

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Educational technology and digital democracy: A case study of social media's influence on undergraduate political engagement in Nigeria

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## ABSTRACT

The study investigated the impact of social media on undergraduate students' political participation in Nigeria. Among younger adults, social media has become a tool that is far more than a mainstream educational technology for supporting social learning and out-of-classroom educational connections, it has been playing a huge role in determining or changing the direction of political discourse. However, while social media platforms have become pivotal spaces for political discourse, their role in fostering or hindering meaningful political engagement among undergraduates remains understudied, particularly in how algorithmic curation and echo chambers might either empower or alienate young citizens in digital democratic processes. Specific objectives of the study include determining the usage of social media and the level of political participation of undergraduate students' within and outside the campus. In addition, the study aims to assess the impact of social media on undergraduate students' political participation and based on the findings, to propose a social media engagement model for student's political participation. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The sample consists of two hundred (200) randomly selected third- and fourth-year undergraduates at a public university in south-west Nigeria. The research instrument was a questionnaire ( $\alpha=0.889$ ). The collected data were analyzed using percentage, mean, and ANOVA. Findings show that WhatsApp was the social media platform mostly used by students (61.5%). Students' level of political participation was found to be moderate (mean = 3.0), while the impact of social media on students' political participation was also moderate (mean = 3.0). there were no significant differences in students' level of political participation within and outside the campus or in the impact of social media on students' political participation within and outside the campus. Social media continues to represent useful tools for promoting political participation and seamless electoral processes, however, its potential to contribute negatively to algorithmic curation and the creation of echo chambers must be addressed to ensure they are empowering rather than alienating younger adults in the digital democratic processes, thereby promoting better politics, and good governance.

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**Keywords:** Digital impact; political engagement; political participation; social media; undergraduate

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## 1. Introduction

Social media has become an essential part of the information society, catalysing democratisation and political development <sup>[1]</sup>. It has taken communication beyond traditional methods, making it an essential part of people's lives and affecting their social, political, and economic activities <sup>[2]</sup>. Social networks have become popular platforms for socializing and interacting with others <sup>[3, 37]</sup>. This change, coupled with the widespread use of the Internet, has also transformed the way public activities are conducted. For example, it has drastically changed how elections and campaigns are conducted and how protests are organised <sup>[4]</sup>.

The rise in social media usage among young people, who are perceived as being more proficient in technology than older generations, has resulted in a higher level of social activities, interactions and behaviours <sup>[5]</sup>. The United Nations has defined youths as people between the ages of 15 and 24 who are also seen as being very critical to the existence, survival, and socio-economic development of nations. In certain parts of the world, the growth in youth population is fast outpacing economic growth, hence, they become essential parts of national development <sup>[6]</sup>. Youths adopt social networking platforms for communication with friends, family members, and the general public <sup>[7]</sup>. Social media platforms provide a multi-way communication channel, which enhances the feedback process and encourages interaction among users <sup>[8]</sup>. Online political activities (e-participation) include writing emails to politicians, visiting politicians' campaign websites, donating money online, electronic campaigns, and electronic voting.

In a study conducted by Soita and Njoroge <sup>[9]</sup>, 72% of American youths (aged 18–29 years) use social networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace. Ojo, Opeloye and Olugbade <sup>[10]</sup> had also reported that undergraduates in Africa are more favourably disposed to social media technologies with usage that can be potentially negative or positive <sup>[11]</sup>.

An additional use of social media is to support the democratisation of knowledge and information, making people both information producers and consumers <sup>[12, 13]</sup>. Through social media, citizens can have the opportunity to engage in and participate in political processes, and monitor and influence government decisions <sup>[14, 15, 16, 17]</sup>. The growing popularity of social media has motivated scholars to explore its role in everyday life and in a democratic society, particularly in facilitating political participation and engagement <sup>[18]</sup>.

Political participation involves the contributions of citizens to the acts, events, or activities that influence the selection of political representatives and their consequent actions <sup>[19]</sup>. This civic activity is a critical part of any democracy as it allows citizens to elect political representatives who make decisions/policies that affect citizens either positively or negatively <sup>[20]</sup>. The benefits of using social media for political participation include granting citizens the opportunity to participate actively and get fully involved in the political discourse by adding their voices to issues posted on social media sites. The platforms also afford electorates a friendlier avenue of assessing candidates for political offices and promoting transparency in governance <sup>[21]</sup>. Social media also offers potential for innovating governance and finding new ways of governing by creating an opportunity to listen to citizens' opinion pools online. However, the use of social media for political participation has its drawbacks, such as misinformation, political harassment, rumours, fake news, propaganda, and trolling <sup>[22]</sup>. Additionally, the use of social media for political participation allows for foreign interference in elections. Despite these challenges, the advantages associated with social media have made political leaders worldwide adopt the platform to

campaign during elections, maintain closeness and transparency with citizens, and mobilise citizens and candidates towards active participation in the political process.

The significance of social media for political participation include granting citizens the opportunity to participate actively and get fully involved in the political discourse by voicing their opinions on issues. The platforms also afford electorates an avenue for assessing candidates for political offices and promoting transparency in governance <sup>[21]</sup>. Social media also offers potential for innovating governance and finding new ways of governing by creating an opportunity to listen to citizens' opinions through online pools.

In Nigeria, social media plays a significant role in political participation as evident during the 2011 and 2015 elections <sup>[23]</sup>. Social media campaigns significantly influenced the electorates' choices of candidates and participation, with many believing that the elected presidential candidates were made popular due to its impact. The Internet and social media are growing in significance for spreading political information, yet they also constitute a growing danger to democracies around the world <sup>[24]</sup>. In some Asian countries such as Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh, the internet plays a crucial role in political dialogues and engagement. Millennials are the most active users of the internet and social media, and online activities related to politics are useful and encourage youth participation in political events. The dual effect of the internet on information and participation in politics is important in gauging political dynamics <sup>[25]</sup>.

The use of social media for political participation however has its drawbacks. Issues such as misinformation, political harassment, rumours, fake news, propaganda, and trolling have been noted <sup>[22]</sup>. Additionally, the use of social media for political participation also opens national systems up to foreign interference in elections. In spite these challenges, the advantages of social media have made its adoption by political leaders a global phenomenon as tools for pre-election campaigns, maintaining closeness and transparency with citizens, and mobilising citizens for active participation in the political process. Undergraduate students represent the highest users of social media in the population, and can therefore exercise great influence on the political process, impacting the course of democracy and governance for good or bad.

The proliferation of social media has also reshaped how undergraduates engage with political discourse, yet its dual potential to democratize participation and entrench polarization remains poorly understood. While digital platforms offer unprecedented access to political information and mobilization tools, algorithmic curation and echo chambers risk fragmenting civic discourse into isolated ideological bubbles. This study investigates how social media's technological affordances and structural limitations shape undergraduate political engagement, addressing a critical gap in educational technology research. By examining how platform design influences exposure to diverse perspectives, information literacy, and participatory behaviours, this work aims to inform strategies for fostering inclusive, critically informed digital citizenship among young adults—a cornerstone of sustainable democratic societies.

Political knowledge, engagement and participation have been reported to differ on the basis of demographic factors including gender <sup>[26]</sup> <sup>[27]</sup> <sup>[28]</sup> and education <sup>[29]</sup>. Older people are found to have less knowledge and interest and participate less in politics than young people <sup>[28]</sup>, indicating an inverse relationship between age and political participation. Findings from a study in Senegal however indicated that 'schooling increases interest in politics and greater support for democratic institutions' <sup>[29]</sup> implying that more educated individuals will be more interested and engaged with politics than less educated persons. The study also found that this happens 'primarily when democracy is threatened, when support for democratic institutions among educated individuals is also greater'. The higher participation noted with higher education and reduced participation based on age thus highlights a conflict in findings. This study will therefore look

further into this phenomenon, assessing whether the impact of social media on undergraduate students' participation in politics within and outside the campus differ based on educational level by assessing the impact of the moderating variable of educational level on undergraduate students' participation.

### *Research Objectives*

The specific objectives and questions addressed in the study include the following:

- i. To determine students' social media usage (Which social media do undergraduates use most?)
- ii. To examine the level and impact of undergraduate students' political participation in and outside the campus (what is the level of undergraduate students' political participation within and outside the university campus?)
- iii. To assess the impact of social media on undergraduate students' political participation (how does social media impact undergraduate students' political participation?)
- iv. To examine the moderating effect of educational level on the impact of social media on undergraduate students' political participation within and outside the university campus.
- v. To propose a social media engagement model for student's political participation.

## **2. Related work**

In the contemporary digital age, social media platforms have emerged as potent tools shaping various aspects of human interaction and behaviour <sup>[5]</sup>. Among the domains experiencing significant transformation due to social media is political engagement, particularly among undergraduate students. This literature review seeks to investigate the intricate relationship between digital democracy and undergraduate political engagement, with a specific focus on the influence of social media <sup>[30]</sup>. By delving into existing research, this review aims to address the objectives of determining students' social media usage, examining the level of undergraduate political participation, and assessing the impact of social media on their political engagement.

Understanding the extent and nature of undergraduate students' social media usage is crucial to comprehending its potential impact on their political engagement. Research by Lim, Molenaar, Brennan, Reid, and McCaffrey <sup>[31]</sup> highlight that social media has become deeply integrated into the daily lives of young individuals, with platforms such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), and Instagram serving as primary sources of information and social interaction. Moreover, studies indicate that undergraduates spend a considerable amount of time on social media platforms, utilising them for various purposes beyond socialising, including accessing news and engaging in political discussions <sup>[32]</sup>.

The level of political participation among undergraduate students, both on and off-campus, is a significant aspect to consider in understanding their engagement with political processes. Research by Alarcón González <sup>[15]</sup>, suggests that traditional forms of political participation, such as voting in elections or attending rallies, have declined among young people in recent years. However, there is evidence to suggest that social media platforms have provided alternative avenues for political engagement, allowing students to participate in activism, advocacy campaigns, and discussions on social and political issues <sup>[16]</sup>.

The impact of social media on undergraduate political participation is a subject of ongoing debate among scholars <sup>[33]</sup>. On one hand, proponents argue that social media enhances political engagement by facilitating greater access to information, promoting political discussion, and mobilising individuals for collective action <sup>[34]</sup>. For example, studies have shown that social media platforms played a crucial role in

mobilising youth movements during political protests, such as the Arab Spring and Occupy Wall Street (2022).

On the other hand, critics contend that social media may contribute to political polarisation, echo chambers, and the spread of misinformation, ultimately undermining meaningful political discourse and civic engagement <sup>[35]</sup>. Additionally, research suggests that while social media may increase awareness of political issues among undergraduates, it does not necessarily translate into tangible offline political participation, such as voting.

The influence of social media on undergraduate political engagement is a multifaceted phenomenon with implications for democracy and civic participation. This literature review has explored the objectives of determining students' social media usage, examining their level of political participation, and assessing the impact of social media on their political engagement. While social media has the potential to empower and mobilise undergraduate students for political action, it also poses challenges such as information overload, filter bubbles, and the spread of disinformation. Future research should continue to investigate these dynamics to better understand the evolving role of social media in shaping democratic processes among young individuals.

### 3. Methods

The study used a descriptive survey design <sup>[36]</sup> which is appropriate for the study because of the nature of the information that is to be obtained. The population comprised all year 3 and year 4 students of the University of Ibadan, Ilesa campus, Nigeria. A sample of two hundred (200) students were selected using stratified random sampling technique with forty (40) students randomly selected from each of five (5) schools (faculties) within the campus, namely School of Arts and Social Sciences, School of Education, School of Languages, School of Science, and School of Vocational and Technical Education.

The research instrument is a 3-section questionnaire. Section A captured the respondents' demographic information while section B featured twelve (12) items that captured information on the level of political participation of students. Section C comprised of eleven (11) items related to the impact of social media on students' political participation. Both sections A and B responses were structured on a 4-point Likert-like scale with responses ranging from Strongly agree [SA], Agree [A], Disagree [D], and Strongly disagree [SD]. The instrument's reliability based on Cronbach's Alpha was 0.825 which indicates that the research instrument is reliable for use in the study.

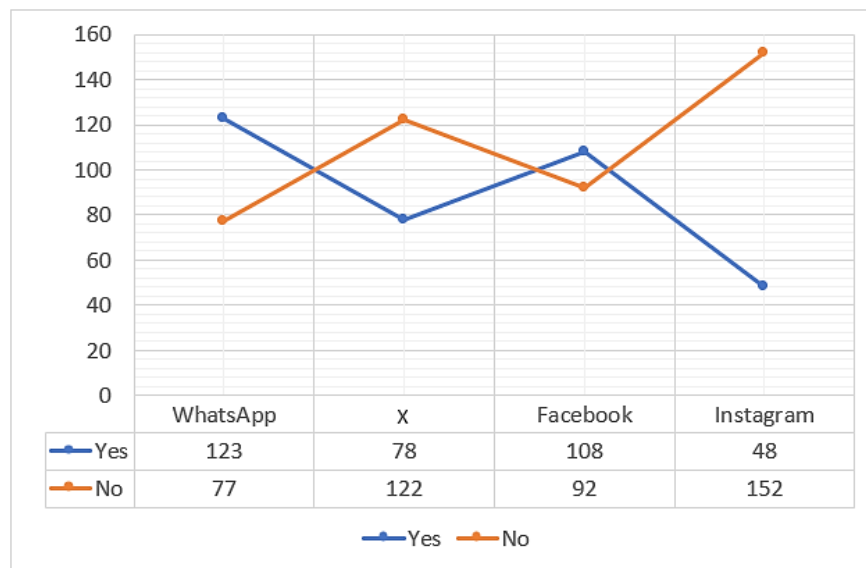
The purpose of the study was stated in the questionnaire and explained to the participants whose consents were duly sought and received while administering the physical questionnaires directly to students at the selected faculties. The completed questionnaires were retrieved from the respondents immediately after completion. Data collected was analysed using IBM SPSS version 25.

### 4. Results

#### 4.1. Social media usage among undergraduates

The various social media accounts operated by the undergraduate students of the university are shown in

**Figure 1.** The Figure shows that most students use WhatsApp (61.5%) and Facebook (54.0%) while fewer numbers use X (39%) and Instagram (24%). WhatsApp, therefore, is the most operated/used social media account by undergraduate students.



**Figure 1.** Social media accounts operated by students

#### 4.2. Level of undergraduate students' political participation within and outside the campus

**Table 1** shows that most students participate in voting during an election (84%), regularly exercise their voting rights (80.5%), got involved in politics-related debates, discussions, and campaigns (78%), are interested in listening to political campaigns/discussions (87.9%), participate in college politics (79.5%), have candidate for a position in Student Union Government (73.5%), always participate in voting for Student Union Government candidate in the school (80%), have been a member of the electoral committee (58%), are interested in helping candidates to canvass for votes during election (73.5%), always provide possible supports for candidate that meet their desire (84.5%), always encourage people to vote for/support their choice candidates (86.5%) and strongly disagree with opposition to their choice candidates (71.5%). The level of political participation of undergraduate students is considered moderate (Mean= 3.0).

**Table 1.** Undergraduate students' political participation within and outside the campus

Statement	SA%	A%	D%	SD%	Mean	SD
I always participate in voting during elections in Nigeria	37.0	47.0	8.5	7.5	3.1	0.9
I regularly use my voting right	31.5	49.0	7.5	12.0	3.0	0.9
I get involved in political-related debates, discussions, and campaign	27.5	50.5	13.0	9.0	3.0	0.9
I am interested in listening to political campaigns/ discussions	41.7	46.2	8.0	4.0	3.3	0.8
I participate in college politics	31.5	48.0	10.5	10.0	3.0	0.9
I have a candidate for a position in the Student Union Government	25.0	48.5	11.5	15.0	2.8	1.0
I always participate in voting for Student Union Government candidates in the school	34.0	46.0	11.0	9.0	3.1	0.9
I am/ have been a member of the election committee	22.0	36.0	21.0	21.0	2.6	1.1
I am interested in helping candidates to canvass for votes during election	29.5	44.0	10.5	16.0	2.9	1.0
I always provide possible support for candidates who meet my desire	43.0	41.5	5.5	10.0	3.2	0.9

Statement	SA%	A%	D%	SD%	Mean	SD
I always encourage people to vote for/ support my choice of candidates	30.2	56.3	7.0	6.5	3.1	0.8
I strongly disagree with opposition to my choice of candidates	30.5	41.0	16.5	12.0	2.9	1.0
Average					3.0	0.925

Table 1. (Continued)

#### 4.2.1. Moderating effect of education

**Ho1: There is no significant difference in student's level of political participation within and outside the campus based on educational level.**

ANOVA of test of differences in undergraduate students' level of political participation within and outside the campus based on their level of education is presented in Table 2. Statistics in the table show that mean scores for year 3 and year 4 students are comparable with year 3 students having a higher score ( $\bar{X} = 36.30$ ) while year 4 students recorded a lower score ( $\bar{X} = 35.38$ ).

**Table 2** shows the difference in undergraduate students' level of political participation in and outside the campus. Statistics in the table show that the mean scores for both 300-level and 400-level students are not so different with 300-level students having a higher score ( $\bar{X} = 36.30$ ) while 400-level students recorded a lower score ( $\bar{X} = 35.38$ ).

Table 2. ANOVA of differences in student's level of political participation within and outside the University by Education Level

Level	N	Mean	SD		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
300	104	36.30	6.664	Between Groups	42.535	1	42.535	.940	.333
400	96	35.38	6.795	Within Groups	8960.260	198	45.254		
Total	200	35.86	6.726		9002.795	199			

This statistic indicates 300-level degree students demonstrated a higher level of political participation in and outside the campus than their 400-level counterparts. ANOVA test of difference of mean however shows no significant difference, implying that difference in educational level for year 3 and 4 students does not moderate the impact of social media on undergraduate students' political participation within and outside the campus,  $F_{(1, 199)} = 0.940$ ,  $p > 0.05$ . The hypothesis is therefore accepted.

#### 4.3. Impact of social media on undergraduate students' political participation

The impact of social media on participants is evaluated based on three (3) broad categories including positive engagements (SA and A), Neutral and non-engagement (SD and D). Table 3 shows that most students are interested in voting online (79.5%), participating in politics (75%) or in debates, discussions, and campaigns (73.5%), criticizing government policies (66.7%), getting involved in political activities (75%). They believe that voting has been influenced by people's thought (70.5%). About three quarters of participants submit that they share their political view/opinion (74.9%) and more admit that read political manifestos (86%) and follow activities (87%) on social media. A higher number of participants get a lot of useful election information through social media (90.4%) and many agree that social media made criticism and evaluation of candidates possible and easy (87.3%).

**Table 3.** Impact of social media on undergraduate students' political participation

Statement	SA%	A%	D%	SD%	Mean	SD
I am always interested in voting online	28.5	51.0	13.0	7.5	3.0	.8
My participation in politics is influenced by social media	26.0	49.0	13.0	12.0	2.9	.9
I participate in debates, discussions, and campaigns on social media	29.0	44.5	18.0	8.5	2.9	.9
I criticize government policies on Social media	31.3	35.4	19.7	13.6	2.8	1.0
I get involved in political activities on social media	33.5	41.5	17.0	8.0	3.0	.9
Deciding on the person to vote for is always influenced by people's thoughts on social media	27.0	43.5	15.5	14.0	2.8	1.0
I share my political views/opinions on social media	30.2	44.7	13.1	12.1	2.9	1.0
I come across/read political manifestos on social media	32.5	53.5	9.5	4.5	3.1	.8
Social media can be used to follow political activities	41.5	45.5	10.5	2.5	3.3	.7
Social media often give people a lot of useful election information about candidates and election	44.2	46.2	6.5	3.0	3.3	.7
Social media make proper criticism and evaluation of candidates possible and easy	33.3	54.0	10.1	2.5	3.2	.7
<b>Average</b>					<b>3.0</b>	<b>.855</b>

The data highlights a significant influence of social media on undergraduate political participation, with high percentages of students agreeing that social media facilitates activities such as accessing political information, sharing views, and engaging in debates. Algorithmic curation plays a critical role here by tailoring content to individual preferences, which can enhance exposure to political information. On the average, social media has a **good** impact ( $\bar{X} = 3.0$ ) on undergraduate students' political participation.

Ho2: There is no significant difference in the impact of social media on students' political participation based on educational level.

**Table 4.** ANOVA of differences in the impact of social media on students' political participation based on educational level

Level	N	Mean	SD		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
300	104	33.83	5.343	Between Groups	70.871	1	70.871	2.201	.140
400	96	32.64	6.012	Within Groups	6375.124	198	32.198		
Total	200	33.26	5.691		6445.995	199			

**Table 4** shows the differences in the impact of social media on undergraduate students' political participation in and outside the campus for year 3 and year 4 students. Mean scores for both year 3 are shown with mean score for year 3 slightly higher ( $\bar{X} = 33.83$ ) than for year 4 students ( $\bar{X} = 32.64$ ). Analysis of variance (ANOVA) performed on the data, however, indicated no significant difference in the impact of social media on students' political participation in and outside the campus based on educational level,  $F_{(1, 199)} = 2.201$ ,  $p(0.140) > 0.05$ . The null hypothesis is therefore accepted.

#### 4.4. Social media engagement model for increased student's political participation

The social media engagement model shown in Figure 2 posits that active usage of social media like WhatsApp, Facebook, X, and Instagram can significantly increase political awareness and participation among undergraduate students. This is because social media exposes students to a diverse range of political content such as news, views, and calls to action from various sources that may not be easily accessible through traditional media. Students can have access, through social media, to engage with peers, superiors,



government agencies, and other information sources with diverse political orientations. This could reinforce political interests and orientation whilst also amplifying shared opinions and advocacy.

The inherently social and viral nature of online engagement enables rapid mobilisation of the relatively more politically conscious youth demography. Consequently, higher social media usage among students would promote increased political awareness and participation. However, effects may vary based on the specific platforms used, content quality/exposure patterns, peer influences, and the prevailing socio-political environment. Systematic social media literacy efforts can optimise positive democratic impacts. Since political actors (using social media influencers) are already in the game, Government through its various agencies could increase students/youths' positive political participation by direct communication (information, education, orientation etc.) via social media handles.

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agencies could increase students/youths' positive political participation by direct communication (information, education, orientation etc.) via social media handles.

The model describes the strategic role of social media as a tool for promoting active political participation in a democracy. It indicates the dynamic impacts of social media on political participation, electoral processes, governance, and the available cloud resources through emerging technologies. Social media could serve as the core medium of information (formal and informal) circulation between the government, political actors, electoral process, and the student population. The informal circulation emanates from leakages while the formal circulations are directly initiated.

## 5. Discussion

The emergence of social media has changed the landscape of political engagement through the enhancement of individuals' participation in political discourse, expression of opinions, and mobilisation around various causes. The aim of this paper was to explore the influence of social media on undergraduate political engagement, with a focus on understanding students' social media usage, examining their level of political participation, and assessing its impact on their engagement both on and off-campus.

### *Determining Students' Social Media Usage*

It is important to understand students' social media usage to foster proper assessment of the impact of the various platforms. This is why <sup>[4]</sup> opined that social media promotes political participation among the digital natives as they use the platforms to for information communication and consumption, political engagement, discussion and expression <sup>[10, 13]</sup>. Research by Lim et al. <sup>[31]</sup> observed that youths use different social media platform for different purposes. A good illustration of this is the use of X for real-time updates and political discussions, while Instagram and TikTok could be better utilised for visual storytelling and political activism. All these are further strengthened by the fact that mobile devices and high-speed internet have made accessibility to social media easier for youths' increase political activities <sup>[3]</sup>.

### *Examining Undergraduate Students' Political Participation*

Students' engagement with political processes could be better understood by assessing their level of participation in politics within and outside the campus. Findings by Kura et al. <sup>[21]</sup> and Alarcón González <sup>[15]</sup> suggest the need to break the grip of traditional political structures to encourage youth participation. Social media platforms provide the means for students' political participation beyond the limits of traditional boundaries such as attending campaign rallies and voting. Diaz Ruiz and Nilsson <sup>[35]</sup>, however, noted that the opportunities provided by social media for students' political participation, could result in misinformation and echo chambers effect. This means that students might only be privileged to listen to information within like-minded communities, which could limit hearing views from varying and opposite sources <sup>[22]</sup>.

### *Assessing the Impact of Social Media on Students' Political Participation*

The social media has impacted students' political participation both positively and negatively. Jennings et al. <sup>[12]</sup> believed that political deliberation and participation have been increasingly promoted by platforms like Facebook and X which enables students' connection with those on the same wavelength, access to diverse views, and engagement in discussions that focuses on pressing political issues. Moreover, as observed by Lee et al. <sup>[33]</sup>, the ease of sharing information on social media allows students to mobilise around causes they care about, amplifying their voices and exerting influence on political agendas. The digital platforms on which social media operates, allows political activism which can shape voting patterns and political outcomes of any nation if permitted to thrive <sup>[34]</sup>.

In conclusion, social media plays a significant role in shaping undergraduate political engagement because it offers both opportunities and challenges. The understanding of students' social media usage, examination of their level of political participation, and the assessment of the impact of these platforms are steps needed to foster a vibrant digital democracy in our world today. While social media provides avenues for students to engage in political discourse, mobilize around causes, and exert influence. However, this same curation may contribute to echo chambers, as students' reliance on social media for deciding whom to vote for (27% strongly agree) or forming opinions (30.2% strongly agree) could limit exposure to diverse perspectives. Thus, while social media promotes engagement, it may also reinforce ideological silos, shaping participation patterns.. In other to address these challenges, concerted efforts are needed from educators, policymakers, and technology experts to promote critical media literacy, foster inclusive dialogue, and safeguard the integrity of democratic processes in the digital age.

## **6. Conclusion, recommendation, and future direction**

This study investigated the effect of access to social media on political participation among undergraduate students. Findings revealed that there is a high level of political participation among the students and showed that social media significantly influences political knowledge. It is recommended that radio stations and other traditional media should take advantage of social media, as that is where electorates, especially young people, are active and because social media is the future of media. If social media-driven campaigns like #Obama, #Arabsprings, #Bring Back Our Girls, #Occupy9ja, and #NextLevel could be used to enlighten and mobilise people, then it is possible to use the internet and social media to boost political knowledge and participation amongst electorates.

The findings further raise questions for examination in future research. Future studies should further explore how media access and political knowledge influence political participation and voting behaviour. The cross-sectional design and self-reported nature of the research may lead to response biases. Generalizing the result might be limited because the study was conducted among undergraduate students.

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of this study.

1. Social media literacy should be promoted to enhance students' critical thinking skills with respect to information received and shared on social media. Educational institutions should integrate social media literacy programs into the curriculum in addition to seminars and workshops on media literacy.
2. Active participation and engagement in politics should be encouraged through initiatives such as organised student-led debates, forums, or workshops on political issues. Also, opportunities for students to volunteer or internship programme with political organizations or campaigns should be facilitated.
3. Since social media was found to have a positive impact on students' political participation, governments and electoral agencies can adopt same to disseminate civic education materials and information about electoral processes.
4. While this study focused on undergraduates in one specific university, future research could explore social media's impact on political participation across different demography and regions. This will provide valuable information about social media influence on political engagement on a broader scale and inform targeted interventions and policies.

5. Universities can collaborate with government agencies, civil society organizations, and media outlets to amplify the impact of their efforts to promote political participation through social media. This synergy will help stakeholders to develop better strategies on the use of social media for democratic governance and civic engagement.

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## Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest

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