

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

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

**Keywords:** Social Media, Elections, INEC, Information, Rigging, Winning.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The potential of every country to develop is determined by how well information is shared. This is because of the fact that understanding is both potent and important for human life. Based on this opinion, Kuusik (2015) claims that information can affect public discourse. In the framework of genuine governance in the public domain, the media may be utilised as an avenue for public knowledge and sensitisation, as well as for influencing government actions (Nwagbara, 2010). The media is an important instrument for raising democratic expectations and resolving conflicts and consequences; the media cannot afford to act poorly, become negligent, or be blind to the public's political and social choices when carrying out its duties. According to Kaur and Kaur (2013), the

early 1990s development of the Internet led to a surge in the number of individuals who are linked to the Internet. A more connected populace has greater availability of information, more opportunities to speak in public, and a higher ability for concerted action. Social network use has become a reality for many people, including a diverse variety of players such as ordinary individuals, activists, nonprofit organisations, telecommunications firms, software suppliers, governmental organisations, and governments at large. Social media has grown to be a significant instrument for citizens to discuss both locally and nationally significant topics. Facebook, X, and YouTube are not merely internet breakthroughs for the twenty-first century but also quickly becoming influential and opinion-forming platforms (Ibid). Social media are a group of Internet-based applications that build on the theoretical and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that enable the creation and exchange of user-generated content," according to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010). A platform for creating social networks is a social networking service. These social network services are web-based, giving users a way to communicate online. Users of social networking sites can communicate with people in their network by sharing thoughts, photos, postings, activities, events, and hobbies.

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

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

The Problem of this study involves determining to what extent their notable performance in the 2023 governorship elections was aided by the internet, social networking, and social media in

particular. Other questions asked of respondents included accurate percentages of responses from young people to the study's questions about networking behaviour, the extent to which social media was used to seek out the political campaign and electoral information, as well as the participant's level of activity in posting information. Election irregularities, fraud, and intervention by incumbent governments utilising federal funding and federal security to thwart the electorate's will in the past were among the most challenging problems that Nigerians had to deal with.

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

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the role of social media in Nigerian elections. However, the specific objectives of the study are to:

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

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide this research:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Social media played no role in Nigerian political awareness and participation in the 2023 governorship elections;

**H<sub>02</sub>:** The coverage of Nigeria's election through social media does not curtail election rigging and fraud.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Since the early 18th century, when the modern press first emerged, it has been observed that writers, politicians, statesmen, academics, and media professionals have assigned the press as an institution with a number of vital tasks (Owoyemi, 2018). This is significant for journalism since it plays a crucial role in the growth and survival of a country. Any country's ability to develop depends on how well knowledge is shared. The rationale is that knowledge is both powerful and necessary for human survival. In light of this, Kuusik (2015) asserts that information has the ability to influence public debate. In the framework of true leadership in the public domain, the media can be utilized as a platform for public knowledge and sensitisation as well as to influence government actions (Nwagbara, 2010). A key weapon for raising democratic expectations and

resolving disputes is the media. As a result, the press cannot afford to act improperly, become careless, or be oblivious to the political and sociocultural preferences of the public when doing its tasks. In support of his claim that "information is power, and the more people enjoy it, the more the power is circulated," Sidney (1975) cites Lipman (1922). He continues by saying that the level of press freedom will decide how well it can play the function of watchdog over how public affairs are conducted.

### **Concept of Social Media**

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

Social media refers to various online tools and platforms that let users publish and share material instantly, building social networks and virtual communities. It provides an interactive space for individuals, organisations, and businesses to communicate, collaborate, and share information (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Social media comprises available platforms and services that allow users to create and share content, as well as engage in social interactions and networking. It provides a space for individuals to express themselves, connect with others, and participate in virtual communities, contributing to the formation of a collective digital culture. Social media encompasses web-based applications and platforms that enable users to interact and communicate with others, sharing content and information across various digital formats. It facilitates the exchange of ideas, opinions, and experiences, contributing to the democratisation of media and fostering global connectivity (Hinton & Hjorth, 2013).

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

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

1. Collaborative projects (for example, Wikipedia)
2. Blogs and Microblogs (for example, X)

3. Content communities (for example, YouTube)
4. Social networking sites (for example, Facebook)
5. Virtual game worlds (for example, World of Warcraft)
6. Virtual social worlds (for example, Second Life)

### **Historical Development of Social Media: A Transformative Journey**

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

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

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

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

**Mobile Revolution and Social Media:** The proliferation of smartphones and mobile internet access in the late 2000s and early 2010s transformed the social media landscape. Platforms like Facebook and X optimised their services for mobile devices, increasing user engagement exponentially (Kwak et al., 2010). Mobile apps such as WhatsApp (2009) and WeChat (2011) revolutionised instant messaging and brought social media closer to users' everyday lives.

**Social Media's Impact on Society:** The historical evolution of social media has profoundly impacted society. It has facilitated information dissemination during political movements such as the Arab Spring (Tufekci & Wilson, 2012) and played a pivotal role in shaping public discourse and political campaigns (Parmelee & Bichard, 2012, p. 12). Furthermore, social media has revolutionised marketing and brand communication, empowering businesses to reach wider audiences and engage with customers in new ways.

Since its early days as an online community, social media has seen considerable changes in its historical evolution. Over the years, social media has developed to play a crucial role in contemporary communication and societal interactions, from the introduction of Web 2.0 to the mobile revolution. By comprehending its historical trajectory, we can better understand the wider implications and potential future developments of this constantly changing phenomenon.

### **Social Media Discovery of Election Rigging Methods in Nigeria**

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

1. INEC recognises non-existent polling places and distributes voting supplies to them.
2. Bribing INEC officials, the police, and security personnel to manipulate the election results.
3. Using partisan party members as poll workers is a practice of INEC.
4. Election materials were diverted to traditional rulers' private offices, homes, and palaces for manipulation and falsification.
5. Voter registration lists containing fictitious identities that are later utilised as ghosts are kept secret or not released.
6. The voter list used at polling places is not numbered, so names can be added at will.
7. Polling places and collation centres move suddenly and without notice.
8. Pre-stuffing ballot boxes with fictitious ballot paper before election day.
9. Stuffing illegal papers into unlawful ballot boxes.
10. Offering pre-filled voting boxes for sale to candidates.
11. Throwing official ballot boxes into rivers and replacing them with freshly loaded ballot boxes obtained from unlawful sources or exchanging official ballot boxes with unofficial ballot boxes carrying unauthorised thumb-printed voting sheets.
12. The addition of unofficial ballot boxes containing already thumb-printed ballots to official ballot boxes.
13. Falsification of results and forgery of figures both at polling units and collation centres.
14. Multiple voting to which INEC officials and the police are indifferent.
15. Voting by minors, to which police officers and INEC officials pay no attention.
16. Using specific ethylated alcohol to remove fingernail "indelible ink" to enable multiple voting.
17. Poll staff applying Vaseline to voters' fingernails before applying the allegedly irremovable ink to facilitate easy cleansing and multiple voting. The ballots are printed by the INEC staff using their thumbs.
18. Security personnel printing ballots using their thumbs.
19. Some domestic observers thumb-printed the ballots.
20. Accumulation and use of voting cards obtained illegally on election days.
21. Use party representatives to examine voter registration forms to encourage voter fraud and multiple voting.
22. Putting party agents in police gear to scare rivals at polling places and centres for data collection.
23. Use of armed thugs to intimidate and threaten opponents and representatives of opposing parties.
24. Terrorizing rivals and representatives of competing parties using police and security personnel.

25. Armed thugs, police, and security personnel are used to coerce party representatives of opposition parties into leaving the polling place.
26. Party members of the ruling parties wear INEC tags on election days to make it easier to move from one collation centre to another and from one polling place to another in order to rig the results.
27. Phony election results sheets with the same numbers as actual results sheets are printed and used.
28. Signing fake election results while holding some party representatives at gunpoint.
29. Illegally soliciting votes at polling places.
30. To cover up the rigging of election results, members of the ruling parties have made bogus claims to be party agents for opposition parties.
31. intimidating and pressuring voters—in some cases, through threat of violence—to support particular parties
32. Agents of recently registered parties are compromised by ruling parties that bribe them.
33. Voters were made fully visible to party agents during the voting process, violating their right to privacy and undermining the legal necessity for secret balloting.
34. Posting erroneous results on its website for online consumption that were consistent with results from the polling places.
35. Posting erroneous results from polling places on INEC's website for internet consumption.
36. Mandate being sold to the highest bidder.
37. Using different fingers to leave imprints on the ballots will make it harder to detect multiple votes.
38. Agents of the ruling parties unlawfully seize ballots from voters who are known to have cast ballots against the party's preference and purposefully invalidate them by adding additional finger impressions.
39. Use of looted public money to bribe voters.
40. Refusing to count and throwing away ballots with thumbprints that belong to unfavourable political parties.

According to conceptual review, the relationship between social media and 2023 governorship election coverage has the following:

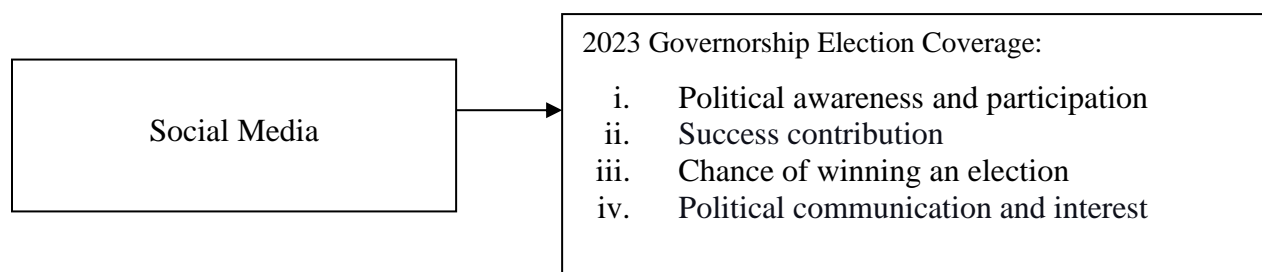
**Table 1: Social Media Coverage on 2023 Nigeria Governorship Election Results /Winners**

STATES	APC	LP	NNPP	PDP	WINNER
<b>Abia</b>	24,091	175,467		88,529	Alex Otti (LP)
Adamawa	975	668	-	9337	Ahmadu Umaru Fintiri(PDP)
<b>A’Ibom</b>	129,602	4,746	12,509	354,348	Umo Eno (PDP)
<b>Bauchi</b>	432,275		60,496	525,280	Bala Mohammed (PDP)
<b>Benue</b>	473,933			223,913	Fr. Hycinth Alia (APC)
<b>Borno</b>	545, 542			82,147	Babagana Zulum(APC)
<b>C’River</b>	258,619	5,957		179,636	Bassey Edet Otu (APC)
<b>Delta</b>	240,229	48,027		350,234	Sheriff Oborevworu (PDP)
<b>Ebonyi</b>	199,131			80,191	Francis Nwifuru (APC)

<b>Enugu</b>	14,575	157,552		160,895	Peter Mbah (PDP)
<b>Gombe</b>	342,82			233,131	Inuwa Yahaya (APC)
<b>Jigawa</b>	618,449	965	37,156	368,726	Umar Namadi (APC)
<b>Kaduna</b>	730,002	58,283	21,405	719,196	Uba Sani (APC)
<b>Kano</b>	890,705		1,019,602	15,957	Abba Yusuf (NNPP)
<b>Katsina</b>	859,892	560	8,263	486,620	Dikko Radda (APC)
<b>Kebbi</b>	409,225			360,940	Nasiru Idris (APC)
<b>Kwara</b>	273,424	1,647	4,398	155,490	Abdulrahman Abdulrazaq (APC)
<b>Lagos</b>	762,134	312,329	1,583	62,449	Babajide Sanwo-Olu (APC)
<b>Nasarawa</b>	347,209			283,016	Abdullahi Sule (APC)
<b>Niger</b>	469,896	3,415	3,378	387,476	Umar Mohammed Bago (APC)
<b>Ogun</b>	276,298		1394	262,383	Dapo Abiodun (APC)
<b>Oyo</b>	256, 685	,500		563, 756	Seyi Makinde (PDP)
<b>Plateau</b>	481,370	60,310		525,299	Caleb Mutfwang (PDP)
<b>Rivers</b>	95,274	22,224	335	302,614	Siminalayi Fubara (PDP)
<b>Sokoto</b>	453,661			404,632	Ahmed Aliyu (APC)
<b>Taraba</b>			202,278	257,926	Col. Kefas Agbu (PDP)
<b>Yobe</b>	317,113			124,259	Mai Mala Buni (APC)
<b>Zamfara</b>	311,976			377,726	Dauda Lawal-Dare (PDP)

**Source: Social Media via Facebook, 2023**

The conceptual model guides this study in line with the conceptual framework. The model focuses on the relationship between social media and 2023 governorship election coverage.



**Independent variable**

**Dependent variables**

Source: The researchers’ fieldwork

**Empirical Review**

Nsikak, Anietie, and Umoh (2023) researched “Social Media as a Tool for Political Marketing in Nigeria: Challenges and Opportunities. Gone are the days when social media were glibly esteemed as inferior imitations of mainstream media”. Social media is no longer just seen as a new platform



for gossip and informal socialising, appealing to only millennials and the generations following them. Social media are now widely used across various industries and have evolved into a vital component of people's survival. This study examines social media's role in Nigerian political campaign marketing. Founded on the Three-stage Model of Political Marketing and the Technological Determinism Theory, the study contextualises the use of social media technologies within the Nigerian political marketing ecosystem to the potential and obstacles. The study used an explanatory and descriptive methodology and heavily relied on library review. It focuses on the unusual potential and challenges of using social media for political marketing in Nigeria and explores and exclusively establishes eleven methods social media are and can be used for political marketing. It concludes there is a connection between the use of social media for political marketing and the backing, endorsing, and/or patronage a candidate, aspirant, or political party receives before, during, and after an election. The paper concludes with five pertinent suggestions meant to solve the issues raised during the investigation.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

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

Again, the method is necessary because it enables the researcher to measure what each respondent knows, likes, and thinks about the topic under study. For the type of survey to be applied, the researcher chooses the descriptive survey method, which allows her to use statistical tools like tables, percentages, and chi-squares to analyse her collected data.

### **Population of the Study**

The study's population is definite, and it includes all registered voters in Enugu State, provided such electorate resides in Enugu. Statistical figures from Enugu State show a total of 2,122,793 registered voters. Therefore, the actual population of the study is 2,122,793. See Table 2.

**Table 2: Population Table**

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

Source: Enugu State INEC Office

### Sampling Technique and sample size

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

### Sample Size

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

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

Where;

n = Sample Size

N = Population

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

1 = Mathematical constant

$n \cong 0.4$

Therefore, the sample size determined for this study is 366 respondents. However, 200 copies, representing 55%, were distributed based on Creswell's (2018) convenience sampling as justified by Bryman (2016).

### Nature of Distribution and Retrieval of Research Instrument

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

**Table 3: Distribution and Retrieval of Instrument**

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

Source: Field survey, 2023.

Table 3 shows that out of the 200 copies of the questionnaire distributed to voters, 176, representing 88%, were retrieved, while 24, representing 12%, were lost. Also, out of the 176 copies retrieved, 24, representing 14%, were incompletely filled and, therefore, discarded. However, 152, representing 86%, were completely filled and found useful for analyses. Thus, further analyses in this study were based on the 152 copies retrieved and found useful.

### **DATA ANALYSIS AND SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

Two hypotheses were tested from the available analysed data. In this section, the two hypotheses were tested using the Simple Regression analysis in SPSS version 21.

#### **Test of Hypothesis One**

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

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

#### **Interpretation**

The R-value in the model summary table shows a simple correlation of 0.936 which shows a very strong positive correlation. The  $R^2$  value shows how much of the total variation in the dependent variable (political awareness and participation) can be explained by the independent variable (social media). The table shows that social media can explain 87.5% of the variation in political awareness and participation. This is equally high. With a sig (p-value) of (0.000), which is less than Alpha (0.05), and a t value of 32.501, the overall regression model, therefore, is a good fit. That is, it statistically predicts the outcome of the variables.

#### **Decision**

Since the p-value (0.000) is less than Alpha (0.05), that is  $0.000 < 0.05$ , and t calculated (32.501) is greater than t tabulated (1.960), we, therefore, reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis which implies that social media played a significant role in Nigerian political awareness and participation in the just concluded 2023 governorship elections.

Table 4 contains the response question on which platform can curtail election rigging and fraud in Nigeria. It was interpreted and utilised in hypothesis two testing.

**Table 5: Responses on which platform can curtail election rigging and fraud in Nigeria**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage %
WhatsApp	92	61
Facebook	44	29
Instagram	7	5
Twitter	6	4
Tick-talk	3	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2024

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

### **Test of Hypothesis Two**

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

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

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

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

### **Conclusion**

The results of the study showed that social media significantly influenced Nigerian political awareness and participation in the recently concluded 2023 governorship election. Additionally, social media helped the Nigerian governorship elections of 2023 run smoothly and successfully. Lastly, voters claim that social media can be used to improve future elections in Nigeria because

it has the potential to lower electoral fraud, lower campaign costs, and enshrine transparency in the electoral process, among other things.

### Recommendations

Against this backdrop, the following recommendations were made:

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

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