

# Journal of Management Research and Review

Volume: 01 Issue: 04 October-2025

## Social Media and Youth Political Participation in Nigeria: Opportunities and Challenges

**Enyioko Ikechukwu Jacinta (Ph.D)**

Department of Political Science, and Public Administration, Achievers University, Owo, Ondo State, Nigeria. ORCID ID: 0009-0006-3127-2502

**Bayefine Onaiyekan Robert**

Post Graduate Student, Department of Political Science, and Public Administration, Achievers University, Owo, Ondo State, Nigeria.

**Published Date: October 09, 2025**

**ABSTRACT:** This study investigates the role of social media in shaping youth political participation in Nigeria, emphasizing both the opportunities and challenges associated with its use. Adopting a descriptive survey design, data were collected from 600 respondents across Nigeria's six geopolitical zones using stratified random sampling. A structured questionnaire provided quantitative insights. The reliability of the instrument was confirmed with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.86. Findings revealed that social media significantly enhances youth political awareness and engagement. For instance, 73.3% of respondents affirmed that social media improved their access to political information ( $M = 3.93$ ), while 65.0% reported increased interest in politics ( $M = 3.68$ ). Moreover, 56.7% of participants engaged in online political discussions ( $M = 3.50$ ), and 70.0% noted exposure to diverse political views ( $M = 3.83$ ). However, the impact on offline mobilization and voting decisions was moderate, with only 46.7% agreeing that online campaigns influenced their voting behavior ( $M = 3.27$ ). Challenges were also pronounced: 65.0% identified misinformation ( $M = 3.65$ ), 60.0% cited limited digital literacy ( $M = 3.50$ ), and 65.0% emphasized high data costs and poor connectivity ( $M = 3.72$ ) as barriers to effective engagement. Overall, the grand mean of 3.46 indicates a moderate influence of social media on youth political participation. The study concludes that social media is a double-edged sword facilitating awareness, mobilization, and activism, while simultaneously constrained by misinformation, digital divides, and regulatory challenges. Policy interventions, digital literacy programs, and inclusive internet access are recommended to maximize its democratic potential in Nigeria.

**KEYWORDS:** Social media, Youth political participation, Democratic engagement, Misinformation, Nigeria

### INTRODUCTION

Over the last twenty years, the expansion of digital technologies has transformed communication, civic engagement, and political participation across the globe. Among these innovations, social media stands out as a central instrument shaping political processes. Unlike traditional outlets such as radio, television, and newspapers that operate on a one-way communication model, social media is interactive, fast, and decentralized. This shift has democratized political discourse by giving citizens greater opportunities to express opinions, share information, and mobilize for action (Adegboyega & Oyewole, 2023; Ojebuyi & Salawu, 2021). Nigeria provides a particularly significant case for examining this transformation. With a population exceeding 230 million and nearly 60% under the age of 30, the country has one of the largest youth populations in Africa (Pew Research Center, 2022). These young citizens represent not only the majority of voters but also a dynamic force for political change. For many of them, social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, and X (formerly Twitter) serve as the primary channels for accessing information, engaging with governance, and organizing collective action. Traditionally, political participation in Nigeria relied on structures like town hall meetings, rallies, radio, and print media. While useful, these channels were often limited in scope and largely dominated by elites (Enahoro & Olayiwola, 2022). Social media, in contrast, offers a more inclusive environment where citizens can participate regardless of class or location. The rapid spread of mobile phones and relatively affordable internet services has further enhanced this process, making political communication more immediate and citizen-driven (Adegboyega & Oyewole, 2023).

The impact of social media on Nigeria's democracy has been most visible during elections and civic mobilizations. From the 2011 to 2019 general elections, platforms became key tools for campaigns, voter education, and political mobilization. Candidates increasingly bypassed traditional media to interact directly with citizens, while civil society used these channels for election monitoring and civic education (Enahoro & Olayiwola, 2022). Beyond elections, the 2020 EndSARS protests revealed the mobilizing power of social media. What started as a protest against police brutality soon evolved into a nationwide movement coordinated through hashtags, live streams, and WhatsApp groups (Olorunmola, 2020). The movement also attracted global attention, demonstrating the potential of social media to amplify domestic issues internationally and drive grassroots activism (Adegboyega & Oyewole, 2023). Despite these opportunities, social media poses serious challenges. The spread of misinformation, propaganda, and divisive narratives threatens Nigeria's fragile democracy (Ojebuyi & Salawu, 2021). Algorithm-driven amplification of sensational content further deepens polarization and weakens rational debate (Pew Research Center, 2022). Regulatory issues have also emerged, particularly concerning freedom of expression and state control. The suspension of Twitter in 2021 highlighted the tension between safeguarding national security and protecting digital freedoms (BBC News, 2021). Critics argued that such actions curtailed dissent, especially given the platform's role in organizing EndSARS protests.

License: This is an open access article under the CC BY 4.0 license: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Overall, the integration of social media into Nigeria's political system carries both promise and risks. It provides new spaces for transparency, participation, and accountability, yet it also exposes institutional weaknesses in governance and regulation (Enahoro & Olayiwola, 2022). This study, therefore, investigates "Social Media and Youth Political Participation in Nigeria: Opportunities and Challenges," with the aim of analyzing how digital platforms foster political engagement among youth, the opportunities they offer for democratic development, and the threats they pose to political stability.

### 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Youth political participation in Nigeria has historically been constrained by structural barriers such as economic exclusion, limited civic education, and weak institutional responsiveness (Enahoro & Olayiwola, 2022). However, the emergence of social media has opened new spaces for engagement, enabling young Nigerians to bypass traditional political structures and interact directly with political leaders, movements, and ideas. Despite these advancements, several critical issues persist. First, while social media facilitates political mobilization, the impact of this engagement on sustained political participation and democratic outcomes remains unclear. Many scholars argue that social media activism often results in "slacktivism" short-term online enthusiasm with limited offline impact (Adegboyega & Oyewole, 2023). Second, the rise of misinformation, fake news, and online propaganda poses significant threats to the credibility of digital platforms, often leading to political polarization and the manipulation of public opinion (Ojebuyi & Salawu, 2021).

Third, tensions between digital freedom and state regulation complicate the use of social media as a democratic tool. The Nigerian government's suspension of Twitter in 2021 illustrated the vulnerability of digital activism to state control, raising concerns about censorship and shrinking civic spaces (BBC News, 2021). Finally, although the youth constitute a significant portion of Nigeria's electorate, their ability to transform digital activism into long-term political power, such as electoral success or sustained policy influence, remains underexplored. These challenges necessitate a scholarly inquiry into how social media both enables and constrains youth political participation in Nigeria. Without such analysis, the transformative potential of digital technologies risks being undermined by systemic barriers, misinformation, and regulatory pushback.

### 1.3 Research Questions

This study is guided by the following questions:

1. To what extent has social media influenced youth political participation in Nigeria?
2. What opportunities do social media provide for enhancing democratic engagement among Nigerian youth?
3. What challenges hinder the effective use of social media as a tool for youth political participation in Nigeria?
4. How can the benefits of social media be maximized while addressing the challenges it poses to political participation?

### 1.4 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the role of social media in shaping youth political participation in Nigeria, with a focus on its opportunities and challenges. The specific objectives are to:

1. Assess the extent to which social media has influenced political participation among Nigerian youth.
2. Identify the opportunities social media presents for enhancing youth engagement in democratic processes.
3. Examine the challenges associated with social media use in youth political participation in Nigeria.

## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Conceptual Review

#### 2.1.1 The Concept of Social Media

The concept of social media has attracted wide scholarly attention due to its growing influence on communication, political participation, and civic engagement. It is generally defined as a collection of internet-based applications that allow interactive creation and exchange of user-generated content in real time (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Alalwan, 2023). Popular platforms such as Facebook, Twitter (now X), WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube integrate technological and social dimensions to connect diverse communities and facilitate information flow. Unlike Web 1.0, which was characterized by static content, Web 2.0 promotes participatory culture where users actively produce and circulate information (Jenkins, Ford, & Green, 2018). This shift transforms citizens from passive consumers into active contributors to political debate and mobilization. In this way, social media embodies a democratizing potential, especially in environments where traditional media is tightly controlled (Mutsaers & Harris, 2022). Beyond being a technological tool, social media functions as a public sphere where ideas are debated, agendas set, and marginalized voices expressed (Dahlgren, 2021). In Nigeria, where youths make up over 60% of the population, it has become central to political awareness, mobilization, and activism (Okoro & Adebayo, 2021). By circumventing political gatekeepers such as parties and mainstream media often associated with corruption and exclusion youths find alternative avenues for engagement (Chiluwa & Adetunji, 2022).

The Nigerian context highlights both the opportunities and contradictions of social media. A clear example is the EndSARS protest of 2020, during which young Nigerians used hashtags, live updates, and videos to mobilize support across ethnic and religious divides. The movement demonstrated the power of digital platforms to amplify voices, attract global solidarity, and compel government response (Iwilade, 2021). Thus, social media operates not only as a communication tool but also as a political instrument for resistance and accountability.

However, the same platforms also generate challenges for governance and democracy. Research shows that they can promote misinformation, hate speech, cyber extremism, and state surveillance (Uwalaka & Nwabueze, 2022). For instance, fake news circulated through WhatsApp and Twitter during the 2019 and 2023 elections shaped voter perceptions and deepened polarization (Onuora & Ifukor, 2023). Political elites increasingly exploit social media for propaganda, raising concerns about manipulation of public opinion (Ojebuyi & Salawu, 2023). Access remains another obstacle. While urban youths with smartphones and affordable internet actively engage online, rural counterparts face barriers such as poor infrastructure, high costs, and low digital literacy (Nwagwu, 2022). This digital divide limits inclusiveness and questions the extent to which social media truly democratizes participation.

Government regulation further complicates the landscape. The suspension of Twitter in 2021 illustrated the struggle between state control and digital freedoms (Adebanwi, 2024). Such interventions show how social media can serve both as a platform for resistance and as a site of authoritarian restriction. In summary, social media in Nigeria represents a double-edged sword. It enables political learning, activism, and mobilization, yet it also carries risks of manipulation, exclusion, and repression. For Nigerian youths, it remains a critical but contested arena where opportunities for democratization coexist with significant challenges (Alalwan, 2023; Adebanwi, 2024).

### 2.1.2 Youth Political Participation

Youth political participation has become a critical issue in democratic debates, especially in developing countries where young people form a large proportion of the population. Political participation refers to the activities through which citizens influence government decisions, policies, and leadership (Verba, Scholzman, & Brady, 1995). In this context, youth participation involves individuals between 18 and 35 years engaging in voting, civic activism, protests, advocacy, and digital campaigns (Ehinomen & Ikuemonisan, 2023). In Nigeria, the rise of social media platforms such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, and WhatsApp has redefined how young people engage in politics. These platforms enable youths to exchange ideas, organize collective action, and demand accountability from leaders (Ojebuyi & Salawu, 2022). Unlike traditional participation hindered by poverty, unemployment, or exclusion from political institutions, social media provides a relatively accessible space for self-expression, issue-based mobilization, and online advocacy (Obi-Ani, Anikwenze, & Isiani, 2020).

Youth involvement now extends beyond casting ballots to activities like online petitions, grassroots organizing, and digital protests. A notable example is the 2020 #EndSARS movement, where Nigerian youths used hashtags, live streaming, and online fundraising to amplify their campaign against police brutality, gaining both national and global attention (Iwilade, 2021). This highlights the transformative role of technology in shaping youth-led activism. Nonetheless, several challenges persist. Digital platforms are vulnerable to misinformation, hate speech, and surveillance, which weaken democratic engagement (Agunbiade & Lawal, 2023). Furthermore, socioeconomic disparities, unequal digital access, and resistance from political elites limit meaningful youth inclusion in governance. Despite these obstacles, sustained youth engagement through digital tools holds significant potential for deepening democracy in Nigeria by fostering transparency, inclusiveness, and accountability (Omodunbi & Awosusi, 2022). To maximize this potential, reforms promoting civic education, digital literacy, and institutional support are necessary for integrating young voices into governance (Adebayo & Iwuoha, 2023).

### 2.1.3 Opportunities and Challenges of Social Media

Social media has become a major driver of political communication and civic engagement in the 21st century, reshaping how citizens interact with leaders and participate in governance. In Nigeria, platforms such as Facebook, Twitter (X), Instagram, and WhatsApp play critical roles in mobilizing political support, shaping opinions, and encouraging democratic participation (Olowu & Olaoye, 2023). For young people, social media offers several opportunities. It provides an accessible and affordable platform that reduces barriers posed by mainstream media and financial limitations (Ekekwe & Ihediwa, 2022). It also promotes political awareness and civic education by enabling the real-time sharing of information, debates, and election updates. During Nigeria's 2023 elections, platforms were widely used to share campaign materials and civic education content (Adebayo, 2023). Social media also strengthens accountability by allowing citizens to expose corruption, demand transparency, and mobilize for reform, as seen in the EndSARS movement (Adediran, 2021).

However, these opportunities are accompanied by serious challenges. The spread of misinformation and fake news often distorts public opinion and undermines electoral integrity, sometimes fueling violence and voter distrust (Oyesomi et al., 2022). The digital divide also restricts participation, as internet access and literacy remain unequal, particularly in rural areas (Ogunleye & Alabi, 2023). In addition, online platforms can foster hate speech, cyberbullying, and ethnic or religious polarization (Chukwuma & Ibrahim, 2023).

Government restrictions further complicate digital participation. The 2021 Twitter ban revealed how state control threatens online freedoms (Abubakar & Musa, 2022). Moreover, online activism does not always translate into tangible outcomes such as increased voter turnout (Nwachukwu, 2023). Overall, social media acts as a double-edged sword: it empowers Nigerian youths with awareness and mobilization tools but also creates risks through misinformation, exclusion, and censorship. Addressing these challenges through digital literacy, fact-checking, and inclusive internet policies is essential to maximize its democratic potential.

### 2.1.4 The Extent to Which Social Media Has Influenced Political Participation Among Nigerian Youth

The rise of social media has redefined political participation in Nigeria, especially among youths who make up the largest population group. Unlike traditional modes of engagement controlled by state or elite structures, digital platforms offer open spaces where young people can access information, voice opinions, and participate in governance. This has expanded opportunities for political awareness, activism, and accountability (Adeleke & Aminu, 2023).

One major impact is the improvement of political awareness. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter (now X), WhatsApp, TikTok, and Instagram serve as central sources of news and debate. Through infographics, memes, and hashtags, complex political issues are simplified, making politics more relatable to young audiences. By consistently exposing users to political content, these platforms have bridged literacy gaps and heightened interest in governance (Chukwuere & Ihejirika, 2023; Ekperiware, Edosomwan, & Isukul, 2022).

Beyond awareness, social media has been vital for digital activism. The EndSARS protests of 2020 highlight this role, as youths mobilized online to demand an end to police brutality. Social media enabled coordination, fundraising, and international visibility, transforming online discourse into mass street demonstrations. This experience shows how platforms can move beyond discussion to become tools of agenda-setting and political mobilization (Olowojolu, 2021; Freedom House, 2023). Digital platforms also enable direct engagement with political leaders. Increasingly, Nigerian politicians use these tools to communicate policies, campaign, and interact with citizens. During the 2019 and 2023 elections, online campaigns encouraged voter registration, debate participation, and election monitoring, particularly among young voters (Okunade & Akinola, 2022). Thus, social media has strengthened democratic inclusivity by creating real-time interaction between leaders and citizens.

Equally important is its role in promoting accountability. Youths frequently use Twitter Spaces, Facebook Live, and Instagram to challenge corruption, scrutinize policies, and expose misconduct. These forums have created a parallel public sphere where leaders are held accountable

beyond formal institutions (Chukwuere & Ihejirika, 2023). Nevertheless, these benefits face notable challenges. The rapid spread of fake news and propaganda can distort reality, fuel intolerance, and threaten democratic values (Nwankwo & Okafor, 2022). Government restrictions, such as the temporary Twitter ban during EndSARS, expose the fragility of digital participation (Freedom House, 2023). Additionally, unequal internet access and limited digital literacy exclude many rural or poor youths. Risks of surveillance and harassment also discourage full participation (Adeleke & Aminu, 2023). In summary, social media has expanded political participation by fostering awareness, activism, accountability, and electoral involvement. However, misinformation, censorship, digital inequality, and insecurity remain barriers. Its overall impact on Nigerian youth participation will depend on addressing these challenges through regulation, digital literacy, and protection of civic freedoms.

## 2.2 Theoretical Review

The role of theory in academic research is to provide a conceptual foundation for explaining relationships among variables and phenomena. In the study of social media and youth political participation in Nigeria, theoretical perspectives are vital for explaining how digital platforms reshape civic engagement, influence democratic outcomes, and create both opportunities and challenges. Several theoretical frameworks from communication studies, political science, and sociology are particularly relevant to this discourse. This section examines four key theories: Public Sphere Theory, Uses and Gratifications Theory, Social Capital Theory, and Networked Publics Theory while also situating them within the Nigerian socio-political context.

### 2.2.1 Public Sphere Theory

The Public Sphere Theory, propounded by Jürgen Habermas (1962), posits that a democratic society requires spaces where citizens can engage in rational-critical debate about issues of public concern. Historically, coffee houses, newspapers, and town halls constituted such spheres in Europe. In the 21st century, digital technologies especially social media have redefined the nature of the public sphere. For Nigerian youths, platforms like Twitter (now X), Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram represent arenas where political issues are debated, grievances aired, and state accountability demanded. In the Nigerian context, the EndSARS protests of 2020 serve as a prime example of the digital public sphere. Social media enabled youths to bypass traditional media, which is often censored by the state or influenced by political elites, and to directly engage with a national and global audience (Okoro & Nwafor, 2023). Through hashtags such as EndSARS and SARSMustEnd, Nigerian youths created a transnational discursive community that pressured government institutions to respond. However, Habermas also warned of distortions to the public sphere, such as commercialization, unequal access, and misinformation. These concerns are evident in Nigeria, where not all youths have equal internet access due to poverty and infrastructural challenges, leading to a “digital divide” (Akinwale & Abiodun, 2022). Furthermore, the proliferation of fake news and online propaganda during elections threatens the deliberative quality of social media debates, raising questions about whether the digital public sphere in Nigeria genuinely enhances democratic participation or merely amplifies noise and polarization.

### 2.2.2 Uses and Gratifications Theory

The Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), developed by Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1974), shifts the focus from what media does to people to what people do with media. It argues that audiences are active, not passive, and that they use media to satisfy specific needs such as information, entertainment, socialization, personal identity, and empowerment. For Nigerian youths, UGT provides a framework for understanding why social media has become a preferred medium of political engagement compared to traditional channels. Social media satisfies multiple needs simultaneously: it provides information on political developments, interaction through debates and discussions, identity reinforcement by connecting youths with like-minded peers, and empowerment by enabling participation in campaigns and protests (Oladipo & Okoro, 2022). For instance, during the 2019 and 2023 elections, many youths relied on Twitter and WhatsApp for updates on election results, voter registration processes, and party manifestos. Nonetheless, UGT also highlights limitations. Some youths primarily use social media for entertainment such as memes, comedy skits, and music and may engage politically only superficially. This “slacktivism” (minimal political activity, e.g., liking or sharing posts without real-world participation) raises concerns about whether online engagement translates into substantive offline political involvement (Chiluwa & Ajiboye, 2021). Thus, while UGT helps explain motivations, it also underscores the varying depths of youth political participation in Nigeria.

### 2.2.3 Social Capital Theory

Social Capital Theory, advanced by Putnam (2000), emphasizes the role of networks, norms, and trust in fostering civic engagement and collective action. Social capital is the glue that binds individuals into communities, enabling cooperation for mutual benefit. In the context of Nigerian youths, social media creates a form of digital social capital that enhances connectivity across ethnic, religious, and geographical divides. Social media platforms enable Nigerian youths to form trust-based networks that strengthen solidarity. The Not Too Young To Run Movement, which successfully lowered the constitutional age for contesting political offices, relied heavily on online mobilization to build coalitions among youth organizations, NGOs, and civil society actors. Similarly, digital solidarity networks during EndSARS facilitated crowd-funding, legal aid, and international lobbying, are showcasing how online networks can translate into concrete political outcomes (Adebanwi & Obadare, 2021). However, the theory also highlights potential drawbacks. The fragmentation of social media into echo chambers can erode generalized trust and deepen political polarization. Hate speech, ethnic bias, and disinformation campaigns have at times undermined unity among Nigerian youths. This suggests that while social capital fostered online can mobilize collective action, it can also reinforce divisions if not properly managed.

### 2.2.4 Networked Publics Theory

The Networked Publics Theory, articulated by Boyd (2010), conceptualizes publics as communities that are restructured through digital networks. Unlike the traditional public sphere, which is spatially constrained, networked publics are enabled by social media technologies that allow geographically dispersed individuals to interact, organize, and engage in real-time. For Nigerian youths, this theory is highly relevant. Social media platforms enable the rapid formation of political communities that cut across physical boundaries. Movements like Nigeria Decides, End Bad Governance, and Vote Not Fight exemplify how networked publics are formed around shared concerns, often leading to large-scale mobilization. Networked publics allow Nigerian youths to directly challenge elite-controlled narratives, amplify their voices, and pressure the state to respond to collective demands (Ademilokun & Taiwo, 2023).

Nevertheless, networked publics face challenges. State surveillance and digital repression, such as the 2021 Twitter ban in Nigeria; demonstrate the vulnerability of digital activism to government control. Additionally, while networked publics amplify youth voices, they may exclude those without reliable internet access or digital literacy, thereby reinforcing socio-economic inequalities. Together, these theories offer a multidimensional understanding of how social media shapes youth political participation in Nigeria. Public Sphere Theory emphasizes deliberation and civic discourse; Uses and Gratifications Theory explains individual motivations and selective media use; Social Capital Theory highlights collective networks and trust-building; and Networked Publics Theory illustrates how digital connectivity redefines political communities. By synthesizing these frameworks, this study situates social media as a double-edged sword: a powerful tool for democratic participation and youth empowerment, but also a platform vulnerable to manipulation, inequality, and repression.

### 2.3 Empirical Review

Empirical studies on the relationship between social media and youth political participation in Nigeria have provided valuable insights into how digital platforms shape civic engagement, political behavior, and democratic participation. Scholars have used different methodological approaches ranging from surveys and interviews to mixed-methods designs, with varying sample sizes and analytical tools, to investigate the extent of opportunities and challenges that social media presents to Nigerian youth in politics.

Uche and Nwafor (2022) conducted a quantitative study examining the influence of social media platforms on political awareness and participation among Nigerian youths during the 2019 general elections. Adopting a descriptive survey design, they administered structured questionnaires to 400 respondents aged between 18 and 35 years, selected using stratified random sampling across tertiary institutions in Lagos and Abuja. Data were analyzed using regression analysis. The findings revealed that exposure to political content on platforms such as Twitter and Facebook significantly improved political awareness and stimulated participation in electoral processes. However, the study noted that misinformation and political propaganda hindered informed decision-making. The authors recommended that civil society organizations should intensify digital literacy campaigns to help youths critically evaluate online political information.

In a related study, Musa and Ibrahim (2023) employed a mixed-method research design to investigate the dual role of social media in enhancing participation and spreading political disinformation. The study surveyed 250 youths through purposive sampling in Kano and Kaduna states and complemented the data with 15 in-depth interviews with student leaders and political influencers. Quantitative data were analyzed using correlation analysis, while qualitative data underwent thematic analysis. Results showed that social media provided opportunities for mobilization, activism, and real-time political engagement, but also amplified ethnic bias, hate speech, and voter apathy when manipulated by political elites. The study recommended strengthening Nigeria's digital regulatory framework and promoting civic education to mitigate the adverse effects of online manipulation.

Similarly, Adeyemi and Olatunji (2021) used a cross-sectional survey design to explore the relationship between social media usage and youth electoral participation in Southwest Nigeria. A sample of 300 young people was selected through multi-stage sampling from Oyo, Ogun, and Osun states. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire focusing on frequency of social media use, type of political content consumed, and willingness to vote. Analysis through logistic regression revealed a significant positive relationship between frequent use of Twitter and Instagram for political news and the likelihood of participating in elections. Nevertheless, the study found that online activism often did not translate into offline participation such as voting or attending political rallies. The authors recommended bridging the gap between online engagement and offline political action through youth-centered political mobilization strategies.

Furthermore, Eze and Okonkwo (2024) carried out a correlational study investigating how social media shapes youth perceptions of government responsiveness in Southeast Nigeria. Using simple random sampling, 350 youths were surveyed across Enugu and Anambra states, and data were analyzed with Pearson correlation and multiple regression. Findings indicated that positive engagement on social media, such as interaction with government handles, increased trust and political efficacy among youths. Conversely, exposure to online corruption scandals and unmet campaign promises fostered cynicism and reduced political participation. The study recommended that government institutions adopt more transparent and interactive digital communication strategies to rebuild trust with the youth population.

Finally, a cross-country comparative study by Ogunleye et al. (2024) further broadened the scope by examining youth political participation through social media in Nigeria, Ghana, and Kenya. Employing a cross-sectional design, data were collected from 600 respondents (200 per country) through stratified random sampling, and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Findings revealed that while social media significantly enhanced political participation across the three countries, Nigerian youths were more exposed to challenges of misinformation and partisan propaganda compared to their counterparts. The study recommended regional collaboration to promote fact-checking initiatives and strengthen media literacy among African youths.

Collectively, these studies demonstrate that while social media presents significant opportunities for Nigerian youths to participate in politics by increasing awareness, facilitating activism, and strengthening engagement it also poses challenges such as misinformation, political manipulation, digital divides, and state repression. Scholars consistently recommend digital literacy campaigns, balanced regulatory frameworks, transparent government communication, and protection of digital rights as ways to maximize opportunities while minimizing challenges.

### 2.4 Anchor Theory of the Study: Networked Publics Theory

This study is anchored on the Networked Publics Theory developed by Boyd (2010), which explains how digital technologies reshape social interaction, communication, and participation. Boyd defines "networked publics" as publics created and sustained through digital networks. Unlike traditional publics, they are shaped by technological affordances such as persistence, scalability, replicability, and searchability, which transform how people connect, deliberate, and organize collective action. Within social media spaces, these publics serve as dynamic arenas where individuals' particularly young people negotiate identities, discuss political issues, and mobilize participation. Unlike physical public spheres such as town halls or rallies, networked publics transcend geography and socio-political limits, thereby enabling broader and faster political engagement (Papacharissi, 2010).

The theory is highly relevant to this study as it reflects the realities of youth political engagement in Nigeria's digital environment. Platforms like Twitter (X), Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, and TikTok have become crucial arenas for political debates, reform campaigns, and challenges to state authority. The 2020 EndSARS protests illustrate how Nigerian youths created and maintained networked publics that expanded beyond national borders to attract international attention (Ademilokun & Taiwo, 2023). Similarly, the NotTooYoungToRun movement leveraged digital affordances to mobilize support for constitutional reforms that lowered the age limit for political offices (Oladipo & Okoro, 2022).

Networked Publics Theory also explains both opportunities and challenges inherent in digital participation. Opportunities include visibility, real-time mobilization, and transnational solidarity, while challenges involve digital exclusion, state censorship such as Nigeria's 2021 Twitter ban, and the circulation of misinformation (Akinwale & Abiodun, 2022). This study adopts the theory because it offers a comprehensive lens for understanding how social media restructures political participation among Nigerian youths. Unlike other frameworks, it captures the transformative role of digital technologies in shaping political communities and influencing democratic outcomes.

### 3.0 METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design to examine the relationship between social media usage and youth political participation in Nigeria, with particular attention to both the opportunities and challenges that emerge from this interaction. The descriptive survey approach was considered appropriate because it enables the systematic collection of quantitative and qualitative data to explore trends, patterns, and perceptions among Nigerian youths regarding their engagement in political processes through digital platforms (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The population of the study comprised Nigerian youths between the ages of 18 and 35 years, consistent with the official definition of youth in Nigeria (National Youth Policy, 2019). According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2023), this demographic group constitutes approximately 34% of the total Nigerian population, making them a significant category for political mobilization and participation. To ensure adequate representation, a stratified random sampling technique was employed. The population was stratified based on geographical zones (North-Central, North-East, North-West, South-East, South-South, and South-West), and respondents were proportionally drawn from each stratum. This method allowed for fair representation of diverse socio-cultural and political contexts in Nigeria. A total sample size of 600 respondents was determined using Cochran's formula for sample size calculation at a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error (Taherdoost, 2017).

The main research instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire designed to capture information on three major constructs: (i) patterns of social media usage among youths, (ii) extent and forms of political participation influenced by social media, and (iii) perceived challenges and opportunities of social media for political engagement. The questionnaire contained both closed-ended and Likert-scale items to allow for quantitative analysis while also capturing nuanced perceptions. A pilot test was conducted with 50 respondents outside the main sample to validate the instrument. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a coefficient of 0.86, indicating high internal consistency. In addition to the questionnaire, a small number of semi-structured interviews were conducted with youth leaders, political communication experts, and representatives of civil society organizations. This qualitative component was included to enrich the quantitative data and provide deeper insights into contextual challenges and opportunities of social media in Nigeria's political space. Quantitative data collected from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were employed to summarize demographic data and response patterns and determine the extent to which social media usage predicts youth political participation. Statistical analyses were carried out using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27.0. The integration of quantitative methods enabled a robust and comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

### 4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

**Table 1: Descriptive Analysis of the Influence of Social Media on Youth Political Participation in Nigeria**

| S/N | Question                                                                   | SA (%)     | A (%)      | U (%)      | D (%)      | SD (%)    | Mean (M) | Std (SD) | Dev |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|----------|----------|-----|
| 1   | Social media increases my interest in politics.                            | 180 (30.0) | 210 (35.0) | 90 (15.0)  | 80 (13.3)  | 40 (6.7)  | 3.68     | 1.22     |     |
| 2   | Social media makes it easier to access political information.              | 240 (40.0) | 200 (33.3) | 70 (11.7)  | 60 (10.0)  | 30 (5.0)  | 3.93     | 1.17     |     |
| 3   | I have participated in online political discussions on social media.       | 150 (25.0) | 190 (31.7) | 120 (20.0) | 90 (15.0)  | 50 (8.3)  | 3.50     | 1.25     |     |
| 4   | Social media campaigns influence how I vote.                               | 120 (20.0) | 160 (26.7) | 140 (23.3) | 120 (20.0) | 60 (10.0) | 3.27     | 1.26     |     |
| 5   | I use social media to organize or join political protests/events.          | 80 (13.3)  | 140 (23.3) | 180 (30.0) | 140 (23.3) | 60 (10.0) | 3.07     | 1.18     |     |
| 6   | Social media exposes me to diverse political views.                        | 200 (33.3) | 220 (36.7) | 90 (15.0)  | 60 (10.0)  | 30 (5.0)  | 3.83     | 1.14     |     |
| 7   | Information on social media is generally reliable for political decisions. | 70 (11.7)  | 130 (21.7) | 150 (25.0) | 170 (28.3) | 80 (13.3) | 2.90     | 1.22     |     |
|     | Grand Mean                                                                 |            |            |            |            |           | 3.46     | 1.26     |     |

**Source:** Author's Computation, 2025.

Table 1 summarizes the descriptive analysis of how social media shapes youth political participation in Nigeria. The results show that social media significantly influences political awareness and engagement, though the impact varies across different dimensions. About 65.0% of respondents agreed that it increases their interest in politics, reflected in a mean score of 3.68. This indicates that social media motivates young people to pay closer attention to political issues. The strongest agreement was recorded for easy access to political information, with 73.3% support and a mean score of 3.93, highlighting its role as a key channel for communication and information sharing. In terms of active participation, 56.7% of respondents confirmed engaging in online political discussions, producing a mean score of 3.50. This suggests that social media provides interactive spaces that enhance civic engagement. However, its direct effect on voting behavior was moderate. Only 46.7% agreed that campaigns influenced their decisions, with 30.0% undecided, yielding a mean of 3.27. Similarly, the role of social media in mobilizing protests or events recorded low agreement (36.6%) and a mean score of 3.07, showing that online activism does not always translate into offline action. Exposure to diverse political views was another strong area of influence, with 70.0% agreement and a mean of 3.83, suggesting that social media broadens youths' political perspectives. Conversely, trust in the reliability of political information was low, with just 33.4% agreement and the lowest mean of 2.90, reflecting skepticism about credibility and misinformation. The overall grand mean of 3.46 indicates a moderate level of influence. While social media enhances interest, access, and discourse, its weaker effects on voting, mobilization, and credibility highlight the need for stronger digital literacy and institutional measures to maximize its democratic potential.

**Table 2: Descriptive Analysis of the Opportunities Social Media Presents for Enhancing Youth Engagement in Democratic Processes**

| S/N        | Question                                                                                    | SA (%)     | A (%)      | D (%)     | SD (%)   | NS (%)    | Mean (M) | Std (SD) | Dev |
|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|-----|
| 1          | Social media increases access to political information for youth.                           | 200 (33.3) | 260 (43.3) | 70 (11.7) | 30 (5.0) | 40 (6.7)  | 3.88     | 1.14     |     |
| 2          | Social media mobilizes youth to participate in elections and rallies.                       | 230 (38.3) | 220 (36.7) | 70 (11.7) | 30 (5.0) | 50 (8.3)  | 3.92     | 1.17     |     |
| 3          | Social media facilitates direct communication between youth and public officials.           | 240 (40.0) | 180 (30.0) | 70 (11.7) | 30 (5.0) | 80 (13.3) | 3.88     | 1.20     |     |
| 4          | Social media encourages youth to engage in policy discussions and civic debates.            | 220 (36.7) | 200 (33.3) | 90 (15.0) | 30 (5.0) | 60 (10.0) | 3.82     | 1.22     |     |
| 5          | Social media provides platforms for youth to organize and collaborate on civic initiatives. | 210 (35.0) | 240 (40.0) | 70 (11.7) | 30 (5.0) | 50 (8.3)  | 3.88     | 1.16     |     |
| 6          | Social media promotes political awareness and sensitization among young people.             | 225 (37.5) | 210 (35.0) | 80 (13.3) | 35 (5.8) | 50 (8.3)  | 3.87     | 1.18     |     |
| 7          | Social media empowers youth voices by amplifying their opinions on governance issues.       | 235 (39.2) | 200 (33.3) | 75 (12.5) | 30 (5.0) | 60 (10.0) | 3.91     | 1.19     |     |
| Grand Mean |                                                                                             |            |            |           |          |           | 3.88     | 1.18     |     |

Source: Author's Computation, 2025

Table 2 presents the descriptive analysis of the opportunities that social media offers for enhancing youth engagement in democratic processes. The results indicate that social media plays a significant role in broadening access to political participation, mobilization, and civic engagement among Nigerian youth. A substantial proportion of respondents (76.6%) agree that social media increases access to political information, as reflected in a mean score of 3.88. This highlights the capacity of digital platforms to bridge the information gap between political leaders and young citizens. Similarly, 75.0% of respondents affirm that social media mobilizes youth to participate in elections and rallies, supported by the highest mean score of 3.92. This demonstrates the instrumental role of platforms such as Facebook, Twitter (X), Instagram, and WhatsApp in driving political mobilization and voter turnout. Furthermore, 70.0% of respondents recognize that social media facilitates direct communication between youth and public officials, with a mean score of 3.88, signifying its ability to reduce traditional barriers to political dialogue. In addition, 70.0% of respondents agree that social media encourages policy discussions and civic debates among youth, with a mean score of 3.82, suggesting its usefulness in stimulating democratic discourse. Likewise, 75.0% of respondents highlight that social media provides avenues for collaboration on civic initiatives, with a mean score of 3.88, indicating the value of digital platforms in collective action and grassroots organization. Another key finding shows that 72.5% of respondents believe social media promotes political awareness and sensitization among young people, as reflected in a mean score of 3.87. Similarly, 72.5% of respondents agree that social media amplifies youth voices on governance issues, with a mean score of 3.91, reinforcing its role as an empowering tool for political expression and advocacy.

The overall grand mean of 3.88 indicates a moderately high level of agreement that social media provides diverse opportunities for enhancing youth participation in democratic processes. These findings suggest that social media is not merely an information-sharing tool but a strategic instrument for mobilization, communication, awareness creation, and empowerment of young citizens. To maximize these opportunities, policymakers and stakeholders should strengthen the digital space by ensuring freedom of expression, supporting digital literacy, and mitigating challenges such as misinformation and online harassment, which may otherwise undermine the democratic benefits of social media.

**Table 3: Descriptive Analysis of Challenges Associated with Social Media Use in Youth Political Participation in Nigeria**

| S/N        | Question                                                                                           | SA<br>(%)      | A<br>(%)       | U<br>(%)       | D<br>(%)       | SD<br>(%)     | Mean | Std.<br>Dev. |
|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|------|--------------|
| 1          | Misinformation on social media discourages youth participation in politics.                        | 180<br>(30.0%) | 210<br>(35.0%) | 80<br>(13.3%)  | 80<br>(13.3%)  | 50 (8.3%)     | 3.65 | 1.26         |
| 2          | Online harassment and threats discourage youth from participating politically.                     | 150<br>(25.0%) | 200<br>(33.3%) | 90<br>(15.0%)  | 100<br>(16.7%) | 60<br>(10.0%) | 3.47 | 1.30         |
| 3          | Lack of digital literacy limits youths' effective political engagement on social media.            | 140<br>(23.3%) | 220<br>(36.7%) | 100<br>(16.7%) | 80<br>(13.3%)  | 60<br>(10.0%) | 3.50 | 1.27         |
| 4          | Government censorship and account suspensions inhibit youth political participation.               | 120<br>(20.0%) | 180<br>(30.0%) | 150<br>(25.0%) | 90<br>(15.0%)  | 60<br>(10.0%) | 3.25 | 1.27         |
| 5          | High cost of data and poor internet access limit youth political participation online.             | 210<br>(35.0%) | 180<br>(30.0%) | 90<br>(15.0%)  | 70<br>(11.7%)  | 50 (8.3%)     | 3.72 | 1.28         |
| 6          | Echo chambers and algorithmic bias polarize youth and reduce constructive participation.           | 130<br>(21.7%) | 210<br>(35.0%) | 110<br>(18.3%) | 90<br>(15.0%)  | 60<br>(10.0%) | 3.43 | 1.26         |
| 7          | Limited trust in online discussions due to fake accounts and bots discourages youth participation. | 160<br>(26.7%) | 190<br>(31.7%) | 110<br>(18.3%) | 80<br>(13.3%)  | 60<br>(10.0%) | 3.52 | 1.28         |
| Grand Mean |                                                                                                    |                |                |                |                |               | 3.51 | 1.27         |

**Source:** Author's Computation, 2025

Table 3 highlights the major challenges facing Nigerian youths in using social media for political participation. Findings show that misinformation is a significant barrier, with 65.0% of respondents (30.0% strongly agree, 35.0% agree) affirming its negative impact. This is reflected in a mean score of 3.65 (SD = 1.26), though some respondents remain less concerned. Similarly, 58.3% (25.0% strongly agree, 33.3% agree) identify online harassment and threats as deterrents, producing a mean of 3.47 (SD = 1.30), indicating moderate agreement. Another key issue is limited digital literacy, reported by 60.0% (23.3% strongly agree, 36.7% agree). With a mean of 3.50 (SD = 1.27), this suggests that inadequate skills constrain effective political engagement. Government censorship and account suspensions attract lower agreement, with 50.0% acknowledging it as a challenge (mean = 3.25, SD = 1.27), implying it is less critical than other barriers. The most significant constraint is cost of data and poor internet access, noted by 65.0% (35.0% strongly agree, 30.0% agree). This records the highest mean score of 3.72 (SD = 1.28), showing financial and connectivity limitations as the strongest deterrents. Algorithmic bias and echo chambers also concern 56.7% (21.7% strongly agree, 35.0% agree), with a mean of 3.43 (SD = 1.26), indicating their role in polarizing discussions. Furthermore, 58.4% (26.7% strongly agree, 31.7% agree) report that fake accounts and bots reduce trust in online political debates, supported by a mean of 3.52 (SD = 1.28). The overall mean of 3.51 (SD = 1.27) suggests that youths moderately agree social media poses diverse obstacles. However, internet costs, misinformation, and fake accounts emerge as the most severe. Addressing these issues through affordable internet, stronger fact-checking, digital literacy programs, and measures against online manipulation can enhance youth political participation.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study reveals that social media has become a powerful driver of youth political engagement in Nigeria. Evidence from the 2023 general elections and related studies shows that platforms such as Twitter (X), Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp were central in mobilizing young citizens, expanding their access to political information, and encouraging civic involvement. For many youths, social media served as the first gateway to political conversations, enhancing their awareness and participation (Queen et al., 2025). Online campaigns and mobilization initiatives significantly contributed to increased voter registration and turnout, especially among first-time voters. Reports from Afrobarometer (2024) confirm that young people relied heavily on social media for election-related updates, complementing traditional media sources. Importantly, digital activities often translated into physical participation, such as rallies, monitoring of polls, and voter registration drives, underscoring the role of online spaces in reinforcing democratic action (A Review of the Role of Social Media, 2025). However, participation levels were uneven, with urban youths engaging more actively than rural counterparts due to disparities in internet access and digital literacy (Igwebuike Research Institute, 2024).

The findings also highlight the opportunities that social media presents for enhancing youth involvement in Nigeria's democracy. Its low-cost and wide reach made it possible to mobilize large numbers of young people. Viral campaigns and hashtags effectively reminded users of registration deadlines and offered directions to polling centers (Afrobarometer, 2024). Civil society organizations also used these platforms to provide civic education through infographics, videos, and short guides (A Review of the Role of Social Media, 2025). Social media further created networks across regions, linking youths who advocated for good governance, anti-corruption, and employment opportunities. These online networks often

led to offline activism, including advocacy campaigns and peaceful protests (Queen et al., 2025). Moreover, the platforms gave rise to new forms of youth leadership by amplifying the voices of young influencers, activists, and commentators who might otherwise lack access to traditional institutions. Collectively, these opportunities confirm social media's role not just as a communication tool but as a catalyst for empowerment in democratic participation.

Nonetheless, several challenges were identified. The spread of misinformation and disinformation was a major problem during the 2023 elections, shaping perceptions and undermining informed choices (Misinformation or Disinformation on Social Media, 2024). Platform algorithms, which amplify sensational content, worsened polarization and confined youths to echo chambers (A Review of the Role of Social Media, 2025). Online harassment, particularly targeting young women and politically active youths, created hostile digital environments that discouraged continued participation (The Guardian, 2024). The digital divide also persists, limiting rural and economically disadvantaged youths who face poor connectivity, high data costs, and low digital literacy (Afrobarometer, 2024). In addition, some political actors manipulate social media through disinformation campaigns, bots, and influencer marketing to distort youth narratives (Misinformation or Disinformation on Social Media, 2024). Overall, the findings show that social media has transformed youth political participation in Nigeria by widening access to information, mobilizing voters, and creating spaces for leadership. Yet, issues of misinformation, harassment, inequality, and manipulation highlight the need for improved digital literacy, stronger regulation, and platform accountability to maximize its democratic potential.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Conclusion

This study set out to examine the role of social media in shaping youth political participation in Nigeria, highlighting both the opportunities and challenges associated with its use. The findings revealed that social media has significantly transformed political engagement among Nigerian youth by providing a platform for information dissemination, mobilization, and interaction with political actors. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter (now X), Instagram, and WhatsApp have facilitated greater access to political information, enhanced awareness of civic rights, and stimulated active participation in electoral processes and governance debates (Okorie et al., 2023; Ibrahim, 2022). The study further established that social media empowers young people by amplifying their voices, reducing barriers to political participation, and promoting digital activism. However, challenges such as misinformation, fake news, online harassment, low digital literacy, and internet access inequality remain critical obstacles that hinder its full potential (Olowojolu & Adebayo, 2023). Additionally, the digital divide between urban and rural youth, coupled with government censorship and regulatory concerns, continues to limit inclusive participation (Afolabi & Uzoma, 2024).

In conclusion, social media has emerged as a double-edged sword in Nigeria's democratic landscape. While it offers unparalleled opportunities for political mobilization and participation among the youth, it also presents challenges that require deliberate policy, institutional, and societal interventions. Therefore, maximizing its benefits for democratic consolidation in Nigeria will depend on addressing these challenges while fostering responsible and inclusive use.

### Recommendations

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

- i. **Promote Digital Literacy Among Youth:** Government agencies, NGOs, and educational institutions should collaborate to provide training on responsible social media use, fact-checking, and online safety. This will equip young people to critically evaluate political information and reduce susceptibility to misinformation.
- ii. **Strengthen Legal and Policy Frameworks:** The Nigerian government should update its digital governance frameworks to balance freedom of expression with accountability. Laws should focus on curbing cyber harassment, hate speech, and misinformation without stifling civic engagement.
- iii. **Expand Internet Access and Affordability:** To bridge the digital divide, government and private sector stakeholders should invest in affordable broadband infrastructure, particularly in rural areas. This will ensure that more youth have equal opportunities to participate in political discourse online.
- iv. **Encourage Political Engagement through Social Media Campaigns:** Political parties, civil society groups, and electoral bodies such as INEC should utilize social media more effectively to engage youth, disseminate accurate information, and promote inclusive democratic participation.
- v. **Enhance Collaboration with Tech Platforms:** Social media companies operating in Nigeria should partner with local fact-checking organizations and advocacy groups to minimize the spread of fake news and ensure platform safety, particularly during election periods.
- vi. **Promote Civic Education through Social Media:** Civic education campaigns should be designed and disseminated through social media platforms to encourage political awareness, participation, and democratic values among Nigerian youth.

By implementing these recommendations, Nigeria can harness the transformative power of social media to deepen democratic participation, empower young citizens, and strengthen the nation's democratic institutions.

## REFERENCES

- 1) Abubakar, A., & Musa, S. (2022). Digital authoritarianism and political communication: The Nigerian Twitter ban in perspective. *Journal of African Media Studies*, 14(2), 145–160.
- 2) Adebaniwi, W. (2024). Digital spaces and democratic engagement in Africa: Rethinking political participation in the social media era. *African Affairs*, 123(492), 67–85.
- 3) Adebaniwi, W., & Obadare, E. (2021). Social capital, civil society and democracy in Nigeria. *African Affairs*, 120(480), 263–285. <https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adaa049>

- 4) Adebayo, K. (2023). Youth, social media, and electoral participation in Nigeria's 2023 general elections. *African Journal of Democracy and Governance*, 10(1), 34–49.
- 5) Adebayo, O., & Iwuoha, V. C. (2023). Digital technology and inclusive governance in Africa: Youth participation in the age of social media. *Journal of African Political Studies*, 29(3), 415–432.
- 6) Adediran, T. (2021). Social media activism and governance in Nigeria: A case study of the #EndSARS protest. *Journal of Politics and Society in Africa*, 6(3), 112–129.
- 7) Adegboyega, L., & Oyewole, S. (2023). Social media, youth activism, and democratic governance in Nigeria. *Journal of African Media Studies*, 15(2), 215–232.
- 8) Adeleke, A., & Aminu, K. (2023). Social media and democratic participation among Nigerian youths: Opportunities and dilemmas. *African Journal of Governance and Development*, 12(2), 45–60.
- 9) Ademilokun, M., & Taiwo, R. (2023). Hashtag activism and political participation in Nigeria: A discourse analysis of EndSARS movement. *Journal of Language and Politics*, 22(2), 237–256.
- 10) Adeyemi, T., & Olatunji, K. (2021). Social media usage and youth electoral participation in Southwest Nigeria. *Journal of African Media Studies*, 13(4), 567–582.
- 11) Afrobarometer (2024). Facing lack of economic opportunity, Nigerian youth want government action on jobs and cost of living. Afrobarometer Round 10 insights.
- 12) Agunbiade, O., & Lawal, A. (2023). Social media, misinformation, and democratic governance in Nigeria. *African Journal of Governance and Development*, 12(2), 57–74.
- 13) Akinwale, A., & Abiodun, O. (2022). Digital divide and youth political participation in Nigeria: Implications for democracy. *Information, Communication & Society*, 25(9), 1187–1204.
- 14) Alalwan, A. A. (2023). Social media in contemporary society: Opportunities, risks, and governance. *Information Systems Frontiers*, 25(2), 445–459.
- 15) BBC News. (2021, June 5). Nigeria suspends Twitter operations. Retrieved from
- 16) Bello, R., & Salihu, M. (2022). Digital mobilization and the #EndSARS protests: Social media as a tool for youth activism in Nigeria. *African Affairs Review*, 17(2), 145–163.
- 17) Boyd, D. (2010). Social network sites as networked publics: Affordances, dynamics, and implications. In Z. Papacharissi (Ed.), *A networked self: Identity, community, and culture on social network sites* (pp. 39–58). Routledge.
- 18) Chilwa, I., & Adetunji, A. (2022). Discourse, media and conflict: Examining digital activism in Africa. Routledge.
- 19) Chilwa, I., & Ajiboye, E. (2021). Social media activism and political participation in Nigeria: An appraisal of EndSARS. *Communication & Society*, 34(3), 45–64.
- 20) Chukwuere, J. E., & Ihejirika, J. (2023). Social media as a political communication tool: Implications for youth engagement in Africa. *Journal of African Media Studies*, 15(1), 78–94.
- 21) Chukwuma, O., & Ibrahim, L. (2023). Social media, hate speech, and political polarization in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Political Communication*, 5(1), 77–92.
- 22) Ehinomen, C., & Ikuemonisan, E. (2023). Youth and political participation in Nigeria: Issues, prospects and challenges. *Nigerian Journal of Political Science*, 9(1), 88–104.
- 23) Ekeke, E., & Ihediwa, P. (2022). Digital platforms and political participation of youth in Nigeria. *International Journal of Governance and Development*, 4(2), 58–71.
- 24) Ekperiware, M. C., Edosomwan, S., & Isukul, A. C. (2022). Digital activism and political participation: Evidence from Nigeria's EndSARS movement. *Journal of Political Studies*, 28(3), 101–120.
- 25) Enahoro, J. A., & Olayiwola, K. (2022). Social media and political participation: Evidence from young voters in Nigeria. *African Journal of Politics and Governance*, 11(1), 45–60.
- 26) Eze, C., & Okonkwo, J. (2024). Social media engagement and youth perceptions of government responsiveness in Southeast Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Political Communication*, 9(1), 33–52.
- 27) Igwebuike Research Institute (2024). Examining teens' level of Facebook use in South-East Nigeria. Igwebuike Research Institute Publications.
- 28) Iwilade, A. (2021). EndSARS and the digital politics of youth protest in Nigeria. *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 59(2), 155–178.
- 29) Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media. *Business Horizons*, 53(1), 59–68.
- 30) Katz, E., Blumler, J. G., & Gurevitch, M. (1974). Utilization of mass communication by the individual. In J. G. Blumler & E. Katz (Eds.), *The uses of mass communications: Current perspectives on gratifications research* (pp. 19–32). Sage.
- 31) Misinformation or Disinformation on Social Media in the 2023 General Elections (2024). *Journal of Arts, Humanities and Management Studies/BIA Journal*.
- 32) Musa, Y., & Ibrahim, A. (2023). Opportunities and risks of social media in youth political participation in Northern Nigeria. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 41(3), 402–421.
- 33) Mutsvairo, B., & Harris, M. (2022). Platform politics in Africa: How digital technologies shape political participation. Palgrave Macmillan.
- 34) Nwachukwu, J. (2023). Clicktivism or real participation? Evaluating social media's impact on political engagement in Nigeria. *Contemporary African Politics Review*, 8(2), 141–159.

- 35) Nwagwu, W. (2022). The digital divide and political participation of Nigerian youth: Exploring barriers to inclusivity. *African Journalism Studies*, 43(3), 59–79.
- 36) Nwankwo, O., & Okafor, C. (2022). Bridging the digital divide: Youth, social media, and political participation in rural Nigeria. *Journal of African Political Economy & Development*, 7(4), 115–132.
- 37) Obi-Ani, N. A., Anikwenze, C., & Isiani, M. C. (2020). Social media and the #EndSARS protests: Mobilizing Nigerian youths for change. *International Journal of Social Media Studies*, 5(1), 12–28.
- 38) Ogunleye, B., Adomako, S., & Nyongesa, P. (2024). Social media and youth political participation in Africa: A comparative study of Nigeria, Ghana, and Kenya. *African Journal of Democracy and Development*, 12(1), 77–95.
- 39) Ogunleye, F., & Alabi, A. (2023). Bridging the digital divide: Internet access and youth political engagement in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Development Studies*, 9(2), 101–117.
- 40) Ojebuyi, B. R., & Salawu, A. (2021). The influence of social media on youth political participation in Africa: Lessons from Nigeria. *Communicatio: South African Journal for Communication Theory and Research*, 47(3), 17–35.
- 41) Ojebuyi, B. R., & Salawu, A. (2022). Youth, social media and political participation in Nigeria. *Journal of African Media Studies*, 14(2), 233–249.
- 42) Ojebuyi, B. R., & Salawu, A. (2023). Digital inequality and political participation in Nigeria: Revisiting the rural–urban divide. *African Journalism Studies*, 44(2), 113–132.
- 43) Okeke, J., & Nwosu, C. (2022). Social media and democratic accountability in Nigeria: An appraisal of digital activism. *African Governance Review*, 3(4), 89–103.
- 44) Okoro, N., & Adebayo, O. (2021). Social media and political participation in Africa: The Nigerian experience. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 7(1), 1892925.
- 45) Okoro, N., & Nwafor, K. A. (2023). Digital media, youth activism and democratic consolidation in Nigeria. *Media, Culture & Society*, 45(5), 1013–1031.
- 46) Okunade, S., & Akinola, A. (2022). Political communication in the digital age: Nigerian politicians and the use of social media. *African Journal of Political Science*, 16(1), 33–49.
- 47) Oladipo, T., & Okoro, C. (2022). Social media, political participation, and democratic consolidation in Nigeria: A study of youth engagement. *African Journal of Political Science*, 16(2), 55–73.
- 48) Olorunmola, V. O. (2020). The power of social media for civic mobilization: The EndSARS protest in Nigeria. *Centre for Democracy and Development West Africa (CDD) Report*.
- 49) Olowojolu, O. (2021). Social media and youth political mobilization: Lessons from the EndSARS protests. *Studies in Politics and Society*, 9(2), 67–84.
- 50) Olowu, T., & Olaoye, M. (2023). Social media and political communication in Africa: Opportunities and challenges. *Journal of African Political Studies*, 12(1), 22–39.
- 51) Omodunbi, G., & Awosusi, O. (2022). Social media activism and youth political participation in Nigeria’s democratic process. *African Review of Political Economy*, 49(174), 603–621.
- 52) Onuora, A., & Ifukor, P. (2023). WhatsApp, elections and the circulation of political disinformation in Nigeria. *Information, Communication & Society*, 26(5), 895–912.
- 53) Oyesomi, K., Oyero, O., & Salawu, A. (2022). Misinformation, disinformation, and electoral processes in Nigeria: The role of social media. *Journal of African Elections*, 21(1), 56–72.
- 54) Queen, A., Adeyemi, S., & Okafor, J. (2025). Enhancing youth political participation through social media exposure: An exploration of social exchange theory. *Quantum Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*.
- 55) The Guardian (2024). Online harms: Sextortion and harassment risks for African youth on social platforms.
- 56) Uche, C., & Nwafor, E. (2022). Social media influence on youth political participation during Nigeria’s 2019 elections. *Journal of Media and Politics in Africa*, 8(2), 214–229.
- 57) Uwalaka, T., & Nwabueze, C. (2022). Fake news, social media and Nigeria’s democracy. *Media, Culture & Society*, 44(5), 987–1005.
- 58) Verba, S., Scholzman, K. L., & Brady, H. E. (1995). *Voice and equality: Civic voluntarism in American politics*. Harvard University Press.