



CARITAS INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF POLITICAL STUDIES AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

CIJPSIR, Volume 2, Issue 1 (2025)

SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCE ON NIGERIA GENERAL ELECTIONS WITH EMPHASIS ON ENUGU STATE 2023 GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION

¹Eze, Ngozi Linda

^{*2}Eze, Hyacinth O.

³Obasi, Ferdinand

⁴Onwo, Desmond O.

Authors' Affiliation

^{1&3}Department of Mass

Communication,

Caritas University, Enugu

²Department of Urban & Regional
Planning,

Caritas University, Enugu

⁴Department of Political Science

&International Relations,

Caritas University, Enugu

*Correspondence:

ezeho747@gmail.com

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the role of social media in Nigeria elections with specific reflection from 2023 Enugu State Governorship election. The specific objectives of the study include: finding out roles the social media played in Nigerian political awareness and participation in the 2023 governorship elections; and identifying the depth and frequency of social media coverage on the success of curtailing election rigging and fraud. The study adopted survey method coupled with social media data gathered from the Nigeria general elections. These data were analyzed and two hypotheses tested using Chi Square and Simple Regression Analysis in SPSS version 21. The major findings revealed that social media played a significant role in Nigerian political awareness and participation in the just concluded 2023 governorship elections; and that the coverage of Nigeria's election through social media curtails election rigging and fraud. In line with the findings, it was recommended that the Electoral Act should be reviewed to provide specific guidelines on the use of social media in Nigeria's future elections; the use of Electronic Card readers must be perfected to avoid technical hitches as experienced during the last elections; the Independent Nigeria Electoral Commission (INEC) should establish a social media tracking center to monitor, collate, and interpret trends and reports during elections; and that the INEC, civil society organizations, and security agencies in the Country should establish modalities to systematically verify information reported by citizen observers through social media.

Keywords:

Social Media
Elections,
Inec,
Information,
Rigging
Winning.

Introduction

The potential of every country to develop is determined by how well information is shared. This is because of the fact that understanding is both potent and important for human life. Based on this opinion; Kuusik (2015) claims that information can affect public discourse. In the framework of genuine governance in the public domain, the media may be utilized as an avenue for public knowledge and sensitization, as well as for influencing government actions (Nwagbara, 2010). The media is an important instrument for raising democratic expectations and resolving conflicts for consequence, the media cannot afford to act poorly, become negligent, or be blind to the public's political and social choices when carrying out its duties. According to Kaur and Kaur (2013), the early 1990s development of the Internet led to a surge in the number of individuals who are linked to the Internet. A more connected populace has greater availability of information, more opportunities to speak in public, and a higher ability for concerted action. The use of social networks has grown into a reality for many people, including a diverse variety of players such as ordinary individuals, activists, nonprofit organizations, telecommunications firms, software suppliers, governmental organizations, and governments at large. Social media has grown to be a significant instrument for citizens to discuss both locally and nationally significant topics. Facebook, X, and YouTube are not merely internet breakthroughs for the twenty-first century; they are also quickly becoming influential and opinion-forming platforms (Ibid). Social media are group of Internet-based applications that build on the theoretical and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that enable the creation and exchange of user-generated content," according to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010). A platform for creating social networks is a social networking service. These social network services are web-based, and they give users a way to communicate online. Users of social networking sites can communicate with people in their network by sharing thoughts, photos, postings, activities, events, and hobbies.

Therefore, social media is a two-way channel that not only provides information but also engages with you while doing so and allows engagement with other users. Candidates, voters, observers, and the electoral authority (the Independent National Electoral

Commission, INEC) are all expressing discontent with the general elections in Nigeria. Election irregularities, including the deprivation of voting rights to potential voters, the theft of ballot boxes from election officials, the stuffing of the boxes with illegitimate ballots, and claims of collusion between election officials and politicians to rig the results and undermine the will of the people, were reported in the wake of the elections Aleyomi and Ajekaiye (2014); Ibrahim and Ibeanu, (2009). The inadequacies that marred the Nigerian election process in 2023 seriously undermined its integrity and led to calls for more open, transparent, and fair elections. The traditional media, which consists of TV, radio, and print, has fallen short of expectations when it comes to providing the electorate with accurate information before, during, and even after elections. One of the reasons for this is that most of Nigeria's traditional media are owned and controlled by the country's political elites, necessitating a change to a more interactive form of media that permits user-to-user generated content and breaks the traditional media's monopoly on gate keeping and agenda setting.

The relevance of this study lies on how current and fresh the 2023 governorship elections, which serve as the case study for this investigation, as events during the election period demonstrated the critical role that social media platforms play in the success of contemporary elections as well as in the survival and maintenance of democracy on the multi-political and religiously conflicted African continent, of which Nigeria is not exempt. The only way to have a legitimate administration, according to Aleyomi and Ajekaiye (2014), is to let the voters choose who would rule them. This can only be done through participation, and social media offers one of the platforms for engaging actively in one's nation's political affairs. In light of this, this research study used the governorship elections in Enugu States in 2023 as a case study to examine the usage and effects of social media coverage on Nigerian voters.

The Problem of this study involves determining to what extent their notable performance in the 2023 governorship elections was aided by the internet, social networking, and social media in particular. Other questions asked of respondents included accurate percentages of responses from young people to the study's questions about networking behavior, the extent to which social media was used to seek out

political campaign and electoral information, as well as the participants' level of activity in posting information. Election irregularities, fraud, and intervention by incumbent governments utilizing federal funding and federal security to thwart the will of the electorate in the past were among the most difficult problems that Nigerians had to deal with.

In a study of Nigerian elections over almost 50 years, published in 2011 Jawan & Osinakachukwu, (2011), the authors found that persistent "election riggings in Nigeria have resulted into the imposition of corrupt and illegitimate leaders who have no regard to the principles of democracy which are off-shoots for good governance, rule of law, constitutionalism and fundamental human rights." And that derailing of the electoral process was the catalyst for electoral fraud. One aim of the study is that the details of social media's success in making a difference way from the norm, be gleaned from the study results.

The goal of this study therefore is to investigate the role of social media in Nigeria elections. However, the specific objectives of the study are to:

- i. find out roles the social media played in Nigerian political awareness and participation in the 2023 governorship elections;
- ii. identify the depth and frequency of social media coverage on the success of curtailing election rigging and fraud; and
- iii. ascertain whether social media determined a candidate's chance of winning an election.

Research Hypotheses - The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide this research:

H₀₁: Social media played no role in Nigerian political awareness and participation in the 2023 governorship elections;

H₀₂: The coverage of Nigeria election through social media does not curtail election rigging and fraud.

Literature Review

Since the early 18th century, when the modern press first emerged, it has been observed that writers, politicians, statesmen, academics, and media professionals have assigned the press as an institution with a number of vital tasks (Owoyemi, 2018). This is significant for journalism since this plays a crucial role in the growth and survival of a country. Any country's ability to develop depends on how well

knowledge is shared. The rationale is that knowledge is both powerful and necessary for human survival. In light of this, Kuusik (2015) asserts that information has the ability to influence public debate. In the framework of true leadership in the public domain, the media can be utilized as a platform for public knowledge and sensitization as well as to influence government actions (Nwagbara, 2010). A key weapon for raising democratic expectations and resolving disputes is the media. As a result, the press cannot afford to act improperly, become careless, or be oblivious to the political and sociocultural preferences of the public when doing its tasks. In support of his claim that "information is power, and the more people enjoy it, the more the power is circulated," Sidney (1975) cites Lipman (1922). He continues by saying that the level of press freedom will decide how well it can play the function of watchdog over how public affairs are conducted.

Concept of Social Media

Different users' interpretations of the word "Social Media" exist. For instance, social media is described as "a group of internet-based applications that build on the theoretical and technical foundations of Web 2.0 and that enable the creation and exchange of user-generated content" by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010). It encompasses web-based and mobile technologies that are used to transform communication into dialog between people, groups, and communities.

Social media refers to a variety of online tools and platforms that let users publish and share material instantly, building social networks and virtual communities. It provides an interactive space for individuals, organizations, and businesses to engage in communication, collaboration, and information sharing (Boyd and Ellison, 2007). Social media comprises available platforms and services that allow users to create and share content, as well as engage in social interactions and networking. It provides a space for individuals to express themselves, connect with others, and participate in virtual communities, contributing to the formation of a collective digital culture. Social media encompasses web-based applications and platforms that enable users to interact and communicate with others, sharing content and information across various digital formats. It facilitates the exchange of ideas, opinions, and experiences, contributing to the democratization

of media and fostering global connectivity (Hinton and Hjorth, 2013).

Online platforms and tools that let people and groups produce are referred to as social media, share, and curate content, fostering user engagement and collaboration. It provides a means for users to express themselves, build online identities, and connect with diverse communities, enabling both personal and professional networking (Boyd and Ellison, 2018). Social media platforms typically include websites like Facebook, X, Instagram, Skype, Zoom, and YouTube as well as participatory elements on these platforms, such as the "re-tweeting" option on X. These items are referred to as media because they are tools that may be used for both storing and disseminating information. The majority of social media technologies, however, allow for user engagement, in contrast to conventional media like television and radio, as evidenced by Facebook's commenting functionality and X's "re-tweeting" function.

Among the many formats that social media technologies can take are magazines, online forums, weblogs, social blogs, podcasts, photographs, and videos. (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010 attempted to categorize social media into six separate groups in order to account for the range of forms they can take:

1. Collaborative projects (for example Wikipedia)
2. Blogs and Microblogs (for example X)
3. Content communities (for example YouTube)
4. Social networking sites (for example Facebook)
5. Virtual game worlds (for example World of Warcraft)
6. Virtual social worlds (for example Second Life)

Historical Development of Social Media: A Transformative Journey

Social media has transformed communication, information sharing, and interpersonal relationships, and has become an essential component of contemporary society. Technology developments, societal changes, and user needs have all had an impact on its historical growth, which has spanned several decades. This essay examines key turning points and paradigm shifts that have influenced social media's development, illuminating its explosive expansion and influence on modern culture.

Early Beginnings and Emergence of Online Communities: The origins on social media can be

traced back to the late 1970s and early 1980s when Bulletin Board Systems (BBS) emerged as the first platforms for online communication and community building (Reid, 2018.pg 67). These systems allowed users to post messages and share files, laying the groundwork for subsequent developments. The 1990s, advent of the World Wide Web provided a more accessible and user-friendly platform for the creation of online communities.

Rise of the Web 2.0 Era: The early 2000s witnessed a paradigm shift with the emergence Web 2.0, which emphasized user-generated content, interactivity, and collaboration (O'Reilly, 2005.pg 112). This transformative era saw the birth of several influential platforms. Friendster, launched in 2002, introduced the concept of online profiles and connecting with friends (Boyd & Ellison, 2007, pg 4). It paved the way for subsequent communal schmoosing sites like MySpace (2003) and Facebook (2004), which achieved unprecedented global popularity.

Expansion and Diversification of Social Media: The mid-2000s witnessed a rapid expansion on social media platforms. YouTube, founded in 2005, revolutionized the sharing of video content, empowering individuals to become creators and influencers (Burgess & Green, 2009). Additionally, platforms like LinkedIn (2003) focused on professional networking, while Instagram (2010) and Snapchat (2011) prioritized visual content and instant messaging.

Mobile Revolution and Social Media: Proliferation of smart phones and mobile internet access the late 2000s and early 2010s transformed the social media landscape. Platforms like Facebook and X optimized their services for mobile devices, leading to an exponential increase in user engagement (Kwak et al., 2010). Mobile apps such as WhatsApp (2009) and WeChat (2011) revolutionized instant messaging and brought social media closer to users' everyday lives.

Social Media's Impact on Society: The historical evolution of social media has had a profound impact on society. It has facilitated information dissemination during political movements such as the Arab Spring (Tufekci & Wilson, 2012) and frolicked a pivotal role in shaping public discourse and political campaigns (Parmelee & Bichard, 2012, pg.12). Furthermore, social media has revolutionized marketing and brand communication, empowering

businesses to reach wider audiences and engage with customers in new ways.

Since social media's early days as online communities, it has seen considerable changes in its historical evolution. Social media has developed over the years to play a crucial role in contemporary communication and societal interactions, from the introduction of Web 2.0 to the mobile revolution. We can better understand the wider implications and potential future developments of this constantly changing phenomenon by comprehending its historical trajectory.

Social Media Discovery of Election Rigging Methods in Nigeria

Kwasau (2023), postulated that social media had discovered the following on election rigging in Nigeria election during the 2013 governorship election:

1. INEC's recognition of nonexistent polling places and distribution of voting supplies to them.
2. Bribing INEC officials, the police, and security personnel in order to manipulate the results of elections.
3. Using partisan party members as poll workers is a practice of INEC.
4. Diversion of election materials for manipulation and falsification to traditional rulers' private offices, homes, and palaces.
5. Voter registration lists containing fictitious identities that are later utilized as a ghost are kept secret or not released.
6. The voter list used at polling places is not numbered, allowing names to be added to it at will.
7. Polling places and collation centers moving suddenly and without notice.
8. The pre-stuffing of ballot boxes with fictitious ballot paper before election day.
9. Stuffing illegal papers into unlawful ballot boxes.
10. Offering pre-filled voting boxes for sale to candidates.
11. Throwing official ballot boxes into rivers and replacing them with freshly loaded ballot boxes obtained from unlawful sources, or exchanging official ballot boxes with unofficial ballot boxes carrying unauthorized thumb-printed voting sheets.
12. The addition of unofficial ballot boxes containing already thumb-printed ballots to official ballot boxes.
13. Falsification of results and forgery of figure both at polling units and collation centres.
14. Multiple voting to which INEC officials and the police are indifferent.
15. Voting by minors, to which police officers and INEC officials pay no attention.
16. Using a specific ethylated alcohol to remove fingernail "indelible ink" to enable multiple voting.
17. Poll staff applying Vaseline to voters' fingernails before applying the allegedly irremovable ink to facilitate easy cleansing and multiple voting. The ballots are printed by the INEC staff using their thumbs.
18. Security personnel printing ballots using their thumbs.
19. Some domestic observers thumb printed the ballots.
20. Accumulation and use of voting cards obtained illegally on election days.
21. Use of party representatives to examine voter registration forms in order to encourage voter fraud and multiple voting.
22. Putting party agents in police gear to scare rivals at polling places and centers for data collection.
23. Use of armed thugs to intimidate and threaten opponents and representatives of opposing parties.
24. Terrorizing rivals and representatives of competing parties using police and security personnel.
25. Armed thugs, police, and security personnel are used to coerce party representatives of opposition parties into leaving the polling place.
26. Party members of the ruling parties wearing INEC tags on election days to make it easier to move from one collation center to another and from one polling place to another in order to rig the results.
27. Phony election results sheets with the same numbers as real results sheets are printed and used.
28. Signing fake election results while holding some party representatives at gunpoint.
29. Illegally soliciting votes at polling places.
30. To cover up the rigging of election results, members of the ruling parties have made bogus claims to be party agents for opposition parties.
31. intimidating and pressuring voters—in some cases, through threat of violence—to support particular parties

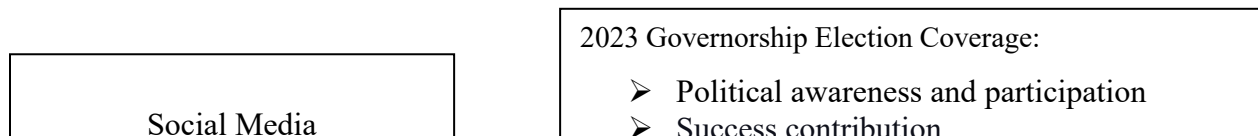
32. Agents of recently registered parties are compromised by ruling parties that bribe them.
33. Voters were made fully visible to party agents during the voting process, violating their right to privacy and undermining the legal necessity for secret balloting.
34. Posting erroneous results on its website for online consumption that were consistent with results from the polling places.
35. Posting erroneous results from polling places on INEC's website for internet consumption.
36. Mandate being sold to the highest bidder.
37. Using different fingers to leave imprints on the ballots will make it harder to detect multiple votes.
38. Agents of the ruling parties unlawfully seize ballots from voters who are known to have cast ballots against the party's preference and purposefully invalidate them by adding additional finger impressions.
39. Use of looted public money to bribe voters.
42. Refusing to count and throwing away ballots with thumbprints that belong to unfavorable political parties.
- According to conceptual review, the relationship between social media and 2023 governorship election coverage has the following:

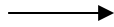
Table 1: Social Media Coverage on 2023 Nigeria Governorship Election Results /Winners

STATES	APC	LP	NNPP	PDP	WINNER
Abia	24,091	175,467		88,529	Alex Otti (LP)
Adamawa	975	668	-	9337	Ahmadu Umaru Fintiri(PDP)
A’Ibom	129,602	4,746	12,509	354,348	Umo Eno (PDP)
Bauchi	432,275		60,496	525,280	Bala Mohammed (PDP)
Benue	473,933			223,913	Fr. Hycinth Alia (APC)
Borno	545, 542			82,147	Babagana Zulum(APC)
C’River	258,619	5,957		179,636	Bassey Edet Otu (APC)
Delta	240,229	48,027		350,234	Sheriff Oborevworu (PDP)
Ebonyi	199,131			80,191	Francis Nwifuru (APC)
Enugu	14,575	157,552		160,895	Peter Mbah (PDP)
Gombe	342,82			233,131	Inuwa Yahaya (APC)
Jigawa	618,449	965	37,156	368,726	Umar Namadi (APC)
Kaduna	730,002	58,283	21,405	719,196	Uba Sani (APC)
Kano	890,705		1,019,602	15,957	Abba Yusuf (NNPP)
Katsina	859,892	560	8,263	486,620	Dikko Radda (APC)
Kebbi	409,225			360,940	Nasiru Idris (APC)
Kwara	273,424	1,647	4,398	155,490	Abdulrahman Abdulrazaq (APC)
Lagos	762,134	312,329	1,583	62,449	Babajide Sanwo-Olu (APC)
Nasarawa	347,209			283,016	Abdullahi Sule (APC)
Niger	469,896	3,415	3,378	387,476	Umar Mohammed Bago (APC)
Ogun	276,298		1394	262,383	Dapo Abiodun (APC)
Oyo	256, 685	1,500		563, 756	Seyi Makinde (PDP)
Plateau	481,370	60,310		525,299	Caleb Mutfwang (PDP)
Rivers	95,274	22,224	335	302,614	Siminalayi Fubara (PDP)
Sokoto	453,661			404,632	Ahmed Aliyu (APC)
Taraba			202,278	257,926	Col. Kefas Agbu (PDP)
Yobe	317,113			124,259	Mai Mala Buni (APC)
Zamfara	311,976			377,726	Dauda Lawal-Dare (PDP)

Source: Social Media via Facebook, 2023

In line with the conceptual framework, the conceptual model guides this study. Conceptual Model: The relationship between social media and 2023 governorship election coverage.





Independent variable

Dependent variables

Source: Proposed by the Researchers for this study.

Empirical Study

Nsikak, Anietie & Umoh (2023) researched “social media as a Tool for political marketing in Nigeria: Challenges and Opportunities Gone are the days when social media were glibly esteemed as inferior imitations of mainstream media”. Social media is no longer just seen as a new platform for gossip and informal socializing, appealing to only millennials and the generations following them. Social media are now widely used across a variety of industries and have evolved into a vital component of people's survival. In this study, social media's role in Nigerian political campaign marketing is examined. Founded on the Three-stage Model of Political Marketing and the Technological Determinism Theory, the study offers a contextual evaluation on the use of social media technologies within the Nigerian political marketing ecosystem to the potential and obstacles. The study used an explanatory and descriptive methodology and heavily relied on library review. It focuses on the unusual potential and challenges that come with using social media for political marketing in Nigeria and explores and exclusively establishes eleven methods social media are and can be used for political marketing. It concludes there is a connection between the use of social media for political marketing and the backing, endorsing, and/or patronage a candidate, aspirant, or political party receives before, during, and after an election. The paper concludes with five pertinent suggestions meant to solve the issues raised during the investigation

Table 2 : Population Table

S/N	State	Number of Registered Voters
1.	Enugu State Registered voters	2,122,793
	Total	2,122,793

Source: Enugu State INEC Office

Research Methodology

The research design adopted in this study is the survey method. Since the study tires to investigate social media elections in Nigeria, the design is relevant to the study because it help in gathering data from a target population through the questionnaire or interview. It further subjects such data to statistical analysis for the purpose of reaching conclusion on the subject matter of the study, and it provides solution to identified research problem. It also allows the researcher to gain insight into the problems by accurately describing the event as it happens, focuses on investigating the belief, attitudes, and opinions of another group of people by administered questionnaire to them and having face-to-face questions and responses.

Again, the method is necessary because it enables the researcher to measure what each respondent knows, likes and thinks on the topic under study. On the type of survey to be applied, the researcher chooses descriptive survey method that affords her to use statistical tools like tables, percentage and chi-square in analyzing her collected data.

Population of the Study - The population of the study is definite population of all the registered voters in Enugu State. Provided such electorate resides in Enugu. Statistical figures from Enugu State have a total of 2,122,793 of registered voters. Therefore, the actual population of the study is 2,122,793. See table 2.

Sampling Technique and sample size

Madume (2016:87) Sampling is the selection of a part or a section of an entire population of people that are studied to obtain information about the research variables. Therefore, the researchers adopted the simple random sampling technique. The use of the simple random sampling technique is to give every voter equal opportunity of being selected. This is design to avoid prejudice and to remove bias. Simple random sampling is a statistical technique used in research and data analysis to select a subset of individuals or items from a larger population.

Sample Size

A sample is any portion taken from a population or universe to represent that population. This sample size for the investigation was determined using the Taro Yamene (1964) approach, which is a mathematical model. So, the equation is;

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where;

n = Sample Size

N = Population

e = Allowable level of errors at 5% (0.05) significant.

1 = Mathematical constant

$$n \cong 0.4$$

Therefore, the sample size determined for this study is 366 respondents. However, 200 copies which represent 55% were distributed based on Convenience Sampling of Creswell (2018) as justified by Bryman (2016).

Nature of Distribution and Retrieval of Research Instrument

The research instruments used in this study were copies of structured questionnaire administered on randomly selected voters in Enugu under study. Table 4.1 below shows how the 200 copies of the questionnaire were distributed and retrieved.

Table 4.0: Distribution and Retrieval of Instrument

Number of Copies Distributed	Number of Copies Retrieved	Number of Copies Lost	Number of copies found useful	Number of discarded copies	Percentage of Retrieved and Used Copied (%)
200	176 (88%)	24 (12%)	152	24	86.00

Source: Field survey, 2023.

Table 4.1 shows that out of the 200 copies of the questionnaire distributed to voters, 176 representing 88% copies were retrieved while 24 representing 12% copies were lost. Also, out of the 176 copies retrieved, 24 representing 14% copies were incompletely filled and therefore were discarded. However, 152 representing 86% copies were completely filled and found useful for analyses. Thus, further analyses in this study were based on the 152 copies retrieved and found useful.

Data Analysis and Summary of Findings

From the available analyzed data, two hypotheses were tested. In this section, the two hypotheses stated were tested using the Simple Regression analysis in SPSS version 21.

Test of Hypothesis One

Social media played no role in Nigerian political awareness and participation in the concluded 2023 governorship elections.

This hypothesis was tested using the research available information and interpreted as follows:

Interpretation - The R value in the model summary table shows a simple correlation of 0.936 which shows a very strong of positive correlation. The R² value shows how much of the total variation in the dependent variable (political awareness and participation) that can be explained by the independent variable (social media). The table shows that 87.5% variation in the political awareness and

participation can be explained by social media. This is equally high. With a sig (p-value) of (0.000) which is less than Alpha (0.05) and a t value of 32.501, the overall regression model, therefore, is a good fit. That is, it statistically predicts the outcome of the variables.

Decision - Since the p-value (0.000) is less than Alpha (0.05), that is $0.000 < 0.05$, and t calculated (32.501) is greater than t tabulated (1.960), we therefore reject the null hypothesis and accept the

Table 4: Responses on which platform can curtail election rigging and fraud in Nigeria

Responses	Frequency	Percentage %
Whatsapp	92	61
Facebook	44	29
Instagram	7	5
Twitter	6	4
Tick-talk	3	1
Total	152	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

From the table above, 92 respondents representing 61% voters ticked that WhatsApp social media can curtail election rigging and fraud influence in Nigeria, 44 representing 29% ticked Facebook, 7 representing 5% Instagram, 6 representing 4% Twitter while 3 representing 1% ticked Tick-Talk, giving a total of 152 respondents.

Test of Hypothesis Two

The coverage of Nigeria election through social media does not curtail election rigging and fraud.

Interpretation - The R value in the model summary table shows a simple correlation of 0.826 which shows a strong of positive correlation. The R^2 value shows how much of the total variation in the dependent variable (curtail election rigging and fraud) that can be explained by the independent variable (social media). The table shows that 68% variation in the curtail election rigging and fraud can be explained by social media. This is equally high. With a sig (p-value) of (0.000) which is less than Alpha (0.05) and a t value of 17.951, the overall regression model, therefore, is a good fit. That is, it statistically predicts the outcome of the variables.

Summary of Findings - The following major findings were made in the course of this research work:

1. Social media played a significant role in Nigerian political awareness and participation in the just concluded 2023 governorship elections.
2. The coverage of Nigeria's election through social media curtails election rigging and fraud.

alternate hypothesis which implies that social media played a significant role in Nigerian political awareness and participation in the just concluded 2023 governorship elections.

The response question on which platform can curtail election rigging and fraud in Nigeria is contained in table 4, interpreted and utilized in hypothesis two testing.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion - The results of the study showed that social media significantly influenced Nigerian political awareness and participation in the recently concluded 2023 governorship election.

Additionally, social media helped the Nigerian governorship elections of 2023 run smoothly and successfully. Lastly, voters claim that social media can be used to improve future elections in Nigeria because it has the potential to lower electoral fraud, lower campaign costs, and enshrine transparency in the electoral process, among other things.

Recommendations - Against this backdrop, the following recommendations were made:

- i. The Electoral Act should be reviewed to provide specific guidelines on the use of social media in Nigeria's future elections.
- ii. The use of Electronic Card readers must be perfected to avoid technical hitches as experienced during the last elections.
- iii. INEC should establish a social media tracking center to monitor, collate, and interpret trends and reports during elections.
- iv. INEC, civil society organizations, and security agencies should establish modalities to

systematically verify information reported by citizen observers through social media.

References

- Aleyomi, M. & Ajakaiye, O. (2014). The impact of social media on citizens' mobilization and participation in Nigeria's 2011 General Elections. *Research Gate Journal*, Vol.17, No.2, pp.31-52 31.
- Boyd, D., & Ellison, N. (2007). Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 13(1), 210-230.
- Boyd, d., & Ellison, N. B. (2018). *Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship. in the Oxford handbook of Internet studies (pp. 1-16)*. Oxford University Press.
- Bryman, A. (2016) Social Research Methods (5th ed.). Oxford University Press; Available in ChatGPT.
- Burgess, J., & Green, J. (2009). *YouTube: Online video and participatory culture*. UK: Polity Press.
- Creswell, J.W. & Creswell J.D. (2018). Research Design : Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Method Approaches (5th ed.). SAGE Publications; Available in ChatGPT.
- Hinton, S., & Hjorth, L. (2013). *Understanding social media*, (Vol. 2). SAGE.
- Ibrahim, J. & Ibeanu, O. (2009). *Direct Capture: The 2007 Nigerian elections and subversion of popular sovereignty*. Lagos: Centre for Democracy and Development.
- Jawan, J A & Osinakachukwu, N. P., The electoral process and democratic consolidation in Nigeria. *Journal of Politics and Law*, Vol. 4, No. 2; September 2011.
- Kaplan, A. M. & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world unite: The challenges and opportunities of social media. *Business Horizons*, 53(1), pp. 59-68.
- Kaur, G. & Kaur, B. (2013). *Models and theories of communication*. Dubai: Nasty Publishers.
- Kuusik, N. (2015). The role of the media in peace building, Conflict management and prevention. www.eir.info/theroleofmediainpeacebuilding, downloaded on March 25, 2015.
- Kwasau, M. (2013). The challenges of democratic consolidation in Nigeria's Fourth Republic", *European Scientific Journal*, Vol. 9, no.8.
- Lipman (1922). *Social media: Depression and Anxiety*. UK: Bright Publishers.
- Nsikak, A., Umoh, P & Anietie, A. (2023). Emerging role of social media in political activism: Perceptions and practices. *Journal of South Asian Studies*, 31(1), pp. 381- 396.
- Nwagbara, I. (2010). How social media shapes today's election. *Peoples Daily*, Retrieved June 20, 2015, from <http://peoplesdailyng.com/weekend/index.php/news/special-report/5895->
- O'Reilly, T. (2005). What is Web 2.0: Design patterns and business models for the next generation of software. *Communications & strategies*, 1(1), 17-37.
- Owoyemi, A (2018). Print media contribution to prevention of electoral violence in the 2015 General Election in Nigeria. *Being M.A Dissertation submitted to the University of Ibadan, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for award of Masters in Language and Communication Art*.
- Parmelee, J. H., & Bichard, S. L. (2012). Politics and the Twitter revolution: How tweets influence the relationship between political leaders and the public. Lexington Books.
- Reid, E. (2018). A history of social media. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Sidney, S. (1975). Perceptions of Social Media. A joint Arena for Voters and Politicians. *Nordicom Review*, 36, 2, pp.65-79.
- Tufekci, Z., & Wilson, C. (2012). Social media and the decision to participate in political protest: Observations from Tahrir Square. *Journal of Communication*, 62(2), 363-379.