# ROLES OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN SHAPPING POLITICAL CAMPAIGN

## ( A CASE STUDY OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCE DURING NIGERIA ELECTION)

### BY

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BEING A RESEACH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION, INSTITUTE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY, KWARA STATE POLYTECHNIC, ILORIN.

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# CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this research work has been read and approved by DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION, KWARA STATE POLYTECHNIC, ILORIN as having satisfied part of the requirement for the award of Higher National Diploma (HND) in Mass Communication.


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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this project work to Almighty God for His protection, guidance and inevitable mercy over my lives throughout the research work. I also dedicate it to my able parents for their supports, morally, financially and spiritually over my course of study.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1    Background of the Study

The emergence of social media has transformed the organization and execution of political campaigns globally. In Nigeria, where traditional media has long dominated political communication, the rise of social media has introduced a significant shift in campaign strategies. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp have become influential tools for political candidates, parties, and stakeholders to connect with a wider audience, particularly the youth.

A major turning point in the utilization of social media for political campaigns in Nigeria occurred during the 2015 general elections. Politicians like Muhammadu Buhari and Goodluck Jonathan leveraged platforms such as Twitter and Facebook to engage voters and promote their political agendas. Scholars such as Olorunnisola and Martin (2019) observed that social media played a pivotal role in shaping voter perceptions during this period by enabling direct communication and bypassing traditional media gatekeepers. Similarly, the 2023 general elections highlighted an increasing reliance on platforms like WhatsApp and Instagram for disseminating campaign messages and mobilizing grassroots support.

The widespread penetration of the internet in Nigeria has further reinforced the role of social media in political communication. Data from the Nigerian Communications Commission (2023) indicates that over 50% of the population has internet access, with a substantial number actively participating on social media platforms. This has made social media a cost-effective and accessible medium for political candidates to engage with voters and influence public opinion.

However, the use of social media in Nigerian political campaigns is not without challenges. The spread of fake news, hate speech, and misinformation

raises concerns about the credibility of information circulated during elections. As noted by Uwalaka and Isikalu (2021), the unregulated nature of social media has, at times, intensified political tensions and contributed to public polarization.

This study, therefore, examines the role of social media in shaping political campaigns, with a particular focus on its impact during Nigerian elections. By analyzing how political candidates, parties, and citizens have utilized social media platforms, this research aims to assess its effectiveness, limitations, and broader implications for democratic governance in Nigeria.

## 1.2    Statement of the Problem

In recent years, social media has emerged as a critical tool for political campaigns globally. In Nigeria, it has redefined the dissemination of political messages, transformed candidate-voter engagement, and influenced citizens' participation in the democratic process. Scholars such as Olorunnisola and Douai (2019) assert that social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp, have become integral to modern political communication, offering accessible and cost-effective channels for interaction between politicians and the electorate. However, the increasing reliance on social media in political campaigns has presented both opportunities and challenges.

On the one hand, social media has facilitated greater political participation and enhanced direct communication between politicians and voters. On the other hand, it has contributed to the proliferation of misinformation, fake news, and hate speech, particularly during election periods. For instance, reports from the 2019 and 2023 general elections highlighted the widespread dissemination of divisive content and propaganda on platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter (Nwosu & Uffoh, 2020). These trends raise concerns about the ethical use of social media in political communication, as well as its potential to undermine public trust in democratic institutions.

Furthermore, despite its growing influence, the extent to which social media impacts voter behavior and shapes electoral outcomes in Nigeria remains inadequately explored. Existing studies, such as those by Opeibi (2019), tend to emphasize the general societal impact of social media, often overlooking its specific role in shaping political campaigns and election results within Nigeria's unique political and socio-cultural context. Another significant challenge lies in the issue of digital inequality. Although Nigeria has experienced notable growth in internet and smartphone penetration, many rural areas remain underserved, limiting the reach of social media campaigns. According to the Nigerian Communications Commission (2023), rural regions continue to face obstacles such as poor network coverage and high data costs. This raises concerns about whether social media fosters inclusive political participation or exacerbates existing socio-economic disparities.

Given these issues, this study seeks to address how social media has influenced the conduct of political campaigns in Nigeria, the role it plays in shaping voter perception and participation during elections, and the challenges arising from its use in Nigerian political campaigns. By addressing these questions, this research aims to fill existing gaps in the literature by examining the role of social media in political campaigns. It focuses on its influence during Nigerian elections and its broader implications for democratic processes and governance.

## 1.3    Objectives of the Study

The study is guided by the following specific objectives:

i. To examine how social media has influenced political campaign strategies in Nigeria.

ii. To investigate the impact of social media on voter perception and participation during Nigerian elections.

iii. To identify the challenges associated with the use of social media during

political campaigns in Nigeria.

iv. To assess the effect of digital inequality on the reach and effectiveness of social media campaigns in Nigeria.

v. To propose strategies for enhancing the ethical and effective use of social media in Nigerian political campaigns.

**1.4  Research Questions**

i. To guide the study and ensure a structured investigation into the role of social media in shaping political campaigns in Nigeria, the following research questions are proposed:

ii. How has social media influenced the strategies used in political campaigns in Nigeria?

iii. What is the impact of social media on voter perception and participation during Nigerian elections?

iv. What are the major challenges associated with the use of social media in Nigerian political campaigns?

v. How does digital inequality affect the effectiveness and reach of social media political campaigns in Nigeria?

vi. What strategies can be employed to enhance the ethical use and effectiveness of social media in Nigerian political campaigns?

**1.5  Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study lies in its potential to bridge key gaps in understanding the role of social media in Nigerian political campaigns and elections, offering both theoretical and practical insights. It examines the influence of social media on voter behavior, political campaign strategies, and election outcomes while addressing challenges such such as misinformation and digital inequality. Academically, this research will contribute to the growing body of knowledge on social media's impact by focusing specifically on its role in

shaping political campaigns in Nigeria, thereby providing a clearer understanding for scholars and future researchers.

For political parties and candidates, the findings will offer guidance on designing effective social media strategies to engage diverse demographic groups, including youth and first-time voters, while fostering transparency and trust. Policymakers will benefit from evidence-based recommendations to counter misinformation, regulate ethical social media use, and promote civic education to safeguard electoral integrity. Additionally, the study will address digital inequality by exploring how limited internet access in rural areas affects political participation, emphasizing the need for improved infrastructure, affordable internet, and digital literacy programs.

The study will also provide practical strategies for mitigating the proliferation of fake news and hate speech on social media, empowering political stakeholders and civil society organizations (CSOs) to promote ethical communication practices. CSOs will gain actionable insights to design civic education campaigns, combat misinformation, and encourage active political participation among marginalized groups. Ultimately, the findings will contribute to sustainable democratic governance by strengthening transparency, accountability, and informed political engagement, benefiting a wide range of stakeholders and enhancing Nigeria's democratic processes.

## 1.6 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study defines the boundaries of the research, focusing on social media's role in shaping political campaigns during Nigerian elections. Geographically, the study is limited to Nigeria, including its 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), analyzing regional variations in social media usage and their impact on political participation and campaigns in both urban and rural areas. Temporally, it examines the 2019 and 2023 general elections, chosen for their significance in Nigeria's democratic evolution and the prominent role of

social media in influencing public opinion and voter mobilization. Thematically, the study concentrates on key areas related to social media's impact on political **campaigns and elections in Nigeria.**

**1**.7     Definition of Terms

**Role:** This refers to the function or influence of social media in Nigeria's elections, including its ability to inform, mobilize, and engage voters.

**Social Media:** Social media refers to online platforms and tools that facilitate the creation, sharing, and exchange of content, ideas, and information among users.

**Political Campaigns:** Political campaigns are organized efforts by political candidates, parties, or other stakeholders to persuade citizens to support a candidate, political party, or ideology during an election.

**Shaping:** This signifies the transformative impact of social media on the political landscape, particularly in shaping public opinion, influencing voter behavior, and redefining traditional campaign methods.

**Social Media Influence:** Social media influence refers to the power of social media platforms to shape public opinion, beliefs, and behaviors.

**Social Media Campaigns:** Social media campaigns involve strategic communication efforts by political candidates or parties on social media platforms to mobilize supporters, communicate their political message, and interact with voters.

Nigeria: The study focuses on Nigeria, a country with a diverse socio-political structure and growing social media adoption.

**Election:** This pertain Election: This pertains to Nigeria's electoral process, including general elections such as those held in 2019 and 2023.

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# CHAPTER TWO
# LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1    INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of relevant literature to contextualize the research problem, identify existing gaps, and build the theoretical and empirical foundation for the study. The literature review will examine previous studies, theoretical perspectives, and research findings related to the role of social media in shaping political campaigns, with a specific focus on the Nigerian electoral context.

The chapter begins by exploring theoretical frameworks relevant to the study, such as theories of media influence, political communication and voter behavioru. It will then review empirical studies on social media's use in political campaigns, its effects on voter perception and participation, and the challenges associated with social media use, such as misinformation and digital inequality. Additionally, the review will highlight the context of Nigerian political campaigns and social media trends to identify the research gap this study seeks to address.

This literature review will critically analyze the works of scholars, report, and studies to establish the foundational understanding necessary for the research. It will also draw comparisons with similar studies conducted in other geopolitical settings to provide a comparative perspective. Ultimately, the literature review will guide the study's theoretical approach, research design and analytical framework.

The key areas of focus in this chapter include:

- Theoretical perspectives on social media and political communication.
- The influence of social media on voter perception and political participation.

- Social media strategies employed by political candidates and parties in Nigerian campaigns.

- Challenges associated with social media use during political campaigns, such as misinformation and hate speech.

- Digital inequality and its impact on inclusive political participation.

- The Nigerian electoral process and the role of social media in shaping its political landscape.

## 2.2    Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework provides the conceptual foundation for this study by offering established perspectives and models that guide the research process. It is essential to apply relevant theories to analyze and interpret the influence of social media on political campaigns during Nigerian elections. This section explores key theories that underpin the relationship between social media, voter behaviour, political participation, and campaign strategies.

### 2.2.1    Agenda-Setting Theory

The Agenda-Setting Theory posits that the media has the power to influence public opinion by determining which issues are considered important by the audience. According to this theory, while the media may not dictate how people think, it has the ability to dictate what people think about by highlighting certain topics (McCombs & Shaw, 1972).

**Application to social media and political campaign:**

In the context of social media, political candidates and parties use platforms to shape the political agenda by emphasizing specific issues, such as economic reform, security, or social welfare. These platforms determine which political issues gain attention and public discourse, thereby influencing voter priorities and perception. Social media's rapid dissemination capacity makes it a powerful tool

for setting electoral agendas, especially in the context of elections where key policy promises are shared.

**Relevance to the Nigeria context:**

During Nigerian elections, political parties and candidates strategically use social media to prioritize issues like youth unemployment, security challenges, and corruption. These platforms enable political actors to highlight key issues that resonate with voters, impacting public perception and engagement (Akinmoladun, 2019).

### 2.2.2   Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT)

The Uses and Gratifications Theory focuses on the motivations of media users and how they actively engage with media content to satisfy specific needs. This theory emphasizes that individuals use media platforms intentionally to meet informational, entertainment, social, or political needs (Katz et al., 1973).

**Key Premise:**

The theory assumes that media users are active and goal-oriented, seeking content that aligns with their preferences and needs. For instance, during political campaigns, voters use social media to gather information about candidates, connect with their peers, and express political opinions.

**Application to social media and political campaigns:**

Social media platforms fulfill various needs for political users, such as accessing real-time updates about campaigns, engaging with political parties, participating in political debates, and connecting with other voters. Candidates and political parties leverage these motivations by creating engaging content that aligns with the desires of their target audiences.

**Relevance to the Nigeria context:**

In Nigeria, social media serves as both an information and interaction platform. Voters use social media to access political news, participate in political

discussions, and make informed decisions about candidates and policies (Ebo, 2021).

### 2.2.3 The spiral of silence Theory:

The Spiral of Silence Theory suggests that individuals may remain silent about their opinions or beliefs when they perceive that their views are in the minority. This occurs due to a fear of social isolation or rejection, which discourages individuals from expressing dissenting views (Noelle-Neumann, 1974).

**Application to social media and political campaigns:**

Social media amplifies the dynamics of the spiral of silence, as individuals may withhold opinions due to fear of backlash or polarization. Political candidates and parties must navigate this dynamic by creating safe, open, and inclusive communication channels to foster trust and encourage participation among voters.

**Relevance to the Nigeria context:**

In Nigerian political campaigns, the fear of backlash through online hate speech, misinformation, or cyberbullying can deter citizens from voicing their political opinions. This can limit democratic debate and affect the extent to which citizens engage with political campaigns (Adegbite&Olatunde, 2020).

**Political Participation:**

This theory focuses on the behaviors and activities individuals engage in to influence political processes, such as voting, attending rallies, joining campaigns, or participating in online political discussions. Political participation is both a fundamental aspect of democracy and a reflection of the influence of communication tools like social media.

**Application to Social Media and Political Campaigns:**

Social media has broadened the scope of political participation by providing platforms for citizens to engage in political conversations, express their opinions, and connect with political movements. In Nigeria, digital political participation is

evident through online discussions, campaign sharing, and mobilization efforts facilitated by social media platforms.

**Relevance to the Nigerian Context:**

Social media has significantly increased political engagement among Nigerian youth, especially during recent elections. Platforms like Facebook and Twitter have empowered young people to mobilize for causes, engage with political campaigns, and influence public perception (Okonkwo, 2020).

## 2.3    Conceptual Framework

The theoretical perspectives discussed above inform the conceptual framework of this study. The framework integrates these theories to analyze the relationship between social media, voter perception, participation, and campaign strategies during Nigerian elections.

Social Media as an Agenda-Setting Tool: Guided by the Agenda-Setting Theory, social media influences the political issues that voters prioritize during campaigns.

Social Media Use by Voters: Guided by the Uses and Gratifications Theory, voters actively engage with social media for informational and participatory purposes.

Spiral of Silence Dynamics: Political candidates and campaigns must address the fear of backlash or minority opinions by creating safe online spaces, in line with the Spiral of Silence Theory.

Digital Political Participation: Social media platforms facilitate new forms of political engagement, which are understood through the lens of the Political Participation Theory.

## 2.3    Empirical Review

The empirical review critically analyzes previous studies and research findings related to the role of social media in shaping political campaigns, with a specific focus on its influence during Nigerian elections. This section synthesizes

existing research on key themes such as social media strategies used in political campaigns, the effects of social media on voter behavior and participation, challenges associated with misinformation and hate speech, and the role of digital inequality in political engagement.

The review will examine both local and international studies to provide a broader perspective while emphasizing studies directly relevant to the Nigerian electoral context.

## 2.3.1 Social Media Strategies in Political Campaigns

Several studies have explored how political candidates and parties use social media platforms for political campaigning. Social media allows for direct interaction with voters, dissemination of messages, and grassroots mobilization.

For instance, Bimber and Davis (2019) note that social media has shifted political campaign strategies from traditional media to more interactive, user-driven platforms. Social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp enable candidates to create campaign messages and communicate directly with citizens. Similarly, Loader et al. (2014) found that social media's interactive nature enhances political participation by engaging citizens in real-time conversations and building personal connections with candidates.

In the Nigerian context, Okonkwo (2020) highlighted how platforms such as Facebook and Twitter have been central to mobilizing political support. Candidates often use social media to share policy promises, disseminate information, and engage with voters in rural and urban areas. Similarly, Akinmoladun (2019) emphasizes that social media strategies in Nigeria include the use of hashtags, live-streamed events, and political advertisements, which aim to increase visibility and encourage voter engagement.

These findings indicate that social media is an effective tool for creating a personal connection with the electorate, reaching a younger, digitally connected demographic, and amplifying political messages.

### 2.3.2 Social Media's Influence on Voter Perception and Participation

Social media significantly affects how citizens perceive political parties, candidates, and policies. Studies have shown that political communication via social media impacts voter attitudes and their likelihood of participating in elections.

Enli (2017) argues that social media has reshaped political communication by allowing voters to actively engage with political messages rather than passively receiving them through traditional media. This interactivity empowers voters to form opinions, align with movements, and mobilize in new ways. Furthermore, Campbell et al. (2020) suggest that social media shapes voter behavior by exposing citizens to personalized campaign messages and creating emotional responses to political narratives.

In Nigeria, Ebo (2021) points out that social media platforms play a key role in shaping voter expectations and participation by providing spaces for discussion, political awareness, and campaign engagement. During the 2019 and 2023 elections, social media platforms like WhatsApp and Twitter were instrumental in mobilizing youth, a demographic that dominates the Nigerian population.

However, Adegbite and Olatunde (2020) argue that while social media has improved participation, it has also fostered polarization and misinformation, which can negatively affect voter decisions and undermine democratic processes.

These studies highlight the dual nature of social media's influence: it can empower political participation by increasing access to information and fostering dialogue, yet it also creates challenges such as polarization and misinformation.

### 2.3.3 Challenges of Social Media in Political Campaigns: Misinformation and Hate Speech

One of the most pressing challenges associated with the use of social media during political campaigns is the spread of misinformation and hate speech.

These elements distort public understanding, damage political reputations, and threaten the integrity of elections.

Vosoughi et al. (2018) found that misinformation spreads faster on social media compared to accurate information due to the virality of emotionally charged content. Similarly, Lazer et al. (2018) emphasize that misinformation and fake news undermine trust in democratic institutions, especially during election periods.

In Nigeria, studies such as Okonkwo (2020) reveal how misinformation has played a significant role in political campaigns. False information, propagated through platforms like WhatsApp and Twitter, has been used to smear political opponents, sow division, and manipulate voter behavior. Similarly, Akinmoladun (2019) highlights that hate speech remains prevalent on social media, further polarizing political opinions and creating tensions during elections.

Efforts to address misinformation and hate speech have included government policies and the regulation of social media use, but challenges remain in enforcing accountability and promoting ethical online behavior among candidates and their supporters.

### 2.3.4 Digital Inequality and Political Participation

Digital inequality refers to disparities in access to technology, internet services, and digital literacy. These inequalities affect the reach of social media campaigns and the inclusivity of political participation.

Van Dijk (2019) defines digital inequality as the unequal distribution of technological opportunities among different socio-economic groups. In Nigeria, rural areas often lack adequate internet infrastructure and access to smartphones, which limits their engagement with social media-based political campaigns.

Studies such as Adegbite and Olatunde (2020) emphasize that these disparities result in unequal opportunities for political participation. While urban

areas may fully engage with social media campaigns and mobilization efforts, rural populations may remain excluded due to technological limitations.

Addressing these disparities is crucial to ensuring that social media campaigns are inclusive and reach all demographics, thereby strengthening the democratic process.

### 2.3.5 Nigerian Electoral Context and Social Media

The Nigerian political landscape has experienced a dramatic transformation with the integration of social media into its electoral process. Political campaigns in Nigeria have transitioned from traditional rally-based strategies to social media-centric approaches.

Research by Akinmoladun (2019) and Okonkwo (2020) identifies social media platforms as key tools for candidate engagement, information dissemination, and mobilization during Nigeria's 2019 and 2023 elections. WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram were particularly effective in engaging the youth demographic, a dominant voting bloc in Nigeria's elections.

However, challenges such as misinformation, digital divides, and political polarization have complicated this transition. As noted by Ebo (2021), these challenges must be addressed to ensure fair and transparent elections.

The reviewed literature establishes that while social media offers opportunities for greater political participation and engagement, it also poses ethical and structural challenges that must be explored further in this study. This empirical review provides the foundation for identifying research gaps and constructing the research methodology in the subsequent chapter.

### 2.4    Research Gap

The research gap identifies the shortcomings, limitations, and unexplored areas in the existing body of knowledge related to the role of social media in shaping political campaigns during Nigerian elections. This section synthesizes insights

from the theoretical and empirical review to pinpoint specific areas where additional research is necessary.

## 2.4.1 Limited Focus on Social Media's Direct Influence on Nigerian Election Outcomes

While numerous studies have analyzed the use of social media during political campaigns in Nigeria (e.g., Okonkwo, 2020; Akinmoladun, 2019), there remains a gap in understanding how social media directly affects election outcomes. Many studies focus on voter behavior and participation but fail to systematically explore how social media strategies by candidates and parties translate into tangible electoral success. This gap limits the ability to draw concrete conclusions about the causal relationship between social media use and electoral results

## 2.4.2 Inadequate Exploration of Social Media Challenges and Their Impacts

Although the literature highlights issues such as misinformation, hate speech, and digital inequality (e.g., Vosoughi et al., 2018; Akinmoladun, 2019), there is limited research on how these challenges affect voter trust, political participation, and campaign outcomes in Nigeria. Most existing studies address these challenges from a theoretical or general perspective without delving into their unique manifestations within Nigeria's political campaigns.

There is a need for more localized studies to investigate how these challenges influence the effectiveness of social media strategies during elections and voter engagement.

## 2.4.3 Insufficient Data on Digital Inequality's Role in Social Media Campaigns

Digital inequality, which refers to disparities in internet access, smartphone availability, and digital literacy, has been acknowledged as a factor impacting social media use. However, empirical studies examining the direct effects of digital inequality on social media-based political participation in

Nigeria are scarce. Existing research (Van Dijk, 2019) emphasizes these disparities broadly but lacks a focused analysis of their specific implications for Nigerian elections.

Understanding how digital divides impact different socio-economic groups' ability to engage with social media campaigns would provide valuable insights into ensuring inclusive and fair democratic participation.

## 2.4.4 Need for Context-Specific Studies on Social Media's Role in the Nigerian Electoral Process

Most studies on social media's role in political campaigns adopt a general or global approach without sufficient attention to the unique political, social, and technological context of Nigeria. The diverse socio-political factors in Nigeria—including urban-rural divides, economic inequality, and technology infrastructure—affect how social media influences political campaigns and voter behavior.

The lack of context-specific research means that many theoretical and empirical findings cannot be fully applied to Nigeria's unique political climate. Hence, there is a need for studies that are tailored to Nigeria's electoral system, culture, and socio-political environment.

## 2.4.5 Limited Understanding of Social Media's Role in Shaping Voter Perception and Behavior

Although the literature discusses the impact of social media on political participation and mobilization (e.g., Campbell et al., 2020; Enli, 2017), the extent to which social media influences voter perception and the decision-making process in Nigeria remains underexplored. Voter behavior is dynamic, and social media offers both opportunities and challenges in shaping citizens' choices. However, the intricate mechanisms through which these platforms affect voter attitudes, opinions, and decisions during Nigerian elections need further empirical investigation.

**Summary of the Research Gap**

The gaps identified from the theoretical and empirical review are as follows:

1. There is limited research exploring how social media strategies directly influence election outcomes in Nigeria.
2. There is inadequate exploration of the challenges of misinformation, hate speech, and their impacts on electoral processes.
3. Digital inequality and its effects on participation in social media campaigns in Nigeria remain underexplored.
4. There is a lack of context-specific research that considers Nigeria's unique political and socio-economic environment.
5. There is insufficient empirical understanding of how social media shapes voter perception, attitudes, and decision-making in the Nigerian electoral context.

**Relevance of this Study in Addressing the Research Gap**

This study seeks to address these identified research gaps by examining:

How social media influences political campaigns and voter perception during Nigerian elections.

The extent to which misinformation and hate speech affect trust in political processes and voter participation.

The effects of digital inequality on citizens' engagement with social media campaigns and political discourse.

Context-specific analysis tailored to Nigeria's political, technological, and socio-political environment.

By addressing these gaps, this research will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the role of social media in shaping political campaigns and its broader implications for democracy in Nigeria.

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# CHAPTER THREE
# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology employed in this study, focusing on the systematic approach adopted to investigate the role of social media in shaping political campaigns, with particular attention to its influence during Nigerian elections. The research methodology serves as the blueprint for the study, providing a structured approach to gathering, analyzing, and interpreting data.

The methodology provides the framework for answering the research questions and achieving the objectives of the study. This chapter will detail the research design, population of the study, sample selection and technique, data collection methods, data analysis methods, research instrument, validity, and reliability of the instrument. It also discusses ethical considerations and the limitations of the research process.

The chapter begins with an overview of the research design, followed by the target population, sample size, and sampling techniques. Subsequently, it addresses data collection methods, the instruments used, ethical considerations, and the procedures for data analysis. This structured approach ensures that the study maintains methodological rigor and achieves research objectives efficiently.

## 3.2 Research Design

The research design serves as the framework for the entire study, guiding how data is collected, analyzed, and interpreted to address the research questions and objectives. It provides a structured approach that ensures the research is systematic, focused, and capable of generating valid and reliable findings.

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design, combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The mixed-methods design is appropriate

because it allows for a comprehensive exploration of the research problem by integrating the strengths of both methodologies.

### 3.3 Population of the Study

The population of the study refers to the entire group of individuals, organizations, or events that the researcher aims to investigate and draw conclusions about. For this study, the population consists of individuals and groups involved in political campaigns, social media usage, and voter participation during Nigerian elections, focusing on the recent general elections (2019 and 2023).

Understanding the population is essential because it sets the scope of the study and determines the generalizability of the research findings.

### 3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

This section outlines the methods used to select participants from the target population to ensure the research objectives are met. It discusses the sample size—the number of individuals included in the study—and the sampling techniques employed to select participants effectively.

### 3.4.1 Sample Size

The sample size refers to the number of individuals or units selected from the accessible population to participate in the study. A representative sample is crucial for drawing valid and reliable conclusions about the population while maintaining the feasibility of the research.

In this study, the sample was determined based on a balance between the size needed for statistical analysis (quantitative research) and qualitative insights (qualitative research).

1. Quantitative Sample Size:

A sample size of 400 respondents was be used for the quantitative survey. This number ensures sufficient statistical power for analysis and allows for

generalizability to the broader Nigerian population involved in social media political engagement.

2. Qualitative Sample Size:

For the qualitative component, 20-25 participants were selected for interviews and focus group discussions. This number allows for in-depth insights and the identification of patterns and themes related to the study's qualitative objectives.

### 3.4.2 Sampling Technique

The study employs a mixed-methods sampling strategy to select participants. This involves both probability sampling for the quantitative portion and non-probability sampling for the qualitative component to ensure inclusivity, representation, and depth.

### 3.5 Data Collection Methods

This section outlines the methods and instruments used for data collection to ensure the research objectives are achieved. The study utilizes a combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, as identified in the mixed-methods research design. These methods will gather information related to the role of social media in shaping political campaigns and its influence during the Nigerian elections.

### 3.6 Research Instrument

The research instrument refers to the tools or devices used to collect data for a study. It includes the questionnaires, interview guides, and other methods that will be used to gather information from participants. This section describes the design, structure, and components of the instruments employed for both quantitative and qualitative data collection.

### 3.6 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

To ensure that the research instruments are accurate, consistent and appropriate for the study's objectives, validity and reliability will be addressed.

1.  Validity:

Content Validity: The instruments were reviewed by experts in political communication and social media research to ensure that the survey questions and interview guides cover all necessary aspects of the study.

Face Validity: Ensuring that the questions are clear, unambiguous, and appropriate for answering the research questions.

2.  Reliability:

The reliability of the quantitative instrument was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha to test internal consistency. A Cronbach's alpha value of 0.7 or higher was considered acceptable.

**3.7     Data Analysis Methods**

This section describes the techniques and methods that were used to analyze the data collected through both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The goal of this section is to outline how the data was  processed, interpreted, and presented to answer the research questions effectively.

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# CHAPTER FOUR

## DATA PRESETATION AND ANALYSIS

### 4.0     INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on data presentation and analysis observed from the question and the study to set out in the research methodology.

This study findings are presented to examine "Role of social media in shaping political campaign(A case study of influence during Nigeria election)"

This research instruments which are questionnaire and survey guide were used to acquire data.

The data collected represented in accordance with the order establishment in the study questions and sample proportion were used to evaluate the respondent demographic information.

### 4.1     DATA PRESENTATION

According to Okoto 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 organization and presentation of data in table, graphs, chart, etc. In this research project the instrument for the study was administered to random selected respondents in polytechnic and it consist of four section (A,B,C and D) of 18 questions which are relevant to this study.

**Table1: which social media platforms do you use most often?**

| Response | Number of respondent | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Facebook | 38 | 30% |
| Twitter (x) | 12 | 20% |
| Instagram | 4 | 15% |
| WhatsApp | 36 | 15% |
| Tiktok | 6 | 10% |
| YouTube | 4 | 10% |
| TOTAL | 100 | 100% |

Source: Research survey, 2025

Table1 show that 38 respondent representing (30%) Facebook, 36 respondent representing (15%) WhatsApp. This table shows that majority of the respondent choose Facebook and WhatsApp as their social media platforms.

**Table2: How often do you encounter political content on social media**

| Response | Number of respondent | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Very frequently | 59 | 60% |
| Occasionally | 27 | 20% |
| Rarely | 10 | 10% |
| Never | 4 | 10% |
| TOTAL | 100 | 100% |

Source: Research survey, 2025

Table 2 above classifies the respondents from the data gathered it shows that 59 of the respondent representing (60%) were between very frequently while 27 representing (20%) were occasionally and 10 representing (10%) were Rarely . Therefore it was concluded that majority of the respondent representing (60%) encounter political content on social media very frequently.

**Table3: Did you follow any political campaign on social media during the last Nigeria election**

| Response | Number of respondent | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 72 | 75% |
| No | 28 | 25% |
| Total | 100 | 100% |

Source: Research survey,2025

Table 3 above classifies the respondent from the data gathered, it shows that 72 of the respondents representing (75%) were YES, 28%respondents representing (25%) were NO and Therefore, it was concluded that majority of the respondent representing (75%) were YES

**Table4: what type of political content influenced you the most?**

| Response | Number of respondent | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Video | 54 | 50% |
| Live session | 11 | 20% |
| Memes | 11 | 10% |
| Infographic | 7 | 5% |
| News Articles | 15 | 13% |
| Testimonials endorsement | 2 | 2% |
| TOTAL | 100 | 100% |

Table 4 above classifies the respondents from the gathered data. It shows that 54 of the respondents representing (50%) were video 11 representing (20%) were live session and 7 representing (5%) were infographic. Therefore, it was concluded that majority of the respondent representing (50%) were video.

**Table5: Gender**

| Response | Number of respondent | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Male | 45 | 35% |
| Female | 55 | 65% |
| Others | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 100 | 100% |

Source: Research survey, 2025

Table 5 above classifies the respondent Gender from the data gathered, it shows that 45 of the respondent representing (35%) were Male, and respondent representing (65%) were female and 0 representing others. Therefore, it was concluded that majority of the respondent representing (35%) were female.

**Table6: Age**

| Response | Number of respondent | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 18-25 | 57 | 25% |
| 26-35 | 25 | 25% |
| 36-45 | 7 | 25% |
| 46-60 | 9 | 20% |
| 60+ | 2 | 5% |
| TOTAL | 100 | 100% |

Source: Research survey, 2025

Table 6 above classifies, the respondent Age from the data gathered, it shows that thing of the respondent representing (25%) were 18_25, 25 representing (25%) were 26_35, and 7 representing (25%) are 36-45. Therefore, it was concluded that majority of the respondent representing (25%) were 18-25.

**Table7: Educational Qualification**

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Secondary school | 10 | 60% |
| OND/NCE | 15 | 20% |
| HND/B.SC | 66 | 10% |
| Postgraduate | 9 | 10% |
| TOTAL | 100 | 100% |

Source: Research survey, 2025

Table 7 above classifies the respondent qualification from the data gathered, it shows that things of the respondent representing 60% were secondary school, while 20% is representing OND/NCE while 10% is representing respondent HND/B.SC, while 10%. Respondent is representing post graduate this means that majority of the respondent choose HND/B.SC.

**Table8: Occupation**

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Student | 61 | 70% |
| Civil servant | 9 | 10% |
| Private sector | 12 | 10% |
| Self employed | 17 | 5% |
| Unemployed | 1 | 5% |
| TOTAL | 100 | 100% |

Source: Research survey, 2025

Table 8 above  shows  classifies the respondent occupation from the data gathered, it shows that things of the respondent representing 70%were student while 10%.respondent  representing civil servant. respondent representing 10% private sector, and respondent representing 5% is self employed . Respondent representing 1% is unemployed means that majority student.

**Table9: Do you use social media regularly?**

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| YES | 94 | 90% |
| NO | 6 | 10% |
| Total | 100 | 100 |

Source: Research survey, 2025

Table 9 above show that 94 respondent representing (90%) YES  10% respondent representing (10%) NO  This means that majority of the respondents is YES.

**Table10: Do you believe media influenced your voting decision**

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly agree | 54 | 50% |
| Agree | 20 | 20% |
| Disagree | 24 | 29% |
| Strongly disagree | 2 | 1% |
| Total | 100 | 100 |

Source: Research survey, 2025

Table10 shows that 54 respondent representing (50%) stronglyagree,20 respondent representing (20%) Agree, This means that majority of the respondents choose  Strongly Agree

**Table11: In  your opinion how effective was social media in educating  voters during the election**

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Very effective | 63 | 60% |
| Effective | 22 | 25% |
| Ineffective | 15 | 15% |
| Very ineffective | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 100 | 100% |

Source: Research survey, 2025

Table 11 shows that 63 respondent representing (60%) very effective, 22 respondent representing (25%) Effective. This means that majority of the respondents agree that social media is very effective in educating voters during election.

**Table12: Do you Think political campaign on social media were more engaging than traditional media (TV, Radio Newspaper)**

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 81 | 80% |
| No | 11 | 10% |
| Not sure | 8 | 10% |
| Total | 100 | 100 |

Source: Research survey, 2025

Table 12 shows that 81 respondent representing (80%) YES, 11 respondent representing (10%) NO, And 8 respondent representing (10%) NOTSURE This means that majority choose YES.

**Table13: Were you influenced by political endorsement or discussion by influencer/celebrities on social media**

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 65 | 70% |
| No | 35 | 30% |
| Total | 100 | 100% |

Source: Research survey, 2025

Table13 show that 65 respondent representing (70%) YES, 22 respondent representing (30%) NO. This means majority of the respondents agreed

**Table 14 Do you verify political information seen on social media before accepting it as a true?**

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Always | 68 | 55% |
| Sometimes | 23 | 35% |
| Rarely | 7 | 5% |
| Never | 2 | 5% |

Source: Research survey, 2025

Table 14 show that 68 respondent representing (55%) Always, 23 respondent representing (35%) sometime, And 7 respondent representing (5%) Rarely This means that majority of the respondents choose always.

**Table15: social media give a voice to all political candidates regardless of party strength**

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly agree | 55 | 50% |
| Agree | 40 | 30% |
| Strongly disagree | 0 | 0% |
| Disagree | 5 | 20% |
| Total | 100 | 100% |

Source: Research survey, 2025

Table 15 show that 55 respondent representing (50%) strongly agree, 40 respondent representing (30%) agree. This means that majority of the respondent stronglyagree.

**Table16: Do you think fake New or misinformation on social media affected election outcome**

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 90 | 80% |
| No | 10 | 20% |
| Total | 100 | 100% |

Source: Research survey, 2025

Table 16 show that 90 respondent representing (80%) YES, 10 respondent representing (20%) No. This means that majority of the respondent agreed.

**Table17: social media Should be regulated during election period to prevent misinformation**

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly agree | 64 | 50% |
| Agree | 30 | 31% |
| Strongly disagree | 5 | 16% |
| Disagree | 1 | 3% |
| Total | 100 | 100% |

Source: Research survey, 2025

Table 17 show that 64 respondent representing (50%) strongly agree, 30 respondent representing (31%) agree. This means that majority of the respondent strongly Agree .

**Table18: in your opinion did some media promote peaceful or violent political discourse during the election**

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Promoted peaceful discourse | 63 | 50% |
| Promoted violence | 22 | 20% |
| Both | 15 | 30% |
| Total | 100 | 100% |

Source: Research survey, 2025

Table18 show that 63 respondent representing (50%)Promoted peaceful discourse 22 respondent representing (20%).Promoted violence. Respondent representing (20%) is A both This means that the majority agree on promoted peaceful discourse.

## 4.2 ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

**Social Media Usage and Platforms**

Research Question 1: Which social media platforms do respondents use most often?

(Table 1) Facebook (30%) and WhatsApp (15%) are the most frequently used platforms, followed by Twitter (X) (20%), Instagram (15%), TikTok (10%), and YouTube (10%).

Table 9 reinforces this, with 90% of respondents confirming regular social media use, indicating a highly connected sample.

**Exposure to Political Content**

Research Question 2: How often do respondents encounter political content on social media? (Table 2) 60% of respondents encounter political content very frequently, 20% occasionally, 10% rarely, and 10% never.

**Types of Influential Political Content**

Research Question 3: What type of political content influenced respondents the most?

(Table 4) Videos (50%) were the most influential, followed by live sessions (20%), news articles (13%), memes (10%), infographics (5%), and testimonials/endorsements (2%).

**Social Media as a Platform for All Candidates**

Research Question 4: Does social media give a voice to all political candidates regardless of party strength?

(Table 15) 50% strongly agree, 30% agree, 10% neutral, 10% disagree, 0% strongly disagree.

**Nature of Political Discourse**

Research Question 5: Did social media promote peaceful or violent political discourse during the election? (Table 18)

50% promoted peaceful discourse, 20% promoted violence, 20% a bit of both, 10% not sure.

The 50% peaceful discourse suggests social media largely facilitated constructive political engagement, aligning with Table 11 (voter education) and Table 15 (voice for all candidates).

The 20% violence and 20% a bit of both highlight concerns about polarizing or inflammatory content, consistent with Table 16's focus on misinformation.

**4.3    DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The data consistently shows social media as a dominant force in political engagement, with 90% regular use (Table 9), 75% campaign engagement (Table

3), and 85% effectiveness in voter education (Table 11). Facebook and WhatsApp lead due to their widespread use and accessibility in Nigeria.

Videos (50%) and live sessions (20%) (Table 4) are key drivers of influence, reflecting the power of visual and interactive formats in engaging young, student-heavy audiences (Tables 6, 8).

The sample's 65% female, 70% student, and 60% secondary school profile suggests a youthful, moderately educated group, which may explain the preference for accessible platforms (Facebook, WhatsApp) and engaging content (videos).

The 80% belief in misinformation's impact (Table 16) and 80% support for regulation (Table 17) highlight a critical awareness of social media's risks, balanced by 90% verification efforts (Table 14).

Social media's 80% engagement advantage over traditional media (Table 12) underscores its role as a dynamic, interactive platform for political campaigns.

Table 6 (Age): Equal 25% across three age groups is statistically unusual and may indicate a data error.

The conclusion incorrectly states HND/B.Sc as the majority (10%), while secondary school dominates (60%).

Table 8 (Occupation): The unemployed percentage is listed as 1% in the text but 5% in the table, suggesting a typo.

# CHAPTER FIVE
## SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 5.1    INTRODUCTION

This study was conducted to investing The role of social Media in shaping political campaign during Nigeria election.The finding reveal that social media platform serve as a major source of political information for the electorate significantly influencing voter's perception and opinion about candidate election related news quickly and broadly making it powerful tool in election campaign.The study also found that social media facilities political engagement by providing a platform for discussion and debate, while also contributing to the formation of political attitude and voting intention.However it was observed that social media also source of misinformation and propaganda which may distort public opinion. Despite this, the majority of respondent agreed that social media has positively shaped their understanding of political events during election.

## 5.2.    CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings the study concludes that social media play a crucial role in shaping public opinion during election it effectively disseminates political information. Influences voter behaviour and increase political participation.The credibility of information on social media, although sometime questioned largely affects how the public perceives candidates and electoral outcomes, social media platforms empower users to engage in political discussion, which helps form collective opinions and sometimes mobilised voters.Nonetheless the potential for misinformation remain a challenge emphasizing the need for users to critically evaluate the content they consume overall. Social media has transformed the electoral landscape by becoming a key driver in moulding public opinion

**5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations are made

**1. Promote media literacy :** Government and civil society organisations should Implement programmes that educate the public on how to critically assess political information on social to reduce the spread and impact of misinformation.

2. **Enhance social media Regulation:** form social media companies should strength policies that monitor and control false information and hate speech during election to ensure a fair and credible electoral process

**3. Encourage Responsible use:** political parties and candidate should use social media responsibly, ensuring transparency and truthfulness in their online campaigns to foster trust among the electorate

**4. Support official channels:** Electoral bodies should increase their presence on social media platform to provide timely, accurate, and offical election update to counter balance rumour and fake news

**5. Facilities Digital inclusion:** Effort should be made to bridge digital divide so that all segments of the population can access and benefit from political information on social media platforms

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