Innovations

Voters' Participation of 2021 Governorship Election in Anambra State: An Evaluation of Blogs and Youtube Platforms

Rita Oluebube Ekeka Nwafor[1], Cosmas Anayochukwu Nwankwo[2], Nkoli Augustina Chendo[3], Adaora Florence Okeke[4]

[1,2,3,4] Department of Marketing, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam, Anambra State, Nigeria

Abstract: *The use of social media has been identified as a new possibility that will enhance political process and build a robust democracy in the modern world. The reason of the study is to evaluate the effect of social media on voters' participation in the 2021 governorship election in Anambra State. The specific objectives of the study were to: determine the effect of blogs/forums and YouTube on voters' participation in the 2021 governorship election in Anambra State. Survey research design was adopted. The population of this study comprised of all the registered voters in the three senatorial zones of Anambra State, Nigeria, totaling 338,134, while the sample size of 347 was used for the study. This was determined using proportionate stratified random sampling and convenience sampling techniques. The instrument was a questionnaire which was face validated while test-retest reliability was employed to verify the internal consistency. The study data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 27 software. Linear regression analysis were employed to assess research hypotheses while the significance level for the research hypotheses was set at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that Blogs/forums have significant effect on voters' participation in the 2021 governorship election in Anambra State and that Youtube has a significant effect on voters' participation in the 2021 governorship election in Anambra State. The researchers recommended among others that political candidates should improve their strategies especially where it concern blogs to engage citizens by understanding the public's perception of political parties and how shared content on blogs and Youtube platforms which influences their intention to vote.*

Keywords: *Social Media, Voters' Participation, Blogs/Forums, Youtube and Governorship Election*

Introduction

Social media has become a vital instrument for citizens to discuss issues of national significance and day-to-day challenges. According to Okoro and Nwafor (2013),

social media platforms such as Youtube, Blogs/Forums, Facebook, "X" (formerly known as Twitter) and others are not merely technological advancements in the 21st century. They are also fast developing into reliable sources that shape opinions. In order to communicate with the public and other users on social media, users are encouraged to create, comment on, and participate in content (Mohammed & Ogwuche, 2021).

Social media was not always such a vital instrument in contemporary political campaigns, but it has since evolved into one. It is now a common community in the majority of democratic countries in the world, including Nigeria. It has served as an advanced medium for modern human contact. Organizations may now access a wider audience with new technologies thanks to the internet, including social media (Okoro & Nwafor, 2013). The developments in social media and information technology are the most notable shifts. Citizens seem to find social media-driven political campaigns more appealing than conventional party activism (Okoro, Ugonna, Nebo & Obikeze, 2017). The world has evolved drastically due to the emergence of social media communication (Atinuke, 2022). Decentralizing communication has removed the barriers to communication, enabling almost all voters to take part, express themselves, and engage in other societal issues that affect them.

One crucial component of modern democracy is voter participation, which is a subset of political participation (Bernard, 2011). The act of eligible citizens casting votes in elections and therefore actively participating in the political process is referred to as voter participation. In a democratic political system, it is widely believed that citizens should have enough opportunities and a liberalized political environment to voice their opinions and preferences when making political decisions. To build a robust democracy, public mobilization has a significant impact on how votes are cast. To engage in the political process, especially during elections and matters of governance, citizens must be mobilized. With the emergence of the Internet, leading to a barrage of social media, various authors have identified new possibilities and platforms for mobilizing citizens (Fuchs, 2014; Arthur, 2012). During the Anambra governorship election in 2021, the researchers observed that political campaigns did not start on time, hence, most political parties utilized social media platforms such as Blogs, Youtube, radio/TV messaging, Facebook, "X" (Formerly known as Twitter), WhatsApp as against the conventional public gathering. This was due to these reported violent attacks and fears of possible attack of Unknown gun men (UGM). Therefore, politicians all over the world are heavily and deliberately utilizing social media as one of the most common means of communication with the public in order to maintain good public perceptions, hold onto office, and build rapport with their constituents. This has been supported by some empirical research, such as the study conducted by Prayogo, Irmawan, La, Yessy, and Elsyaff

(2022), which looked at how social media is used as a political communication tool to influence public perceptions of politicians. The findings of this investigation into the function of social media can be leveraged to garner interest and foster public confidence. Akosua (2020) investigated how social media affects political discourse in Ghana. The study discovered that knowledge about popular political topics on social media had an impact on their capacity to participate in politics. Binshad and Mohammad (2020) looked at how social media affects voter behavior and how political marketing is evolving. The results show that political parties with a strong social media staff can do well in elections. Nwador, Dike, and Origbo (2020) carried out a study on the relationship between social media marketing and voters' participation in politics in River State, Nigeria. The study revealed that there is a significant effect of social media marketing on voter participation in politics.

Moreover, several studies have argued that the use of social media platforms such as blogs and youtube helps to enhance organizational efficiency (Newman & Gabriel, 2016), political participation (Adeniyi, 2023), voters' sensitization (Ayeni, 2019; Onwunyi & Victor, 2022) and voting behaviours (Mohammed, 2019). Oluwasola (2022) investigated the influence of social media on youth participation in the 2019 General Election in Nigeria. The findings indicate that social media is an essential medium that can be used to enhance the political engagement of Nigerian citizens and young in the country's general elections. Furthermore, the internet's growth and popularity have made it a significant medium for modern political campaigns and elections, as well as for political communication (Fuchs, 2014). In addition, social media platforms are a crucial component of successful political engagement plans since they facilitate communication between supporters and political parties and candidates, as well as frequently highlight the good aspects of these figures. (Obi, Okoli, Ono, & Chiaghana, 2022). Instead of physically attending political parties' events, people have discovered alternate avenues to get involved in politics across the globe by using social media, online petitions, and action groups. This can seem to be a phenomenon which is primarily common in Nigeria and around the entire world. This explains why several political parties, institutions, and organizations today spend a significant amount of time, money, and effort on becoming active on online political platforms in addition to just being present there. One may then contend that the explosion of new ICTs has fundamentally changed the ways in which political mobilization and communication are conducted today, both in Nigeria and globally.

Despite the huge benefit of social media in voters' participation, there are also some lingering problems associated with social media which include; disinformation campaigns to manipulate public perception, damage the reputation of candidates, or interrupt the electoral process, leading to misinformation and voter disenchantment;

online harassment and intimidation of voters, political candidates, and election officials; and unequal access to digital technologies or the internet, leading to disparities in online engagement and voter participation (Aghogho, 2020). The quick dissemination of knowledge on social media media can also make it challenging to verify the accuracy and credibility of news, election-related content, and campaign messages, leading to voter confusion and manipulation. Furthermore, studies (Chang, 2010; Oyewole, 2022) have shown that certain social media platforms—like Youtube, Blogs and Facebook, had no discernible effect on election outcomes, voter behavior, political awareness, political belief or other variables that are not taken into account in this particular study. Therefore, there are inconsistencies from reviewed studies on the impact of social media on other variables as mentioned above, and also lack of literature on the effect of social media on voters' participation in the 2021 Anambra State, Nigeria, governorship election. This accounts for the gap in the current study. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to ascertain how social media particularly blogs/forums and YouTube affect voters' participation in 2021 governorship election in Anambra State, Nigeria. This study is therefore hypothesised as follows:

i. Blogs/forums have no significant effect on voters' participation in 2021 Governorship election in Anambra State.
ii. YouTube has no significant effect on voters' participation in 2021 Governorship election in Anambra State.

Literature Review
Social media and Voters' Participation
Social media according to Shamsu, Bahtiar and Suhaini (2017) serves as a means for enhancing dialogues among voters, both within a political party and in the public domain. It ensures that news about political office holders and community leaders are shared to the public. With the advent of the Internet and social networking sites, the electioneering process underwent a paradigm shift, and society as a whole underwent a radical transformation. The public is no longer inactive in government affairs because new channels for political engagement are opened up by the media. Breuer and Groshek (2014) claim that the platforms have greatly expanded the chances for obtaining and sharing political information, giving any Internet user a variety of extra access points to political content and low-cost political activities in terms of time, money, and effort. Diamond (2010) characterizes social media as a "liberation technology that expands political, social, and economic freedom," which makes sense. Unlike traditional mass media, social networking media provide two-way and even multi-way communication channels (Diamond, 2010; Milakovich, 2010), which enhance user involvement and the feedback process. This kind of

online voting, known as electronic involvement (e-participation) according to Medimorec et al. (2011), is a product of social networking sites' interactive features. Emailing politicians, going to their websites, making online donations, participating in electronic campaigns, electronic voting, and other online political actions are all considered forms of online participation in politics.

Voter participation according to Fiveable (2024), is the degree to which eligible persons participate in the electoral process, particularly by casting ballots in elections. It gauges how much each person exercises their democratic right to vote. As more people turn out to register for a voter's card, which will allow them to fulfill their civic responsibility during elections, voter participation increases over time. It is understandable that conducting general elections has helped Nigeria ease the transition of power from one civilian government to another, with the opposition party assuming power and the incumbent government arranging the polls (Gidengil et al., 2016). The act of citizens participating in the electoral process by casting ballots during elections is known as voter participation. It includes the active participation of qualified citizens in selecting their representatives and determining the course of government. One essential component of democracy is making sure that the people elect their government and hold it accountable. It is the foundation of any democratic society, acting as the basis for the election of governments and the formulation of public policy.

Adding voices to themes provided on social media platforms allows people to actively participate in politics, which is only one of the many benefits of using social media to increase voter involvement. The platforms also support the ideas of participatory democracy, which sees the media as a debate venue that considerably facilitates the actualization of political participation, by providing voters with a more accessible means to assess political candidates and encouraging transparency in governance. Because social media gives people a platform to express their thoughts online, it also opens up a lot of possibilities for innovation and new kinds of administration. This makes it possible to formulate thoughts about what the public requires, including possible reactions to public decision-making procedures. Politicians can also freely interact with the public informally thanks to these platforms, which allow them to reach large audiences and gauge the political climate before ever starting a campaign. This relationship makes politicians appear more approachable and engaged with their constituents by helping them appeal to the public, convey their sense of humor, and show that they are accessible. Social media's introduction into politics has had a significant impact on both politicians and people, yet there are disadvantages to using it to encourage voter involvement. The propagation of misleading information, political harassment, misinformation, fake news, propaganda, and trolling are some of the problems of using social media to promote political engagement. Furthermore, during election season, the topic of

bots affecting election results has grown in popularity. On social media platforms, bots are used to spread discord, leak fake news, and make up profiles that stoke animosity among users along with political parties. The issue of echo chambers is further worsened by the social media usage to encourage voter engagement, as everyone feels compelled to choose a side. When scrolling through their news feed, consumers only see content and opinions that they share. As a result, voters are unlikely to ever be forced to honestly defend their political position unless they diligently seek out individuals and media sources that hold opposite views. Furthermore, using social media to engage voters also makes it possible for outsiders to meddle in elections.

Yet, political leaders worldwide have embraced social media due to its advantages, using it to run for office, garner support, maintain communication and transparency with the public, and inspire voters and candidates to enter the political process (Abdulrauf et al., 2015; Abubakar, 2012; Aharony, 2012; Ekwueme and Folarin, 2017; Unwuchola et al., 2017). Countless countries' most recent elections have demonstrated this. For instance, social media platforms—such as blogs, social networking sites, and websites that share videos—were vital in the 2008 US elections because so many people used them to learn about the candidates and campaigns, according to Smith's (2009) Pew Research Center Internet & American Life Project report. During the elections, users not only got news and campaign material from various media outlets, but they could also share their opinions and ideas, which enabled them to participate more actively in politics as citizens. Acknowledging these advantages, politicians in Nigeria likewise welcomed and took advantage of the media for their political campaigns in the 2021 Anambra State governorship elections. The 2021 Anambra State gubernatorial election served as the first significant test of how political parties, candidates, and civil society organizations handled social media. Social media had never before made it simpler to get involved in politics and communicate with others, which made the election historic. Social media has since been incorporated into Nigeria's electoral processes.

Blogs/forums

A digital diary is another name for a weblog or online forum, where an individual can submit content to share with the world and start conversations with other users (Blood, 2000). The order of the user-shared posts is from newest to oldest. Prior to the past ten years, blogs were only used by individuals to share information focused on one subject of interest. However, many people have proven able to collaborate on various initiatives throughout the last ten years. As a result, there has been a noticeable increase in blog and online discussion forum traffic. These weblogs and discussion forums have been set up by universities, think tanks, activists, and even government agencies to share information. This place discusses almost every aspect

of everyday life, from politics and philosophy to sports, the arts, religion, and science. A straightforward weblog consists of text, pictures, and connections to related online pages. Another crucial component of blogs and online forums is user engagement through comments. Both the quantity and popularity of these blogs are rising quickly with each day that goes by. To increase public voter involvement, politicians as well as political organizations have also set up specialized weblogs and internet forums. Thus, the study's definition of a blog is a website that features comments, online musings from the author, and frequently links to images, videos, and other content.

YouTube

YouTube is a social networking website that was introduced at the beginning of 2005 and is used for sharing video content. It is said to be the second most searched website, after Google Search. Goodrow (2017) estimates that approximately 2.5 billion monthly users (Most Used Social Media in 2021 and 2022) will watch videos for around a billion hours every day on average. A 2019 study found that over 500 hours of video content was uploaded to YouTube per minute (Hale, 2019; Neufeld, 2021). It is thought to be the source of many contemporary cultural and social phenomena. In the area of political communication, YouTube has tremendously aided communication between the public and politicians.

One of the best examples of this was the collaboration between CNN and YouTube during the US presidential debates, where questions from the public were allowed. Political landscapes have been drastically altered by YouTube, as one well-known example of how social media has been utilized for political communication in the past ten years is the Arab Spring. One of the main architects of the Arab Spring observed that they utilized Facebook to plan demonstrations, which were subsequently orchestrated by X and disseminated to a worldwide viewership via YouTube (Seelye, 2007).

Researchers and campaign practitioners are using YouTube with great enthusiasm as a tool for electoral advertising. This shift in the election campaign has ushered in a new era for political marketing and communication. However, the extensive usage of YouTube as a political communication medium is still relatively new in the fields of marketing and communication studies (Vesnic-Alujevic & Van Bauwel, 2014). The ability to capture user feedback in the form of views and comments is one of YouTube's primary features. The quantity of views signifies the video's popularity, while comments reveal the audience's reaction and viewpoint (Paek, Kim, & Hove, 2010).

Theoretical Framework
Theory of Planned Behaviour by Ajzen (1991)

This study was anchored on the theory of planned behavior by Ajzen (1991). According to the theory of planned behavior, individual's intentions are shaped by their attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control which also serves as the best indicators of their behavior. It makes the assumption that people behave logically in accordance with their attitudes, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms. The idea holds that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control are the three components that determine intents, which in turn drive behaviors. Although they serve as the background for decision-making, these aspects are not always actively or consciously taken into account. A person's views about the results or characteristics of engaging in a particular behavior, or behavioral beliefs, are what define their attitude and are weighed by assessments of those results or characteristics. A person's subjective norm is established by the degree to which significant referents—that is, those who hold personal significance for them—approve or disapprove of the behavior—that is, normative beliefs—performed by that person, and is then weighed by that person's incentive to conform. Control assumptions regarding the existence or absence of facilitators and obstacles to behavioral performance, weighted by the perceived power or input of each component to either promote or hinder behavior, determine perceived behavioral control. In an attempt to take into consideration variables outside of a person's volitional control that may affect her or his intentions and behavior, Ajzen introduced the theory of planned behavior by adding perceived behavioral control (PBC) to the idea of reasoned action. The theory is therefore an expansion of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). This extension was predicated on the notion that ability (behavioral control) and motivation (intention) determine behavioral performance. A person with strong control attitudes about the components that enable behavior will therefore regard themselves as having great control, which increases their intention to engage in the behavior. The theoretical proposition can be expressed mathematically as BP = f(BI + BC), where BP represents behavioral performance and BI and BC are the influencing variables meaning behavioural intention and behavioural control respectively.

In the context of this study, behavioral performance can be defined as customers' purchase intentions, which can be impacted by variables that support behavior (behavioral control) and the intents themselves, which may be the motivations behind using social media. The goal of this study's model is to identify the specific social media features that the behavioral control variables have an impact on customer behavior, or buying behavior. According to this idea, in the context of using mobile phones, in order for a person to change their behavior (make a purchase), they must methodically recognize the product and believe it to be a

superior option. This presupposes that introducing a new belief, varying the political belief that already exists' favorability or unfavorability, and varying the belief strength linked to the desired behavior can all be used to change behavior. Social media platforms like blogs/forums and YouTube adoption can stimulate the variables that lead a buyer to embrace a product as a superior choice.

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of social media specifically blogs/forums and YouTube on voters' participation in the 2021 governorship election in Anambra State. The design of the study was a survey research design. This is because survey research design characterizes influences between variables by gathering data from a sample of a population. The target population of the study was all the registered voters in Anambra State, Nigeria which comprised of three senatorial zones Anambra State which consisted of 338, 134 voters. The researchers used a proportionate stratified random sampling to selected one local government area (LGA) from each senatorial zone, namely Onitsha North 159,292, Njikoka 103,721, Orumba South 75,121. Also, a convenient sampling technique was used to select the sample size of 399 used for the study and derived using Taro Yamane (1967) formula. A structured questionnaire which was face validated by three experts was used for data collection. A reliability index of 0.83 was obtained for the instrument using Spearman's rank correlation coefficient. Data collected were analysed using Linear regression analysis to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significant. The analysis was done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), Version 27.

Analysis of Data

A total of four hundred (400) registered voters were given questionnaires. Nevertheless, 347 copies of the questionnaire that had been accurately filled out were identified and utilized for the study (representing an approximation response rate of 87%), while 31 invalid copies were discarded. Consequently, data analysis and interpretation were based on the only valid questionnaires that were returned. The demographic data of the population of the study shows that out of the three hundred and forty-seven (347) respondents, seventy (70) respondents which represent 20.2% are single, while two hundred and thirty-four (234) of the respondents representing 67.4% are married, and the remaining 43 respondent, which represent 12.4% are widowed/divorced/separated. Also, 36 respondents comprising 10.4% had no formal education while twenty-seven (27) of the respondents which represent 7.8% percent have primary school education, whereas fifty-three (53) respondents which represent 15.3% had post-primary school education, and two hundred and thirty-one (231) which represent 66.6% have

tertiary education. Moreover, the respondents' age range is shown in table 4.3 above. Moreover, 179 respondents representing for 5.1% of the sample, are within the ages of 18 and 34, 74 respondents comprising 21.3%, are within the ages of 35 and 49, 84 respondents, representing 24.2%, are between the ages of 60 and 69, and 10 respondents comprising 2.9%, are 70 years of age and above.

The regression test was conducted to determine the degree of relationships between blogs/forums and voters' participation and also between YouTube and voters' participation in 2021 Governorship election in Anambra State.

Ho$_1$: Blogs/forums have no significant effect on voters' participation in the 2021 governorship election in Anambra State

Table 4.1: Regression Model Summary

Model Summary^b					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.466^a	.218	.215	11.23787	1.176

a. Predictors: (Constant), BGS
b. Dependent Variable: VP
Source: SPSS version 27

Table 4.2: Regression ANOVA

ANOVA^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	12115.488	1	12115.488	95.934	.000^b
	Residual	43569.971	345	126.290		
	Total	55685.460	346			

a. Dependent Variable: VP
b. Predictors: (Constant), BGS
Source: SPSS version 27

The result in Table 4.1 shows that the correlation coefficient is .466 and the coefficient of determination is .218. This implies that the two variables (Blogs/forums and voters' participation in the 2021 governorship election in Anambra State) are high, linearly and positive correlated. In Table 4.2, (the ANOVA Table), the F-value is 95.934 and the significance value is .000, this indicates that the analysis is statistically significant. Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected. This reveals that Blogs/forums have significant effect on voters' participation in the 2021 governorship election in Anambra State.

H0$_2$: Youtube has no significant effect on voters' participation in the 2021 governorship election in Anambra State

Table 4.3: Regression Model Summary

Model Summary[b]					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.215[a]	.046	.043	12.40746	1.304

a. Predictors: (Constant), YTB
b. Dependent Variable: VP
Source: SPSS version 27

Table 4.4: Regression ANOVA

ANOVA[a]						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2574.443	1	2574.443	16.723	.000[b]
	Residual	53111.017	345	153.945		
	Total	55685.460	346			

a. Dependent Variable: VP
b. Predictors: (Constant), YTB
Source: SPSS version 27

Table 4.3 reveals that the correlation coefficient of .215 and a coefficient of determination of .046 were obtained. This implies that Youtube and voters' participation in the 2021 governorship election in Anambra State are linearly and positive correlated. Moreover, Table 4.4, (the ANOVA Table), shows an F-value of 16.723 and a significance value of 000. This indicates that the analysis is statistically significant. Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected. This reveals that Youtube has a significant effect on voters' participation in the 2021 governorship election in Anambra State.

Table 4.5: Multiple regression

Model		Coefficients^a Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.324	.211		4.853	.000
	BGS	.458	.061	.524	7.537	.000
	YTB	.352	.047	.391	.527	.001

a. Dependent Variable: VP
b. Predictors: (Constant), BGS, YTB
Source: SPSS version 27

The coefficients and probability values for each individual variable are displayed in Table 4.5. BGS has a probability value of.000 and a regression t-value of 7.537. This suggests that BGS significantly and positively influences voters' participation. Regression t-test results for YTB show a 0.527 value with a probability value of 0.001, suggesting asignificant positive effect on voters' participation. Furthermore, the beta values of the standardized coefficients shows that the β-values of 0.524 and 0.391 were obtained for Blogs (BGS) and YouTube (YTB) respectively. This indicates that Blogs (52.4%) has the strongest effect on voters' participation of the 2021 governorship election in Anambra State, followed by YouTube (39.1%) respectively.

Discussion of Findings
From the test conducted it was revealed that blogs and forums positively and significantly influence Anambra State voters' participation in the 2021 gubernatorial election. This is because voters agree that Blogs/forums help voters to maintain contacts with the candidates, makes planning easier for election victory, made access to relevant information easier to voter and their choice of candidates, make political lobbying easier and that the use of Blogs/forums reduces the cost of politics. The regression indicates that an increase in Blogs awareness among voters will significantly lead to a unit rise in voters' participation. This could be due to the ability of blogs to engage, encourage and fosters diverse viewpoints among organize supporters who are outside the established media outlets and still want to participate in political discussion. This is in agreement with the findings of Okolo, Ugonna, Nebo, and Obikeze (2017), who discovered that blogging is a reliable social media tool that positively and significantly affects a political candidate's reputation in Nigeria. Additionally, the results are corroborated by Sumaira, Ummel,

Bushra, and Rizwan (2015), who discovered that blogs significantly influence political efficacy and vote intention at Gujarat University. Additionally, Newman and Gabriel (2016) revealed that banks' usage of blogs, Facebook, "X," and LinkedIn to spread the word about their goods and services online significantly and positively increases their conversion rates. Mohammed (2019) showed that Ghanaian tertiary students' voting behavior is influenced by social media platforms. This result corroborated the findings of Chinedu-Okeke and Obi (2016), who found that social media campaigns for political candidates significantly influenced voters' engagement and decision-making in Nigerian elections. Similarly, Nwador, Dike, and Origbo's (2020) discovery that social media marketing significantly influences people's participation in politics in Rivers State, Nigeria, is noteworthy because the two variables exhibit a positive and substantial correlation. Furthermore, Adeniyi (2023) revealed that social media was a strong predictor of citizens civic participation with neighbors in conjunction with family as well as higher levels of political activity, including contacting elected officials, joining political parties, and casting a ballot. The findings validated those of Ise Olorunkanmi, Olanrewaju, Oduola, Nweke-Love, Kodi, and Akinojo (2023), who discovered that social media-supported voter education programs have improved election literacy, raised voter turnout, and lowered the quantity of wrong ballots cast. The current investigation's results align with those of Lambe et al. (2023), who proposed a positive correlation between political campaigns and social media and political participation on online and offline platforms. Even after controlling for political efficacy and political knowledge, online participation remained higher. Conversely, this finding is against that of Chang (2010) who posited that there is some doubt about the effects of blogs on politics.

On the other hand, the test to determine the effect of Youtube on voters' participation in the 2021 governorship election in Anambra State showed that Youtube positively and significantly influence on voters' participation in the 2021 governorship election in Anambra State. This is because a good numbers of the respondents agree that Voters follow political news on Youtube during electioneering period to enhance their participation, serves as an avenue for politicians to boost their image to the public, improves voters' participation by providing videos of rallies, speeches and advertisements of political candidates, serves as a platform of credibility in encouraging voters' political participation and that voters prefer political candidates who engage them on Youtube than those who do not. The regression implies that an increase in Youtube awareness among voters will significantly lead to a unit rise in voters' participation. The finding could be due to the ability of Youtube to create communities where ideas, experiences, beliefs about a political candidate, video and political events are shared. Hence, it provides visually compelling political content which makes it possible to reach and mobilize

diverse audiences. The outcome suggests that decision-making is influenced by social media use and backs up the Theory of Planned Behavior. Taufiq, Ahmad, and Muhammad (2019) and Okoro and Nwafor (2013), who found that social media platforms like Youtube have a significant and positive effect on participation in politics, corroborate this conclusion. The study's findings is in consonance with those of Akosua (2020), who discovered that voters get information about political issues by using videos, hash tags, articles, photographs, postings, and links found on diverse social media networks. Additionally, Oluwasola (2022) discovered that social media was crucial in enhancing the political engagement of Nigerian citizens and young in the country's general elections. Furthermore, Ayeni (2019) revealed that social media sites such as Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube support the activation of citizens' participation in politics and the exercice of their right to vote. In the same vein, Onwunyi and Victor (2022) asserted that social media sites like Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube are essential tools for disseminating information in order to promote sufficient voter awareness as well as participation. This result is similar with that of Aghogho (2020), who discovered that social media improves the dissemination of political information and raises popular awareness of politics, both of which have a favorable impact on Nigeria's democracy. However, this result contradicts that of Oyewole (2022), who discovered no meaningful relationship between political exposure on YouTube and political beliefs.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concluded that the use of social media platforms such as blogs/forums and Youtube have great influence on voters' participation and media coverage in election. Also, these platforms enhance political decision, campaigns, engagements and connection. Based on the findings, the researchers recommended that political candidates should improve their strategies especially where it concern blogs to engage citizens through blogs by understanding the public's perception of political parties and how shared content on blogs platforms influences their intentions to vote. Also, YouTube platform should specifically describe the quality and period of voters' registration. As a result, YouTube needs accurate political party descriptions, trustworthy images, skillfully designed websites, and safe payment options. In addition, the National Orientation Agency, state and federal Ministries of Information should be used to educate the public, especially young people, on the use of blogs/forums and Youtube platforms for political goals to avoid abuse.

[1]https://orcid.org/0009-0008-6922-2476, [2]https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3135-7788, [3]https://orcid.org/0009-0008-3555-179X, [4]https://orcid.org/0009-0000-2969-1544

References

1. Abdulrauf, A. A., Hamid, N. A., & Ishak, S. (2015). *Social media and youth online political participation: Perspectives on cognitive engagement. New Media and Mass Communication, 44,* 8-15. www.iiste.org.

2. Abubakar, A. A. (2012). *Political participation and discourse in social media during the 2011 presidential electioneering. The Nigerian Journal of Communication, 10(1),* 96–116.

3. Adeniyi, W. K. (2023). *Power to the people: Social media as a catalyst for political participation in Nigeria. International Journal of Interactive Communication Systems and Technologies 12(1),* 1-10.

4. Aghogho, J. E. (2020). *Public perception of social media contributions to political participation processes in Delta State, Nigeria. Acta Universitatis Danubius Vol. 14(1).*

5. Aharony, N. (2012). *Twitter use by three political leaders: An exploratory analysis. Online Information Re-view, 36(4),* 587-603.

6. Ajzen, I. (1991). *The theory of planned behavior. Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 50(2),* 179-211.

7. Akosua, G. M. (2020). *The Impact of social media on political communication in Ghana. School of Graduate Studies and Research,* Ghana Institute of Journalism.

8. Arthur, C. (2012). *Encouraging Political Participation in Africa.* Retrieved from www.issafrica.org.

9. Atinuke, B. (2022). *Influence of social media networking on academic achievement of senior secondary school students in Abuja. FUOYE international Journal of Education, 5(1),* 77-87.

10. Ayeni, T.P (2019) *the role of social media in voter sensitization in Nigeria. American Journal of Computer Science and Information Technology, 7(1),* 33-41.

11. Bernard, E. (2011). *How do social media change the conditions for civic and political mobilization?* Retrieved from: nrk.no.

12. Blood, R. (2000). *Weblogs: A history and perspective.* Retrieved from: www.rebeccablood.net.

13. Breuer, A., & Groshek, J. (2014). *Slacktivism or efficiency-increased activism? Online political participation and the Brazilian Ficha Limpa anti-corruption campaign.* In: Y. Welp, & A. Breuer (eds.) *Digital Oppor-tunities for Democratic Governance in Latin America,* Routledge, 165-182.

14. Chang, M. T. (2010). *Different Blog Use, Different Participation.* (Unpublished Graduate Program of Radio and Television), National Chengchi University.

15. Chinedu-Okeke, C. F. and Obi, I. (2016) *Social media as a political platform in Nigeria: A focus on electorates in South-Eastern Nigeria. IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 21(11),* 6-22.

16. Diamond, L. (2010). *Liberation technology. Journal of Democracy, 21(3),* 69–83.

17. Ekwueme, M., & Folarin, S. (2017). Role of social media in electioneering: The case of the Nigerian 2015 presidential election. In Proceeding of the Covenant University Conference on e-Governance in Nigeria (CUCEN2017). 299-311.

18. Gidengil, E., Wass, H. & Valeste, M. (2016). Political socialization and voting: The parent child Link in turnout. Political Research Quarterly, 69(2), 373-383.

19. Goodrow, C. (2017). You know what's cool? A billion hours. youtube. Retrieved from: blog.youtube.

20. Hale, J. (2019). More than 500 Hours of Content Are Now Being Uploaded to YouTube Every Minute." Tubefilter. Retrieved from: www.tubefilter.Com.

21. Ise Olorunkanmi, O. J., Olanrewaju, A. F., Oduola, J. O., Nweke-Love, H. C., Kodi, E. E. & Akinojo, I. C. (2023). The influence of social media on political communication: A case study of Nigeria's 2023 general elections in Omu-Aran. International Journal of Advanced Academic Research, 9(7), 31-46. www.openjournals.ijaar.org.

22. Lambe, K. M., Olamide, H. O., Adesina, L. A., Udende, P. & Mustapha, M. L. (2023). Social Media and changing political behaviors among the youth in Kwara State of Nigeria, Democratic Communiqué, 31(2), 37-57.

23. Medimorec, D., Parycek, P., & Schossböck, J. (2011). Vitalizing democracy through e-participation and open government: An Austrian and Eastern European perspective. Retrieved from: www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de.

24. Mohammed, A. (2019) the influence of social media on the voting behaviour of tertiary students in the Wa Municipality: Ghana's 2016 general elections in perspective. University for Development Studies Wa Municipality: Ghana.

25. Mohammed, N. & Ogwuche, P. O (2021). Political marketing and social media use in Nigerian politics: Understanding the nexus. Madonna Journal of Communication Studies, 3(1), 7-22.

26. Neufeld, D. (2021). The 50 most visited websites in the world. Visual capitalist. etrieved from : www.visualcapitalist.com.

27. Newman C. E. & Gabriel A O. (2016). Social media marketing on organizational efficiency of deposit money banks in Nigeria. Department of Marketing, Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

28. Nwador, C. A. & Dike, L. B., Origbo, H. (2020) Social media marketing and political participation of electorate in Rivers State, Nigeria. International Journal of Management Sciences, 8(2), 78-103. www.arcnjournals.org.

29. Nwankwo, C. A., Kanyangale, M., & Abugu, J. O. (2019). Online shopping industry and its consumers in Nigeria. Journal of Economics, Management and Trade, 24(3), 1-12.

30. Obi, E.C., Okoli, O., Chiaghana, C & Ono, G.N. (2022). Political awareness campaign as a probable influence on Anambra women participation in politics. UNIZIK Journal of   Gender Research (UJGR), 1(1), 149-173.

31. Okeke, A.F (2023). Effect of internet marketing performance of selected banks in AbiaState. RIK International Journal of business and management,7 (1), 58-74.

32. Okoro, N. & Nwafor, K. A. (2013). Social media and political participation in Nigeria during the 2011 general elections: The lapses and the lessons. Global Journal of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences, 1(3), 29-46.

33. Okoro. V. O., Ugonna, I. A., Nebo, G. N. & Obikeze C. O. (2017). Effects of the social media in the marketing of political candidates in Nigeria. British Journal of Marketing Studies, 5(6), 15-32. www.eajournals.org.

34. Oluwasola F. O. (2022). The 'tag generation': Social media and youth participation in the 2019 General Election in Nigeria. Africa Development, 47(2),107-145

35. Onwunyi, U. M. and Victor, E. U., (2022). Social media and voter sensitization in Nigeria: A retrospective analysis of the 2019 general election. Asian Journal of Social Science and Management Technology, 4(5) ssrn.com.

36. Oyewole, J. A. (2022). Correlations between Exposure to YouTube-Casting and Partisan Political Awareness. European Journal of Behavioral Sciences, 5(4), 11-20.

37. Prayogo P. H., Irmawan R., La M., Yessy M. S. & Elsyaff A. M. (2022) Social media contribution as a political communication strategy tool in forming the political image of presidential candidates in the 2019 Pilpres in Indonesia. Journal of Theoretical and Applied Information Technology 100(22), 1-15

38. Seelye, K. Q. (2007). New presidential debate site? Clearly, YouTube. The New York Times. Retrieved from: www.nytimes.com.

39. Smith, A. (2009). The Internet's role in campaign 2008. Retrieved from: www.pewresearch.org.

40. Sumaira T., Ummel B., Bushra A. and Rizwan S. (2015) Impact of social media on political efficacy and vote intention: A case of educated youth. JISR-MSSE 13(1), 1-9

41. Taufik Ahmad, Aima, A. & Muhammad, I. (2019). The use of social media on political participation among university students: An analysis of survey results from Rural Pakistan. Sage Open, 9(3).

42. Unwuchola, A. A., Adinlewa, T., & Udeh, K. (2017). An Appraisal of the role of ICT as a tool for participa-tory democracy in Nigeria. Media and Communication Current, 1(1), 69-87.

43. Vesnic-Alujevic, L. & Van Bauwel, S. (2014) YouTube: A political advertising tool? A case study of the use of YouTube in the campaign for the European parliament elections 2009. Journal of Political Marketing, 13(3), 195-212.

44. Yamane, T. (1967). Statistics: An Introductory Analysis (2nd Edition), New York: Harper and Row.