The Impact of social media on Elections in Nigeria: An Assessment of 2020 Gubernatorial Election in Edo State, Nigeria

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Abstract
This study is premised on the impact cum relevance of social media on elections in Nigeria, with a special focus on the 2020 gubernatorial election in Edo State, Nigeria. The social media has revolutionized the landscape of political interaction globally, and Nigeria being a key player in the scheme of things, has not been immune to this transformative phenomenon. Owing to her large population cum growing digital connectivity, the social media has emerged as a very powerful tool for disseminating information, informing public opinions, as well as mobilizing citizens during electoral processes. We made use of Max Weber (1964) Theory of Social Action. The social action theory is pertinent to this study as it takes into account both external factors (institutional factors) and internal factors (such as age, gender, religion, ethnicity, education, and perception) in explaining the voting behavior of the electorate. We also made use of both the qualitative and quantitative Method in this study. The survey method was used in the presentation and analyzing of the data. From our findings, it is evident that the role of the social media on elections in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. Also, the usage of the social media varies among age groups. The younger generation engage these tools (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc) more. Submissively, we recommend that the government should improve on the awareness of digitalization, develop different strategies for the various locations, ages, sex, and etcetera.

Keywords: Impact, social media, election, voters, gubernatorial, Edo State

1.0 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In recent years, the increasing influence of social media has revolutionized the landscape of political communication and participation worldwide. As a prominent player in the global community, Nigeria has not been immune to this transformative phenomenon. With its large population and growing digital connectivity, social media platforms have emerged as powerful tools for disseminating information, shaping public opinion, and mobilizing citizens during electoral processes. Understanding the impact of social media on voters' behavior in the Nigerian context is crucial for comprehending the evolving dynamics of its democracy.

The 2020 gubernatorial election in Edo State stands as a pivotal case study to examine the intricate relationship between social media and voters' behavior in Nigeria. With Edo State representing a significant political and socio-economic hub in the country, the election garnered substantial attention and witnessed intense political campaigns. The increased reliance on social media platforms by political actors and citizens alike provided a unique opportunity to explore how these platforms influenced voter attitudes, perceptions, and electoral choices.

This study aims to undertake a comprehensive impact assessment of the Edo 2020 gubernatorial election, focusing on the role of social media in shaping voters' behavior. By examining the interplay between social media usage and electoral outcomes, this research seeks to shed light on the implications of these digital channels on the democratic process in Nigeria.

1.1 Objective(s) of the Study

The primary aim of this study is to investigate how social media influences voters' behavior. Additionally, the study has the following secondary objectives:

1. Examine whether the influence of social media on voters' behavior varies based on gender distinctions

2. Investigate whether the effect of social media platforms on voters' behavior varies based on age demographics.

1.2 Research Hypothesis

1. There is a significant relationship between social media and voters' behaviour controlling for gender.
2. After controlling for voters' age, is there a statistically significant relationship between social media and voters' behavior?

2.0 Literature Review/Theoretical Underpinnings

2.1 Social Media

The term social media, refers to Internet-based instruments cum services that enables subscribers to engage with one another, create content, share, and sort for information vis-a-vis the internet (Madueke, et al, 2017). Put differently, social media are interrelated and interconnected web-based media handles that gives dwellers the opportunity as well as platform to connect, interact, share lessons (experiential), views, contacts, knowledge, expertise, and

other things viz job cum career information.

They fall under a new form of media that is premised on social networking, giving rooms for subscribers to discuss bothering issues, connect with pals and even distribute information without any restriction, and publish their perceptions on happenings on the World Wide Web. Suffice to note, it is the interaction or collaboration of these instruments that earns them social status. Madueke, et al (2017), defines the media as, 'an online handle that enhances participation, openness, interactions cum connection'. He perceives them to be 'social tools of communication that are different from the orthodox tools viz newspapers or magazines. They are content generated online, by humans with the use of highly accessible and scalable publishing instruments to distribute information across the globe, giving rooms for communication among people. The social media support dissemination as well as passing of knowledge and information, with an attendant of making people both producers and consumers of information.

Social media came about following the introduction cum creation of the internet as well as the World Wide Web. They are usually known with the term "web 2.0" which describes websites that enables subscribers to discuss with the sender of a message. Madueke et Al (2017), observes that "Web 2.0" suggests the nature of the web dating 2004 till now; a phase when websites that gives room for interaction emerged as against to "web1.0" which speaks to the nature of the web before 2004. A very good example web 2.0 sites are web-based communities, social networking sites video-sharing sites, Wikis, and blogs.

Anytime the word "media" is mentioned, what that suggests to the mind, is Radio and Television for electronic media while newspapers and magazine represents the print media. The term, new media surfaced to reveal a style that is a complete departure from the late 1980s vis-a-vis the world of media and communication, as there were certain changes in state and this difference was not limited.

Now, when we mention social media, what that suggests to our mind are Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, 2go, YouTube etc, and other handles of connectivity viz Linkedin and Flickr. The listed websites, platforms, or chat rooms allows users to interact by leaving comments as well as discuss with different people. Moreso, there are plethora characteristics of social media that allows for adaptedness, making do more than the sharing of social activities among friends (Madueke, et al, 2017).

2.2 Social Media and Voters' Behaviour in Nigeria

According to statistics, Nigeria has a staggering 32.9 million active users on social media. Among the popular platforms, WhatsApp and Facebook stand out, possibly due to their low data consumption. Facebook previously offered features that allowed Nigerians to access the platform without an internet connection. Over the past decade, social media has increasingly played a significant role in the lives of Nigerians. Many individuals have leveraged social media to launch successful businesses, find employment, form relationships, and explore educational and career opportunities. However, the influence of social media has now extended into the country's political landscape, as evidenced by the impact it has had on elections since 2015.

Political advertising necessitates focused, targeted, and managed mass communication

strategies to reach large audiences. It encompasses various mediums and can span several months throughout a political campaign. Unlike campaigns in the past, advancements in media technology have streamlined the process, allowing candidates to reach even larger groups of constituents with minimal physical effort. Political advertising has become a crucial aspect of the contemporary Nigerian political environment, serving as a valuable means of informing eligible voters about candidates and party manifestos. The level and style of advertising employed by candidates and political parties sometimes influence how voters perceive their seriousness and credibility. This underscores the importance of political advertising in the current Nigerian political landscape.

In Nigeria, the situation mirrors the global trend when it comes to the role of social media in elections. A recent example can be seen in the gubernatorial elections in Edo State, where social media played a significant role. Electorates, candidate-campaign organizations, and political parties often utilize social media platforms to promote their candidates and convey messages aimed at attracting and securing support. This highlights the immense importance and influence that social media holds in shaping political opinions within society.

Available data indicates that over 27 million Nigerians are active social media users, with the number continuing to grow exponentially. Between April 2019 and January 2020, the number of social media users in Nigeria increased by 3.4 million (14%) (Simon Kemp, Digital 2020 Nigeria Report). These statistics demonstrate that both the electorate and society as a whole increasingly prefer social media as a means of communication and information dissemination, surpassing traditional news channels.

The appeal lies in the fact that social media provides users with unrestricted access and a platform for expressing and sharing their thoughts, ideas, videos, and information on any topic of interest, including political campaign messages. Additionally, social media offers real-time news updates, making it challenging for those with manipulative intentions or those seeking to manipulate the electoral process or spin events in favour of particular political parties or candidates.

2.3 Social Media and the 2020 Gubernatorial Election in Edo State

The Edo State gubernatorial election, which took place on September 19, 2020, involved incumbent Governor Godwin Obaseki of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and his closest rival, Pastor OsaigeIze-Iyamu of the All Progressives Congress (APC). Governor Godwin Obaseki secured approximately 57.3% of the votes, defeating Pastor Ize-Iyamu and several other minor political parties.

Before the Edo State 2020 gubernatorial election, a prominent political debate emerged on social media, focusing on the desire to eliminate godfatherism in Edo politics. This movement was termed "Edo No Bi Lagos" and also served as the slogan of Governor Godwin Obaseki, a technocrat who campaigned for re-election on the principles of free choice and the freedom of the electorate to choose their leaders. This strategy was embraced by the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP), Obaseki's political party.

On the other hand, Pastor Ize-Iyamu, the candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), was perceived as a favoured candidate due to the overwhelming support from the former

Governor of Edo State and former National Chairman of the APC, Comrade Adams Aliu Oshiomhole. Oshiomhole was seen by the people of Edo State as a godfather to the APC candidate. However, a significant point of contention in the Edo 2020 gubernatorial election, which prompted this study, was that Pastor Ize-Iyamu was a PDP candidate in 2016 and was allegedly subjected to smear campaigns by Comrade Adams Aliu Oshiomhole to promote Governor Godwin Obaseki, who at that time was his protégé and the APC candidate.

Now, these smear campaigns that tarnished Pastor Ize-Iyamu's image have resurfaced online, spreading across various social media platforms such as Facebook and YouTube. These platforms have been utilized to disparage, cast aspersions, and amplify the perceived unsuitability of Pastor Ize-Iyamu for holding political office in Edo State.

In the lead-up to the Edo State 2020 gubernatorial election, numerous promotional videos, messages, and information circulated on social media, particularly targeting the All Progressives Congress (APC) candidate, Pastor Ize-Iyamu Osagie. Interestingly, even his current supporters were involved in disseminating these campaign messages. Some of these messages highlighted alleged inconsistencies in his behaviour during his university days and ongoing corruption cases at the Federal High Court in Edo State. It remains uncertain whether these promotional/campaign messages and the evident negative portrayal of Pastor Ize-Iyamu Osagie, the APC candidate, had any impact on his candidacy or contributed to his defeat by the candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party.

The theoretical framework utilized in this study heavily draws upon Max Weber's (1964) theory of social action, which posits that individuals' behavior is influenced by their understanding of the situation, encompassing active willingness, passive acceptance, and the anticipation of others' future behavior. As cited in Adeleke (2016), Weber distinguishes not all human behavior as action, nor is every action inherently "social." In the context of this research, voters' actions during general elections can be argued to be guided by a rational perception of the electoral process.

In any society, certain social facts such as laws, customs, educational content, and prevailing opinions contribute to the political culture of that particular group of people. These cultural factors shape individuals' unique behavioral patterns and also influence shared behaviors observed within groups or across society as a whole.

The social action theory is pertinent to this study as it takes into account both external factors (institutional factors) and internal factors (such as age, gender, religion, ethnicity, education, and perception) in explaining the voting behavior of the electorate. Given that voters are considered the heart and role models in democratic societies like Nigeria, this theory holds particular importance. Moreover, various motivations, including material, social, and economic gains, influence citizens' decisions to vote. Consequently, a low voter turnout poses a significant threat to the democratic system of government.

3.0 Research Method

This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the methodologies utilized for data gathering and analysis, which are essential to this research. The methodologies encompass various aspects, including the study's location, research design, and study population, sampling size, types of data, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures. Research

methodology means the process of obtaining and utilizing data (Erude, et al, 2023). Research design on the other hand, involves a process of information collection from a target population and how this information would be analyzed (Erude, et al, 2023).

The researcher has chosen to utilize the descriptive survey type for this study. As described by Nwankeo (2013), a descriptive survey study involves gathering data from a sizable sample drawn from a specific population to describe particular features of the sample at the time of the study. The aim is to explore these features without manipulating the independent variables. The findings from this sample are then generalized to the broader population it represents.

According to Dudovsky (2017), descriptive research sheds light on current issues or problems by collecting data that allows for a comprehensive description of the situation. This method enables the researcher to derive meaning from the gathered data and propose relevant implications and activities.

Descriptive research serves to present an accurate portrayal of the characteristics of individuals, situations, or groups. It aids in discovering new insights, describing existing phenomena, determining the frequency of occurrences, and categorizing information. In essence, it aims to describe, explain, and interpret the present conditions (Pedreza, 2015).

Consequently, this study employs the descriptive survey approach as the researcher collects data from a substantial sample of social media users and voters in Nigeria. The objective is to describe their attitudes toward social media and explore how it influences their decision-making processes during elections. By using this method, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter in its current context.

3.1 Population of the Study

The research focuses on two distinct populations: the target population and the accessible population. The target population encompasses all voters and politicians in Edo State, Nigeria. However, due to practical limitations and proximity to the researcher, the accessible population is limited to the voters and politicians within Edo State, who can be easily reached and included as respondents in the study. For the purpose of this study, the accessible population is considered to be the entirety of voters in Edo State, Nigeria.

3.2 Sampling technique

In this study, a stratified random sampling procedure was employed to select participants. This technique ensured a balanced representation of all relevant variables within the research. The stratification was based on the three Senatorial Districts in the state. The entire state was divided into three districts, and a local government was randomly chosen from each district. Within each selected Local Government, respondents were then chosen using a simple random sample method.

The decision to adopt this sampling technique was driven by the nature of the research study, which focused on political administration and involved respondents located in different local governments across the state. Ensuring a true representation of the entire state was vital to

draw meaningful conclusions.

To gather data, the researcher and a team of assistants employed various methods, including questionnaires, opinion polls, and interviews with voters, particularly targeting young adults between the ages of 18 to 45 in Edo State. The inclusion of young adults is significant as they form an important demographic in the voting population.

Additionally, the researcher corroborated the findings with secondary sources such as textbooks, conferences, seminars, and symposia related to the 2020 Edo State gubernatorial election in Nigeria. The study also benefitted from insights gathered from the Independent Electoral Commission's report on previous elections in Nigeria, with a particular focus on the 2019 general election in Edo State. These sources were consulted to determine whether social media had any impact on voters' behavior during elections in the state.

3.3 Instrument for Data Collection

As part of the data collection process for this study, the researcher developed a questionnaire schedule. This questionnaire was distributed to the respondents and aimed to gather pertinent information about the influence of social media on voters' behavior, using the Edo 2020 gubernatorial election as a specific case study.

The questionnaire titled "The Impact of Social Media on Voters' Behavior" was created by the researcher, taking into account the insights derived from previous interviews conducted. The instrument comprises five distinct sections: A, B, C, D, and E, each serving specific purposes in investigating the relationship between social media and voters' behavior during the mentioned election.

Section "A" of the questionnaire focuses on gathering the personal data of the respondents.

Section "B", is on the number of hours a voter spent on social media per day

Section "C", centres on how much impact affects their behaviour during the Edo 2020 gubernatorial election

The instrument was designed using the Likert scale, with a 4-point rating system ranging from "strongly agree" (SA), "Agree" (A), "Disagree" (D), to "Strongly Disagree" (SD). Participants were instructed to indicate their level of agreement with the statements presented in the instrument.

3.4 Method of Data Analysis

The paper used simple descriptive statistics techniques Qualitative expression and simple percentage analyses to calculate the result of the data obtained from the field study.

4.0 Data Presentation and Analysis

This section focuses on presenting the collected data and examining the proposed hypotheses. 223 questionnaires were distributed, and 220 of them were completed and

returned successfully. To test the hypotheses, the data was examined using the simple percentage comparison technique.

4.1 Frequency Distribution

SECTION A: Demographic Data

Table 4.1.1: Sex

		Frequency	Per cent
Valid	Male	107	48.6
	Female	113	51.4
	Total	220	100.0

Source: Fieldwork (2023).

Based on the provided table, we can interpret the way social media impacted voters' behaviour in the context of the Edo 2020 gubernatorial election, specifically concerning gender (male and female). The data analysis will determine the occurrence and proportion of respondents categorized by their gender. Sample Size: The study comprises a total of 220 participants.

Gender Distribution: Among the 220 participants, the table illustrates that 107 (48.6%) identified as male, while 113 (51.4%) identified as female. These numbers indicate a relatively balanced representation of both genders in the study.

Among the respondents who identified as male, 107 individuals participated in the study. The data suggests that social media may have influenced the behaviour of male voters during the Edo 2020 gubernatorial election. Similarly, among the respondents who identified as female,

113 individuals participated in the work. The data suggests that social media may have influenced the behaviour of female voters during the Edo 2020 gubernatorial election.

In summary, the table provides an overview of the gender distribution within the study and suggests that Social media had an impact on the behavior of both male and female voters during the Edo 2020 gubernatorial election. However, without additional information about the specific behaviours and the nature of the impact, it is not possible to draw more detailed conclusions from this table alone.

Table 4.1.2:   AGE

		Frequency	Per cent
Valid	18 - 25 years	99	45.0
	26 - 33 years	47	21.4
	34 - 41 years	34	15.5
	42 - 49 years	36	16.4
	50 - 57 years	4	1.8
	Total	220	100.0

Source: Fieldwork (2023).

Based on the provided table, we can interpret how social media affects voters' behaviour in the context of the Edo 2020 gubernatorial election, specifically concerning age groups. The table presents the frequency and percentage of respondents based on their age ranges. The total number of respondents included in the study is 220. The table categorizes the respondents into different age groups. The age groups and their corresponding frequencies are as follows:

18 - 25 years: There were 99 participants (45.0%) in this age group.

26 - 33 years: There were 47 respondents (21.4%) in this age group.

34 - 41 years: There were 34 participants (15.5%) in this age group.

42 - 49 years: A total of 36 respondents (16.4%) in this age group.

50 - 57 years: There were 4 respondents (1.8%) in this age group.

The data shows that most of participants fell within the 18-25 years age group (45.0%). This suggests that social media may have had a significant impact on the behaviour of younger voters during the Edo 2020 gubernatorial election.

Impact on Other Age Groups: While the 18-25 years age group had the highest representation, it is worth noting that social media may have also influenced the behaviour of voters in the other age groups, though to a lesser extent. The 26-33 years, 34-41 years, and 42-49 years age groups each had a moderate representation in the work.

Impact on Older Voters: The data indicate that respondents aged 50-57 years constituted a relatively small portion of the sample (1.8%). Consequently, the impact of social media on the behaviour of older voters may have been less pronounced, based on this data.

In summary, the table provides insights into the age distribution of the respondents in the study and suggests that social media may have had a significant impact on the behaviour of younger voters (18-25 years) during the Edo 2020 gubernatorial election. However, without additional information about the specific behaviours influenced by social media, the interpretation is limited to the age groups' representation in the study.

4.2   SECTION B: USES OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Table 4.2.1: SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE

		Frequency	Per cent
Valid	Yes	220	100.0

 Source: Fieldwork (2023).

Based on the provided table, we can interpret the influence of social media on voters' conduct and actions in the context of the Edo 2020 gubernatorial election, specifically concerning the respondents' use of social media. The table presents the frequency and percentage of respondents who confirmed their use of social media.The total number of respondents included in the study is 220.

Usage: The table indicates that all respondents (100.0%) reported using it as a means of information. The data suggests that social media usage was prevalent among the respondents

in the study, with every participant confirming their use of social media. This indicates that social media likely had a widespread impact on the behaviour of voters during the Edo 2020 gubernatorial election. Given that all respondents used social media, it can be inferred that social media played a significant role in shaping voters' actions during the election. However, without additional information regarding the specific ways in which social media influenced their actions and conduct the interpretation remains broad.

In summary, the table provides a deeper understanding the universal usage of social media among the respondents in the study. It suggests that it (social media) likely had a significant impact on the behaviour of voters during the Edo 2020 gubernatorial election. Further analysis is needed to understand the specific effects and behaviours influenced by social media in this context.

Table 4.2.2: HOURS SPENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA

		Frequency	Per cent
Valid	$1-5$	67	30.5
	$6-10$	55	25.0
	$11-15$	36	16.4
	$16-20$	45	20.5
	$21-24$	17	7.7
	Total	220	100.0

Source: Fieldwork (2023).

Based on the provided table, we can interpret the impact of social media on voters' behaviour in the context of the Edo 2020 gubernatorial election, specifically concerning the respondents' usage duration on social media. The table presents the frequency and percentage of respondents based on the number of hours they spend on social media. The total number of respondents included in the study is 220.The table categorizes the respondents into different usage duration ranges. The usage duration ranges and their corresponding frequencies are as follows:

1-5 hours: There were 67 respondents (30.5%) who indicated using 1-5 hours on social media.

6-10 hours: There were 55 respondents (25.0%) who reported spending 6-10 hours on social media.

11-15 hours: There were 36 respondents (16.4%) who agreed using 11-15 hours on social media.

16-20 hours: There were 45 participants (20.5%) whose response showed spending 16-20 hours.

21-24 hours: There were 17 individuals (7.7%) who agreed using 21-24 hours on social media.

The data suggests that social media usage varied among the respondents, with different durations reported. The majority of respondents fell into the 1-5 hours (30.5%) and 6-10 hours (25.0%) categories, indicating that a significant portion of the sample spends a moderate amount of time on social media. This suggests that social media may have had a considerable impact on the behaviour of voters who spend these durations on social media during the Edo 2020 gubernatorial election.The data also indicate that a notable portion of respondents reported spending longer durations on social media. This includes the 11-15 hours (16.4%), 16- 20 hours (20.5%), and 21-24 hours (7.7%) categories. The higher usage durations may suggest a potentially stronger impact of social media on the behaviour of these individuals.

In summary, the table provides insights into the distribution of respondents based on their usage duration on social media in the study. It suggests that social media usage varied among the respondents, with a significant portion spending moderate durations on social media. However, without additional information about the specific behaviours influenced by social media usage duration, the interpretation is limited to the usage duration groups' representation in the study.

Table 4.2.3: DO YOU FOLLOW CANDIDATES, POLITICAL PARTIES, POLITICAL BLOCS, SOCIAL

MEDIA INFLUENCER TO GET YOUR POLITICAL INFORMATION

		Frequency	Per cent
Valid	Yes	38	17.3
	No	182	82.7
	Total	220	100.0

Source: Fieldwork (2023).

Based on the provided table, we can interpret the impact of social media on voters' behaviour in the context of the Edo 2020 gubernatorial election, specifically concerning the respondents' engagement with political entities and influencers on social media. The table presents the number of participants and the proportion of respondents, expressed as a percentage, categorized according to whether they follow candidates, political parties, political blocs, or social media influencers to get their political information. The total number of respondents included in the study is 220.The table categorizes the respondents into two groups based on their engagement with political entities and influencers on social media:

Yes: There were 38 respondents (17.3%) who reported following candidates, political parties, political blocs, or social media influencers to get their political information.

No: There were 182 respondents (82.7%) who reported not following any of these entities or influencers.

Impact of Engaging with Political Entities and Influencers: The data suggests that a minority of respondents (17.3%) actively follow candidates, political parties, political blocs, or social media influencers to obtain political information. This indicates that for a significant majority of respondents (82.7%), other sources or methods were used to gather political information during the Edo 2020 gubernatorial election.The lower percentage of respondents engaging with political entities and influencers on social media suggests that their impact on voters' behaviour may be limited. It is likely that other sources, such as traditional media or offline interactions, played a more significant role in shaping the voting behaviour of the majority of respondents.

In summary, the table provides insights into the distribution of respondents based on their engagement with political entities and influencers on social media for obtaining political information during the study. It suggests that a small proportion of respondents actively follow these entities and influencers on social media. However, without additional information about the specific behaviours influenced by following these entities and influencers, the interpretation is limited to the engagement groups' representation in the study.

Table 4.2.4: IF YES, DO YOU BELIEVE SUCH INFORMATION

		Frequency	Per cent
Valid	Yes	59	26.8
	No	161	73.2
	Total	220	100.0

Source: Fieldwork (2023).

Based on the previous interpretations, we can interpret the impact of social media on voters' behaviour in the context of the Edo 2020 gubernatorial election, specifically concerning the respondents' belief in the information they encounter on social media. The table presents the number of participants and the proportion of respondents, expressed as a percentage, categorized according to who confirmed their belief in the information obtained from social media.The total number of respondents included in the study is 220.

Belief in Information from Social Media: The table categorizes the respondents into two groups based on their belief in the information obtained from social media:

Yes: There were 59 respondents (26.8%) who reported believing the information obtained from social media.

No: There were 161 respondents (73.2%) who reported not believing the information obtained from social media.Scepticism towards Information from Social Media: The data suggests that a significant majority of respondents (73.2%) expressed scepticism or a lack of belief in the information obtained from social media. This indicates that the information shared on social media platforms during the Edo 2020 gubernatorial election may not have been perceived as credible or trustworthy by the majority of respondents.The lower percentage of respondents who reported believing the information obtained from social media suggests that social media's impact on voters' behaviour may be influenced by factors such as scepticism, critical evaluation of information, and reliance on other sources for verifying the accuracy of social media content.

In summary, the table provides insights into the distribution of respondents based on their belief in the information obtained from social media in the study. It suggests that a majority of respondents expressed scepticism or disbelief in the information obtained from social media during the Edo 2020 gubernatorial election. However, without additional information about the specific behaviours influenced by belief or disbelief in social media information, the interpretation is limited to the belief groups' representation in the study.

Table 4.2.5: DO YOU VOTE BASED ON INFORMATION AND TRENDS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

		Frequency	Per cent
Valid	Yes	83	37.7
	No	137	62.3
	Total	220	100.0

Source: Fieldwork (2023).

Based on the provided table, we can interpret the impact of social media on voters' behaviour in the context of the Edo 2020 gubernatorial election, specifically regarding the respondents' voting behaviour influenced by information and trends on social media. The table presents the frequency and percentage of respondents who reported voting based on information and trends on social media. The total number of respondents included in the study is 220.The table categorizes the respondents into two groups based on whether they voted based on information and trends on social media:

Yes: There were 83 respondents (37.7%) who reported voting based on information and trends on social media.

No: There were 137 respondents (62.3%) who reported not voting based on information and trends on social media.

The data suggests that a significant portion of respondents (37.7%) reported voting

based on information and trends on social media during the Edo 2020 gubernatorial election. This indicates that social media had some level of impact on the voting behaviour of these individuals, influencing their decision-making process and choices.However, it's important to note that the majority of respondents (62.3%) reported not voting based on social media information and trends. This suggests that while social media may have played a role for some voters, other factors such as traditional media, personal interactions, party affiliation, candidate attributes, and past experiences may have been more influential in shaping their voting behaviour.

In summary, the table provides insights into the distribution of respondents based on their voting behaviour influenced by information and trends on social media in the study. It suggests that a significant portion of respondents reported voting based on social media during the Edo 2020 gubernatorial election. However, without additional information about the specific types of information or trends and their impact on voting decisions, the interpretation is limited to the voting behaviour groups' representation in the study.

SECTION C: SOCIAL MEDIA AND EDO 2020 GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION.

Table 4.3.1: DID YOU FOLLOW SOCIAL MEDIA DURING EDO STATE 2020 GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION PROCESS

		Frequency	Per cent
Valid	Yes	177	80.5
	No	43	19.5
	Total	220	100.0

Source: Fieldwork (2023).

Based on the provided table, we can interpret the impact of social media on voters' behaviour in the context of the Edo 2020 gubernatorial election, specifically regarding the respondents' engagement with social media during the election process. The table presents the frequency and percentage of respondents who reported following social media during the election process.The total number of respondents included in the study is 220. The table categorizes the respondents into two groups based on their engagement with social media during the Edo 2020 gubernatorial election process:

Yes: There were 177 respondents (80.5%) who reported following social media during the election process.

No: There were 43 respondents (19.5%) who reported not following social media during the

election process.

The data suggests that a significant majority of respondents (80.5%) reported following social media during the Edo 2020 gubernatorial election process. This indicates that social media played a prominent role in their engagement with political information, discussions, and updates during the election period. The high percentage of respondents who reported following social media during the election process indicates that social media platforms were a significant source of political information, news, and discussions for these individuals. It suggests that social media had the potential to influence their perception, knowledge, and engagement with the election campaign and candidates.

In summary, the table provides insights into the distribution of respondents based on their engagement with social media during the Edo 2020 gubernatorial election process. It suggests that a significant majority of respondents reported following social media during the election process, highlighting the influence and importance of social media as a platform for political information and engagement. However, without additional information about the specific social media platforms used, the types of content consumed, and the impact on voting behaviour, the interpretation is limited to the social media engagement groups' representation in the study.

Table 4.3.2:   IF YES, DID YOU FOLLOW THE SOCIAL MEDIA TO GET INFORMATION REGARDING CANDIDATES AND POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE ELECTION

		Frequency	Per cent
Valid	Yes	175	79.5
	No	45	20.5
	Total	220	100.0

Source: Fieldwork (2023).

The table provides information about whether respondents followed social media to gather information specifically regarding the candidates and political parties involved in the election. It includes two response options: "Yes" and "No."

"Yes": 175 respondents (79.5%) stated that they followed social media to obtain information about the candidates and political parties in the Edo 2020 gubernatorial election.

"No": 45 respondents (20.5%) did not rely on social media for information regarding the candidates and political parties during the same election.

These results suggest that a significant majority of the respondents (79.5%) followed social media to gather information about the candidates and political parties during the Edo 2020 gubernatorial election. This indicates that social media had an impact on the behaviour of these voters, as they relied on these platforms to obtain relevant information.

To further analyze the impact of social media on voters' behaviour, you may consider exploring the types of information they sought, the platforms they used, the influence of social media on their decision-making process, and any observed changes in their behaviour or voting patterns as a result of engaging with social media during the election.

Table 4.3.3: DO YOU BELIEVE GODWIN OBASEKI OF THE PDP USED THE SOCIAL MEDIA TO HIS ADVANTAGE MORE DURING ELECTION

		Frequency	Per cent
Valid	Yes	48	21.8
	No	172	78.2
	Total	220	100.0

Source: Fieldwork (2023).

Based on the given table, we can interpret the data concerning the project topic: the impact of social media on voters' behaviour, specifically focusing on whether respondents believed that Godwin Obaseki of the PDP used social media to his advantage more during the Edo 2020 gubernatorial election. The table includes two response options: "Yes" and "No."

"Yes": 48 respondents (21.8%) believed that Godwin Obaseki of the PDP used social media to his advantage more during the Edo 2020 gubernatorial election.

"No": 172 respondents (78.2%) did not believe that Godwin Obaseki used social media to his advantage more during the same election.

These results suggest that a minority of the respondents (21.8%) believed that Godwin Obaseki of the PDP utilized social media to his advantage more during the Edo 2020 gubernatorial election. However, a significant majority of the respondents (78.2%) did not share this belief.To further explore the impact of social media on voters' behaviour, you may consider analyzing the reasons behind these beliefs, the perceived effect of social media on the election outcome, and

any observed effects on voter behaviour or decision-making. Additionally, you can compare these beliefs with the actual usage and impact of social media during the election to gain a comprehensive understanding if Social media platforms have played a significant role in influencing and shaping voters' behavior during elections.

Table 4.3.4: DO YOU BELIEVE PASTOR OSAGIE IZE-IYAMU OF THE APC USED THE SOCIAL

MEDIA TO HIS ADVANTAGE MORE DURING THE ELECTION

		Frequency	Per cent
Valid	Yes	82	37.3
	No	138	62.7
	Total	220	100.0

Source: Fieldwork (2023).

Based on the given table, we can interpret the data concerning the project topic: the impact of social media on voters' behaviour, specifically focusing on whether respondents believed that Pastor Osagie Ize-Iyamu of the APC used social media to his advantage more during the Edo 2020 gubernatorial election.

The table includes two response options: "Yes" and "No."

"Yes": 82 respondents (37.3%) believed that Pastor Osagie Ize-Iyamu of the APC used social media to his advantage more during the Edo 2020 gubernatorial election.

"No": 138 respondents (62.7%) did not believe that Pastor Osagie Ize-Iyamu used social media to his advantage more during the same election.

These results suggest that a minority of the respondents (37.3%) believed that Pastor Osagie Ize-Iyamu of the APC used social media to his advantage more during the Edo 2020 gubernatorial election. However, a significant majority of the respondents (62.7%) did not share this belief.To further explore the impact of social media on voters' behaviour, you may consider analyzing the reasons behind these beliefs, the perceived influence of social media on the election outcome, and any observed effects on voter behaviour or decision-making. Additionally, you can compare these beliefs with the actual usage and impact of social media during the election to gain a comprehensive understanding of the role played by social media platforms in shaping voters' behaviour.

Table 4.3.5: DID YOU VOTE FOR OR AGAINST ANY CANDIDATE BECAUSE OF THE POST MADE FOR OR AGAINST ON SOCIAL MEDIA

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	81	36.8

	No	139	63.2
	Total	220	100.0

Source: Fieldwork (2023).

Based on the given table, we can interpret the data concerning the project topic: the impact of social media on voters' behaviour, specifically focusing on whether respondents voted for or against any candidate because of the posts made for or against them on social media during the Edo 2020 gubernatorial election.

The table includes two response options: "Yes" and "No."

"Yes": 81 respondents (36.8%) stated that they voted for or against a candidate because of the posts made for or against them on social media during the Edo 2020 gubernatorial election.

"No": 139 respondents (63.2%) stated that they did not vote for or against any candidate based on such social media posts during the same election.

These results suggest that a minority of the respondents (36.8%) voted for or against a candidate because of the posts made for or against them on social media during the Edo 2020 gubernatorial election. However, a significant number of the participants (63.2%) did not base their voting decisions on such social media posts. To further explore the impact of social media on voters' behaviour, you may consider analyzing the specific reasons and factors that influenced the respondents who voted based on social media posts, such as the nature and content of those posts, their reach and engagement on social media platforms, and any observed changes in their behaviour or choices due of engaging with social media during the election. Additionally, it could be valuable to compare the self-reported influence of social media posts with actual voting patterns and outcomes to assess the extent of social media's impact on voters' behaviour in the Edo 2020 gubernatorial election.

4.4: SECTION D: TESTING OF HYPOTHESES

Hypothesis OneTable 4.4.2: Hypothesis two

AGE * DO YOU VOTE BASED ON INFORMATION AND TRENDS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

dChi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	49.427[a]	4	0.000
Likelihood Ratio	55.356	4	0.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	46.044	1	0.000

Source: Fieldwork (2023).

The cross-tabulation table provides a visual representation of how responses are distributed among different categories for two variables. It displays the count of respondents in each combination of categories, as well as the totals for each age group and the overall total. For example, 61 respondents in the age bracket of 18-25 years voted based on information and trends on social media, while 38 respondents in the same age group did not.

Pearson Chi-Square: The chi-square value is 49.427, with 4 degrees of freedom (df). The p-value associated with this test is 0.000, which indicates that there is a significant association between the variables at the conventional significance level of 0.05. In other words, there is evidence to suggest that the age of voters is a function of their behaviour of voting based on information and trends on social media.

Likelihood Ratio: The likelihood ratio chi-square value is 55.356, with 4 degrees of freedom. The associated p-value is 0.000, which supports the same conclusion as the Pearson Chi-Square test. The likelihood ratio test also finds there is a meaningful and statistically significant relationship between the variables.

Linear-by-Linear Association: This test examines the linear trend in the association between the two variables. The chi-square value is 46.044, with 1 degree of freedom, and the associated p-value is 0.000. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, there is evidence of a linear relationship between age and voting behaviour influenced by social media trends.

Additionally, the analysis indicates that 20.0% of the cells have expected counts less than 5, and

the minimum expected count is 1.51. This information suggests that caution should be exercised when interpreting the results due to the low expected counts, as they can impact the reliability of the chi-square test.

The symmetric measures section provides additional information about the strength and significance of the relationship between the variables. The Pearson's R (interval by interval) is 0.459, and the Spearman correlation (ordinal by ordinal) is 0.473. Both measures indicate a moderate positive association between age and voting behaviour influenced by social media trends. The p-values associated with these measures are also 0.000, supporting the significance of the relationship.

In conclusion, the chi-square test results indicate a substantial relationship between age and voting behaviour influenced by social media information and trends in the Edo 2020 gubernatorial election in Nigeria. Younger age groups, particularly those in the 18-25 years range, are more likely to vote based on information and trends on social media compared to older age groups.

Table 4.4.3:   Hypothesis Three

SEX DO YOU VOTE BASED ON INFORMATION AND TRENDS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.434[a]	1	.510		
Continuity Correction[b]	.270	1	.603		
Likelihood Ratio	.435	1	.510		
Fisher's Exact Test				.578	.302
Linear-by-Linear Association	.432	1	.511		
N of Valid Cases	220				

Source: Fieldwork (2023).

The cross-tabulation table shows the distribution of responses based on the two variables. It displays the count of respondents in each combination of categories, as well as the totals for each sex category and the overall total. For example, 38 males voted based on information and trends on social media, while 69 males did not.

Moving on to the chi-square tests, they assess the statistical significance of the relationship between the variables. Here are the key findings:

Pearson Chi-Square: The chi-square value is 0.434, with 1 degree of freedom (df). The p-value associated with this test is 0.510, which indicates that there is no significant association between the variables at the conventional significance level of 0.05. In other words, there is insufficient evidence to suggest that sex is related to voting behaviour based on information and trends on social media in the Edo 2020 gubernatorial election.

Continuity Correction: This test adjusts the chi-square statistic using a continuity correction. The chi-square value with continuity correction is 0.270, with 1 degree of freedom. The associated p-value is 0.603, supporting the same conclusion as the Pearson Chi-Square test. The continuity correction test also finds no significant association between the variables.

Likelihood Ratio: The likelihood ratio chi-square value is 0.435, with 1 degree of freedom. The associated p-value is 0.510, which aligns with the previous results. The likelihood ratio test does not find a significant association between the variables.

Fisher's Exact Test: This exact test calculates the p-value based on the exact distribution of the data. The two-sided p-value is 0.578, and the one-sided p-value is 0.302. Both values indicate no significant association between sex and voting behaviour influenced by social media trends.

Additionally, the analysis indicates that none of the cells has expected counts less than 5, and the minimum expected count is 40.37. This suggests that the chi-square test assumptions are met and the results can be considered reliable.

The symmetric measures section provides additional information about the strength and significance of the relationship between the variables. The Pearson's R (interval by interval) and Spearman correlation (ordinal by ordinal) both have a value of -0.044, indicating a weak negative association. However, the p-values associated with these measures (0.512) suggest that the observed association is not statistically significant.

In summary, based on the chi-square test results, there is no significant association between sex and voting behaviour influenced by social media information and trends in the Edo 2020 gubernatorial election in Nigeria. The analysis does not provide evidence to suggest that sex plays a role in determining whether individuals vote based on information and trends on social media.

CONCLUSION

The research study indicates that the level of education play a little role in determining whether individuals vote based on information and trends on social media. However, it's imperative to note that this conclusion is based on the specific dataset and analysis provided. Additional investigation and in-depth analysis may be necessary to obtain a more thorough comprehension of the connection between educational levels and the impact which social media has on voters' behavior during elections in Nigeria. The research work further indicates that age is significantly related to voting behaviour influenced by social media. This suggests that different age groups may have varying levels of engagement with social media platforms when it comes to gathering information and trends that impact their voting decisions. Further research and analysis can provide deeper insights into how age influences the relationship between social media and voting behaviour, allowing for more targeted and effective communication strategies during political campaigns.

Again, the study indicates that there is no significant relationship between sex and voting behaviour influenced by social media. This suggests that gender does not play a significant role in determining whether individuals vote based on information and trends on social media in the context of the Edo 2020 gubernatorial election. However, it's important to consider that this conclusion is based on the specific dataset and analysis provided. Further research and analysis may be necessary to explore the potential influence of gender on social media-driven voting behaviour in Nigerian elections.

Overall, these conclusions highlight the need for a nuanced understanding of the interplay between social media and voters' behaviour in Nigeria. While demographic factors may not uniformly determine the impact of social media on voting decisions, it is essential to consider these factors when designing targeted communication strategies, promoting digital literacy, and fostering inclusive political discourse. Additionally, further research and analysis are recommended to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between social media and voters' behaviour in Nigeria's elections, as well as to explore other potential factors that may influence this dynamic.

The following recommendations are suggested: 1. Enhance digital outreach strategies: Political campaigns and candidates should utilize a diverse range of communication channels to reach voters, considering that social media may not be the sole influencing factor for voters across different education levels. Employing a multi-channel approach, including traditional media and grassroots initiatives, can help engage a wider range of voters. 2. Tailor social media strategies for different age groups: Recognize that different age groups engage with social media in distinct ways. Political campaigns should tailor their messaging and content to effectively reach and engage voters of different age groups, leveraging the platforms and communication styles preferred by each age segment. 3. Enhance gender-inclusive political communication: While there is no significant association between sex and voting behaviour influenced by social media, political campaigns should ensure their messaging and outreach strategies are gender-inclusive. Addressing diverse concerns and priorities can help engage and mobilize voters across all genders. 4. Improve digital infrastructure in rural areas: Recognize the potential disparity in access to technology and the internet between rural and urban areas. Efforts should be made to improve digital infrastructure in rural areas, ensuring equitable access to information and social media platforms.

These recommendations aim to enhance voter engagement, digital literacy, and inclusive

political communication. They encourage a holistic approach to understanding and leveraging the role of social media in influencing voters' behaviour in Nigeria's elections.

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