to emphasize the role of long term and short-term influence in voters' behavior. Even though they recognized the importance of long-term party loyalty, they identify also the potential impact of short-term fluctuations in partisan decisions to vote. Moreover, the

emergence of the "rational choice" paradigm with Downs (1957) opened a new discussion. Over the years it gave birth to the "median voter theorem. Furthermore, it revitalized new methods to analyze voters' behavior.

Specifically, it began the quest for causal effect on the electoral choice. Causal models reinforced the discussion with testable hypotheses. However, the "minimal effect" of campaign spending and mass communication on voters' behavior remained over the years. In other words, based on academic literature, long-standing party identification explained most of the political behavior. Nevertheless, Campbell et al. findings that short-term fluctuations were possible opened the door for other studies. In conclusion, personal characteristics and background, or party attachments did not form 100% of the explanatory power of electoral choice.

2.1.8 Youths and Political Participation

Youths and political participation In Nigeria, the trend in politics over the past thirty years (30), have shown the same set of politicians being recycled in government. Active participation in politics especially at the decision and policy making level are filled with people fifty years and above. Even the Nigerian constitution seems to have disenfranchised the youth. Although the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended) gave the minimum age requirement to contest for the House of Representative as 30years that of the Senate as 35years, for governors 35years while for the president is 40years. The monetary requirements for eligibility into any of the post is way above what any normal youth could afford. The 20million naira requirement to enable one contest for the House of Representative as stipulated Section 90 of the Electoral Act (2010) as amended, effectively disenfranchises the normal youth from participating in the countries

decision making body. Youth exclusion in political participation in Africa especially in Nigeria can be traced to the culture of the people. There are two unspoken rules in any typical Nigerian household. First, that a youth should only be seen and not heard and secondly that wisdom resides in the old. This then translates to decision making even in the household.

The youth is not consulted when decisions are to be taken, 8 Influence of Social Media on Youth Participation in Politics in Nigeria: A Case of the 2015/2019 General Elections the 2015/2019 General Elections only told what to do. Also in the larger society, there is the belief that the youth should not be involved in decision or policy making. Therefore, it is no surprise to find that the youth is always at the bottom rung in any political party. Thiers is not to make decision but to carry out the decision of the elders. The role of the youth in any structured political party was the foot soldier, used by the 'elders' to intimidate other political parties, rig elections, cart away ballot boxes or generally create mayhem if the outcome of an election was not favourable to them (Umar, 2016).

2.1.9 Concepts of Social Media as a Tool for Mobilizing Youths for Election

Social media as a tool for mobilizing youths for elections is shaped by several key concepts and factors:

- **Accessibility and Reach:** Social media provides a platform that's easily accessible to a wide range of individuals, including the youth. Its pervasive nature allows for reaching a large audience quickly and effectively
- **Engagement and Interactivity:** Social media allows for two-way communication, enabling engagement between political figures, parties, or movements and the youth. This interactive nature fosters a sense of involvement and empowerment.

- **Information Dissemination:** It serves as a vast repository of information where political messages, agendas, and candidates' platforms can be easily shared. However, the abundance of information can also lead to misinformation and manipulation.
- **Peer Influence and Social Proof:** Youths often seek validation from their peers. Social media creates an environment where political opinions and stances can be influenced by friends, influencers, or online communities, shaping their perception of political candidates and issues.
- **Community Building and Mobilization:** Social media platforms allow the formation of communities and Groups with shared political interests. This creates a sense of belonging and encourages collective action and mobilization
- **Credibility and Trust:** The perception of the credibility of information shared on social media is crucial. Trust in the source and the authenticity of the message significantly influences how it's received and acted upon.
- **Personalization and Targeting:** Political campaigns can customize their messages to target specific demographics, including the youth, based on their preferences and behaviors. This personalized approach can make the message more relevant and engaging.
- **Viral Nature and Amplification:** Content on social media can quickly go viral, reaching a vast audience in a short time. This virality can significantly impact the perception and discussion around political matters.
- **Regulation and Ethics:** The ethical use of social media for political mobilization is a subject of debate. Issues related to privacy, transparency, and the responsible use of data in targeting youth are crucial aspects affecting their perception

- **Activism and Civic Engagement:** Social media serves as a platform for raising awareness and encouraging civic engagement among the youth, empowering them to voice their opinions and participate actively in the political process.

Overall, the perception of social media as a tool for mobilizing youths for elections is shaped by its power to inform, engage, and influence, alongside the ethical considerations and the authenticity of the information shared

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.2.1 Mobilization Theory

Mobilization theory stated that social media has the potential to be an influential tool for encouraging participation in political activities (Dunu and Uzochukwu 2015). It asserts that social media gives political activists the exceptional chance to network with potential supporters and share news about political events and activities (Casteltrione 2016). Thus, they may convince individuals to participate in these events who otherwise might not have known about them. The theory is especially applicable to Nigeria's youth participation. In this setting, social media can be used to propagate political gatherings like rallies or protests and to link young people with like-minded political ideologies (Mandrysz 2016). As a result, social media can encourage young people to engage in political activities by fostering a sense of belonging and common purpose. Social media platforms include tools that can make it easier to communicate and share ideas.

Furthermore, tools like liking, sharing, and commenting on Facebook postings, for instance, may be helpful for expressing support or opposition to a particular political stance or contentious subject. Such social media functions, for instance, could help a political party ascertain whether the supporters of the political party are in favor of or against an idea. Social media networked billions of people

around the world, and changed how individuals participate in politics by giving activists new ways to reach a larger audience, to express their opinions, share news, and organize social movements (Agojo et al. 2023). Social media has the ability to help young people interact with their peers and locate and join already-existing social movements.

Additionally, social media provides a forum for people to talk about their experiences and hear from others about their own. This can help young people to develop a deeper understanding of political issues, as well as to become more informed and engaged citizens (Vraga and Tully 2021). Generally, mobilization theory contends that social media can be a useful instrument for boosting young people's political participation, social media can help to organize youth and inspire them to become more politically active by giving political activists a platform to connect with potential supporters and broadcast information about political events and activities.

2.2.2 The Spiral of Silence Theory

According to the spiral of silence theory, people are more inclined to openly express their thoughts if they believe that such opinions are shared by the majority of people and less likely to do so if they believe that same opinions are held only by a small number of people (Matthes et al. 2018). According to this theory, individuals are influenced by those around them and may be reluctant to voice their own beliefs if they fear negative repercussions or potential social exclusion (Chen 2018). According to the spiral of silence theory, (Neubaum and Krämer 2017) stated that social media may have a major impact on young people's views of public opinion and willingness to voice their political convictions. For instance, if young people see their friends engaging in politics and speaking out publicly on social media, they

may be more motivated to do the same themselves. However, if young people believe their beliefs are in the minority, they could be less inclined to speak up and engage in political activities (Norris 2023).

Fear of social rejection or unfavorable consequences for expressing opinions that differ from the majority may be the cause of this. Individuals may be less eager to communicate with those who hold opposing political ideas, which can lead to the polarization of political beliefs and fragmentation of public debate (Hoffmann and Lutz 2017). According to the spiral of silence theory, SM can have a substantial impact on young people's desire to express their political beliefs and participate in political activities. By influencing public opinion perceptions and creating a sense of societal obligation to conform to the majority's opinions, SM can either encourage or prevent young people from participating in political debates and actions. Recognizing these possible outcomes is crucial, and efforts should be made to foster a more inclusive and diverse political conversation on social.

2.3 EMPIRICAL REVIEW

This focuses on the empirical review of studies related the topic, Audience perception of social media as a too of mobilizing youths for election as explored by tope 1919. Social media has become an essential tool in political mobilization, particularly among young people, due to it's accessibility immediacy, and interactive capability Platforms such as fabebook, twitter, Instagram and whatsapp have transformer traditional political campaigns and voter engagement, enabling mass mobilization and participation especially among youths. The review explores existing empirical studie on the forceptions of social media effectiveness in mobilizing young voters, highlighting its, strengths, challenger, and implications for electoral processes.

Empirical studies level that social media has significantly enhanced political participation among youths, making it an indispensable tool for election mobilization. Okoro and Nwafor (2013) investigated the role of social media during Nigeria's 2011 general elections and found that platforms such as Facebook and Twitter played a critical role in disseminating information about voter registration, election dates, and candidate profiles. The study highlighted that 65% of youths surveyed acknowledged that social media influenced their decision to participate in the elections, showcasing its effectiveness as a mobilization tool. Similarly, Adesola et al. (2017) documented the role of social media campaigns like #PVCITISASY and #NigerianDecides during the 2015 Nigerian elections, which successfully encouraged young voters to collect their permanent voter cards (PVC) and turn out to vote.

The perception of social media as an empowering tool for political engagement is widely supported by empirical evidence. A study by Olanrewaju et al. (2020) revealed that 70% of youths in their survey perceived social media as an effective platform for accessing political information and participation in discussions about governance and elections. This perception stems from the ability of social media to bridge the communication gap between political actors. Barack Obama's 2008 presidential bid in the United States further illustrates the global effectiveness of social media in mobilizing young voters. Smith (2009) noted that Obama's strategic use of platforms like Facebook and YouTube helped him connect with young voters, resulting in a historic voter turnout among the youth demographic.

Despite these positive perceptions, there are significant challenges associated with using social media for electoral mobilization, particularly in developing countries. One of the major issues identified in empirical studies is the spread of mass information. Alcott and Gentzkow (2017) found that false information disseminated on social media spreads faster and reaches a wider audience than verified news, posing a significant threat to the integrity of electoral processes. In

the Nigeria context, Olaleye (2012) highlighted that the prevalence of fake news during elections often leads to voter apathy and mistrust in the system. Furthermore, Okolie et al. (2019) identified online harassment and cyber bullying as major challenges faced by youths who actively engage in political discourse participation and undermine the potential of social media as a democratic tool.

Case studies from various countries provide further insights into the effectiveness of social media in mobilizing youths for elections. In South Africa, Bosch (2017) explored the use of Twitter during the national elections and found that it was instrumental in fostering political conversations and encouraging voter participation among young people. Similarly, Esan (2018) examined the role of WhatsApp in grass roots mobilization during Kenya's 2017 elections and highlighted its effectiveness in reaching rural voters who have limited access to traditional media. These studies demonstrate that social media platforms can be adapted to suit the specific needs and contexts of different electorates, making them a versatile tool for political mobilization.

The digital divide remains another significant challenge that affects the perception and effectiveness of social media in electoral mobilization. In many developing countries, unequal access to internet services limits the reach of social media campaigns, particularly in rural areas. Olaleye (2021) noted that while urban youths are more likely to benefit from social media campaigns, their counterparts in rural areas often lack the necessary infrastructure to engage with these platforms. This disparity not only limits the inclusivity of social media campaigns but also perpetuates existing inequalities in political participation.

Another critical factor influencing the perception of social media as a mobilization tool is the level of digital literacy among users. Ojo (2022) emphasized that digital literacy plays a crucial role in determining how youths interact with political content on social media. Higher levels of digital literacy are more likely to critically evaluate the information they encounter online, reducing their susceptibility to misinformation and manipulation. However, the lack of digital

literacy among a significant portion of the population remains a barrier to be effective use of social media in electoral mobilization.

The broader implications of social media mobilization on democratic processes have been explored in various studies. Shirks (2011) argued that including youths, a platform to express their views and engage in public discourse. This democratization is particularly important in countries where traditional media is often controlled by political elites. However, sustain (2017) warned that the echo-chamber effect, where users are exposed only to content that reinforces their existing beliefs, could lead to political polarization and undermine their quality of democratic deliberation.

In summary, empirical studies highlight the transformative potential of social media as a tool for mobilizing youths for elections. Social media platforms provide an accessible and interactive space for political engagement, enabling youths to participate actively in electoral processes. However, challenges such as misinformation, online harassment, digital divides, and low digital literacy levels limit the effectiveness of these platforms. The reviewed studies underscore the need for strategic interventions, including digital literacy programs, improved internet access, and regulatory measures to curb the spread of misinformation. This research aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by exploring the specific perceptions of Nigerian youths regarding social media, role in electoral mobilization, focusing on its effectiveness, challenges and implications for democratic participation.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

According to (Campbell, 1999) Research methodology could be seen as a way of explaining how a researcher intends to carry out their research. It's a logical, systematic plan to resolve a research problem. A methodology details a researcher's approach to the research to ensure reliable, valid results that address their aims and objectives.

The chapter deals with the method chosen by the researcher to carry out the project. The purpose of this chapter is for the researcher to break down the technique chosen to prove that such methods would provide the results required for the study.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design, as define by (Janet, 2024), refers to the comprehensive framework or blueprint that outlines the structure and methodology for conducting a research study. It involves planning the process and methods for data collection, analysis, and interpretation to address specific research questions or hypotheses. A well-designed research play ensures the study's validity, reliability, and ethical standards while also guiding the researcher in shooting appropriate techniques, tools, and procedures. It includes decisions on the type of research (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods) sampling strategies, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques, all aimed of ensuring that the research findings are credible and meaningful.

According to (John, 1992) Research design can be defined as the framework of research methods and techniques chosen by a researcher to conduct a study. The design allows researchers to sharpen the research methods suitable for the subject

matter and set up their studies for success. A research design can also be defined as the strategy for answering your research question using empirical data, creating a research design means making decisions about your overall research objectives and approach whether you will rely on primary research or secondary research.

It is an acceptance fact that research design is the basic plan that guide data Collection and the analysis phase of any research work. The design of a research can be regarded as the framework which specific the type of information to be gathered including the source of data and the procedure used in collecting them. Research can be defined as an attempt to discover something design however, refers to the whole method or technique used in gathering data. Research design therefore entails to frame work or general arrangement that is used to collecting and analysis a set of data.

The research design selected for this project is survey research design that will infuse numbers and in-depth answers from the participants. This research design will enable the researcher to gain more insight into the effects the first-time voters are usually exposed to in a time of political communication.

3.2 POPULATION OF THE STUDY

According to (Janet, 2024), the population of the study refers to the complete set of individual, objects, or elements that share a particular characteristic of set of characteristics that the researcher intends to investigate. The population encompasses all potential participants or items that meet the criteria defined by the researcher, from which a sample may be drawn for data collection. The population is crucial because it determines that scope and relevance of the study's findings. In research, clearly defining the population ensures that the study's results are

applicable to the right group, and it guides the selection of a representative sample to draw meaningful and generalized conclusions.

According to (Henry, 1990; Bickman & Rog, 1998) Population of the study can be defined as subset of the target population from which the sample is actually selected. It is broader than the concept sample frame. It may be appropriate to say that sample frame is an operationalize form of study population. Population of the study could be seen as operational definition of target population. Researchers are seldom in a position to study the entire target population.

The study population chosen for this research is 204,310 Ilorin East Electorates, Kwara State. It comprises of twelve (12) local government wards which are Agbeyangi/Gbadamu/Osin, Gambari I, Balogun Gambari II, Ibagun, Apado, Ilorin, Magaji Are II, Marafa/Peele, Maya/Ile-Apa, Oke-Oyi/Oke Ose/Alalubosa, Zango. The people chosen were those that are eligible to vote during elections. Participants were only qualified if there age are from 18 to 21.

3.3 SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

According to (Ikechukwu, 2002 & Joe, 2004) the sample size is defined as the number of observation used for determining the estimations of a given population. The size of the sample has been drawn from the population. Sampling techniques is the process of selection of a subset of individuals from the population to estimate the characteristics of the whole population.

In a situation where the population is too large then a simple of the population would be taken to determine information. Also to avoid unnecessary repetition of answer and ease computation sample of the population needs to be taken.

The sample size therefore, is 100, the sample consists of both male and female in order to get appropriate results, the respondents were selected on the basis of their status. The researcher through simple random sampling chooses representative from the department making the whole Sample size.

3.4 RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

According to Okuma (2020) A Research Instrument can be defined as a tool used to collect, measure, and analyze data related to your research interests. Questionnaire refers to as a device for security answer to using a form which the respondent fill personally. The research Instrument used in collecting this data is purely questionnaire and will be distributed as state above

The research required a questionnaire to survey and allowed the researcher to stick to the objectives and not deviated from the topic.

3.5 VALIDITY AND RESEARCH OF THE INSTRUMENT

According to (Blumberg et al., 2005) Validity and research of the instrument often defined as the extent to which an instrument measures what it asserts to measure. Validity and research Instrument assesses the extent to which the instrument measures what it is designed to measure (Robson, 2011). It is the degree to which the results are truthful.

The instrument used for the research was verified and considered reliable by experts and professional in the field. The validity of the instrument will be determined by the face and content validity criteria. The face validity was obtained by giving the instrument to the project supervisor and two other scholars who examine the instrument measures for content coverage and suitability for the study following which the instrument was adjudge valid. Reliability is based on the subject of whether the aftereffects of a study are repeatable.

The reliability of the instrument will be determined by the test-retest method wherein the instrument was administered twice within a week interval on the set of respondents who were not part of the final population. At the end of the exercise, the responses were checked for similarity and consistency. (Bergger, 2020)

3.6 DATA COLLECTION METHOD

According to (John et al. 2002) Data collection methods can be defined as the techniques and procedures used to gather in information for research purposes. These methods can range from simple self-reported surveys to more complex experiments and can involved either quantitative or qualitative approaches to data gathering.

The aim of data collection method is to assist the researcher with solutions on problems earlier identified. The specification or classification of data used for information collection for this study is primary source data only based on research issues at hand. Primary data has been used in conducting this research. The respondents supply supplementary data, the interview granted the respondents was basically on the subject of study and direct assessment were made by the researcher to present the data in appropriate form. After the collection of data, it was analyzed through table for easy accessible for the questionnaire, and transcription, for the qualitative data. While for the quantitative data, tables of cross tabulation were used to interpret the data collated, the transcribed data of the discussion was analyzed by the researcher.

3.7 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

According to (Okuma, 2020) Method of data analysis can be defined as the process of systematically applying statistical and/or logical techniques to describe and illustrate, condense and recap, and evaluate data.

The area covers diagnostic test, conceptual model.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on data presentation observed from the distributed questionnaire. The institutional characteristics and background of respondent to the questionnaire would be considered. However, explanation of the element under consideration is grouped on the basis of gender, age, marital status, education level, and occupation. The analysis is based on the response of the respondent which contain reliable information on “Audience perception of social media as a tool of mobilizing youths for elections. The respondent of the questionnaire are Ilorin east electorates.

4.1 DATA PRESENTATION

According to Okoro and Nwafor (2013) data presentation is the process of organizing, summarizing and usually representing data in a way that is easily understandable and meaningful to the audience. It also refers to the organizing and presentation of data into table, graph, chart, e.t.c. In this research project, the instrument for the study was administered to random selected respondents in Ilorin east electorates and it was distributed to 100 numbers of people. The questionnaire consists of two sections (A and B) of 20 questions which are relevant to this study.

SECTION A: ANALYSIS OF DEMOGRAPHIC SEGMENT

Table 1: Sex Distributor of Respondents

Gender	Number Of Respondent	Percentage
Male	55	55%
Female	45	45%
Total	100	100%

Source: Research survey, 2025

Table 1 shows that 55 respondents representing 55% are male while 45 respondents representing 45% were female. This table shows that majority of the respondent are male.

Table 2: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age	Number Of Respondent	Percentage
18-25 years	57	57%
26-35 years	36	36%
36-45 years	7	7%
Totals	100	100%

Source: Research survey, 2025

Table 2 shows that 57 respondents representing 57% fall within 18-25years, 36 respondents representing 36% fall within 26-35years, 7 respondents representing 7% fall within 36-45years. This table shows that majority of the respondents are within 18-25years.

Table 3: Occupation of the Respondents

Occupation	Number of Respondent	Percentage
Student	69	69%
Civil servant	21	21%
Self Employed	10	10%
Total	100	100%

Source: Research survey, 2025

Table 3 shows that 69 respondents representing 69% are students, 21 respondents representing 21% are civil servant, while 10 respondents representing 10% were self-employed. This table shows that majority of the respondents are students.

Table 4: Marital Status of the Respondent

Marital Status	Number of Respondent	Percentage
Single	90	90%
Married	10	10%
Divorced	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Source: Research survey, 2025

Table 4 shows that 90 respondents representing 90% are single, 10 respondents representing 10% are married. This shows that majority of the respondents were single.

Table 5: Religion of the Respondent

Religion	Number of Respondent	Percentage
Christian	81	81%
Islam	19	19%
Others	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Source: Research survey, 2025

Table 5 shows that 81 respondents representing 81% are Christian while 19 respondents representing 19% are Islam. This table shows that majority of the respondents are Christian.

Table 6: Educational Qualification of the Respondent

Educational Qualification of the Respondent	Number of Respondent	Percentage
SSCE/WAEC	13	13%
NCE/OND	25	25%
B.SC/HND	62	62%
Total	100	100%

Source: Research survey, 2025

Table 6 shows that 13 respondents representing 13% are SSCE/WAEC, 25 Respondents representing 25% are NCE/OND, While 62 Respondents representing 62% are B.SC/HND. This table shows that the majority of the respondents are B.SC/HND.

SECTION B: RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Table 7: How Frequent do you use social media?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Multiple Times a day	75	75%
Once a day	7	7%
A few times a week	9	9%
Rarely	9	9%
Never	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Source: Research survey, 2025

Table 7 shows that 75 respondents representing 75% are multiple times a day, 7 respondents representing 7% are once a day, 9 respondents representing 9% are a few times a week, while 9 respondents representing 9% are rarely. This table shows that 75 respondents representing 75% usually use social media.

Table 8: How much time do you spend on social media per day on average?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 30minutes	16	16%
30minutes to 1hour	22	22%
1 to 2hours	14	14%
More than 2hours	48	48%
Total	100	100%

Source: Research survey, 2025

Table 8 shows that 16 respondents representing 16% are less than 30minutes, 22 respondents representing 22% are 30minutes to 1hour, 14 respondents representing 14% are 1 to 2hours while 48 respondents representing 48% were more than 2hours. This table shows that 48 respondents representing 48% mostly spend much time on social media per day on average.

Table 9: Do you think social media content mobilize youths for election?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes, To some extent	52	52%
Yes, Significantly	34	34%
No, Not at all	14	14%
Total	100	100%

Source: Research survey, 2025

Table 9 shows that 52 respondents representing 52% say yes, to some extent, 34 respondents representing 34% say yes, significantly, while 14 respondents representing 14% say no, not at all. This table shows that majority of 52 respondents representing 52% say, yes to some extent.

Table 10: Have you come across social media content on youth perception of politics?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes, Occasionally	50	50%
Yes, Significantly	28	28%
No, Never	11	11%
Not Sure	11	11%
Total	100	100%

Source: Research survey, 2025

Table 10 shows that 50 respondents representing 50% say yes, occasionally, 28 respondents representing 28% say yes, significantly, 11 respondents representing 11% say no, never, while 11 respondents representing 11% says not sure. This table shows that 50 respondents representing 50% say yes, occasionally.

Table 11: Do you believe that social media serves as a powerful tool of mobilizing youths for elections?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes, Definitely	59	59%
Yes, To some extent	39	39%
No, Not at all	1	1%
Not Sure	1	1%
Total	100	100%

Source: Research survey, 2025

Table 11 shows that 59 respondents representing 59% says yes, definitely, 39 respondents representing 39% say yes, to some extent, 1 respondents representing 1% say no, not at all, while 1 respondents representing 1% say not sure. This table shows that the majority of 59 respondents representing 59% say yes, definitely.

Table 12: Social media can be seen as a means to mobilize and organize youth movements, enabling them to participate in elections actively.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agreed	40	40%
Agreed	38	38%
Neutral	9	9%
Disagreed	7	7%
Strongly Disagreed	6	6%
Total	100	100%

Source: Research survey, 2025

Table 12 shows that 40 respondents representing 40% strongly agreed, 38 respondents representing 38% agreed, 9 respondents representing 9% neutral, 7 respondents representing 7% disagreed, while 6 respondents representing 6% strongly disagreed. This means that majority of the respondents strongly agreed that social media can be seen as a means to mobilize and organize youth movements, enabling them to participate in elections actively.

Table 13: Social media is often regarded as a leveling ground that allows individual and grassroots movement to have a voice and influence in political process.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agreed	36	36%
Agreed	47	47%
Neutral	9	9%
Disagreed	1	1%
Strongly Disagreed	7	7%
Total	100	100%

Source: Research survey, 2025

Table 13 shows that 36 respondents representing 36% strongly agreed, 47 respondents representing 47% agreed, 9 respondents representing 9% neutral, 1 respondents representing 1% disagreed while 7 respondents representing 7% strongly disagreed. The table shows that majority of the respondent agreed that social media is often regarded as a leveling ground that allows individuals and grassroots movement to have a voice and influence in political process.

Table 14: Social media platforms, when used effectively can amplify political activism among the youth.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agreed	41	41%
Agreed	35	35%
Neutral	12	12%
Disagreed	12	12%
Strongly Disagreed	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Source: Research survey, 2025

Table 14 shows that 41 respondents representing 41% strongly agreed, 35 respondents representing 35% agreed, 12 respondents representing 12% neutral, while 12 respondents representing 12% disagreed. This means that majority of the respondents strongly agreed that social media platforms, when used effectively can amplify political activism among the youth.

Table 15: Some individuals believe that social media has only a limited impact on the political behaviour of young voters.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agreed	16	16%
Agreed	39	39%
Neutral	13	13%
Disagreed	20	20%
Strongly Disagreed	12	12%
Total	100	100%

Source: Research survey, 2025

Table 15 shows that 16 respondents representing 16% strongly agreed, 39 respondents representing 39% agreed, 13 respondents representing 13% neutral, 20 respondents representing 20% disagreed while 12 respondents representing 12% strongly disagreed. The majority of the respondents agreed.

Table 16: Some media provide a platform for young people to access a wide range of perspectives and opinion on political issues.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agreed	28	28%
Agreed	50	50%
Neutral	8	8%
Disagreed	8	8%
Strongly Disagreed	6	6%
Total	100	100%

Source: Research survey, 2025

Table 16 shows that 28 respondents represent 28% strongly agreed, 50 respondents representing 50% agreed, 8 respondents representing 8% neutral, 8 respondents representing 8% disagreed, while 6 respondents representing 6% strongly agreed. The majority of the respondents agreed that some media provides a platform for young people to access a wide range of perspectives and opinion on political issues.

Table 17: Social media has the potential to facilitate viral campaigning among youth voters.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agreed	35	35%
Agreed	43	43%
Neutral	10	10%
Disagreed	8	8%
Strongly Disagreed	4	4%
Total	100	100%

Source: Research survey, 2025

Table 17 shows that 35 respondents represent 35% strongly agreed, 43 respondents representing 43% agreed, 10 respondents representing 10% neutral, 8 respondents representing 8% disagreed, while 4 respondents representing 4% strongly disagreed. The majority of the respondents agreed that social media has the potential to facilitate viral campaigning among youth voters.

Table 18: Some individuals view social media activism as limited to online spaces, arguing that it may not necessarily translate into real world action such as voter turnout.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agreed	18	18%
Agreed	41	41%
Neutral	16	16%
Disagreed	15	15%
Strongly Disagreed	10	10%
Total	100	100%

Source: Research survey, 2025

Table 18 shows that 18 respondents representing 18% strongly agreed, 41 respondents representing 41% agreed, 16 respondents representing 16% neutral, 15 respondents representing 15% disagreed, while 10 respondents representing 10% strongly disagreed. The majority of the respondents agreed that some individuals view social media activism as limited to online spaces, arguing, that it may not necessarily translate into real world action such as voter turnout.

Table 19: Social media platforms allow political campaigns to target specific demographics including young voters, with tailored messaging and advertisement.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agreed	21	21%
Agreed	52	52%
Neutral	10	10%
Disagreed	8	8%
Strongly Disagreed	9	9%
Total	100	100%

Source: Research survey, 2025

Table 19 shows that 21 respondents representing 21% strongly agreed, 52 respondents representing 52% agreed, 10 respondents representing 10% neutral, 8 respondents representing 8% disagreed, while 9 respondents representing 9% strongly agreed. The majority of the respondents agreed that social media platforms allow political campaigns to target specific demographics, including young voters, with tailored messaging and advertisement.

Table 20: There is a perception that social media may inadvertently exacerbate the digital divide, which can limit its effectiveness as a mobilization tool for all youth.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agreed	21	21%
Agreed	42	42%
Neutral	14	14%
Disagreed	14	14%
Strongly Disagreed	9	9%
Total	100	100%

Source: Research survey, 2025

Table 20 shows that 21 respondents representing 21% strongly agreed, 42 respondents representing 42% agreed, 14 respondents representing 14% neutral, 14 respondents representing 14% disagreed, while 9 respondents representing 9% strongly disagreed. The majority of the respondents agrees that there is a perception that social media may inadvertently exacerbate the digital divide, which can limit its effectiveness as a mobilization tool for all youth.

4.2 ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

These are the analysis of research questions used in the research work that produces the expected outcome of the work done.

RESEARCH QUESTION ONE

What is the perception of youth about politics before social media?

Table 20 answered this question 21(21%) of the respondent select strongly agreed, 42(42%) of the respondent select agreed, 14(14%) of the respondents select neutral, 14(14%) of the respondents select disagreed. While 9(9%) of the respondents select strongly disagreed. This shows that youth perception towards politics before social media is great.

Table 13 answered this question 36(36%) of the respondents select strongly agreed, 47(47%) of the respondents select agreed, 9(9%) of the respondent select neutral, 1(1%) of the respondent select disagreed, while 7(7%) of the respondents select strongly disagreed. This shows that youth perception towards politics before social media is of a good result.

RESEARCH QUESTION TWO

How actively did youths participate in the general elections in Nigeria?

Table 11 answered this question 59(59%) select yes, definitely, 39(39%) of the respondent select yes, to some extent, 1(1%) of the respondent select no, not at all, 1(1%) of the respondent select not sure. This shows that youth participate in the general elections in Nigeria.

Table 19 answered this question 21(21%) of the respondent select strongly agreed, 52(52%) of the respondent select agreed, 10(10%) of the respondent select neutral, 8(8%) of the respondent select disagreed, while 9(9%) of the respondent select strongly disagreed. This shows that youth participate in the general elections in Nigeria.

RESEARCH QUESTION THREE

Has social media influenced youth participation in politics?

Table 14 answered this question 41(41%) of the respondent select strongly agreed, 35(35%) of the respondent select agreed, 12(12%) of the respondent select neutral, 12(12%) of the respondent select disagreed. This shows that social media influenced youth participate in politics.

Table 9 also answered this question 52(52%) of the respondent select yes, to some extent, 34(34%) of the respondent select yes, significantly, while 14(14%) of the respondent select no, not at all. This shows that social media influenced youth participate in politics.

RESEARCH QUESTION FOUR

Does youth online participation in politics translate to participation in real life?

Table 18 answered this question, 18(18%) of the respondent select strongly agreed, 41(41%) of the respondent agreed, 16(16%) of the respondent select Neutral, 15(15%) of the respondent select disagreed, 10(10%) of the respondent select strongly disagreed. This table shows that youth online participation in politics translate to participation in real life.

Table 10 also answered this question, 50(50%) of the respondent select yes, occasionally, 28(28%) of the respondent select No Never, while 11(11%) of the respondents select not sure. This table shows that youth online participation in politics translate to participation in real life.

4.3 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this study is to examine the audience perception of social media as a tools of mobilizing youths for elections. The results obtained in the statistical analysis was used to provide an answer to this research study to provide an answer to this study. Definite question were asked in the study. Hundred (100)

questionnaires were administered to the respondents and all the copies of the questionnaire were answered.

The first research question show in table 20 confined that youth perception towards politics before social media is great, 21(21%) of the respondent select strongly agreed, 42(42%) of the respondent select agreed, 14(14%) respondent select Neutral, 14(14%) selects disagreed. While 9(9%) of the respondent select strongly disagreed. Table 2 examine how much time do respondent spend on social media per day on average 16(16%) respondent selects less than 30 minutes, 22(22%) respondent select 30 minutes to 1 hour, 14(14%) respondent select 1 to 2 hours, while 48(48%) of the respondents select more than 2 hours. The findings explain that most majorities of the respondents spend much of their time on social media. The findings also convey information on this research questions that social media can be seen as a means to mobilize and organize youth movements, enabling them to participate in elections actively, 40(40%) strongly agreed, 38(38%) of the respondents agreed, 9(9%) of the respondents select Neutral, 7(7%) of the respondents disagreed, 6(6%) of the respondents strongly disagreed.

The second research question show in table 13 explain that social media is often regarded as a leveling ground that allows individuals and grassroots movements to have a voice and influence in political process, 36%(36) of the respondents strongly agreed, 47(47%) of the respondents agreed, 9(9%) of the respondents select Neutral, 1(1%) of the respondents disagreed, 7(7%) selects strongly disagreed. Table 4 examine that social media platforms, when used effectively can amplify political activism among the youth, 41(41%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 35(35%) of the respondents agreed, 12(12%) of the respondents Neutral, 12(12%) of the respondent disagreed, this means that majority of the respondents strongly agreed that social media, when used can amplify

political activism among the youth. Some individuals believes that social media has only a limited impact on the political behavior of young voters.

Table 15 answer this research questions, 16(16%) of the respondent strongly agreed, 39(39%) of the respondents agreed, 13(13%) selects Neutral, 20(20%) of the respondents disagreed, while 12(12%) of the respondents strongly disagreed. The majority of the respondents agreed social media has impact on the political behavior of young voters. Table 16 explains that some media provide a platform for young people to access a wide range of perspectives and opinions on political issue, 28(28%) of the respondents select strongly agreed, 50(50%) of the respondent select agreed, 8(8%) of the respondent select Neutral, 8(8%) of the respondent select disagreed. This means that majorities of the respondents believes that social media provides a platforms for young people to have access to a wide range of perspectives and their opinion on political issues. Table 17 discover that social media has the potential to facilitate viral campaigning among youth voters, 35(35%) of the respondents select strongly agreed, 43(43%) of the respondents select agreed, 10(10%) of the respondent select Neutral, 8(8%) of the respondents disagreed, 4(4%) of the respondents select strongly disagreed this means that social media has the potential to facilitate viral campaigning among the youth voters.

The consequence of these findings is that the social media has changed the landscape of citizenship and leadership, mass, mobilization, governance and politics, and the way people can hold their leaders accountable. This can forms to Olley and Ekharact's (2013, p.46) assertion that "Nigerian government and political office holders must be conscious of the capacity of the people to governance themselves into action using social media tools" Youths, who engage actively in social media, have moved from the level of just entertainment and

interaction with family and friends, to that of involving actively in issues relation to politics, governance, leadership, corruption and security.

The social media inherent potentials provide for great freedom of expression, submission of ideas, surveillance of the political/governance sphere to identify those who are being involved in negative acts and through public outcry, expose them. Many times, outcry against public office holders has led to such cases being investigated and offenders sanctioned in different ways. Another important finding from this research is the fact that through many people can get involved online in socio-political issues, It is only a fraction that may actually go on to get involved in live demonstrations or activities. However, that does not change the fact the internet remains a poverty tool for political participation.

This potential to participate in society issues through the social media, of course, may only be applicable to those who have access to communication facilities. That is, the issue of digital divide still exists, and youths in the rural areas may still be passing through situations that the social media may have no impact on because they lack the access and empowerment. Given the ever changing nature of internet communication, it is necessary to conduct more research in this area to find out how it affects the dynamics of the society in different ways. In relation to youth mobilization and socio-political issues, there is still need to see how more people can be made to move their campaigns from the internet, and on the streets.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 SUMMARY

One aspect of audience perception is the recognition of social media's potential to reach and mobilize a large number of youths. Social media platforms provide a space for political campaigns, candidates, and activists to connect with young people who are often active users of these platforms. The ability to share information, rally support, and organize events quickly and easily has made social media an attractive tool for political mobilization.

This study explores how audiences perceive social media as a tool for mobilizing youth participation in elections with the growing influence of platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram in political communication, the research seeks to understand the effectiveness, credibility, and impact of social media in engaging young voters, raising political awareness and encouraging civic involvement during electoral processes.

Furthermore, social media has also been credited with democratizing the political process by giving a voice to marginalized groups and allowing them to express their opinions and concerns. This has empowered young people who may have traditionally felt excluded from the political sphere to actively participate and engage in political discussions. The immediacy and accessibility of social media have made it easier for young people to stay informed about elections, candidates, and key issues. However, audience perception of social media can be a double edged sword, as it can also contribute to the spread of misinformation, echo chambers and polarization.

The rapid dissemination of unverified information through social media platforms can lead to the formation of biased opinions and the manipulation of public sentiment. Additionally, concerns about data privacy, algorithmic bias, and the influence of social media platforms on political campaigns have raised questions about the integrity and transparency of the electoral process. These concerns can impact the audience's trust in social media as a reliable source of political information and may discourage some individuals from actively engaging in political discussions or participating in elections.

In summary, the perception of social media as a tool of mobilizing youths for elections is a mixed bag. While it has the potential to empower and engage young people, it also comes with challenges such as misinformation and privacy concerns. Understanding and addressing these challenges are crucial to maximizing social media's positive impact on youth mobilization and ensuring a fair and informed electoral process.

5.2 CONCLUSION

The findings of this study reveal that social media is widely perceived as a powerful and effective tool for mobilizing youth participation in elections. Audiences acknowledge its role in raising political awareness, disseminating information quickly and encouraging dialogue among young voters. However, concerns remain about misinformation, political bias and unequal access. Overall, the perception is largely positive, suggesting that when used responsibly, social media can significantly enhance youth engagement in democratic processes.

Due to the information explosion in the digital age, the importance and impact of information on the platform of the internet cannot be overemphasized. This is more so with a tool like the social media. The platform of social media opens

up people, especially youths who are the most active users, to the issues around them.

Additionally, the widespread attraction for the social media may be attributed to the fact that this is the only place where the common man and youths can make their voice heard since the mainstream media may not be predisposed to granting audience to divergent ideas from youths or other people not specially recognized as opinion leaders.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the researcher recommends the following:

1. Social media platforms should engage in meaningful collaborations with political parties, candidates and electoral authorities: suggest that social media companies should work closely and constructively with key players in the democratic process to ensure fair elections, promote transparency, Protect election integrity, support voter education. In short, it's a call for cooperation to strengthen democratic processes and public trust during elections.
2. Government should address echo chambers and polarization: Means that authorities should take steps to reduce the spread of one sided or extreme opinions online (Echo Chambers), which can divide society (Polarization). Instead, they should promote policies or programs that encourage users to engage with a wide range of perspectives and allow different voice and communities to participate in online discussions. This helps build understanding, tolerance, and a healthier democratic dialogue.
3. Enhance digital literacy: Government and civil society organizations should implement programs to improve youth's ability to critically analyze social media content, helping them identify credible political information.

4. Increase accessibility: efforts should be made to ensure equitable access to internet and mobilize devices so that all youths regardless of location or income, can participate in online electoral conversations.
5. Encourage peer-to-peer advocacy: Empower young people to become ambassadors for voter's mobilization, encouraging discussions within their networks through social media challenges, hashtags, and stories.
6. Enhance Digital literacy: Government and civil society organizations should implement programs to improve youths ability to critically analyze social media content, helping them identify credible political information.

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