

Original Article

# Women's Perception of the Use of Social Media for Political Mobilization during the 2019 Presidential Elections in Nigeria

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**Abstract** - This study aimed to determine women's perception of the use of social media for political mobilization during the 2019 Presidential Elections in Nigeria. The study had six specific objectives that were converted into research questions. A survey research method was used for the study, while a questionnaire was used to elicit data from a sample of 385 women in six capital states representing the six geo-political zones in Nigeria. Findings from the study showed that the majority of the women reported that the most used social media platforms for political mobilization during the 2019 Presidential Elections in Nigeria were Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, YouTube, TikTok and Instagram in that order. The extent of use of social media was found to be high. The most effective social media was found to be YouTube, while the most effective message format was that which combined more than one element. The most preferred message tone was persuasion, while women reported that changes were needed in political messages to incorporate the needs of women. Based on these findings, it was recommended, among others, that social media platforms should continue to be used for the political mobilization and engagement of women for future elections and that messages for political mobilization of women should employ various elements such as texts, videos, audio and pictures.

**Keywords** - Women, Presidential elections, Perception, Social media, Political mobilization.

## 1. Introduction

Political mobilization is one of people's fundamental human rights; hence, it is promoted as a critical requirement for democratic governance. For any country to promote its democracy and ensure that its people continue to have a say in the governments of their countries, political mobilization for political participation needs to be promoted.

The United Nations (2023) Human Rights says that political participation is important for enhancing democratic governance, the promotion of social inclusion and adherence to the basics of the rule of law. It adds further that political mobilization for participation is important for economic prosperity and attaining all other human rights.

Therefore, political mobilization is an essential requirement for the promotion of political participation. People, irrespective of their age, class, gender and social categorization, need to be mobilized so that they will take part in the politics of their countries. Women are particularly important because cultural and religious hindrances limit them. Birnir and Overos (2019) note that although political mobilization is supposed to be on an equal basis, such expectation is hardly achieved because societies are structured in manners that give other individuals and groups more privileges than others.

Women face different limitations to political involvement, among which are cultural practices, religious beliefs, poverty, and low literacy levels, among others. Salehyan and Stewart (2017) aver that women deserve special attention when considering ways of promoting political mobilization for participation in politics because they are highly disadvantaged by how society is configured. The central argument here is that women must be given regard to mobilize them to participate in their countries' politics.

What this means is that women's political mobilization is important so that they will play roles in arriving at decisions that affect them and the generality of society. One of the tools for mobilizing women for political participation is communication. As a tool for women's political mobilization to promote participation, communication is used to build a network of individuals aiming to achieve certain goals. From the perspective of this study, such communication is referred to as political communication. That is the use of communication to achieve political goals.

Political mobilization communication can occur through channels like radio, newspapers, magazines, television and internet-power platforms. Bennett et al. (2008) say that communication is at the heart of political events, and without effective communication, it will be



challenging to carry out political activities. Communication is used to educate, guide, galvanize and create awareness of political events, issues and ideologies.

The emergence of social media platforms has completely changed the scope, nature and approach to political mobilization. Before the advent of social media platforms, political mobilization was done using mainly traditional media and other political events and rallies. Ezeah and Gever (2015) say that there is an emerging trend in political communication whereby social media platforms are increasingly being used as communication channels. Ezeah and Gever add further that social media platforms have become important instruments for political mobilization. Through the instrumentality of social media platforms, women can be educated, informed, and, in the process, mobilized for different political activities like voter registration, political party rallies, voter sensitization programmes, and voting, among several others.

During the 2019 Presidential Elections, social media played a prominent role in mobilizing the masses for political participation. The political atmosphere was charged as a build-up to the election. Although 79 political candidates participated in the 2019 Presidential Elections in Nigeria, the leading candidates were former President Muhammadu Buhari of the All Progressives Congress (APC) and Alhaji Atiku Abubakar of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). The 2019 Presidential Elections were keenly contested, and different political parties engaged in different activities to gain the voters' votes. Ugwuanyi et al. (2022) aver that women were at the centre of the 2019 Presidential Elections because politicians invested their resources to mobilize women to gain the upper hand.

Events leading to the 2019 Presidential Elections also led to the change in political platforms among different political gladiators. For example, as a build-up to that election, the President of the Senate, Bukola Saraki, defected from the All Progressives Congress to the Peoples Democratic Party, Vice President Alhaji Atiku Abubakar defected from the APC to the PDP, former Governor Samuel Ortom of Benue State, defected from the APC to the PDP, for Governor Aminu Tambuwa defected from the APC to the PDP, current Senate President and then-Senate Minority Leader, Godswill Akpabio defected from the PDP to the APC. Ugwuanyi et al. (2022) note that the competition was fierce, such that political groups and cultural and religious associations also joined as they endorsed different political candidates based on their preferences.

Social media became a vehicle to mobilize votes for these various political parties as there are reports that show a high number of Nigerians with social media accounts (Sasu, 2023) and most of them spending a lot of time on these platforms (Kareem, 2023). Based on the above, this study will determine women's perception of using social

media for political mobilization during Nigeria's 2019 Presidential Elections.

## 2. Statement of Problem

Despite the use of social media platforms as part of electioneering during the 2019 Presidential Elections, women's perception of how this led to their political mobilization is unclear. During the 2019 Presidential Elections, social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and WhatsApp were seriously used to educate women and galvanize them to participate in their country's polity. This scenario presents a research problem because of two reasons. Mobilizing women to participate in Nigeria's politics is part of meeting their fundamental human rights.

Their participation will ensure that they contribute to making decisions that affect them. In the second place, such a study will enrich literature related to the role of social media in different areas of human life. In particular, issues that are not clear and deserve scholarly interrogation are the uncertainty about the social media platforms used for political mobilization during the 2019 Presidential Elections in Nigeria, uncertainty on women's perception of the extent of use of social media for political mobilization during the 2019 Presidential Elections in Nigeria, uncertainty on women's perception of the most effective social media platform for political mobilization during the 2019 Presidential Election in Nigeria.

Furthermore, other areas are uncertainty on women's perception of the message formats that were most effective for political mobilization during the 2019 presidential election in Nigeria, uncertainty on women's perception of the most effective message tone in using social media for political mobilization during the 2019 Presidential Elections in Nigeria and finally uncertainty on women's perception of changes that were needed to effectively make use of social media for political mobilization in Nigeria. These issues create a research gap that needs to be bridged. Hence, this study examined women's perception of social media use to mobilize them politically during the 2019 Presidential Elections in Nigeria.

## 3. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were:

1. To determine the social media platforms used for political mobilization during the 2019 Presidential Elections in Nigeria.
2. To examine women's perception of the extent of use of social media for political mobilization during the 2019 Presidential Elections in Nigeria.
3. To investigate women's perception of the most effective social media platform for political mobilization during the 2019 Presidential elections in Nigeria.
4. To assess women's perception of the message formats that were most effective for political mobilization during the 2019 Presidential Elections in Nigeria.
5. To ascertain women's perception of the most effective message tone in using social media for political

mobilization during the 2019 Presidential Elections in Nigeria.

6. To find out women's perception of changes needed to use social media for political mobilization in Nigeria effectively.

#### 4. Conceptual and Literature Review

Political mobilization is the process of encouraging people to participate in political activities, such as voting, attending protests, or contacting their elected representatives. It can be done through various channels, including social media, traditional media, and face-to-face canvassing (Moskalenko & McCauley, 2009). Social media has become an increasingly important tool for political mobilization in recent years. Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram allow users to connect with like-minded individuals and share information about political issues. This can help to raise awareness about important issues, build support for political campaigns, and encourage people to take action.

Social media can be regarded as a useful platform to engage in politics, especially for adult citizens potentially. In the opinion of Robertson (2010), social media has not only helped in political campaigns but has helped the masses in political mobilization. It is very vital for political mobilization, not only in developed countries but also in developing countries like Nigeria. The researcher believes that women, too, particularly in Nigeria, can utilize the communication privileges offered by social media to mobilize themselves politically.

In Africa today, the massive acquisition of social media tools and the establishment of new media technologies have set the platform for self-mobilization towards other networking groups for political and social mobilization Fair (2009). For example, the Committee for Joint Action (CJA) in Ghana was able to mobilize thousands of sympathizers to organize a demonstration to press for the reduction of fuel prices in 2008. Berman (2007), Feltey & Susel (2008), and Walters (2020) argued that citizen involvement in government decision-making improves government performance, decision legitimacy, citizen responsiveness, and trust in direct democracy. At the same time, with effective mass mobilization, citizens become contributors to governance and shareholders in government due to their mediated involvement in the decisions of the state (Roberts, 2004).

Political participation is one of the fundamental ideas of a democratic society. The active involvement of citizens, both male and female, in politics is what gives credence to a political system. It involves a commitment to equal opportunity for men and women to develop their individual capacity and make their presence felt (Agbaje, 1999, cited in Eze Michael 2016). The contemporary Nigerian political atmosphere has been male-dominated ever since the history of Nigerian politics. The marginalization of women in politics is as old as the Nigerian society, predating her independence in 1960. Oluyemi (2016) argues that the underrepresentation of women gained root due to the

patriarchal practice inherent in society. Irabor (2011) adds that Nigeria's democratic culture is majorly characterized by ill factors such as marginalization, manipulation, oppression, rigging lawlessness, assassinations, illegalities, violence, male-dominated party executives, money politics and innumerable social, cultural and religious issues, and all these factors constitute barriers to women aspiring and contesting for elective positions in Nigeria.

This, however, does not mean that women have not fought to contribute their quota to the political and overall development of the nation. Women have been pivotal to the development of Nigeria even before independence. Ngara (2013) avers that Nigeria's pre-colonial atmosphere is replete with the exploit of Queen Amina of Zaria, who led armies to drive out invaders from Zaria, Moremi of Ile-Ife, and others who contributed immensely to the development of their society and left a footprint on the sand of history. Eze-Michael (2016) also notes that women have been involved in politics even before Nigeria gained independence in 1960.

After the country gained independence in 1960, she was under military rule for 29 years. Within this period, there was little or no room for women in politics. The menfolk dominated Nigeria's first republic (1960-1966), the second and third, and the current republics, which spanned from 1979 to 1983 and 1993 to 1999, respectively. The second and third republics recorded a little more women involvement than the first republic. During the Second Republic, two women were appointed Federal Ministers. They were Chief (Mrs.) Janet Akirinade and Mrs Adenike Oyagbola, Minister for Internal Affairs and Minister for National Planning, respectively (Oluyemi, 2016). In 1983, during the Buhari led military regime, the first formal quota system was introduced regarding appointing women into governance.

The federal government directed that at least one female must be appointed as a member of the Executive Council in every state. All the states complied with this directive; some states even had two to three female members, and in the early 1990s, two women were appointed Deputy Governors. These were Alhaja Latifat Okunu and Mrs. Pamela Sadauki of Kaduna State. The highlights of the third republic were the two female Deputy Governors that emerged after the elections, namely Alhaja Sinatu Ojikutu for Lagos State and Mrs. Cecilia Ekpeyong of Cross River State, Mrs. Kofo Buknor Akerele who was the only woman that won a seat in the senate, and Chief (Mrs.) Florence Ita Giwa won a seat in the House of Representatives for the Calabar Constituency.

Nigeria is in its fourth republic, and men still dominate the political space. According to Ajayi (2015), elections and democratic practice in the fourth republic is also characterized by irregularities and ill factors such as electoral practices, political intolerance, economic mismanagement, high level of intimidation, use of political office as the gateway for personal enrichment, political

thuggery and violence, godfatherism, lack of intra party democracy, insecurity, manipulation of religion and ethnicity to achieve selfish ambitions and other countless misdemeanours. These factors constitute some barriers hindering women's participation in politics in Nigeria. Arowolo and Aliko (2010) characterized these factors as "impediments preventing women from actively participating in politics and governance."

Okoro and Santas (2017), however, conducted a survey that appraised the utilization of online media for political communication in the 2011 Nigerian Presidential Election. The study aimed to determine if voter's choice of presidential candidates was influenced by their online media use. 249 respondents were selected through random sampling. The result of the descriptive statistics showed that the majority of the respondent's choice of candidates was influenced because of the massive use of social media to create visibility. The respondents were of the opinion that the selected presidential candidates were popular because they used social media in their campaigns.

The findings further indicated that religious affiliations and ethnicity also influenced voters' choice of candidates. In view of these findings, the study concluded that social media had redefined the landscape of political communication in Nigeria, and it was recommended that it should continue to be used in future elections in Nigeria. It also recommended that the electorate should ensure that they deemphasized ethnic and religious considerations in their voting patterns in future elections and that only credible candidates should be voted into power.

Santas, Asemah and Jumbo (2020) did a study that evaluated the role of the mass media in the mobilization of women for political participation in the 2019 Gubernatorial Election in Nigeria. The rationale for the study was to determine the extent to which the mass media mobilized women for political activities during the 2019 gubernatorial elections in Lafia, Nasarawa State, Nigeria. A survey research method was used for the study, while a questionnaire was used to elicit data from a sample respondent of 385 women in Lafia, Nasarawa State.

Findings from the study indicated that 40.3% of the women were well exposed to media messages geared towards mobilizing them to participate in the election; 37.7% of them affirmed that they received political messages via radio, and 51.9% said they participated to a great extent in the elections. Findings further showed that 58.4% of the respondents were of the opinion that the mass media did not project or give enough coverage to women contestants during the election.

Another study that was reviewed was by Chinedu, Chinonye and Obi (2016). The researchers used a survey research design, sampled 400 participants and collected data using a structured questionnaire. Findings indicated that the political campaigns done using new media significantly affected the electorates' decision-making and participation

in Nigeria's election. The study recommended, just like Okoro and Santas's study, that embracing social media for successive political campaigns enables electorates to interact with political candidates.

Oyesomi and Oyero (2012) conducted a study on newspaper coverage of women's participation in the 2011 General Elections. The study aimed to determine the volume of coverage given by Nigerian newspapers to female candidates as against their male counterparts, the prominence given to the reports on women's participation in the 2011 General Elections and the tone used in reportage. The study found that the Nigerian newspapers, particularly the *Punch* and the *Guardian*, did not give adequate coverage to reportage on women's participation in the election compared to their male counterparts. Out of the 464 stories that were content analyzed by the researcher in the study, only 62 reports were centred on women's participation. The study also revealed that women's participation accounted for a mere 9.1 percent in the General Elections, which comprised Presidential, Gubernatorial and Legislative Elections.

Oyesomi and Oyero (2007) conducted a similar study. They found out that out of the 192 issues from *Punch* and the *Guardian* newspapers that were sampled, giving a total of 432 reports or news items on the 2007 General Elections, *Punch* reported only 23 items on women as against 200 for men, while *Guardian* reported a total of 33 issues on women as against 166 issues reported on men. This shows that for the study period of 8 months (November 2006 – June 2007), Nigerian newspapers reported only 56 issues out of 422 issues on the 2007 General Elections. Thus, coverage of women's political participation in the 2007 General Election was relatively poor.

Nyekwere and Nyekwere (2012) did a study using descriptive survey research design. They revealed that 80% of the respondents, representing 80%, believed that women's failure during elections is not a result of inadequate reportage on female candidates by media houses. In contrast, the remaining 20, representing 20%, believed that women's failure during elections resulted from inadequate reportage on candidates by the media house. Additionally, Adekoya, Akintayo and Adegoke (2015) carried out a study to ascertain the usefulness of radio as a political mobilization tool. The researchers used descriptive survey research, and it was discovered through the collated results that, indeed, radio has a positive impact in mobilizing women to participate in elections. With the right contents, it can become a viable medium in fostering development for women in politics in Nigeria. A lot of improvement can be achieved beyond what is presently obtained using the radio medium.

The study also revealed that there is a strong significance between political programmes and the participation of women in politics because a good number of women listen to both the English and Yoruba political programs, especially the ones transmitted in Yoruba

language on Ogun State Broadcasting Service OGBC 90.5FM Ogun State which was the radio station under study. Akanu (2015) carried out research on the portrayal of women in Nigeria's mass media. The study surveyed how the media in Nigeria portray women and treat issues affecting them.

The study sought to determine if women were misrepresented by the mass media, the causes of the negative portrayal of women by the mass media, the consequences of negative portray of women by the mass media and ways to eradicate stereotypes of women. The study adopted the survey research design, and the questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection. Although the studies reviewed above present different interesting results, limited studies have so far examined women's perception of the use of social media for political mobilization during presidential elections in a developing country like Nigeria. The current study attempted to fill this gap.

**5. Theoretical Framework**

The researcher used constructive perception theory to understand women's perception of the use of social media for political mobilization during the 2019 Presidential Election. Constructive Perception Theory was suggested in 1970 by Richard Gregory. The theory states that people actively construct their perception of the world based on their prior knowledge, expectations, and experiences (Cagli, 2018).

Gregory argued that perception is a process of making inferences about the world based on incomplete and ambiguous sensory information. He also argued that people's prior knowledge and expectations play a major role in how they perceive the world. Constructive perception theory is a complex and controversial theory. However, it has helped explain several phenomena in perception, such as illusions, ambiguous figures, and the role of prior knowledge in perception.

Constructive perception theory is a powerful tool for understanding how people perceive the world around them. The researcher used this theory to understand how women perceive the use of social media for political mobilization during the 2019 Presidential Elections.

This theory is relevant to the study because it is possible that the perception of women regarding the use of social media was influenced by various parameters such as their level of education, occupation or age. It is also possible that their perception was determined by the message tone or format and not just exposure to social media messages during the 2019 Presidential Elections during the election.

**6. Research Methodology**

This study employed the survey research design, having the questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. The population of this study comprised women

ages 18 to 65 from selected capital cities representing the six geo-political zones in Nigeria, which, according to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) 2019, was **9,000,301**. A sample size of 385 was obtained using the Australian Calculator provided by the National Statistical Service (NSS, 2012). Of the 385 copies administered, 354 were returned and found usable. The data analysis was done using 354 figures from the returned number of questionnaires.

**7. Data Presentation and Analysis**

The researcher computed Table 1 to determine the social media platform used most during the 2019 Presidential Elections. The result of the study revealed that Facebook, followed by YouTube, Twitter, WhatsApp and Instagram, was the least used. With 29% of respondents showed that Facebook was most in use.

**Table 1. To determine social media platforms used for political mobilization during the 2019 presidential elections in nigeria**

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook	102	29
WhatsApp	75	21
Twitter	61	17
Instagram	15	4
TikTok	20	6
YouTube	81	23
Total	354	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

**Table 2. To examine women's perception of the extent to which social media was used for political mobilization during the 2019 presidential election in nigeria**

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Very Large Extent	130	37
Large Extent	93	26
Moderate Extent	86	24
Low Extent	45	13
Total	354	100

Source: Field Survey 2023

**Table 3. Women's perception of the most effective social media platform for political mobilization during the 2019 presidential elections in nigeria**

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook	71	20
WhatsApp	77	22
Twitter	63	18
Instagram	12	3
TikTok	20	6
YouTube	111	31
Total	354	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The researcher computed Table 2 to determine the women's perception of the extent to which social media was used for political mobilization during the 2019 presidential elections. The result of the study revealed that more than half of the women (a cumulative of 63%) indicated very large and large extent while only a few indicated low extent. This means that the women perceived that social media platforms were significantly used for political mobilization during the 2023 Presidential Elections.

The researcher computed the table 3 to determine women's perception of the most effective social media platform for political mobilization during the 2019 presidential election in Nigeria. The result of the study revealed the study revealed that YouTube was found to be most effective, followed by WhatsApp and Facebook in that order.

**Table 4. To assess women's perception of the message formats that were most effective for political mobilization during the 2019 presidential election in nigeria**

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Very High Extent	266	75
High Extent	45	13
Moderate Extent	28	8
Low Extent	15	4
Total	354	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The researcher computed the table above to determine the extent to which a combination of more than one message element in social media political message influenced the political mobilization of women during the 2019 Presidential Elections. The researcher found that the majority of the participants, representing 75 and 13%, reported that messages that combined more than one element were effective to a high and very high extent. These elements include texts, audio, illustrations, pictorials and video.

**Table 5. The extent to which message tone on social media influenced women during Nigeria's 2019 presidential election**

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Very High Extent	207	58
High Extent	83	24
Moderate Extent	41	12
Low Extent	23	6
Total	354	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The researcher computed the table above to determine the extent to which message tone influenced the political mobilization of women during the 2019 presidential election in Nigeria. The researcher found that a majority of the participants (a cumulative of 82%) indicated a very high

extent, followed by a high extent. The implication is that the message tone was very effective in mobilizing women during the 2019 presidential election in Nigeria. This also indicates that a lot was done within the period to use social media for women's political mobilization.

**Table 6. The extent women think that changes are needed to make social media more effective for political mobilization**

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Very High Extent	247	70
High Extent	39	11
Moderate Extent	45	13
Low Extent	22	6
Total	354	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The result of the study, as presented in the table above, determined the extent to which women perceived that changes are needed to political advertisements in Nigeria. The study's results revealed that the majority of the women –representative of 70% and 11% indicated very high extent followed by moderate extent and high extent. Very few indicated low extent.

## 8. Discussion of Findings

In the first objective of this study, the researcher determined the perception of women regarding the social media platforms that were used for the mobilization of women during the 2019 presidential election. The study results revealed that the participants reported that the social media platforms used during the 2019 Presidential Elections included Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram and TikTok.

However, the women reported that Facebook was the most used social media platform, followed by YouTube. The result of this study has extended the study of Ugwuanyi et al. (2022), who examined the use of social media during the 2019 presidential elections but did not provide empirical evidence to explain the social media platform used most. The result of this study is consistent with that of Koc-Michalska and Lilleker (2016) and Sircar (2020), who, in their studies, reported that Facebook was one of the most popular social media platforms for political communication. However, they did not link it to women's perceptions of the social media platforms used during presidential elections.

Providing information on the social media platforms used during the 2019 presidential elections has offered empirical evidence that could guide future debates on the current trends in political communication. Such information is also important because the debate on the role of social media in political engagements is an ongoing one; up-to-date information is needed to understand the social media platforms being used. In the study's second objective, the researcher determined the perception of women regarding the extent to which social was used for political

mobilization during the 2019 presidential elections in Nigeria.

The study's result showed that most women reported that social media was used for political mobilization during the 2019 presidential elections to a very large extent. What this means is that women perceived that social media played a crucial role in galvanizing women to be a part of the democratic process. Additional results revealed that the contribution of social media to voter turnout was found to be moderate. Also, women perceived the extent to which social media contributed to their attendance at political rallies was moderate. However, most of the women reported that the extent to which social media contributed to their online political engagement was high.

This study is consistent with the study of Obiechina (2019), who reported that social media play huge roles in promoting citizens' political engagement. The study is also consistent with that of Ugwuanyi et al. (2019), who found that social media largely influenced the participation of women in politics. However, the current study has extended that of Santas et al. (2020), who did not consider other aspects of citizens' involvement, like voter turnout and attendance at rallies. Also, Santas et al. examined the traditional mass media with little attention focused on social media. The additional information provided in the current study is crucial because it could help shape future discourse on the use of social media to promote the integration of women in the body polity. The focus on women in the study is crucial because the current thinking is that more women need to participate in politics to be involved in political decisions on issues that directly affect them.

The third objective was to understand the social media platform that was most effective in mobilizing women during the 2019 presidential election in Nigeria. The study's result revealed that most participants reported that YouTube was the most effective social media platform. The women who took part in the study also reported that social media was effective because of its interactivity. Other reasons that made social media platforms effective included ease of use, the content offered and frequency of use. Additional results revealed that the extent to which women engaged with social media messages during the 2019 presidential election was high.

This study is the extent of Obiechina (2019), who examined the effectiveness of social media platforms for political mobilization but did not pay greater attention to the most effective social media platform. However, the researcher included information on the current study's most effective social media platforms. Such an additional could serve as a guide for political parties and other individuals who may want to use social media for political mobilization. The current study has also extended that of Santas et al. (2020) by including information on reasons social media platforms are effective from the perspective of women. This additional information is essential because it has enriched

literature relating to the use of social media for political mobilization.

In objective four of the study, the researcher examined women's perception of the message formats they perceive as effective for political mobilization during the 2019 presidential election in Nigeria. The researcher found that the majority of the women reported that textual message formats were effective to a moderate extent, video were effective to a high extent, pictures were effective to a very high extent, illustrations were effective to a great extent, and audio messages were effective to a low extent. What this means is that the extent of effectiveness of social media messages was based on the format that was used.

This study is consistent with the study of Cho (2013), who reported that message format is a key factor influencing message content's effectiveness. Meirick and Nisbett (2011) note that as a result of the usefulness of message content, it is essential to consider it and decide on the most effective format to use, considering the target audience. The result of this study has extended that of Cho (2013), who examined the use of social media for political mobilization but did not consider the role that message format plays. Considering message format is important because it will ensure that political messages achieve their goals. The result further showed that the women perceived that the most effective is that which combines more than one element.

The implication is that no one message format is effective enough to be used alone. Therefore, the women perceived combining more than one message element as a sure way to achieve the goal of using social media for political mobilization. This aspect of the findings has shown that for political persuasion on social media to be effective, there is a need to use more than one message format based on the target audience. Another important aspect of the current study is the focus on women. Recently, the argument has been the need to include women in politics as voters, political party office holders, political appointees, and elected political office holders, among others. However, this debate will also need to include the perception of women regarding their mobilization to be a part of their political system and the role that social media platforms play in this process.

The fifth objective of the study is to determine women's perception of the most effective message tone vis-à-vis the use of social media for political mobilization during the 2019 presidential election in Nigeria. The result of the study revealed that 58% of the women reported that message tone was effective in using social media for political mobilization during the 2019 presidential election to a large extent. The result was the type of message tone that influenced mobilization most; the women perceived that the persuasive tone that they tried to convince was more effective. Furthermore, the majority of the participants reported that they ignored the message tone that they hated but commented positively on the message tone that they liked.



This result is consistent with the study of Arceneaux and Nickerson (2009), which reported that message tone determined the audience's reaction to the message. The researchers note that as a result of the centrality of message tone, it is helpful for communication planners to craft their messages in a tone that is not offensive to the target receivers. According to Meirick and Nisbett (2011), the tone of the message is essential in political communication, especially since intense emotions characterize electioneering campaigns.

Political parties and their candidates and supporters are often involved in differing strategies to outsmart their opponents and gain political capital. Because of the emotions that are associated with politicking, people are usually sensitive to political messages. Therefore, the onus lies with those responsible for drafting the message to consider the sensitivities of others and ensure that the message tone does not generate negative reactions. Therefore, by providing empirical evidence on the usefulness of message tone, the current study has extended the literature on the role of social media as a platform for political mobilization.

In the last objective of the study, the researcher determined women's perception of the changes needed to utilize social media for political mobilization effectively. The researcher found that most women perceived those changes as needed to utilize social media for political mobilization effectively. The extent to which such changes are needed was very high as 70% indicated so while 11% indicated high. This means that, cumulatively, 81% indicated a high need to effect changes in the use of social media for political mobilization.

The needed changes include using more than one message element, addressing the needs of women in the messages, using different social media platforms and encouraging women to seek political offices. This study has extended that of Gibson et al. (2005) and Norris (2003), who reported that online platforms have become instrumental to political engagements without exploring areas where improvement is needed.

Additionally, Okoro and Santas (2017) examined the use of social media for political communication during Nigeria's 2011 presidential election but did not examine changes that are needed to make better use of social media for the political mobilization of women. However, in the

current study, the researcher did not just offer information on women's perception of the use of social media for political communication but also explored areas that require changes so that the potential inherent in social media can be fully explored to promote women's participation in the political of their countries. It is not enough to understand the usefulness of social media for political mobilization; care must be taken to understand the areas where changes are needed.

## 9. Conclusion

This study concludes that the perception of women on the use of social media for their mobilization during the 2019 Presidential Election was high and that the most used social media platform was Facebook, but the most effective was YouTube. This study also concluded that social media message formats with different elements were more effective in mobilization, while the preferred message tone was persuasive. The study's findings suggest that it was conducted in unique times when social media has become the mainstay of communication information dissemination in the world.

In view of the findings and conclusion, this study provides the following recommendations;

1. Social media platforms should continue to be used for the political mobilization of women. This is important because the result of the study showed that they are effective in political mobilization and engagements on the Internet.
2. Different message elements should be used in using social media for political mobilization. This is important because the result of the study revealed that messages with different elements (audio, text, videos, pictures, etc.) are more effective.
3. The message tone for using social media for political mobilization should be persuasive. This is important because the result of the study showed that such a message tone is more effective. Negative and attack tones should be avoided. This is because the result of the study revealed that such a tone leads to a negative reaction.
4. Finally, changes should be made to message content for political mobilization to include the needs of women. This is important because the result revealed that the women reported that such changes would make social media messages more effective in promoting the political mobilization of women.

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