

Exploring the Impact of Digital Media on Lagos State Youths' Perception and Attitude towards Political Empowerment

*Omolade Obukohwo Sanni (Ph.D)

Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, Lagos State University

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.90400233>

Received: 31 March 2025; Accepted: 04 April 2025; Published: 07 May 2025

ABSTRACT

Digital media has transformed peoples approach to communication, interaction and engagement with information. Youths, in particular, have embraced digital media, using it to connect with others, share ideas, and access information. However, despite the proliferation of digital media and its emergence as a potential game-changer, offering youths a platform to access information, engage with politics, and mobilize for change; youths still face challenges in accessing accurate political information, engaging in meaningful online political discussions, and mobilizing effectively for political change. This study investigates the impact of digital media on Lagos state youths' perception and attitude towards political empowerment. The, determined the awareness level and how digital media is used for youths political empowerment, and how it influence Lagos state youths' political perception and attitudes. The study is premised on Empowerment theory and Uses and gratification theory which provides a framework for understanding how digital media is used, and the gratification gained by the youths with the potential outcomes produced from the usage of digital media. The study adopts the descriptive research design with survey method using questionnaire as instrument complemented with in-depth interview. The population of the study consist of youths in Lagos state. Multistage sampling technique was adopted in selecting 385 youths from two local governments in Lagos State. The study revealed that majority the youths are aware of digital media platforms used for political empowerment, and have access to information on politics, governance and civic engagement on digital media, but not without the challenges of fake news, misinformation and inadequate infrastructure. Majority of the youths disagreed that the use of digital media provided opportunities for participating in decision making, training and mentorship. The study concludes that usage of digital media platforms for political purposes is important to youths to encourage them to actively engage in political processes to enhance their political empowerment.

Keywords: Digital Media, Youths, Empowerment, Political Participation, Lagos State

INTRODUCTION

With the global youth population at an all-time high and young people spearheading political movements worldwide, amplifying youth's voice and enabling youth to play a meaningful role in politics is essential for establishing robust and inclusive democracies (Power of Dialogue Consortium (PoDC) Report, 2024). The population of youth in Nigeria is 52.2 million (i.e. about 28% of total population), but despite the potentials that this number holds, young people in Nigeria are largely marginalized from governance, leaving them helpless to refute their continued exclusion. This is corroborated by the lower percentage of youth that hold political and leadership positions in the country (Akinyetun, 2021). According to S-Davies (2018), though Nigerian youth are enthusiastically ready to get involved in politics and are more than ever prepared for leadership positions in the country, the political empowerment of Nigerian youths remains a major challenge. Youth political empowerment is a crucial component of democratic governance and sustainable development in nation of the world, and Olufowobi (2018) opines that all that is needed to improve youth participation in politics is an empowering environment.

Youth empowerment in politics refers to the process of enabling young people to participate fully and effectively in the political process, and to have a meaningful impact on decision-making and governance. This involves creating opportunities for youths to develop their skills, knowledge, and confidence to engage in politics and to

take on leadership roles, and this is critical for building a more inclusive, participatory, and representative democracy (UNDP, 2024). Youth empowerment in politics comprises of several key aspects, ranging from political awareness and education, which entails providing youths with information and training on political processes, institutions, and issues. Political parties can ensure that youths have a voice in shaping policies and programs that affect their lives, identify and support young leaders by encouraging youths to take on roles in politics, civil society, and community organisations for leadership development, and ensure representation of diverse youth groups, including those from marginalized or underrepresented communities. According to Levy & Akiva (2019), active participation in national issues helps to develop youths' perception of societal challenges and nurtures their problem-solving abilities, which later on lead to their empowerment. Furthermore, another aspect of youth empowerment in politics includes encouraging youths' political participation and engagement by creating opportunities for youths to participate in political discussions, debates, and decision-making processes through engagement with political leaders on different political forums on the mass media especially on digital media.

The rapid development of information and communication technologies (ICTs) has changed the way people engage with politics, and with the emergence of digital media, the public, particularly the youths are now able to use their online presence to engage in political discussions, mobilize support, and participate in online activism. Digital media has become a crucial tool for youths to access political information, express their opinions, and participate in the democratic process as the role of digital media in shaping the political landscape, particularly among youths, has become increasingly significant in recent years, this study explores the impact of digital media on youths' perception and attitudes towards political empowerment in Lagos State, Nigeria. According to National Bureau Of Statistics (2013, p.11) the National Youth Policy defines youth as a 'Nigerian citizen between the ages of 18 – 35 years', these youths constitute over 60% of the population, making them a critical demographic for political engagement and social change. Lagos State, Nigeria's economic hub, is home to a vibrant youth population increasingly engaged with digital media, which might have a profound impact on youths' perception and attitude towards political empowerment, amplify youth voices, foster political engagement, and drive social change. This study therefore examined the impact of digital media on youths' perception and attitude towards political empowerment in Lagos state.

Statement of the Problem

The advent of digital media has transformed the political landscape, offering new avenues for youth political empowerment. Digital platforms have enabled youths to access information, mobilize, and engage with politics in ways that were previously unimaginable. Digital media has amplified youth voices and provided a platform for political expression, enabling young people to share their thoughts, discuss politics, participate in civic activities, rally around causes that matter to them and mobilize for social change. Despite the growing importance of digital media, many youths in Lagos State remain disengaged from the political process, highlighting the need to understand the factors that influence their political empowerment and the extent to which digital media influences youths' perception and attitude towards political empowerment in Lagos State. Several studies have reported high levels of digital media use among youths in Nigeria (Olasinde 2014, Olayemi, 2022), the impact of digital media on youths' political participation (Omotayo and Folorunso, 2020, Oni, Mohammed, Collins-Dike, and Ridwan, 2024) and role of social media in shaping youths' political opinions and attitudes (Peter and Muth, 2023), however there are still some gaps in the literature and dearth of research on impact of digital media on youths' political empowerment. Therefore the study investigate the impact of digital media on youth perception and attitudes towards political empowerment in Lagos State. This study seeks to contribute to the growing body of research on youth political empowerment in Nigeria.

Research Questions

The research questions that guided the study are as follows:

- i. What is the awareness level of Lagos state youths on digital media platforms used for political empowerment?
- ii. How do Lagos state youths use digital media for political empowerment?

- iii. How do use of digital media for political empowerment influence Lagos state youths' political perception and attitudes?
- iv. What are the challenges faced by Lagos state youths in using digital media for political empowerment?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The media must provide the public with not just regular information, but adequate information on basic rights and entitlements (Sanni and Ojewale, 2013). As nations become increasingly interconnected through globalization and digital communication, youths are no longer seen as inconspicuous spectators in political processes but as active representatives of change who possess the power to influence the direction of their communities and nations (Jisan and Sadia, 2024). Youths bring fresh perspectives, innovative ideas, and a strong desire for change, making their involvement essential for addressing pressing issues such as political exclusion and social inequality. Moreover, fostering an inclusive environment where youths' voices are heard can lead to the development of policies that reflect the diverse needs and aspirations of all citizens. As the world moves toward an increasingly complex political landscape, understanding the dynamics of youth participation and political empowerment becomes paramount. (Jisan and Sadia, 2024).

Digital communication in Nigeria has evolved rapidly over the past two decades, impacting various facets of society, including economic, political and regulatory frameworks. The growth of the internet and mobile telecommunications has transformed how Nigerians communicate, conduct business, and interact with government and institutions. The rise of digital media platforms like social media for example Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok, online forums for example Nairaland and Nigerian Politics Forum; Online communities for example has #NigerianPolitics, and #PoliticsNG, Personal blogs and opinion-based blogs has provided a new medium for political expression among Nigerians and have become vital tools for political communication. A study by (Omotayo and Folorunso, 2020) highlighted that younger Nigerians are more likely to engage with political content online, which influences their political opinions and actions. Digital media platforms facilitate real-time interaction between politicians and the public, allowing leaders to share their messages directly, bypassing traditional media gatekeepers. Political messages can be circulated rapidly, leading to the rise of viral campaigns and movements, shaping political agendas (Plantin and Punathambekar, 2019). Enriched digital communication promotes digital activism (e.g., hashtag movements, online petitions), transforming how citizens advocate for change. This activism can coerce policymakers and change the political landscape. Leaders can employ digital communication platforms to solicit feedback directly from the public, encouraging a more responsive and participatory style of governance, which may lead to more engaged and trusting citizenry (Milakovich, 2012). Politicians can address constituents directly, respond to queries, and hear feedback (Druckman and Lupia, 2016). This reduces the communication gap that often exists in traditional media. The rise of the internet, digital media platforms, and mobile communication tools has reshaped how information is disseminated, how stakeholders engage with one another, and how political processes unfold. The youth in Nigeria, empowered by digital tools, are increasingly active in political discourse. Initiatives like the Digital Rights and Inclusion Forum (DRIF) emphasize the importance of including young voices in policy-making processes, leveraging digital communication for advocacy and participation in governance (Ologunbe and Taiwo, 2025).

Digital media has the potential to increase youths' political engagement, participation and empowerment by providing a platform for information dissemination, discussion and mobilization. Youths regard digital media as a credible medium for political discourse and majority if the youths testified to digital media as making them to become more politically active (Rufai, 2019). The inclusion of youths in formal politics in Nigeria is vital to the political environment, UNDP (2015) report views youths as a positive force for transformative social change, and suggests that the support for the political participation of youths should extend across the electoral cycle by empowering the youths through capacity development which has proven to be effective. The report further suggested that social media, blogs and other online tools can give youths a voice for political engagement and open outlets for direct feedback between government officials and youths. Political parties are encouraged to create space for the youths by removing hindrances to youths' involvement, this can break a cycle of disbelief and mistrust, enabling youths to develop the skills and motivation to successfully interact with political parties.

Their involvement is not only a fundamental democratic right but also essential for fostering stable and peaceful societies. Policies need to reflect the specific needs of younger generations, and for this to happen, young people must be aware of their rights and be equipped with the knowledge and capacity to participate meaningfully in political life, particularly in elections (Camur, 2021).

The Nigerian government instituted various regulatory frameworks to manage digital communication and the internet space, particularly the National Broadband Plan aimed at improving internet access. However, regulations such as the Cybercrimes Act (2015) and the recent Communications Act (2022) raise issues about surveillance, data privacy, and the capability for censorship (Oyinloye et al., 2024). The balance between regulation and innovation is a significant challenge. While the government aims to regulate cybercrime and data breaches, excessive regulation can stifle creativity and empowerment in the digital space. Furthermore, the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) responsible for regulating the telecommunications sector also promote competition, and ensure affordability, however, service providers and consumers still face challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, high service costs, and inconsistent regulation.

However, irrespective of these challenges, Nigerian youth have demonstrated resilience, agency, and an ardent commitment to promoting positive change within their society (Falola & Imafidon, 2021). With Nigeria's youth demographic constituting a considerable portion of the population, their collective voice and actions hold the transformative potential to reshape the direction of the nation's governance and socio-political landscape (Olaniyan, 2020). However, despite their numerical strength and intrinsic potential, Nigerian youth often find themselves marginalized and estranged within the political sphere, facing countless challenges that hinder their political empowerment.

Theoretical Framework

The study is premised on Empowerment theory and Uses and gratification theory. Empowerment Theory (ET) of Zimmerman (2000) is a framework that explains the process of enabling individuals or groups to gain control over their lives, make informed decisions, and take collective action. ET associates the well-being of individuals with the larger social and political environment, and implies that actions, activities or structures may be empowering, and that the aftermath of such processes result in a level of being empowered. The theory focuses on the process of empowering individuals and communities, and the theory help in understanding how digital media empowers young people in Lagos State by making youths have critical awareness and analytical skills. Digital media can enhance youths' ability in understanding their socio-political environment by identifying those with power, resources, and their connection issues of concern and factors that influence their decision making. Their analytical skills can be improved through participation in activities by learning new skills, developing a sense of community and building a sense of control and confidence. ET is relevant to this study because the theory emphasizes the importance of critical thinking and awareness of social and political issues, can enhance young people's skills, knowledge, and self-efficacy and encourage active participation in democratic processes, which can be facilitated by digital media through online engagement and activism.

Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974) is a framework that explains how people use media to satisfy their needs and desires. In the context of this study, UGT can help understand how youths in Lagos State use digital media to satisfy their information needs and desires related to political engagement, socialization, self-expression and political empowerment. This theory is particularly relevant because it explains how young people use digital media platforms (e.g., social media, online forums) for empowerment and the benefits or satisfaction derived from using digital media, such as feeling informed, connected or empowered. By applying UGT, the study can gain insights into the motivations and outcomes of digital media usage among youths in Lagos State, ultimately informing strategies to enhance youths' political empowerment. These two theories complement each other as the Uses and Gratifications Theory explains how digital media is used, and the gratification acquired by the youths while Empowerment Theory explains if the usage of digital media produced potential outcomes. By combining these theories, the study gained a deeper understanding of how digital media influences youth empowerment and political participation.

Empirical Studies

In the study of Rufai (2019), 'The impact of social media on youths level of political participation in the 2019 Nigeria general election', the study examined the believability level of political news Nigerian youths read on social media determined the level of credibility Nigerian youths attach to political messages on social media. Findings from the study revealed that social media did have a positive influence on youths' participation in the political and electoral process, especially the 2019 Nigeria general elections. Youths also regard social media as a credible medium for political discourses and majority also testified to the social media as making them become more politically active.

In the study of Ologunbe and Taiwo (2025) 'The Impact of Digital Communication on Governance, Political Dynamics, and Leadership; A Case Study of the Nigerian People and Process' the study explores the profound impact of digital communication on governance, political dynamics, and leadership within the context of Nigeria. The findings reveal that digital communication significantly enhances transparency and accountability in governance by facilitating real-time feedback and dialogue between citizens and governmental institutions. The study also revealed that social media platforms have emerged as critical grounds for political discourse, mobilization, and activism, enabling citizens to voice their opinions and organize collective actions promptly. Moreover, the research identifies several challenges posed by the increasing dependence on digital communication in political contexts. Misinformation and disinformation campaigns have become rampant, undermining public trust and leading to political polarization. Additionally, issues of digital literacy and access aggravate existing inequalities, as not all demographics can fully participate the digital transformation.

Furthermore, in the study of Jisan and Sadia (2024), 'Youth Participation and Political Empowerment' findings revealed that there are many impediments which work against youth to participate in politics, such as lack of political education, with many youths not provided with sufficient knowledge about political systems, rights, and how they can effectively participate; limited access to resources, with youths from disadvantaged backgrounds often facing problems like inadequate technological access, social networks or even financial means to engage politically. Some other challenges revealed by the study are political apathy, exclusion of youths from mainstream political conversations and decision-making spaces and the absence of youth-friendly platforms where youths can express their views and participate in meaningful discussions.

In the study of Middaugh, Clark and Ballard (2017) 'Digital Media, Participatory Politics, and Positive Youth Development' the authors opined that certain forms of Internet use (such as information seeking, social network site use, media production, and participation in online communities) promote civic engagement and that digital tools play an important role in youth empowerment efforts. Likewise in the study of Tariq and Zeib (2023) 'Political empowerment among young voters: Social media, partisanship and the moderating role of political interest', the findings revealed that political expression was found to be a positive predictor of political empowerment. The study findings also suggest a positive and significant relationship between partisanship of youngsters with their political expression. Furthermore, the results show that political expression in any form increases the likelihood of political empowerment of youngsters.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

The descriptive research design with use of survey method was employed for this study. Survey research allows for a variety of methods to recruit participants, collect data and utilize various methods of instrumentation (Ponto, 2015). In-depth interview was also conducted with some youths and members of youth organisations, and political stakeholders to explore their experiences, perception and challenges in using digital media for political empowerment.

Population of study

The population of the study consisted of youths of Lagos state, which was purposively selected because it was one of the states with the highest number of registered voters with Alimosho and Kosofe local government areas

in Lagos State having the highest and second highest youth participation respectively, in 2023 general elections according to INEC (2023) official data. The population for this study is Lagos State youths with total population of 24.6 million (<https://lagosstate.gov.ng/about-lagos/>).

Sampling size and Sampling technique

The sample size was determined using sample size calculator with confidence interval of 5 at 95% confidence level which gave a total of 385. Multistage sampling was used as the sampling technique. From the purposively selected two local governments areas (LGAs) of Alimosho and Kosofe, simple random sampling using balloting technique was used to select 2 wards each in the two local government namely Egbeda/Alimosho and Ikotun/Ijegan wards in Alimosho LGA and Oworonshoki and Ojota/Ogudu wards in Kosofe LGA in Lagos State. Proportionate sampling was used to determine sample size in each of the LGAs as follows:

Alimosho LGA = 1,953,500 Sample size = 254

Kosofe LGA = 1,010,800 Sample size = 131

Convenience sampling technique was used to select youths from the two local government areas.

Instrument for Data Collection

The study employed questionnaire as the instrument for data collection to draw relevant information from the youths. The youths were informed of the purpose of the research, assured of confidentiality of their identities, and that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty after obtaining their informed consent to participate in the research as respondents. The instrument was subjected to face and content validity; while test retest pilot study was carried out using youths from another local government in the state that is not part of the selected local government areas for the study, but have the same attributes. The result was subjected to Cronbach alpha to determine the reliability coefficient of the instrument at 95% confidence intervals.

Method of Data Collection

A total of three hundred and eighty five (385) copies of the questionnaire were administered and 367 copies were retrieved accounting for 95.3% response rate. 359 copies of questionnaire were properly filled and used for data analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic analysis revealed that out of a total of 359 youths that responded to the survey, gender of respondents were well represented with 47.1% male and 52.9% female. Respondents' age categories were 18 to 22 years (21.4%), 23 to 26 years (25.9%), 27 to 30 years (28.1%) 31-35 years (24.5%). A majority (68.8%) of respondents had at least a tertiary education degree, 11.4% had professional degree and 18.1% had only a primary (basic) or secondary level of education, while 1.7% had No formal education. Majority of the respondents were employed (53.2.8%), 20.1% were in-training and 21.4% were service corps members, while 11.4% were unemployed.

Research Question 1: What is the awareness level of Lagos state youths on digital media platforms used for political empowerment?

Table 1: Awareness Level of Lagos State Youths on Digital Media Platforms Used For Political Empowerment?

Awareness level	Yes	No
Awareness of Digital Media Platforms Used For Political Empowerment	347 96.7%	12 3.3%
Meaning of political empowerment to youths	Yes	No

Ability to participate in political processes like voting, joining political organisations and attending community meetings	342 98.6%	5 1.4%
When individuals or groups are represented in political institutions and decision making bodies	270 77.8%	77 22.2%
When a group has the ability to influence rules, policies and procedures of political institutions	223 64.3%	124 5.7%
Recognition of a group as legitimate political actors	185 53.3%	162 46.7%
Focuses on transforming power relations and promoting social justice	187 53.9%	160 46.1%
Focuses on specific actions to influence governance	183 52.7%	164 47.3%
Attitudes, interests and behaviours related to politics	127 36.6%	220 63.4%
Digital media platforms used by youths for political empowerment	Frequency (N)	Percentage
Social media platforms e.g Whatsapp, X (Twitter), Facebook, TikTok, Instagram	347	100%
Online forums e.g Nairaland (Nigerian online forum), Vanguard News Forum (Nigerian news forum), Nigerian Politics Forum, Premium Times Forum (Politics section)	279	80.4%
Online communities e.g Facebook groups (e.g., "Nigerian Politics", "Politics Nigeria"), Twitter hashtags (e.g., #NigerianPolitics, #PoliticsNG), WhatsApp groups (e.g., "Nigerian Politics Forum")	159	45.8%
Personal blogs and opinion-based blogs	113	32.5%
News websites on politics in Nigeria e.g. ThisDay Live, The Nation Daily Trust, The Cable	307	88.5%
Frequency of use of digital media platform for political empowerment		
Options	Frequency (N)	Percentage
Everyday	67	19.3%
Every alternate days	113	32.6%
Once in a week	91	26.2.9%
Once in two weeks	37	10.7%
Once in a month	32	9.2%
Rarely	7	2.0%
Empowerment to participate in politics through digital media	Yes	No
I feel empowered to participate in politics through use of digital media	204 58.8%	143 41.2%

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 1 implies that majority of the youths are aware of digital media platforms used for political empowerment which they use at least every alternate day. The findings also revealed that majority of the youths know the meaning of political empowerment, with all the respondents utilizing social media for political empowerment, which accounted for the most used digital medium platform, majority of the youths also utilise online forums and online communities on digital media. The least used digital platform was the ‘Personal blogs and opinion-based blogs’. This may be due to the familiarity and constant usage of social media by youths for entertainment and socialisation, which may also involve discussion or sharing of views on politics and political issues in. This findings is supported by comments of interviewees from in-depth interviews, with all the interviewees stating that they use digital media especially social media for political empowerment. Two of the interviewees stated that they use online forums and personal blogs, while one interviewee stated that he utilises only social media and News websites on politics in Nigeria. This findings agrees with several studies of Rufai (2019), Omotayo and Folorunso (2020), and Ologunbe and Taiwo (2025) who opined that digital media is a vital tool for political communication and empowerment.

RQ2: How do youths in Lagos state use digital media for political empowerment?

Table 2: Use of Digital Media by Lagos State Youths for Political Empowerment

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I use digital media to have access to vast amount of information about politics	16 4.6%	95 27.4%	2 0.6%	202 58.2%	32 9.2%
I use digital media to have access to education about politics	22 6.3%	86 24.8%	3 0.9%	208 59.9%	28 8.1%
I use digital media to have access to information about governance	16 4.6%	92 26.5%	5 1.4%	210 60.5%	24 6.9%
I use digital media to have access to information about civic engagement	185.2% 4.6%	89 25.6%	4 1.2%	203 58.5%	33 9.5%
I use digital media to participate in decision making process	42 12.1%	216 62.2%	6 1.7%	71 20.5%	12 3.5%
I use digital media to have access to training and mentorship	31 8.9%	188 54.2%	5 1.4%	115 33.1%	9 2.3%
I use digital media to have access to resources that can build my capacity for political participation	18 5.2%	128 36.9%	4 1.2%	165 47.5%	32 9.2%
I use digital media to have access to resources that can build my capacity for leadership	29 8.4%	123 35.4%	3 0.9%	168 48.4%	24 6.9
I use digital media to meet other youths from diverse backgrounds and identities	4 1.2%	26 7.5%	2 0.6%	269 77.5%	46 13.2%

I use digital media to meet and interact with digital media influencers	35 10.1%	96 27.6%	6 1.7%	190 54.8%	20 5.8%
I use digital media to express my political opinions	13 3.7%	37 10.6%	3 0.9%	265 76.4%	29 8.4%

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 2 implies that digital media is a critical medium for political empowerment as findings revealed that majority of the youths have access to information on politics, governance and civic engagement on digital media. Majority of the youths also have access to resources to build their leadership capacity, meet youths from diverse backgrounds and interact with digital media influencers. However, majority of the youths disagreed to the use of digital media for participating in decision making, training and mentorship, despite the fact that majority of the youths stated that they use the digital media to express their political opinion. The interviewees opined that they all have access to information on politics, governance and civic engagement; and could express their opinions, however, one of the interviewees opined that ‘there is no adequate digital media platform committed for training and mentorship, where one could actively engage in political discourse with politicians and political leaders.’ Another interviewee reiterated ‘that there is no access to adequate digital media platform earmarked for youths to participate in decision making process’ as youths are most of the time alienated when it comes to making decisions in the political sphere’. This study corroborates the study of Middaugh, Clark and Ballard, (2017), Rufai, (2019); and Ologunbe and Taiwo, (2025) which affirms that use of digital media platforms has enabled youths to participate in political discourse and voice their opinions, however findings on youths not being able to participate in decision making process agrees with the study of Jisan and Sadia, (2024), who opined that there is political apathy, exclusion of youths from mainstream political conversations and decision-making spaces and the absence of youth-friendly platforms where youths can express their views and participate in meaningful discussion.

RQ 3: How does the use of digital media for political empowerment impact political opinion and attitudes of youths in Lagos state?

Table 3: How Use of Digital Media impact Political Opinions and Attitudes of Lagos State Youths

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Use of digital media makes me to participate by voting in election	16 4.6%	95 27.4%	2 0.6%	202 58.2%	32 9.2%
Use of digital media makes me to participate in election campaign	15 4.3%	142 40.9%	5 1.4%	169 48.7%	16 4.6%
Use of digital media makes me to volunteer and engage in community activities	18 5.2%	126 36.3%	3 0.9%	178 51.3%	22 6.3%
Use of digital media makes me to engage in community activities	16 4.6%	96 27.7%	5 1.4%	209 60.2%	21 6.1%
Use of digital media makes me to have more knowledge about governance leading to more inclusive and responsive decision making	18 5.2%	203 58.5%	4 1.2%	90 25.9%	32 9.2%

Use of digital media makes me to feel that youths interests and concerns are better represented in politics	27 7.9%	167 48.1%	6 1.7%	142 40.9%	5 1.4%
Use of digital media makes me to feel that youths interests and concerns are better represented in governance	29 8.4%	190 54.8%	5 1.4%	116 33.4%	7 2.0%
Use of digital media makes me to learn more about leadership skills needed for leadership role in politics	19 5.5%	132 38.0%	4 1.2%	166 47.8%	26 7.5%
Use of digital media gives me more confidence needed for leadership role	30 8.6%	123 35.4%	3 0.9%	172 49.6%	19 5.5%
Use of digital media gives me new ideas to address political problems	14 4.0%	94 27.1%	2 0.6%	202 58.2%	35 10.1%
Use of digital media gives me new ideas to address social problems	36 10.4%	95 27.4%	6 1.7%	192 55.3%	18 5.2%
Use of digital media motivates me to mobilize youths for social change	13 3.7%	134 38.6%	3 0.9%	169 48.7%	28 8.1%

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 3 revealed that digital media platforms enabled most of the youths to participate in election campaign, community activities and also voting; gave them new ideas to address political and social problems, and mobilize youths for social change. This implies that most youths are experiencing political empowerment, this collaborates the study of Tariq and Zeib (2023), and the empowerment theory which associates the well-being of individuals with the larger social and political environment, and implies that actions, activities or structures may be empowering, and that the aftermath of such processes result in a level of being empowered, and the uses and gratification theory which explains how young people use digital media platforms (e.g., social media, online forums) for empowerment and the benefits or satisfaction derived from using digital media, such as feeling empowered to participate in voting, election campaign, and community activities; having new ideas to address political and social problems. However a substantial percentage are still of the opinion that they are not experiencing adequate political empowerment as majority disagreed with the use of digital media platform providing more knowledge about governance, and also disagreed that youths interests and concerns are better represented in politics and governance, this corroborates the study of Jisan and Sadia, (2024) which affirms the absence of youth-friendly platforms where youths can express their views and participate in meaningful discussion.

RQ 4: What are the challenges faced by youths in using digital media for political empowerment?

Table 4: Challenges faced by youths in using digital media for political empowerment?

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Digital media spread misinformation about politics which causes confusion	6 1.7%	118 34.0%	2 0.6%	192 55.3%	29 8.4%

There are too many fake news about politics on digital media that leads to mistrust	8 2.3%	105 30.3%	3 0.9%	200 57.6%	31 8.9%
Digital media creates polarisation and echo chambers where I only interact with others who share my views	21 6.1%	172 49.6%	5 1.4%	123 35.4%	26 7.5%
Digital media decrease my critical thinking skills when I have to think of the credibility of the information	24 6.9%	159 45.8%	4 1.2%	141 40.6%	19 5.5%
Digital media decrease my attention span when I have to think of the credibility of the information	13 3.7%	186 53.6%	4 1.2%	129 37.2%	15 4.3%
Digital media are used for online bullying and harassment which dissuades me from actively engaging in online discussions	22 6.3%	112 32.3%	3 0.9%	199 57.3%	11 3.2%
Digital media are used to monitor and track online activities which dissuades me from using digital media for political empowerment	19 5.5%	119 34.3%	5 1.4%	184 53.0%	20 5.8%
Digital media spread disinformation about politics to manipulate public opinion	6 1.7%	121 29.7%	4 1.2%	216 62.2%	18 5.2%
I do not have access to digital media because of lack of digital infrastructure (lack of fast internet) affecting the frequency of use of digital media	29 8.4%	199 57.3%	3 0.9%	109 31.4%	7 2.0%
I don't have adequate skills needed to use digital technology discouraging the use of digital media for empowerment	27 7.8%	197 56.8%	5 1.4%	107 30.8%	11 3.2%

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 4 implies that there are several challenges hindering the youths' political empowerment ranging from fake news, misinformation, disinformation, monitoring and tracking of online activities and also lack of digital infrastructure that is mostly due to low connectivity of internet on mobile networks. All the interviewees corroborated these challenges with one of the interviewee laying emphasis on 'monitoring and tracking of online activities which discourages him from participating actively in online discussion, because he does not want problems with the authorities'. This findings agreed with the studies of Levy & Akiva, (2019), Jisan and Sadia (2024), and Ologunbe and Taiwo (2025) who asserts that misinformation and disinformation campaigns have become rampant, undermining public trust and limited access to resources, often facing problems like inadequate technological access due to low digital literacy, social networks to engage politically thereby hampering their political empowerment.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that usage of digital media platforms for political purposes is important to youths to encourage them to actively engage in political processes to enhance their political empowerment, and contribute to the democratic framework of the state and the nation at large. The study also concludes that identified

challenges needed to be addressed to assure that digital media is used successfully for political purposes aimed at supporting youths' political empowerment in Lagos State.

REFERENCES

1. Akinyetun, T. S. (2021). Youth Political Participation, Good Governance and Social Inclusion in Nigeria: Evidence from Nairaland. *Canadian Journal of Family and Youth*, 3 (2). <https://doi.org/10.29173/cjfy29648> (<https://journals.library.ualberta.ca/cjfy/index.php/cjfy/article/view/29648>)
2. Camur, H. (2021). Barriers to young people's active participation and role of civil society institutions. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. 10.2139/ssrn.1000412
3. Druckman, J.N. and Lupia, A (2016). Preference Change in Competitive Political Environments. *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 19, pp. 13-31,
4. Falola, T., & Imafidon, E. (2021). *Youth and Popular Culture in Africa: Media, Music, and Politics*. New York: Routledge
5. INEC (2023) Youth Participation in Election. <https://www.inecnigeria.org>
6. Jisan B. H. and Sadia A. S. (2024): Youth Participation and Political Empowerment November 2024. *Electronic Research Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*. Vol 6, Issue 4 pg 55 – 65
7. Levy, B. L., & Akiva, T. (2019). Motivating political participation among youth: An analysis of factors related to adolescents' political engagement. *Political Psychology*, 40(5), 1039-1055. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/385891721_Youth_Participation_and_Political_Empowerment
8. Middaugh, E, Lynn Clark, L.S., Ballard, P. J. (2017). Digital Media, Participatory Politics, and Positive Youth Development. *PEDIATRICS* Volume 140, numbers2, November 2017:e20161758. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2016-1758Q> pg 127 - 131
9. Milakovich, M (2012). Digital governance: New technologies for improving public service and participation. *Education Technology*. DOI:10.4324/9780203815991
10. National Bureau Of Statistics (2013). 2012 National Baseline Youth Survey. https://www.nigerianstat.gov.ng/pdfuploads/2102%20National%20Baseline%20Youth%20Survey%20Report_1.pdf
11. Olaniyan, T. (2020). The June 12 Movement and Democratic Transition in Nigeria. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 38(1), 21-36.
12. Olasinde, E. A. (2014). An Analysis of The Influence Of Social Media Sites on Nigerian Undergraduates. *International Policy Brief Series - Education & Science Journal*, Vol. 4 No 1, October 2014, pg. 53 - 65. Retrieved from www.internationalpolicybrief.org
13. Olayemi, M.O. (2022). Perceived Influence of Social Media Usage Among Youth: A Survey. *Open Journal for Information Technology*, 2022, 5(2), 41-54. <https://doi.org/10.32591/coas.ojit.0502.01041o>
14. Ologunbe, John and Taiwo, Ebenezer (12 January 2025): The Impact of Digital Communication on Governance, Political Dynamics, and Leadership; A Case Study of the Nigerian People and Process https://mpira.ub.uni-muenchen.de/123310/1/MPRA_paper_123310.pdf
15. Olufowobi, S. (June 4, 2018). Nigerian youths ready for leadership –Young Alliance. *Punch*. Retrieved from <https://punchng.com/nigerian-youths-ready-for-leadership-young-alliance>
16. Omotayo, F.O and Folorunso, M.B (2020). Use of Social Media for Political Participation by Youths in Oyo State, Nigeria. *JeDEM* 12(1), Pg. 133-158 DOI: 10.29379/jedem.v12i1.585
17. Oni, J.O, Mohammed, I., Collins-Dike, J. and Ridwan, M (2024): Social Media and Political Participation in the 2023 General Election in Lagos State. *Polit Journal: Scientific Journal of Politics*. Vol. 4, No. 2, May 2024, Page: 108 - 122 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33258/polit.v4i2.1151>
18. Oyinloye, O., Oyegoke, N.A., Odion, V.E. and Ojewumi, O.O., 2024. REGULATION, CENSORSHIP AND MEDIA FREEDOM. *African Journal of Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 14(2). <https://journals.aphriapub.com/index.php/AJSBS/article/view/2580>
19. PoDC (2024). The Voice of Youth at the Table. Power of Dialogue (PoD) Consortium. https://nimd.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/POD_report_2024_FINAL-for-export.pdf
20. Peter, C. and Muth, L. (2023). Social Media Influencers' Role in Shaping Political Opinions and Actions of Young Audiences. *Media and Communication* Vol 11, No 3 (2023) <https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v11i3.6750>

21. Plantin, J.C. and Punathambekar, A., 2019. Digital media infrastructures: pipes, platforms, and politics. *Media, culture & society*, 41(2), pp.163-174. Available online at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/016344371881837>
22. Ponto, J. (2015). Understanding and Evaluating Survey Research. *Journal of the Advanced Practitioner in Oncology*, 6, 168-171. <https://doi.org/10.6004/jadpro.2015.6.2.9>
23. Sanni, O. O. & Ojewale, O. C, (2013) "Media Influence in Awareness Creation For Government Development Projects in Lagos State, Nigeria.", *International Journal for Development and Sustainability*, Vol. 2, Issue 2, Pp. 1280 - 1299.
24. S-Davies, Wande (2018): 2019: Nigerian youths more than prepared for leadership —Young Alliance. *Nigerian Tribune*. Retrieved from <https://tribuneonline.ng.com/2019-nigerian-youths-more-than-prepared-for-leadership-%E2%80%95young-alliance/>
25. Tariq, R. & Zeib, F. (2023). Political empowerment among young voters: Social media, partisanship and the moderating role of political interest. *Comunicar*, n. 74, v. XXXI, 2023 *Media Education Research Journal* | ISSN: 1134-3478; e-ISSN: 1988-3478. Pg 95 – 106
26. UNDP (OCT, 2015): Enhancing Youth Political Participation throughout the Electoral Cycle. Pg. 1-76 <https://www.undp.org/publications/enhancing-youth-political-participation-throughout-electoral-cycle>
27. UNDP (2024) Youth empowerment. <https://www.undp.org/governance/youth-empowerment>
28. Zimmerman, M. A. (2000). Empowerment theory: Psychological, organizational, and community levels of analysis. In J. Rappaport & E. Seidman (Eds.), *Handbook of community psychology* (pp. 43–63). Kluwer Academic Publishers. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4615-4193-6_2