

# ROLE OF X (TWITTER) IN FOSTERING POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT AMONG LAGOS STATE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

By

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## ABSTRACT

*In the contemporary landscape of political communication, social media platforms have become indispensable channels for shaping public opinion, mobilizing support, and fostering political engagement. Among these platforms, Twitter stands out as a prominent arena where political discourse flourishes, facilitating communication and interaction among political figures and citizens of a particular country. This study examines the role of twitter in fostering political engagement among Lagos State university students. The Technological Determinism theory served as the theoretical framework of the study, while the Survey Research Method was used and the questionnaire administered via google forms, served as the instrument of data collection. The population of this study comprised of Lagos state university students and the Taro Yamane formula was used to calculate a sample size of 396 respondents for this study. Available sampling technique was used to select respondents who partook in this study. Findings showed that a substantial proportion, constituting (80.1%) of respondents use Twitter for political engagement. Findings also revealed that majority of respondents view Twitter as an effective platform for raising political awareness, holding political leaders and institutions accountable, and organizing and mobilizing for political causes. Based on the findings, the paper recommends the implementation of programs to further enhance students' digital literacy skills, including critical thinking and media literacy, to empower them to navigate political discourse on Twitter effectively.*

**Key Words: Social media, Twitter, Political Engagement, Technological Determinism Theory**

## INTRODUCTION

Effective communication is indispensable for the proper functioning and development of human society (Eyiuche, 2003). One crucial area where communication plays a vital role is political engagement, which according to Ekman and Amna (2012) involves actions or activities undertaken by ordinary citizens to influence political outcomes within the society. In a similar vein, Uzochukwu and Ekwugha (2014) articulates that political engagement ensures that citizens are actively involved in the governing process and remain informed about matters affecting their communities.

It is of great pertinence to note that the perception and involvement of citizens in democratic practices and political engagement are vital for democratic governance, especially in young democracies like Nigeria (Uwalaka, 2021). This is because political engagement not only upholds democracies but also bolsters the credibility of popular governance in

emerging democracies. Actions rooted in political engagement includes; voting in elections, joining political parties, participating in peaceful demonstrations, engaging in civil discourse, and advocating for policy changes (Omene, 2021). These activities empower citizens to influence the decision-making processes of their nation and foster a sense of ownership and responsibility for the direction of their nation's governance.

The best possible way to encourage the political engagement of citizens is through adequate information dissemination, and the means through which political engagement can be actualized is through the media. Supporting this assertion, Falade (2014) connotes that the stability and advancement of a political system rely on the level of awareness and constructive engagement demonstrated by its citizens in civic and political affairs. Further amplifying this stance, Banducci and Semetko (2003) avers that adequate

dissemination of information from the media can facilitate political engagement, leading to a greater likelihood of participating in election and a predisposition towards voting. The positions of the aforementioned scholars bring to the foreground that the media plays a crucial role in fostering political engagement among citizens. By providing accurate and comprehensive information about civic and political issues, the media empowers individuals to make informed decisions and actively participate in the democratic process.

In contemporary times, traditional media, including newspapers, radio, and television, have been utilized to encourage citizen participation in political processes such as elections by disseminating politically oriented information (Omene, 2021). However, the emergence of social media, a digital communication platform, is fundamentally reshaping citizen engagement in politics (Pérez-Martínez et al., 2017). In consonance with this viewpoint, Opeibi (2017) purports that over the years, social media as an emerging form of virtual political interaction has fostered accelerated engagements between politicians and citizens worldwide, notably facilitating more direct channels of communication and diminishing status and communication gaps. Explicating further, Cab (2017) contends that the rising utilization of social media among political parties, advocacy groups, and the general public has created a fresh landscape for communication and interaction. The foregoing accounts for the reason why scholars such as Zappavigna (2013) and Opeibi (2015), argue that social media have facilitated increased interconnectedness among individuals across temporal, spatial, cultural, and political boundaries, thereby fostering political engagement.

Over the years, young adults have often been characterized as disengaged and apathetic towards political engagement (Binder et al., 2021; Loader et al., 2014). However, the advent of social media platforms has emerged as a beacon of hope for fostering youth political engagement (Oser & Boulianne, 2020). Accentuating this position, Goh et al. (2019) notes that social media, in particular, can establish new relationships between political

figures and young adults, facilitate social discourse on political matters, connect individuals, enhance the expression of political opinions, promote equal participation, and generally encourage involvement while also potentially increasing voter turnout and contributing to social cohesion. Therefore, one can assume that the advent of social media can play a pivotal role in reducing the intergenerational gap in political engagement, potentially leading to youth participation in the political landscape.

In the landscape of important social media platforms used for political engagement, X formerly Twitter, occupies a central position (Zappavigna, 2013). Supporting this perspective, Pérez-Martínez et al. (2017) purports that Twitter serves as a channel of communication and interaction among political party activists and citizens utilizing the platform as a means to access information and engage with fellow users. Further amplifying this stance, Graham et al. (2016) asserts that Twitter has rapidly emerged as a crucial online arena for political communication, effectively linking everyday individuals with prominent and influential figures. Additionally, scholars have often argued that the core functionalities of Twitter facilitate a more direct connection between politicians and citizens within a networked setting to foster political engagement (Bruns & Burgess, 2011). The foregoing suggests that Twitter plays a pivotal role in shaping contemporary political discourse by providing a platform for communication, interaction, and information dissemination among political actors, activists, and citizens.

Youths across climes are central to the development of democracy in any society, Nigeria inclusive. This is due to the fact that they constitute a larger percentage of the voting population and possess significant potential to shape the direction of political outcomes (Omene, 2021). Authenticating this position, Opeloyeru (2019) contends that:

Youths are the foundation of a society. Their energies, inventiveness, character, and orientation define the pace of development and security of a nation. Through their creative talents and labour power, a nation makes giant strides in

economic development and sociopolitical attainments. In their dreams and hopes, a nation finds her motivation; on their energies, she builds her vitality and purpose. And because of their dreams and aspirations, the future of a nation is assured (p.3).

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In the contemporary landscape of political communication, social media platforms have become indispensable channels for shaping public opinion, mobilizing support, and fostering political engagement. Among these platforms, Twitter stands out as a prominent arena where political discourse flourishes, facilitating communication and interaction among political figures and citizens of a particular country. However, despite the widespread use of Twitter, the specific mechanisms through which it impacts political awareness, participation, and opinions remain poorly understood.

Apart from constituting the largest percentage of voters, youths are also known to be the most active users of social media, particularly twitter. This formed the bases of this research study which seeks to assess the role of Twitter in fostering political engagement among Lagos State University students.

While previous studies such as Uwalaka (2021), Uche and Chinyere (2020), Opeibi (2019), among others, have examined the role of social media in fostering political engagement, there is a paucity of empirical investigation specifically focused on the role of Twitter in enhancing political engagement. This research aims to address this gap by examining the role of Twitter in fostering political engagement among Lagos State University students.

### RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To assess the extent at which Lagos State University students use Twitter for political engagement.
- To investigate factors that motivate Lagos State University students to use Twitter for political engagement.
- To discover the perceptions of Lagos State University students on Twitter as a tool for political engagement.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- To what extent do Lagos State University students use Twitter for political engagement?
- What are the factors that motivate Lagos State University students to use Twitter for political engagement?
- How do Lagos State University students perceive Twitter as a tool for political engagement?

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### *Social Media and Political Engagement*

Political engagement, commonly referred to as political participation, encompasses actions or endeavors undertaken by ordinary individuals to impact political results within society (Ekman & Amnå, 2012). This encompasses conventional approaches like voting, alongside non-traditional avenues such as participating in online political discourse (Hopmann et al., 2015), and even engaging in political consumerism (Skoric et al., 2016). As outlined by Ekman & Amnå (2012), dimensions of political engagement consist of voting, party affiliation, and activism.

The advent of social media has notably amplified

political engagement worldwide (Arijeniwa & Nwaoboli, 2023), making it challenging to envision political activities within a democratic society without the utilization of these platforms (Zaheer, 2016). Over time, political parties, candidates, and electoral bodies have increasingly embraced social media tools to facilitate their endeavors in reaching broader segments of voters in their comfort zones and at their convenience. This is because social media provides an interactive platform where individuals can freely engage and share content, unlike traditional mass media such as print, broadcast, or outdoor

advertising, which often entail established regulations and limitations (Arijejiwa & Nwaoboli, 2023).

Social media has also paved way for new forms of political engagement and expression (Keating & Melis, 2017). Its rapid evolution has revolutionized the speed and accessibility of communication and information dissemination, significantly impacting political engagement in key ways. According to Scholzman et al. (2012), social media has democratized access to information, thereby reducing the barriers and resources needed to obtain political knowledge. Furthermore, its proliferation has increased the spectrum of available information, facilitating a more inclusive and varied range of viewpoints for citizens. Via social media platforms, Information can now be shared rapidly, widely and easily by anyone, diminishing reliance on traditional media outlets and political institutions for political information (Bimber, 2012; Norris & Inglehart, 2009).

The advent of social media has also empowered

individuals to actively contribute to the dissemination of political information rather than passively consuming it. Through different mechanisms available on social media platforms, individuals can connect with like-minded peers, articulate their viewpoints, and engage directly in their areas of interest. This necessitates active engagement in political issues, enabling individuals to amplify their voices and mobilize around issues that resonate with them (Ekström & Östman, 2015). Even for those who aren't inclined to create content themselves, it's been proposed that online platforms such as social media can enhance political engagement expression (Keating & Melis, 2017). The core idea here is that social media platforms can broaden an individual's access to political content and communal activism through the sharing of news articles and the expression of political viewpoints by friends and family. Consequently, this may stimulate interest in politics, encourage the search for political knowledge, and foster social pressure to participate in political activities or discussions (Theocharis & Quintelier, 2014).

### ***Twitter as a Tool for Political Engagement among Youths***

For decades, scholars have lamented a disparity in political engagement between the younger and older demographics (Matthes, 2022). In tandem with this viewpoint, Quintelier (2007) contends that "in almost every election young people are the least likely to vote, and these participation rates are continuously declining" (p.165). Relating to the Nigerian context, Omene (2021) posits that political participation in Nigeria has been relatively on the down side especially among the largest voting population who are youths. However, the emergence of social media has served as a beacon of hope regarding youths' political engagement (Binder et al. 2021; Oser & Boulianne, 2020). Goh et al. (2019) connotes that social media can provide insurmountable value in establishing relationships between political actors and youths, facilitate interaction about political issues, contribute to social cohesion, as well as boost voter turnout. This implies that the advent of social media platforms has led to a general consensus that the generational political engagement gap may be reduced, and that youths could be reengaged into the political world.

Young people are leveraging social media to reshape political involvement, discovering novel methods to articulate their political preferences beyond conventional boundaries (Keating & Melis, 2017). The adept utilization of social media by youths for political engagement and protests was prominently demonstrated during events like the Arab Spring in the Middle East and North Africa, the Occupy movement in Nigeria, and the 'Indignados' movements in Spain and Greece (Theocharis et al., 2015).

An effective social media platform adopted by youths for engagement and to participate in the democracy of the aforementioned climes was Twitter. Initially introduced in 2006 as a social networking platform primarily for facilitating interpersonal connections among users, Twitter is characterized by its concise message format, allowing users to share short messages via various technologies such as mobile phones, instant messaging clients, and the web (Zappavigna, 2011). Discussing the relevance of Twitter in political engagement, Graham et al. (2016) assert

that it has swiftly evolved into a crucial online arena for political communication by effectively bridging the gap between ordinary individuals and influential figures in society. Its fundamental features serve as a potent tool for establishing a more direct relationship between politicians and young citizens within a specific environment (Bruns & Burgess, 2011).

Twitter has emerged as a potent tool for political engagement among youths, revolutionizing the way young people participate in civic discourse and activism. The platform's accessibility further empowers youths to voice their opinions, share information, and mobilize for various causes, ranging from environmental advocacy to social justice movements. Through hashtags, retweets, and mentions, Twitter facilitates the rapid dissemination of political messages, allowing young people to amplify their voices and connect with like-minded individuals globally (Omene, 2021).

Twitter serves as a virtual town hall where youths can directly engage with politicians, policymakers,

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### ***Technological Determinism Theory***

The Technological Determinism theory, attributed to Marshall McLuhan, posits that the technology prevalent within a society predominantly shapes the pace of its social structure and cultural norms. It suggests that technical advancements, media, or technology as a whole, serve as the primary driver of historical and social transformations. According to this theory, the widespread accessibility of technology inevitably leads to accelerated globalization. Consequently, technological progress and innovation emerge as the primary catalysts for instigating social, economic, or political changes (Omene, 2021).

Nnaane (2023) articulates that the theory core postulation is hinged on the assertion that technology is profoundly influencing how individuals think, feel, and behave, as well as guiding societal transitions between various technological epochs (tribal, literate/print, electronic and digital). Since the social media are products of the digital revolution, communication

and influencers. Politicians recognize the importance of connecting with younger demographics and often utilize Twitter to communicate their platforms, respond to constituents' concerns, and solicit feedback (Opeibi, 2019). This direct interaction fosters a sense of inclusivity and transparency in the political process, empowering youths to hold their elected representatives accountable and advocate for policies that reflect their interests and values.

However, while Twitter offers unprecedented opportunities for political engagement among youths, it also poses challenges such as the spread of misinformation and disinformation. The viral nature of tweets can amplify falsehoods and distortions, leading to the proliferation of fake news and conspiracy theories (Hasan, 2023). Nevertheless, by promoting media literacy, fostering dialogue across ideological divides, and leveraging its democratizing potential, Twitter can continue to empower youths as active participants in shaping the future of governance and democracy.

dynamics among people are undergoing significant shifts. Essentially, technological advancements are catalyzing socio-cultural and political transformations within society. Consequently, the approach of politicians and their parties towards engaging with the public is evolving. It's undeniable that social media, being products of digital technology, now serve as crucial platforms for political engagement between politicians and citizens in a particular theory.

The theory is of great relevance to this study as it charts a framework to understand how Twitter as a technological platform, influences the political engagement of students. It suggests that Twitter's unique features and affordances, such as its real-time communication, character limit, and ease of information dissemination, inherently shape how students interact with political content and engage in the current political landscape.



## REVIEW OF EMPIRICAL STUDIES

Opeibi (2019) examined the growing awareness of Twitter for election campaigns and political engagement between 2012 and 2015. The Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) and Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis served as the theoretical framework used in the study, while qualitative content analysis served as the research method. Findings from the study revealed that Twitter plays a pivotal role in influencing political engagement during election period in Nigeria. The study recommended consistent utilization of Twitter and other social media platforms to facilitate political engagement in Nigeria.

Uwalaka (2021), investigated the influence of social media usage and protest involvement on political participation and efficacy formation among Nigerian students. The researcher employed a sequential explanatory mixed-method research design, comprising a paper survey with 680 face-to-face responses and 34 semi-structured qualitative interviews with university students in Nigeria. Results from the study demonstrated a notable reliance on social media as a means of political engagement in Nigeria. Drawing from these findings, the study concludes that the utilization of social media can serve as an effective tool to enhance political participation among citizens.

Nnaane (2014) examined the impact of social media on political engagement with the electorate during the 2015 presidential election campaign in Nigeria. The study was framed within the Public Sphere and Technological Determinism theories, employing the Survey research method. Utilizing a

multistage sampling technique, states across the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria were selected, with a total of 2304 respondents sampled for the study. Results from the research indicated a significant increase in social media engagement during the 2015 elections, as voters utilized their social media platforms to assess the two main candidates on key campaign issues such as corruption, security, education, healthcare, and infrastructure, among others. The study recommended that political parties should enlist marketing communication experts to manage their social media accounts, thereby preventing political engagement on social media from deteriorating into personal attacks, as observed during the campaign period.

Eze & Obono (2018) explored the impact of the Internet on the political involvement of youth in the Ikeja Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria. The study was guided by the Technological Determinism theory and employed a mixed-method approach, integrating both surveys and in-depth interviews. Employing a multistage sampling technique, the researchers distributed questionnaires to 600 youths residing in the Ikeja Local Government Area of Lagos State. Results from the study indicated that prolonged internet usage among youths correlated with increased political participation. Based on these findings, the researchers suggested that governments and political parties should engage youth more effectively on political issues through the Internet and endeavor to make internet access more affordable.

## METHODOLOGY

This research employed a descriptive survey research design, utilizing a survey method to facilitate the selection of a sample representative of the entire study population. Data collection was conducted through a questionnaire administered via Google Forms to respondents selected for the study. The study population is comprised of students of Lagos State University, which according to (<https://lasu.edu.ng/home/page/?id=about>) is

estimated to be 43,362 students. In the light of the above figure, the Taro Yamane formula was used to arrive at a sample size of three hundred and ninety-six (396) respondents with a confidence level of 95%, a 5% margin of error, and likelihood response rate of 100%. Available sampling technique was used to select respondents who partook in this study.



## RESULTS

The analysis presented below covered data sourced through the use of an online survey administered on students of Lagos State University. A sample size of 396 respondents was gotten, however, the researchers got a total of 357 responses to the questionnaires administered via google forms. Hence, the data presentation is based on the number of retrieved responses.

**Table 1: Demographic data**

Demographic Characteristics	Lagos State University Students (n=357)	
	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	154	43.1%
Female	203	56.9%
Age Bracket		
16-20	128	35.9%
21-25	159	44.5%
26-30	54	15.1%
30 and above	16	4.5%
Religion		
Christian	209	58.5%
Muslim	148	41.5%
Others	0	0%
Marital Status		
Single	286	80.1%
Married	64	18%
Divorced	3	0.8%
Separated	4	1.1%
Widowed	0	0%

**Source: Survey, 2023**

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Gender distribution indicates a slight majority of female students. Age-wise, a substantial proportion of respondents fall within the 21-25 age brackets, with a considerable portion

also in the 16-20 range. In terms of religion, the data revealed that more Christians participated in the study. Regarding marital status, the vast majority of students are single, with a smaller proportion being married, divorced, separated, or widowed.

**Table 2: To what extent do Lagos State University students use Twitter for political engagement?**

Items	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Do you use twitter for political engagement?	Yes	286	80.1%
	No	71	19.9%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>100%</b>
How frequently do you use Twitter for political engagement?	Never	71	19.9%
	Rarely	16	4.5%
	Occasionally	24	6.7%
	Often	145	40.6
	Very Often	101	28.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>100%</b>
To what extent do you use Twitter for political engagement?	Very Large Extent	103	28.8%
	Large Extent	127	35.6%
	Moderate Extent	56	15.7%
	No Extent	71	19.9%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Survey, 2023

Table 2 showcases the utilization of Twitter for political engagement among Lagos State University students. Predominantly, the data from the table above reveals a substantial inclination towards using the platform for political purposes, with majority of respondents affirming their engagement. Among these respondents, varying frequencies of usage were reported, with a significant proportion expressing regular involvement, particularly through "often" and "very Often" categories. Furthermore, when

considering the extent of their engagement, a notable majority indicated a substantial engagement, with a majority of the respondents reporting a "large extent" and a "very large extent" of usage. Conversely, a minority reported minimal to no engagement with political discourse on Twitter. Overall, the findings reveal a prevalent and substantial integration of Twitter for political engagement among Lagos State University students.

**Table 3: What are the factors that motivate Lagos State University students to use Twitter for political engagement?**

Items	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
To what extent do you believe that the amplification of marginalized voices and causes on Twitter motivates you to participate in political activism and advocacy?	Very Large Extent	101	28.3%
	Large Extent	136	38.1%
	Moderate Extent	49	13.7%
	No Extent	71	19.9%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>100%</b>
The opportunity to express my political views freely on Twitter motivates you to participate in political discourse on the platform	Strongly Agree	98	27.5%
	Agree	147	41.2%
	Neutral	41	11.5%
	Disagree	39	10.9%
	Strongly Disagree	32	8.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>100%</b>	
The availability of diverse political opinions on Twitter motivates you to engage in political discussions.	Strongly Agree	106	29.7%
	Agree	129	36.1%
	Neutral	51	14.3%
	Disagree	40	11.2%
	Strongly Disagree	31	8.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>100%</b>	
The sense of community and solidarity with other politically engaged individuals on Twitter motivates you to participate in political discussions?	Strongly Agree	110	30.1%
	Agree	141	38.5%
	Neutral	51	13.9%
	Disagree	48	13.1%
	Strongly Disagree	16	4.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>100%</b>	

**Source: Survey, 2023**

Table 3 illustrates the motivating factors behind Lagos State University students' engagement in political discourse on Twitter. The data reveals that the amplification of marginalized voices and causes significantly drives participation in political activism and advocacy, with a majority of respondents expressing this sentiment. Also, a substantial portion of the respondents sampled for this study disclosed that the opportunity to freely

express political views on the platform is another influential motivator, while a predominant proportion of respondents also indicated that the availability of diverse political opinions on Twitter is a motivating factor. Additionally, majority of respondents revealed that a sense of community and solidarity with other politically engaged individuals on Twitter plays a significant role in motivating them to participate in political discussions.

**Table 4: How do Lagos State University students perceive Twitter as a tool for political engagement?**

Items	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Twitter is a very effective platform for raising political awareness.	Strongly Agree	106	29.7%
	Agree	144	40.3%
	Neutral	82	23.0%
	Disagree	19	5.3%
	Strongly Disagree	6	1.7%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>100%</b>
Twitter helps in holding political leaders and institutions accountable.	Strongly Agree	91	25.5%
	Agree	176	49.3%
	Neutral	67	18.8%
	Disagree	14	3.9%
	Strongly Disagree	9	2.5%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>100%</b>
Twitter serves as an effective tool for organizing and mobilizing for political causes.	Strongly Agree	132	36.9%
	Agree	168	47.1%
	Neutral	39	10.9%
	Disagree	12	3.4%
	Strongly Disagree	6	1.7%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Survey, 2023**

Table 4 presents the perceptions of Lagos State University students regarding Twitter as a tool for political engagement. Analysis from table 4 indicates that a considerable portion of respondents view Twitter as a highly effective platform for raising political awareness, with a majority either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. Moreover, a significant number of respondents believe that Twitter plays a crucial role in holding political leaders and institutions

accountable, with nearly half of the respondents expressing agreement. Additionally, the majority of respondents perceive Twitter as an effective tool for organizing and mobilizing for political causes, highlighting its utility in facilitating political activism and collective action among the study population. Overall, the data from table 4 suggests that respondents sampled for this study generally regard Twitter as a valuable tool for various aspects of political engagement, including awareness-raising, accountability, and mobilization.

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The first research objective was aimed at assessing the extent at which Lagos State University students use Twitter for political engagement. From the above findings, it was revealed that majority of the respondents sampled for this study use Twitter for political engagement. The findings align with the view Pérez-Martínez et al. (2017) who purports that Twitter serves as a channel of communication and interaction among political party activists and citizens and also acts as medium for political

engagement with fellow users. Findings further revealed that a notable proportion of respondents sampled for this study reported a large extent of Twitter usage for political engagement. This finding aligns with the postulations of the Technological Determinism theory that suggest technological advancements play a significant role in shaping societal structures and behaviours. In this context, Twitter, as a social media platform, offers a convenient and accessible means for

individuals to engage in political discourse, amplifying voices, and facilitating connections between citizens and political actors. The ease of sharing information, participating in discussions, and organizing collective action through Twitter aligns with the notion that technological innovations can reshape social norms and practices, particularly in the realm of political participation and engagement.

The second research objective sought to investigate the motivating factors driving Lagos State University students' engagement in political discourse on Twitter. The study findings in this regard revealed several key motivators driving respondents' engagement in political discourse on Twitter. These motivators include the amplification of marginalized voices and causes, the opportunity for free expression of political views, the availability of diverse political opinions, and a sense of community and solidarity with other politically engaged individuals. The stated findings are in correlation with the viewpoint of Omene (2021) who asserts that Through hashtags, retweets, and mentions, Twitter facilitates the rapid dissemination of political messages, allowing young people to amplify their voices and connect with like-minded individuals globally (Omene, 2021). The findings are also in consonance with the perspective of Opeibi (2019) who connotes that Twitter serves as a virtual town hall where people can openly express their views

## CONCLUSION

As a result of the responses gotten from respondents sampled for this study, the researchers conclude that Twitter plays a pivotal role in facilitating political engagement among Lagos State University students, as it provides a formidable framework for students to actively participate in political discourse and advocacy. The platform serves as a dynamic space where

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are hereby given:

- The university community should Implement programs to further enhance students' digital literacy skills, including critical thinking and media literacy, to empower them to navigate political

by directly engaging politicians, policymakers, and influencers.

The third research objective sought to discover the perceptions of Lagos State University students on Twitter as a tool for political engagement. Findings revealed that majority of respondents view Twitter as an effective platform for raising political awareness, holding political leaders and institutions accountable, and organizing and mobilizing for political causes. These findings highlight the instrumental role of Twitter in various aspects of political engagement, from disseminating information and fostering accountability, to facilitating collective action and mobilization. These findings are in tandem with the presupposition of scholars such as Graham et al. (2016), Bruns and Burgess (2011) who argues that the core functionalities of Twitter facilitate a more direct connection between politicians and citizens within a networked setting to foster political engagement. The findings are also in tandem with the tenets of the Technological Determinism theory which presupposes that technological advancements drive societal changes and shape human behaviors, including political engagement. In this context, Twitter, as a technological platform, offers unique functionalities that enable direct interaction and communication between political actors and citizens, thus fostering political engagement.

students can amplify marginalized voices, express their political views freely, and engage with diverse opinions. Furthermore, Twitter enables students to foster a sense of community and solidarity with like-minded individuals, driving collective action and mobilization for various political causes.

discourse on Twitter effectively.

- Relevant personnel such as social media influencers should encourage the amplification of marginalized voices and causes on Twitter by actively promoting and sharing content that reflects different perspectives and experiences.

- As a prominent social media platform, Twitter should create designated online spaces or hashtags where students can engage in respectful and constructive political dialogue, free from harassment or intimidation.
- The government and electoral bodies should promote active citizenship and civic engagement by encouraging students to use Twitter as a platform for registering to vote, participating in elections, and advocating for political change.
- Non-governmental organizations should partner with student organizations and clubs to organize Twitter campaigns, Twitter chats, or virtual events centered around specific political issues or causes relevant to the student body.

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