



Research Article

Influence of Twitter(X) On the Political Participation of Nigerian Youth: Evidence from Selected Local Government Areas in Anambra State During the 2023 General Elections.

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About Article

Article History

Submission: April 20, 2026

Acceptance: April 27, 2026

Publication: April 30, 2026

Keywords:

Twitter(X), Political, Participation, Nigerian youth, General elections

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of Twitter on the political engagement of Nigerian youths during the 2023 general elections, with a focus on six local government areas in Anambra State: Awka North, Awka South, Nnewi North, Nnewi South, Onitsha North, and Onitsha South. With the growing integration of social media into civic life, particularly among digitally active youth populations, the research examines how Twitter was used as a tool for political awareness, mobilization and participation. Drawing on the Social Capital Theory and the Uses and Gratifications Theory, the study explores the dynamics of political communication in the digital age, addressing both motivations for and outcomes of political engagement on Twitter. A structured survey was conducted among 294 valid respondents aged 18–35 years, using a Likert-scale questionnaire to assess frequency of Twitter usage, influence on political opinion, and levels of civic participation. Findings indicate that Twitter significantly enhances political awareness among Nigerian youths, shaping their perceptions of political issues and encouraging participation in political discourse and activism. A substantial number of respondents used Twitter not only to access political information but also to organise, promote, and participate in political movements during the election period. Furthermore, statistical analysis confirmed strong internal consistency in the measured constructs, with Cronbach's Alpha values ranging from 0.84 to 0.91. Despite the positive correlation between Twitter usage and political participation, the study also highlights challenges such as misinformation, algorithmic bias, and online harassment. Nevertheless, the research underscores the platform's critical role in modern Nigerian political engagement, particularly in empowering youth to influence democratic processes and hold political actors accountable. The study concludes by recommending policy attention to digital civic education, improved media literacy, and broader incorporation of social media dynamics into political campaign strategies and electoral governance in Nigeria.



1.0 INTRODUCTION

Social media has become a fundamental tool in shaping social, economic, and political interactions, largely driven by advancements in Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Initially created as platforms for social interaction and community building, social media has evolved into a crucial medium for political communication, social mobilisation, and civic engagement. The relevance of social media to political engagement is evident across the globe. From the Arab Spring to the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States, platforms like Twitter have been central to organising protests, spreading awareness, and shaping public opinion. These digital spaces allow individuals, activists, and organisations to disseminate information rapidly, bypassing traditional media gatekeepers. As a result, social media has become a powerful tool for political actors, especially in regions where traditional media may be controlled by the government or political elites.

As a microblogging platform, Twitter allows users to post brief messages, or "tweets," to their followers, creating real-time conversations around political issues, campaigns, and events. Unlike traditional media, where content is produced and controlled by professional journalists, Twitter gives ordinary citizens the ability to create and share political content, directly influencing the political discourse. It has also been used to challenge governmental authority, as seen during movements like the #EndSARS protests in Nigeria, where Twitter became a hub for organizing protests and amplifying calls for police reform (Ikefuama, 2022).

Twitter's role in political mobilization and engagement has become especially important in countries like Nigeria, where youth engagement in politics has historically been low. Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa, has a large youth population, with over 60% of its citizens under the age of 25 (World Bank, 2020). Despite Nigeria's large youth population, political participation has historically been low due to distrust in governance and political apathy. However, social media has provided new opportunities for youth engagement, making it necessary to examine its influence during the 2023 general elections.

2.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objective of the study was to comprehensively examine the influence of Twitter on the political engagement of Nigerian youths during the 2023 general election campaign period.

This study was guided by the following specific objectives:

1. To ascertain the level of Twitter usage among Nigerian youths during the 2023 general election campaign period.
2. To investigate the prevalence of political activities among Nigerian youths on Twitter during the 2023 general election.
3. Analyse the relationship between Twitter usage and political awareness.
4. Assess the influence of Twitter on political mobilization and participation.

2.1 Research Question

Based on these objectives, the following research questions were formulated to guide the study.

1. What is the level of Twitter usage among Nigerian youths during the 2023 general election campaign period?
2. What type of political activities (e.g., sharing political content, participating in discussions, or expressing opinions) are most prevalent among Nigerian youths on Twitter during the 2023 general election?
3. What relationship exists between Twitter usage and political awareness?
4. How does Twitter usage influence political mobilization among Nigerian youths?

3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Conceptual Framework

3.1.1 Political Trend in Nigeria

Like other countries coming out of colonial administrations, Nigeria has gone through many experiences since the attainment of Independence in 1960 (Ogbeidi, 2012). This includes political turbulences, which form a major part of a nation that is unprepared for democratic rule. After its independence was declared, Nigeria boasted of having a proven reserve of oil, which could sustain the nation and its development without dependence on foreign powers (Onigbinde, 2014). Its ensuing history, however, is one of economic strains, political violence, and poverty. Geddes (2010) highlights how Nigeria, one of Africa's largest countries, has an estimated population of 202 million people with an average annual population growth rate of 2.60 per cent (World Population Review, 2019). He also identifies that there are over 400 languages and dialects spoken, and over

250 ethnic groups in the country. The major languages spoken include Hausa, Fulani, Igbo, Yoruba, Edo, Urhobo, Efik, Ijaw, Tiv and Kanuri (Foyewa, 2018). About 65 per cent of the population is made up of the Hausa-Fulani, the Yoruba and the Igbo, and the country is also divided between the Muslim north, estimated to be between 51 and 57 per cent of the population and the Christian south.

3.1.2 The Influence of Social Media on Youth

Social media can be referred to as a program with multifunctional applications and websites or blogs that allow people to connect through the Internet, chat, and share content and video calls around the world (Camilia, Ibrahim & Dalhatu, 2013). Interested users often sign up for such platforms before they can sign in to access or share information on the same social media platform. Some of the most widely used social media platforms include Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Snapchat. Social media has achieved tremendous growth and fame worldwide over the years. Researchers now find interest in learning more about the effects of these social media platforms on communities. Of all the users of social media platforms, youth and teenagers are the most addicted as they are found on the social network even in the most unlikely places, including classrooms and worship places (Kuss and Griffiths, 2011).

3.1.3 Youth, Social Media and Politics

The digital landscape has fundamentally transformed the social lives of individuals born after 1994, with the advent of various social media platforms and applications shaping their interactions and behaviours

(Lenhart, 2019). Research indicates that a significant proportion of teenagers and young adults are active users of the Internet and social media, with platforms like Twitter and Facebook becoming integral parts of their daily routines (Perrin, 2015). This widespread adoption of social media has not only altered communication patterns but has also influenced political engagement among youths globally.

The Internet, particularly social media platforms, has emerged as a powerful tool for political mobilisation and activism, providing individuals with access to information, facilitating discussions, and enabling mass participation in political processes (Ahmad & Sheikh, 2020). Movements like Black Lives Matter and The Dreamer Movement serve as compelling examples of how social media platforms have been leveraged to organise protests, raise awareness, and advocate for social change (Elliot and Earl, 2018). In Nigeria, social media has become a catalyst for youth participation in politics, empowering them to voice their opinions and engage in political discourse like never before.

3.1.4 Empirical Review

Twitter, as a social media platform, has increasingly become a significant tool for political engagement and mobilisation, particularly among Nigerian youths. The 2023 general election in Nigeria witnessed a surge in the use of Twitter by young Nigerians to express their political views, mobilise support for candidates, and participate actively in the electoral process. According to Adebayo & Oyinlola (2018), Twitter served as a platform for

disseminating political information and fostering discussions on key electoral issues. This study found that Nigerian youths actively engaged in political conversations on Twitter, sharing opinions and seeking clarification on political matters. Similarly, Ogunwale et al. (2020) conducted a survey among Nigerian youths during the 2023 general election and reported that Twitter was one of the primary sources of political news and updates for young voters. This indicates that Twitter played a crucial role in keeping youths informed about the electoral process and political developments. Also, Ojo & Adeoye (2019) conducted a study on youth engagement in political campaigns and found that Twitter was instrumental in organising political rallies, protests, and voter education drives. The platform allowed young Nigerians to connect with like-minded individuals, form online communities, and coordinate offline activities to support their preferred candidates. Additionally, Oladele & Adekunle (2021) conducted interviews with youth activists involved in political mobilisation on Twitter and documented their experiences. The study revealed that Twitter provided a space for young activists to amplify their voices, mobilise support, and challenge the political status quo.

Furthermore, Adeleke and Yusuf (2022) conducted a longitudinal study tracking the Twitter activity of young voters leading up to the election day. They found a correlation between exposure to political content on Twitter and voter turnout among Nigerian youths. The study suggested that active engagement with political discussions on Twitter increased youths' interest in the electoral process and motivated them to

participate in voting. Similarly, Oluwaseun & Ibrahim (2018) analysed Twitter data to understand youth perceptions of political candidates and parties. Their findings revealed that Twitter discussions influenced youths' opinions about candidates' policies, integrity, and competence, ultimately shaping their voting preferences.

4.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

4.1 Social Capital Theory

Social capital theory, a concept deeply rooted in sociology and political science, offers valuable insights into the dynamics of social relationships and their impact on various aspects of society, including political participation (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000; Portes, 1998). Developed initially by scholars such as Pierre Bourdieu and James Coleman, social capital theory posits that social networks and connections within communities hold tangible value, akin to traditional forms of capital like financial resources or human capital (Coleman, 1988; Bourdieu, 1986).

Furthermore, social capital theory distinguishes between two main forms of social capital: bonding and bridging. Bonding social capital refers to connections among individuals who share similar identities, backgrounds, or interests, fostering solidarity and mutual support within cohesive groups (Ssreter & Woolcock, 2004). On the other hand, bridging social capital encompasses connections across diverse social groups, facilitating the exchange of information, resources, and perspectives beyond immediate social circles (Putnam, 2000).

4.1.1 Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT)

Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) has evolved over time, playing a significant role in understanding media consumption patterns and audience behaviour. Developed in the year 1974 by Elihu Katz, Jay G. Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch, UGT shifted the focus from the effects of media messages to the active role of audiences in selecting and using media to fulfil their needs and desires. The theory posits that individuals are not passive recipients of media content but actively seek out specific media to satisfy their psychological and social needs (Dolan et al., 2016).

5.0 METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a survey research design. The population comprised youth aged 18–35 years in six selected local government areas in Anambra State. A sample size of 400 respondents was selected using purposive sampling. Out of these, 294 valid responses were analysed. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analysed using descriptive statistics.

5.1 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

5.1.1 Response Rate

For this study, a survey questionnaire was distributed to respondents across 6 local governments in Anambra State. A total of 400 copies of questionnaire were sent out through digital means seeking respondents' responses and opinions. However, after a careful examination, 294 questionnaire were found valid enough for analysis, while 106 responses were rejected due to incomplete responses and non-consent to participate in the study. Analysis of the respondent rate is further broken down in the table below:

Table 5.1.1 Response Rate of Respondents

Number of copies of the Questionnaire sent out	400	100%
Copies of the Questionnaire received	400	100%
Valid Questionnaires	294	73%
No Response, Invalid and incomplete questionnaire	106	27%

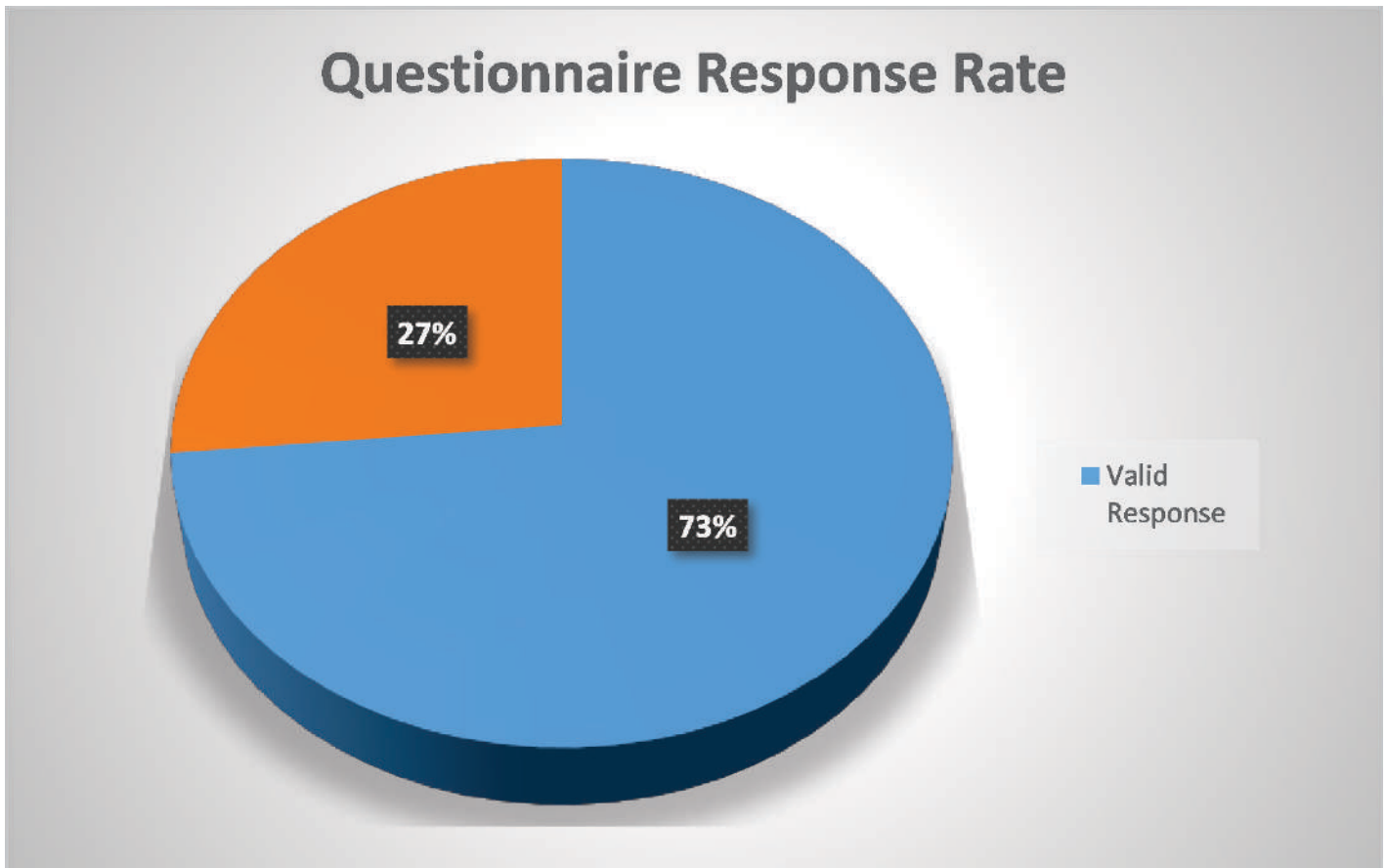


Fig. 4.1 Graphical representation of Respondents based on Response Rate

Note: Data from field survey (2025)

Out of 400 copies of questionnaire distributed, 294 were valid, representing a 73% response rate.

Demographic Representation of Respondents

5.2 Age

Table 5.2 Response Rate of Respondents based on age 43

Age	Count	Percentage
18–25 year	100	34%
26–35 year	148	50%
36–45 year	34	12%
46 and above	12	4%
Total	294	100%

Note. Data from field survey (2025)

The age distribution of respondents shows a strong youth dominance. The majority (84%) of participants fell within the 18–35 age range, indicating that the sample largely reflects Nigeria's digitally active and politically engaged youth population. Only a small proportion (16%) were aged 36 and above, suggesting minimal participation from older demographics.

Fig. 5.2 Graphical Representation of Respondents based on Age

Sex

Table 5.3 Respondents' Gender based on

Gender	Count	Percentage
Female	126	57%
Male	168	43%
Total	294	100%

SexNote. Data from field survey (2025)

Fig. 5.3 Graphical Representation of Respondents based on Sex 45 This distribution suggests a modest gender disparity in the sample, with males being more active or responsive to the study, potentially reflecting broader patterns of Twitter usage or political discourse participation among Nigerian youths. This gender composition impacts the study by providing insights into how male and female youths engage differently with political content on Twitter. While both sexes are significantly represented, the male majority may influence the interpretation of findings related to political engagement trends,

mobilisation efforts, and content interaction during the 2023 general election. However, the substantial female participation also allows for a reasonably balanced analysis of gendered engagement patterns in the digital political sphere.5.3.3 Educational Level Table 5.4 Educational Qualifications of Respondents

Educational Qualification	Count	Percentage
Degree	132	45%
Masters	64	30%
PhD	9	3%
Secondary Education	89	22%
Total	294	100%

Note. Data from field survey (2025)

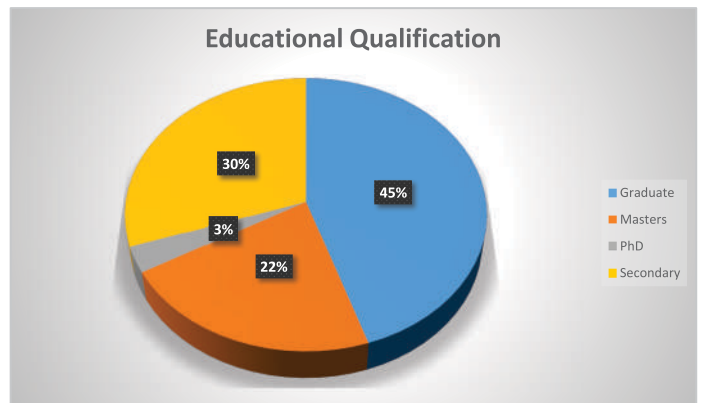


Fig. 4.4. Respondents' Reaction based on Educational Qualification

The table shows that a significant proportion of respondents possess higher educational qualifications, with the majority holding a degree (45%) and postgraduate qualifications (33%). This suggests that the respondents are likely to be well-informed and capable of engaging in political discourse. The presence of respondents with secondary education (22%) also ensures diversity in the sample, allowing for broader insights into political participation across educational levels.

5.3.4 Local Government

Table 5.5 Response Rate of Respondents based on Local Government

Local Government	Count	Percentage
Awka North	83	28%
Awka South	94	32%
Nnewi North	39	13%
Nnewi South	14	5%
Onitsha North	9	3%
Onitsha South	55	19%
Total	294	100

Note. Data from field survey (2025)

Fig. 5.5 Respondents' Reaction based on Local Government

This geographical distribution impacts the study by highlighting regional variations in political engagement via Twitter. The dominance of urban and semi-urban areas, where Internet penetration and digital literacy are typically higher, suggests that the platform's influence on political engagement is stronger in these locales compared to less represented or possibly more rural LGAs.

5.4 Analysis of Survey Results based on the Objectives of the Study.

The survey was developed using a 5 scale Likert scale question which includes key mission to provide suitable responses to the questions being asked in order to achieve the set objective of this study. The responses from the respondents, as presented in the survey,

are ranked from 1, which is strongly disagree, to 5, which is strongly agree.

Interpretation of codes

SA = Strongly Agree (5)

A = Agree (4)

N = Neutral (3)

D = Disagree (2)

SD = Strongly Disagree (1)

5.4.1 Frequency of Twitter Usage among Nigerian Youths for Political Information and Awareness

Table 5.6 Respondents' Response to Question Relating to Objective 1.

S/N	Question	Response Rate				
		SA 5	A 4	N 3	D 2	SD 1
1.	I frequently use Twitter to stay informed about political issues in Nigeria.	103	174	6	0	11
2.	Twitter is one of my primary sources of political information.	152	123	7	7	5
3.	I rely on Twitter to learn about current events related to Nigerian politics.	130	146	5	7	6
4.	Twitter helps me stay updated on political issues affecting my local community.	129	146	4	9	6
5.	I follow accounts on Twitter that regularly post political content.	104	173	8	5	4

Note. Data from field survey (2025)

The responses collected for objective 1 provide insight into how Nigerian youths use Twitter as a source of political awareness during the 2023 general election campaign. Out of 294 respondents, 103 (35.03%) strongly agreed and 174 (59.18%) agreed that they frequently use Twitter to stay informed about political issues in Nigeria, totalling 94.21% who acknowledged Twitter's relevance in their political information routine. Similarly, 152 respondents (51.70%) strongly agreed and 123 (41.84%) agreed that Twitter is one of their primary sources of political information, indicating that 93.54% rely on the platform as a core medium for political content.

When asked whether they rely on Twitter to learn about current events related to Nigerian politics,

276 respondents (93.88%) strongly agreed or agreed. For local issues, 275 respondents (93.54%) also affirmed that Twitter helps them stay updated on political developments in their communities. Furthermore, 277 respondents (94.22%) confirmed they follow Twitter accounts that regularly post political content, showing deliberate engagement with political discourse on the platform.

These findings highlight Twitter as a powerful tool for enhancing political awareness among Nigerian youths. The consistently high percentages across all related questions suggest that Twitter is not only widely used but also plays an integral role in how young Nigerians stay informed and involved in political issues at both national and local levels.

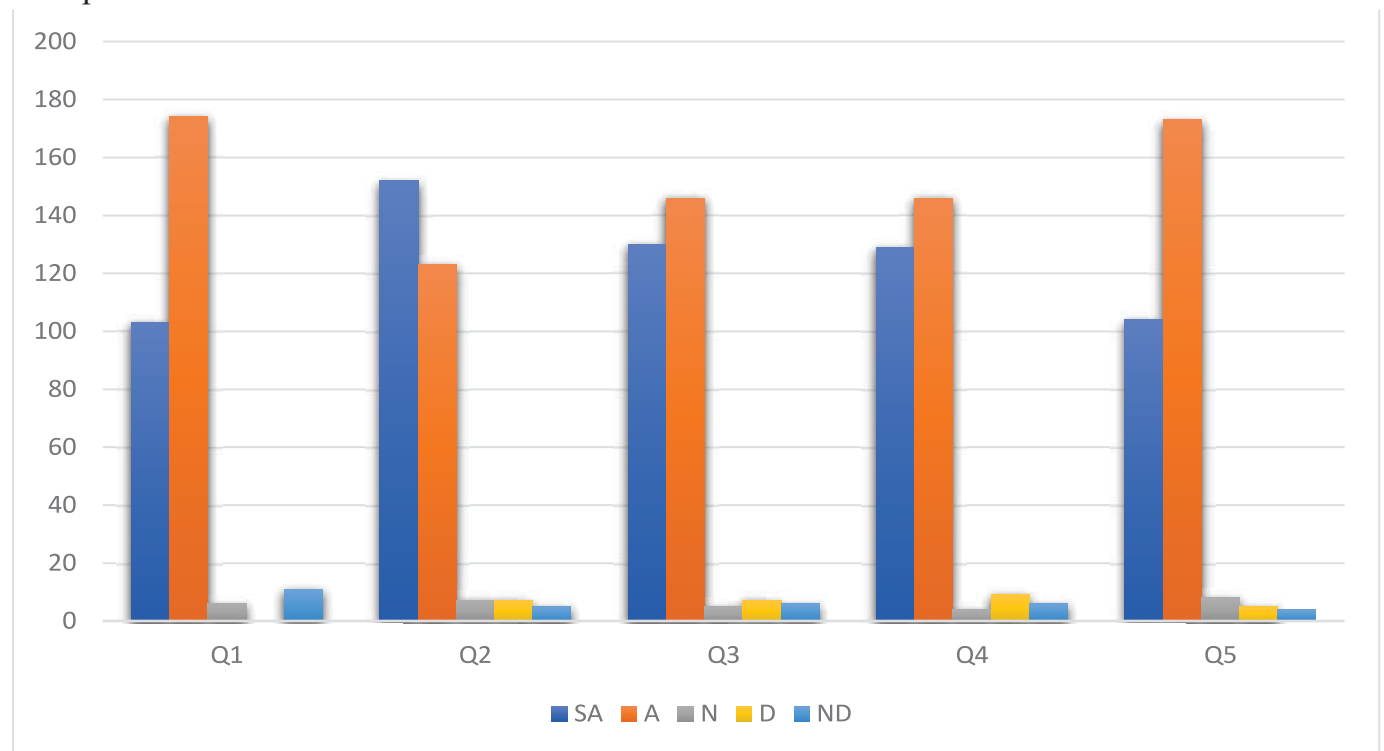


Figure 5.6: Graphical Representation of Table 4.6

5.4.2 Influence of Twitter on Nigerian Youth Political Opinions and Perspectives

Table 5.7 Respondents' Response to Question Relating to Objective 2

S/N	Question	Response Rate				
		SA 5	A 4	N 3	D 2	SD 1
1.	The information I receive on Twitter influences my opinions about Nigerian politics.	80	78	34	9	93
2.	Twitter discussions often shape my views on political matters.	107	61	7	74	45
3.	My perception of Nigerian political leaders is affected by the content I see on Twitter.	126	83	6	40	39
4.	Twitter influences my stance on major political events in Nigeria.	169	89	5	19	12
5.	I believe that Twitter has a significant impact on my perspective on political issues in Nigeria.	168	99	8	11	8

Note. Data from field survey (2025)

The responses collected for Objective 2 shed light on the influence of Twitter on the political opinions and perspectives of Nigerian youths during the 2023 general election campaign period. This objective explores how content and discussions on Twitter shape individual political thought.

For the statement “The information I receive on Twitter influences my opinions about Nigerian politics,” 80 respondents (27.21%) strongly agreed and 78 (26.53%) agreed, while 34 (11.56%) were neutral. However, a

significant 93 respondents (31.63%) disagreed or strongly disagreed, indicating mixed perceptions of Twitter's persuasive power on political opinion.

When asked whether Twitter discussions often shape their views on political matters, 107 (36.39%) strongly agreed and 61 (20.74%) agreed—a combined 57.13%. Meanwhile, 74 (25.17%) disagreed and 45 (15.31%) strongly disagreed, suggesting that although many youths are influenced by discussions on Twitter, a sizable proportion either resist or remain critical of such influence.

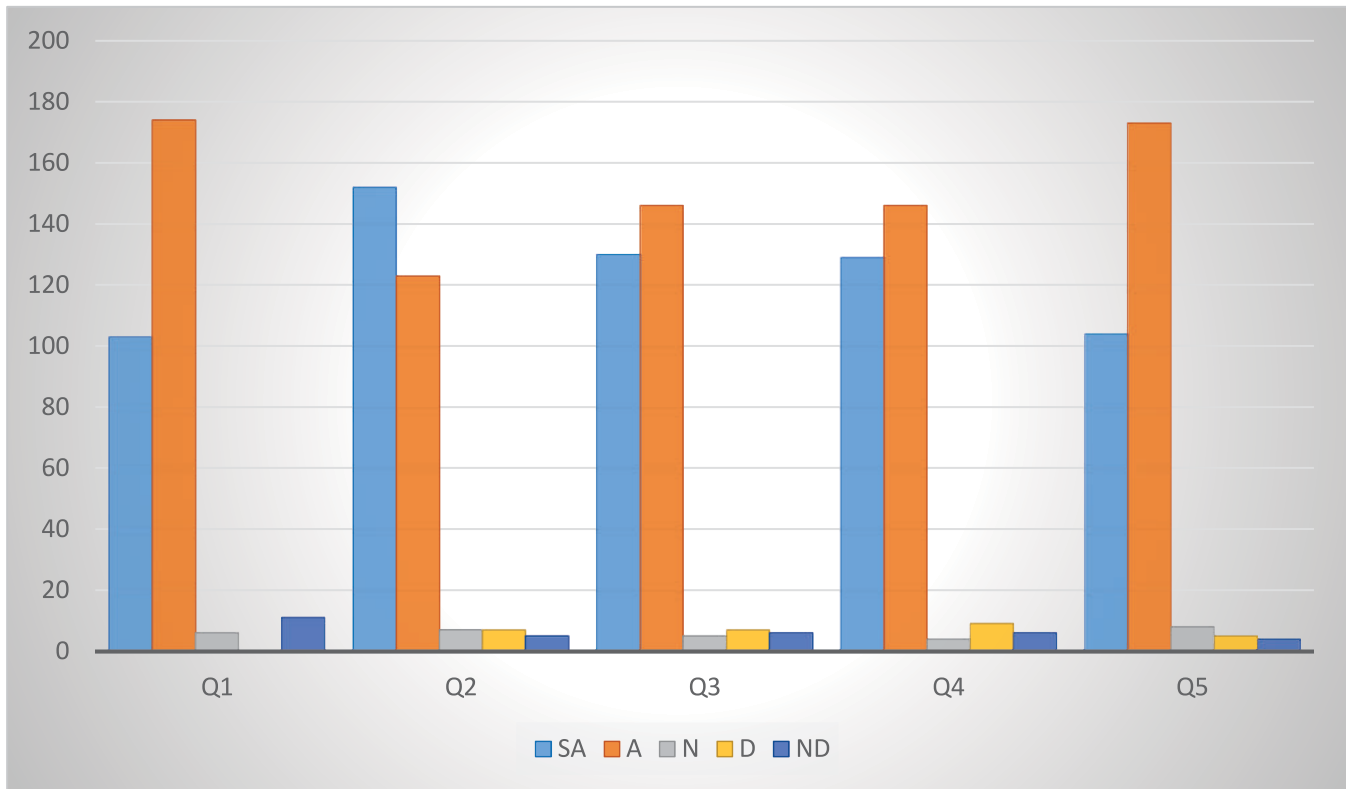


Figure 5.7: Graphical Representation of Table 4.7

5.4.3 Role of Twitter in Facilitating Political Participation and Activism among Nigerian Youth.

Table 5.8. Respondents' Response to Question Relating to Objective 3.

S/N	Question the	Response Rate				
		SA 5	A 4	N 3	D 2	SD 1
1.	Twitter encourages me to participate more actively in political discussions.	84	108	12	28	62
2.	I am more likely to engage in political activities (e.g., protests and campaigns) after seeing them on Twitter.	98	108	10	49	29
3.	Twitter makes it easier for me to connect with others who share my political views.	149	97	10	27	14
4.	I have used Twitter to promote political causes or movements I support.	156	108	8	17	5
5.	Twitter has increased my interest in being involved in Nigerian politics.	174	101	4	12	3

The responses gathered for Objective 3 explore the role of Twitter in facilitating political participation and activism among Nigerian youths during the 2023 general election campaign. This objective focuses on how the platform serves as a medium for civic engagement, mobilisation, and advocacy.

For the first statement (unspecified but related to political participation), 84 respondents (28.57%) strongly agreed and 108 (36.73%) agreed, resulting in a combined 65.30% who acknowledge that

Twitter contributes to their political involvement. Meanwhile, 62 respondents (21.09%) strongly disagreed, suggesting a notable portion do not view Twitter as influential in this regard.

In the second item, 98 (33.33%) strongly agreed and 108 (36.73%) agreed, showing that 70.06% of respondents view Twitter as playing a role in enabling their political activism. However, 49 (16.67%) disagreed and 29 (9.86%) strongly disagreed, reflecting some scepticism or non-involvement in activism via the platform.

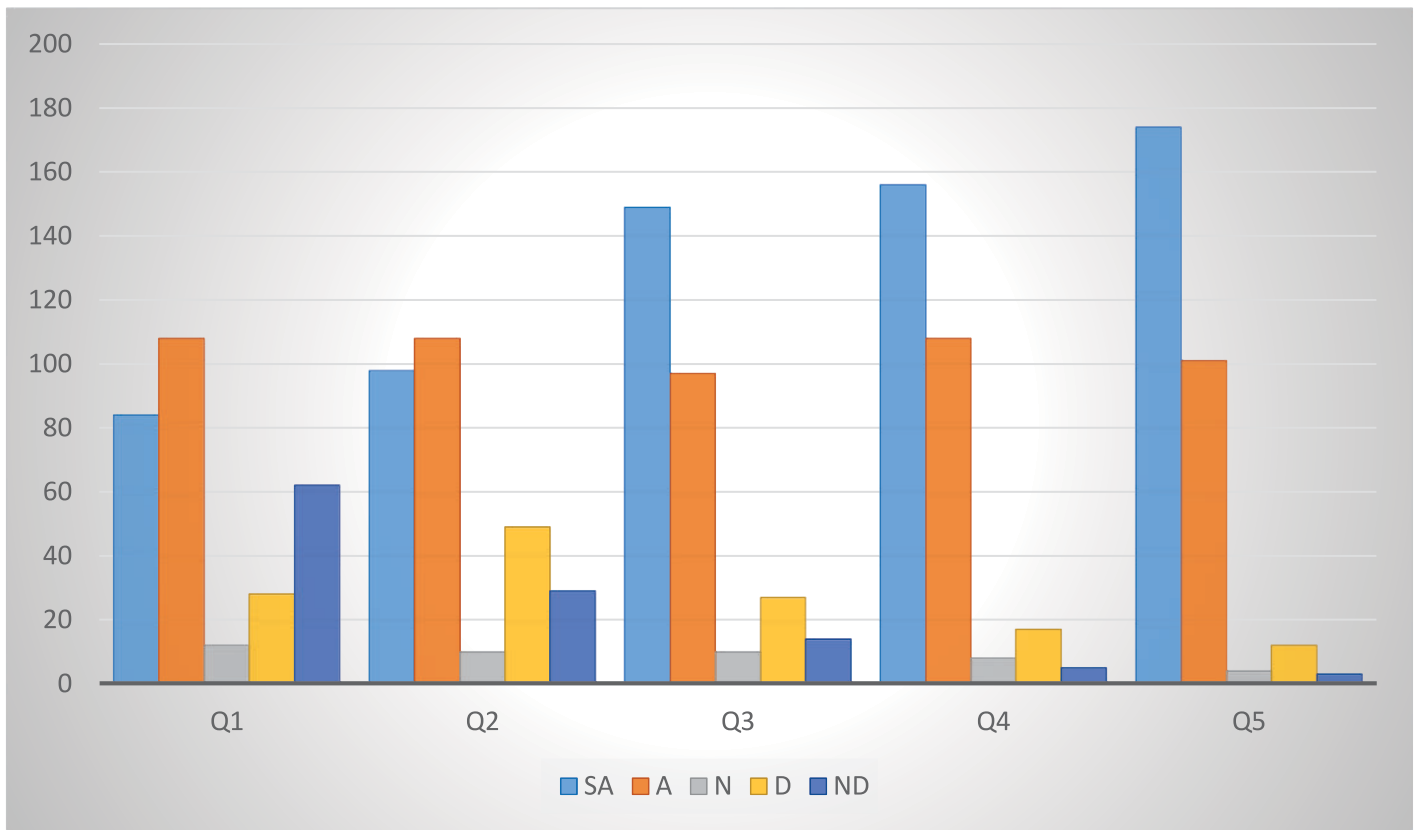


Figure 5.8: Graphical Representation of Table 4.8

5.4.4 Effectiveness of Twitter as a Tool for Political Mobilisation and Advocacy among Nigerian Youth.

Table 5.9. Respondents' Response to Question Relating to Objective 4.

S/N	Question	Response Rate				
		SA 5	A 4	N 3	D 2	SD 1
1.	Twitter is an effective platform for mobilising youth on political issues.	103	143	11	10	27
2.	I believe that political advocacy on Twitter can lead to real change in Nigeria.	147	107	3	24	13
3.	Twitter helps amplify youth voices on political matters that are often overlooked.	141	127	3	14	9
4.	Twitter is an important tool for organising political movements or protests.	151	118	8	12	5
5.	I feel that Twitter empowers Nigerian youth to make a difference in politics.	134	136	10	6	8

Note. Data from field survey (2025)

The responses collected for Objective 4 assess the effectiveness of Twitter as a tool for political mobilisation and advocacy among Nigerian youths during the 2023 general election campaign. This objective focuses on how Twitter empowers young people to act collectively, advocate for change, and influence political outcomes.

For the statement “Twitter is an effective platform for mobilizing youth on political issues,” 103 respondents (35.03%) strongly agreed and 143 (48.64%) agreed, making up a total of 83.67%. Only 37 respondents

(12.59%) disagreed or strongly disagreed, indicating a strong belief in Twitter's capacity to rally youths around political causes.

On whether political advocacy on Twitter can lead to real change in Nigeria, 147 (50.00%) strongly agreed and 107 (36.39%) agreed, totalling 86.39%. This demonstrates substantial confidence in the tangible impact of digital advocacy. Only 12.59% of respondents expressed neutrality or disagreement, suggesting that a majority see Twitter as a catalyst for change.

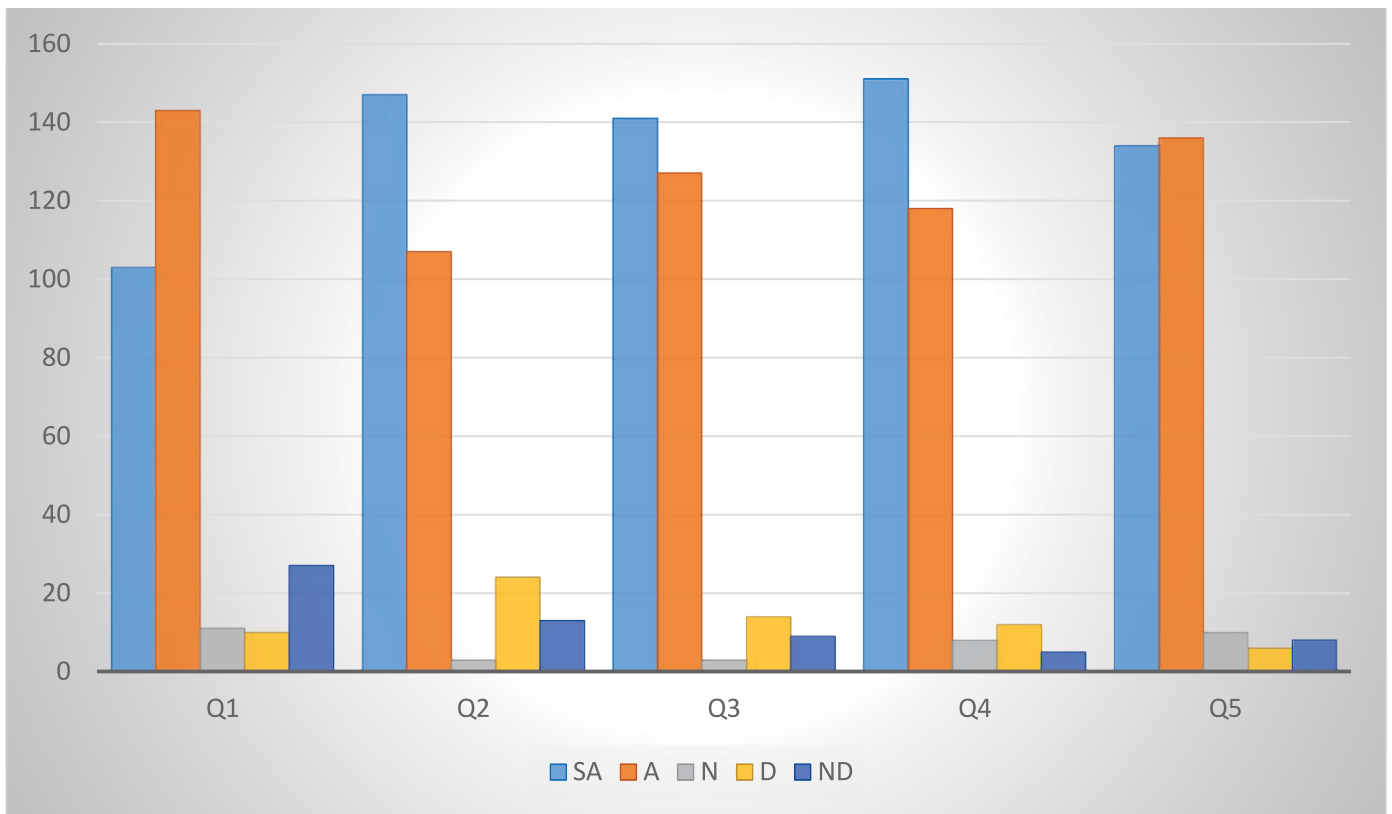


Figure 5.9: Graphical Representation of Respondents' Reaction to Objective 4.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The findings of this study collectively underscore the transformative role that Twitter plays in shaping the political engagement of Nigerian youths, particularly during the 2023 general election.

Synthesising the results across the four objectives reveals a consistent pattern: Twitter is not only a tool for disseminating political information but also a participatory space where political opinions are formed, activism is mobilized, and youth voices are

amplified. The study confirms that Twitter has become a dominant source of political information among Nigerian youths. With over 94% of respondents frequently using the platform to stay informed, this aligns with global trends and supports the theoretical framework of the Uses and Gratification Theory, which posits that users actively seek media content that meets their informational needs. Twitter's real-time nature, interactive design, and accessibility contribute to its effectiveness in enhancing political awareness.

7.0 RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of this study, several key recommendations are proposed to enhance political engagement among Nigerian youths through platforms like Twitter.

1. There is a need for government and electoral bodies, such as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), to formally integrate social media strategies, particularly Twitter, into their voter education and civic awareness campaigns. Given the high levels of youth interaction on the platform, using Twitter as a tool for disseminating electoral information, debunking fake news, and encouraging voter turnout can significantly improve democratic participation.

2. Political parties and candidates should adopt more youth-inclusive communication strategies by maintaining active, transparent, and interactive Twitter accounts. Rather than using the platform solely for propaganda, political actors should engage in genuine dialogue with young voters, listen to their concerns, and respond constructively. This will help build political trust and foster

accountability between elected officials and the electorate.

3. Furthermore, there is a pressing need for digital literacy education. While many youths are politically active on Twitter, their ability to critically assess the credibility of information remains a concern. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs), educational institutions, and media organisations should develop programs to equip young people with skills in media literacy, fact-checking, and responsible digital engagement to combat misinformation and echo chambers.

4. Additionally, civil society organisations and youth advocacy groups should leverage Twitter to sustain political conversations beyond election cycles. Mobilisation efforts should not end with voting but continue with policy monitoring, issue-based campaigns, and governance accountability. Twitter can be used to track campaign promises, demand transparency, and promote continuous civic engagement.

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