

# Social Media Users' Perception of the Influence of Facebook on Peter Obi's One Million Man March Campaign in Nigeria

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## Abstract

This research examined social media users' perception of the influence of Facebook on Peter Obi's One Million Man March campaign. The study sought to ascertain the extent social media users participated in the campaign, their attitude towards the Facebook campaign as well as how they perceived the trustworthiness and credibility of information shared about Peter Obi's One Million Man March campaign on Facebook. The study rested on the assumptions of political mobilization theory. It adopted a survey research design. The questionnaire served as the primary tool for data collection. A sample size of 100 was purposively selected from a population of 217,687 in Ovia North East Local Government of Edo State. Findings Show that Peter Obi's One Million Man March campaign was a success, even though Peter Obi did not emerge as the winner of the election eventually. Findings also showed that the ubiquity of Facebook, with its extensive user base and engaging features, amplified the reach and impact of the campaign. A substantial portion of the participants not only actively engaged with the campaign but also expressed agreement with its messages and objectives while perceiving it as effective. The findings further revealed that the majority of respondents held a positive perception of the information, considering it trustworthy and credible. This positive perception significantly influenced their support for the campaign. The researchers, therefore, recommended that the government, campaign teams, and communication specialists should actively reinforce positive campaign perceptions in their messaging and actions. Second, political campaigns must work diligently to reinforce positive perceptions among the electorate. Lastly, enhancing trustworthiness and credibility in campaign communication is paramount for fostering public trust. In this ever-evolving digital landscape, adapting to the dynamic nature of social media is not just an option but a necessity.

**Keywords:** *Political mobilization, Social media, Facebook, User perceptions, Campaign*

## Introduction

In contemporary democracies, political campaigns play a pivotal role in the electoral process, serving as the primary conduit for political candidates to engage with and

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persuade the electorate. These campaigns have traditionally utilized various media, including radio, television, newspapers, posters, and billboards, to reach voters and convey their messages (Bappayo, Abubakar & Kirfi, 2021). However, the landscape of political communication has witnessed a significant transformation in recent years with the digital age in place.

The digital revolution has ushered in a new era of political engagement, with social media platforms becoming prominent tools for political actors to communicate their manifestos, ideologies, and achievements, and seek public support (Soladoye & Ojo, 2020). Social media platforms have emerged as influential channels for political discourse, allowing candidates to connect with a broader audience, particularly among the youth (Soladoye & Ojo, 2020). As Uwalaka (2021) notes, citizens' perceptions of democratic practices and political engagement are fundamental to the functioning of democracies, particularly in emerging democracies like Nigeria. The internet, with its vast potential for disseminating political information, has empowered the youth to participate actively in discourses on politics and engage with political processes (Agagbo & Nte, 2021).

The use of social media in campaigns on political matters gained significant traction during the 2008 U.S. presidential elections, where Barack Obama's campaign leveraged it as an "experimental innovator" (Pew Research Centre). By 2012, the effectiveness of social media in influencing electoral outcomes had become undeniable, with candidates using multiple platforms to engage voters, share campaign updates, and build electoral coalitions (Pew Research Centre).

This article delves into a specific instance of social media's role in political campaigning – the "Peter Obi One Million Man March Campaign," which unfolded on May 21st, 2022. Various coalition groups, chaired by Mr. Marcel Ngogbehei, played an instrumental role in organizing this event, and Facebook surfaced as a crucial platform for disseminating awareness and mobilizing support. These coalition groups, including "Peter Obi Support Network," "Like Minds for Peter Obi," "Nigeria Needs Peter Obi," "TakeBackNaija," "Women For Peter Obi," and "Peter Obi Movement for President," united and strengthened their cause through active engagement on Facebook.

Furthermore, it critically reviewed works of literature within the domain of mass communication, with a particular focus on key variables central to this research. In terms of geographic focus, it narrowed its lens exclusively to Edo State. Within this state, research participants were selectively drawn from a strategically chosen local government area: Ovia North East Local Government. This specific geographic choice enables a detailed examination of the campaign's impact within this defined area.

Against this backdrop, this study aims to investigate how Facebook users perceived the dynamics of social media engagement in this political context, we seek to gain an understanding of the developing point of view of political communication in Nigeria's emerging democracy.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guide the study;

1. To what extent did social media users participate in Peter Obi's One Million Man March campaign on Facebook?
2. What were the attitudes of social media users towards Peter Obi's One Million Man March campaign on Facebook?

3. How did social media users perceive the trustworthiness and credibility of information shared about Peter Obi's One Million Man March campaign on Facebook?

### **Statement of the Problem**

In recent years, the pervasive influence of social media technologies has led to a significant transformation in the way individuals engage with political discourse and civic participation. While youth, often considered technologically adept, have increasingly embraced social media platforms for communication (Okoro & Santas, 2017; Ekwueme & Folarin, 2017), their utilization of these platforms for political awareness and engagement remains a complex and evolving phenomenon. Research has shown that social networking sites, such as Facebook, play a substantial role in youth communication and interaction (Lenhart, Purcell, Smith & Zickuhr, 2010; Onah & Nche, 2014).

Despite the growing prevalence of social media use, the issue of political knowledge and active civic participation among youth is of paramount concern. As Olaniru, Olatunji, Ayandele & Popoola (2020) have emphasized, political competence and knowledge are critical elements for an engaged citizenry. However, there is an observed decline in public participation in traditional politics, especially among the youth, leading to political volatility and a decline in the quality of political discourse (Harris, Wyn & Younes, 2010; Curran, Fenton & Freedman, 2012; Thun, 2014). Such disengagement results in decreased faith in politicians and the government, further diminishing interest in political affairs (Othman, Osman & Mohammed, 2018).

The social media use by youth primarily for recreational purposes has contributed to a knowledge gap in national politics and significant political issues. Research findings on the relationship between media access and political awareness have yielded conflicting results (Okoro & Santas, 2017; Mustapha, Mustapha, & Anafi, 2018; Agabgo & Nte, 2021), indicating a need for a more nuanced understanding of the intersection between social media use and political engagement among the youth.

However, the period leading up to the 2023 general elections in Nigeria witnessed a remarkable surge in youth participation in politics, attributed largely to the effective use of social media, particularly Facebook, in political communication. Peter Obi, a prominent Nigerian politician, and his campaign team were able to harness the potential of Facebook to mobilize millions of individuals for the "Peter Obi's One Million Man March Campaign" preceding the elections. This achievement underscores the significant role that social media can play in engaging and mobilizing large segments of the population for political purposes.

Given the demonstrated success of this campaign, it is important to look deeper into the dynamics of social media engagement and its influence on youth awareness, perception, and participation in political campaigns. The study aims to explore how social media users perceive the impact of Facebook on Peter Obi's 'One Million Man March Campaign,' shedding light on the evolving role of social media in political communication and mobilization.

### **One Million Man March Campaign**

Peter Obi's One Million Man March Campaign in Nigeria was a significant political event that captured the attention of the nation. The campaign was organized by various

support groups of Peter Obi, a prominent Nigerian politician and former governor of Anambra State, to accelerate his chances of winning at the polls in his bid for public office. The campaign aimed to mobilize one million individuals in support of his political agenda and candidacy, and it utilized various strategies, with a particular focus on social media, especially Facebook.

One of the distinctive features of this campaign was its heavy reliance on social media platforms, with Facebook taking center stage. The campaign team leveraged the popularity and reach of Facebook to connect with voters and rally support. This included the use of Facebook Live sessions, interactive posts, and multimedia content to engage with the online audience and disseminate information about the campaign.

The campaign's message centered on Peter Obi's vision for Nigeria, his achievements as a former governor, and his plans for the future. It aimed to create a sense of unity and purpose among supporters, emphasizing that their collective action could bring about positive change.

Like many political campaigns in the digital age, the One Million Man March Campaign was not without its challenges. One of such is the fact that social media were not restricted. With that, both accurate and false information could easily spread, which led to controversies and heated debates. Critics and opponents also used social media to voice their concerns and opposition.

The campaign had a significant impact on Nigerian political discourse. It not only mobilized a substantial number of supporters but also highlighted the growing role of social media in political communication and mobilization. The use of Facebook as a tool for political engagement demonstrated the potential of online platforms to connect with voters on a massive scale.

While the campaign did not achieve the one million-person target, it left a lasting legacy in Nigerian politics. It underscored the importance of digital strategies in political campaigns and contributed to the ongoing evolution of political communication in the country.

### **Political Mobilisation**

Mobilisation can be seen as the process through which people, organisations and groups are persuaded to take certain actions to attain specified goals. In this process, people are sensitised, informed, and motivated to take desirable activities toward a specific aim to change the allocation of political values to the forerunners of such targeted engagement of the people in political mobilisation. When people are finally inspired to act and participate in political matters, mobilisation can be said to have been effective.

Political mobilisation entails encouraging individuals to engage in political activities such as running for office, registering to vote, and voting, as well as a variety of other actions related to politics and governance.

According to Strandberg (2006), political mobilisation is the process by which politicians, parties, activists and organisations persuade others to participate in politics to win elections, pass bills and influence policy. It is a method of mobilising large groups of people to express themselves publicly and take political action.

As described by Aleyomi & Ajakaiye (2014), it might be any activity that leads to a policy change; it could also include acts like joining a petition to bring about a policy change. Traditionally, political mobilisation relies on techniques such as interpersonal discussion, street signs, TV and radio jingles, newspapers, flyers, and billboards, among

others. But since the inception of the Internet, numerous authors, parties, candidates, and organisations have recognised new opportunities for mobilising citizens, while individuals themselves utilise the Internet to engage themselves for specified political ambitions. As a result, social media has been revived as a tool for creating political agendas and spreading advocacies toward specific goals.

Political mobilization is one of the multifaceted concepts that play a pivotal role in the functioning of democratic societies worldwide. It encompasses a range of strategies and activities aimed at engaging individuals or groups in the political process, with the primary goal of motivating them to take action in support of a political cause, candidate, party, or policy. At its core, mobilization seeks to transform passive observers into active participants in the democratic process. One fundamental aspect of political mobilization is its role in increasing political awareness and civic engagement. By informing and persuading individuals about political issues, candidates, or policy proposals, mobilization efforts aim to equip them with the knowledge and motivation needed to participate in elections, advocacy campaigns, or other political activities. This process of raising political consciousness is essential for preserving democracy, as it enables citizens to make informed choices and voice their preferences.

Historically, political mobilization has been a driving force behind many political movements and social changes. It has played a pivotal role in various historical events, such as suffrage movements, civil rights campaigns, and political revolutions. These movements often relied on effective mobilization to rally support, organize protests, and effect significant societal transformations. Mobilization is, therefore, a critical tool for individuals and groups seeking to influence political outcomes and promote social justice.

In the contemporary landscape, the advent of digital technology and social media has revolutionized political mobilization. These platforms provide powerful tools for reaching and engaging a broad audience quickly and cost-effectively. Campaigns, parties, and interest groups can leverage social media to disseminate information, mobilize supporters, and encourage political participation. This digital aspect of mobilization has the potential to reshape the dynamics of political engagement in the digital age. However, political mobilization is not without its challenges. Overcoming voter apathy, reaching underrepresented communities, countering disinformation, and navigating complex legal and regulatory frameworks are all significant hurdles in mobilization efforts. Moreover, the effectiveness of mobilization can differ depending on the context, political culture, and the specific goals of the campaign or movement.

Political mobilization is a dynamic and essential concept in democratic societies. It encompasses efforts to inform, persuade, and motivate individuals and groups to participate actively in the political process. Whether through traditional grassroots organizing or leveraging the power of digital technology, mobilization remains a fundamental tool for those seeking to influence political outcomes and drive social and political change.

### **Social Media Use for Political Mobilization**

Agagbo & Nte (2021) assessed citizens' access to online political information and how this shapes their amenability to being mobilised for political actions. This research addresses a critical aspect of contemporary political engagement. This concerns the Internet which has become a primary source of information for many individuals. One of

the key findings of Agagbo and Nte's study is the phenomenon of citizens actively seeking online information that corresponds with what they believed before and political perspectives. This selective information-seeking is often driven by cognitive biases, such as confirmation bias, which leads individuals to prefer information that confirms their existing views. When individuals encounter information online that resonates with their pre-held beliefs, they are more likely to engage with and trust that information. This aspect of the research sheds light on the polarization and echo chamber effects that can occur within online political discourse. Furthermore, Agagbo and Nte's study confirmed that when citizens find online information that aligns with their pre-held beliefs, it tends to enhance their political activism. This phenomenon can be attributed to the reinforcement of their existing political convictions. When individuals encounter information that validates their views, they are more likely to feel motivated and empowered to participate in political activities, such as attending rallies, volunteering for campaigns, or engaging in discussions on social media platforms.

The research by Agagbo and Nte also highlighted the complex interplay between logic and sentiment in how the internet and political information affect individuals' willingness to be mobilized. While logic encourages individuals to critically assess information and make informed decisions, sentiment, often driven by emotional responses, can lead individuals to react impulsively and passionately to information that aligns with their beliefs. This conflict between logic and sentiment underscores the intricate nature of political engagement in the digital age.

Olaniru, Olatunji, Ayandele & Popoola (2020) studied the influence of media on political knowledge among undergraduate students in Ibadan, Nigeria. Their research sought to understand how both mass media and social media, contribute to the political knowledge of this particular demographic. One of the central findings of their study was the pivotal role of radio as the most significant source of political knowledge among undergraduate students in Ibadan. This observation underscores the enduring influence of traditional broadcast media, especially radio, in disseminating political information and fostering political awareness among young individuals. The prevalence of radio as a primary source of political knowledge might be attributed to its accessibility and reach in both urban and rural areas of Nigeria. Furthermore, the study shed light on the evolving landscape of media consumption and its implications for political knowledge. While radio remained dominant, the research also highlighted the emerging significance of social media platforms. The findings suggest that various media outlets and political analysts are recognizing how powerful social media are in educating a wider audience about politics. Social media's ability to deliver real-time updates and diverse perspectives plays a vital role in engaging younger generations in political discourse.

The study's results emphasize the need for a multi-faceted approach to political education and information dissemination in the digital age. While traditional media like radio remain essential, harnessing the potential of social media for political education presents a valuable opportunity. This aligns with a broader trend where social media platforms are becoming influential spaces for political discussions, enabling individuals to access a wide array of political perspectives, engage with political actors, and share political content.

Omotayo & Folorunso (2020) studied the use of social media for political participation by youths in Oyo State, Nigeria. Their study delved into the extent and nature of youth engagement in politics through digital platforms, shedding light on the

way social media is defining the political landscape in the region. One of the central findings of their research was the extensive and active social media use for political participation by young people. This observation highlights the transformative impact of digital technologies on political engagement, especially among the youth. Social media platforms serve as accessible and inclusive spaces where young Nigerians can voice their political opinions, connect with like-minded individuals, and contribute to political discourse.

The study also revealed the hierarchy of social media platforms preferred by Nigerian youths for political participation. Facebook emerged as the most popular platform, followed by Whatsapp, Instagram, Twitter, and Yahoo Messenger. This ranking reflects the diverse ways in which young people engage with social media, each platform offering unique features for political interaction and communication.

The various forms of political participation identified in the study underscore the versatility of social media as a tool for civic engagement. Young people employed these platforms for activities such as political advocacy, campaigns, discussions, direct communication with politicians, monitoring and reporting electoral malpractices, public consultations, joining lobbying interest groups and even blogging about political issues. This multifaceted use of social media demonstrates its potential not only as a means of expressing political views but also as a catalyst for political mobilization and change.

Although the above studies relate to the current study in terms of subject scope and methodology; the point of divergence here, is that the current study narrows down its focus to Facebook's influence on a specific political campaign (Peter Obi's One Million Man March).

### **The Power of Social Media to transform Nigerian Politics**

Using a combination of strategy and functional theories, Fasunwon (2019) researched the use of social media in political mobilisation in Nigeria. The study revealed that social media has evolved into a legitimate and verifiable tool for political mobilisation, sensitisation, and socialisation in the country. This observation reflects the transformative impact of digital platforms on political engagement and communication. One of the central findings of Fasunwon's study was the recognition that through social media platforms, various stakeholders, including the government, activists, citizens, politicians, and political parties, can effectively communicate and mobilize the public. These platforms serve as dynamic spaces where individuals and organizations can educate the public about their grievances, policy programmes, and political ideologies. Social media's reach and immediacy make it particularly valuable in engaging a broad and diverse audience in discussions about political issues and mobilising support for causes.

However, the study also highlighted the dual nature of social media in political mobilisation. While it offers a powerful means of disseminating information and engaging citizens, it is not without its challenges. Fasunwon's research pointed out that uncensored information and the technical manipulation of facts that circulate on social media have the potential to incite individuals to engage in violent political activities. This aspect shows the need for careful monitoring and regulation of digital platforms to mitigate the spread of false or harmful content.

In light of these findings, Fasunwon's study concluded by emphasizing the importance of embracing, acknowledging, and expanding the beneficial features of social

media for political mobilization. It recognized the potential of digital platforms in enhancing civic engagement, amplifying voices, and fostering political participation. However, the study also highlighted the responsibility of nations around the world to strike a balance between promoting the positive aspects of social media and addressing the challenges it presents, particularly concerning the spread of misinformation and the incitement of violence.

In their study conducted in 2019, Onyebuchi, Obayi, and Amadi explored the evolving role of social media in the dissemination of politically related information during the Nigerian 2019 elections. Their research provided a nuanced understanding of how digital platforms were reshaping the political information landscape, shedding light on both how social media is reused and the nature of the information shared. One of the central findings of their study was the extensive use of social media apps among respondents. This observation reflects the widespread adoption of digital technologies in Nigeria and the increasing importance of online platforms as a source of information. Social media apps have become integral to the daily lives of many Nigerians, providing them with real-time access to news, opinions, and political developments.

The study also revealed that respondents frequently encountered politically related stories on social media platforms over time. This phenomenon highlights the dynamic nature of political discourse in the digital age, where citizens can engage with and contribute to discussions about elections, candidates, and political issues in real time. Social media's immediacy and accessibility make it a significant driver of political information dissemination. However, a crucial finding of the research was the increasing rate at which significant political stories, both genuine and fake, were being released on online platforms. This trend raised questions about the existence of traditional media gatekeepers who traditionally vetted and verified information before it reached the public. The rapid circulation of unverified or false information on social media platforms has the potential to influence public perceptions and decisions, posing challenges to the reliability and credibility of political information.

In their research conducted in 2017, Okoro and Santas delved into the influence of social media on political communication and voters' choices during the Nigerian 2011 presidential election. Their study aimed to explore the extent to which social media usage impacted voters' preferences for presidential candidates and how it shaped the political landscape in Nigeria during that pivotal election. One of the central findings of their study was that social media played a significant role in shaping respondents' choices of candidates for president during the 2011 election. This observation highlighted the growing influence of digital platforms as a means of political communication and engagement. Social media provided voters with a space to access information about candidates, engage in discussions, and even express their political preferences. The ease of access and real-time and social media updates made it a powerful tool for political information dissemination.

The study also revealed that respondents believed that the two most prominent presidential candidates in the 2011 election were popular because they effectively exploited social media in their political campaigns. This suggests that candidates who leveraged digital platforms for communication and outreach gained a distinct advantage in reaching and mobilizing voters. Social media allowed candidates to connect directly with the electorate, bypassing traditional media gatekeepers, and fostering a sense of engagement and interaction. Furthermore, respondents stated that their voting

behaviour during the 2011 presidential elections was influenced by their use of social media. This finding underscores the impact of digital technologies on shaping political preferences and decisions. The ability to access a wide range of perspectives and information on social media platforms may have influenced voters' perceptions of candidates and their policy positions.

While all the studies above share similarities in their theme, Method, design, and instrument, the current study, however, specifically examines Facebook's role in a specific political campaign.

### **Reliability of Social Media as a source of information**

In recent years, the proliferation of social media platforms has transformed the way information is disseminated, shared, and consumed. These digital networks have become parts of our daily lives, offering unprecedented access to news, opinions, and personal experiences. While they have undoubtedly democratized information flow and amplified voices from diverse backgrounds, the reliability of the content circulating on these platforms has emerged as a subject of growing concern. This concern over the reliability of social media as a source of information has not gone unnoticed among scholars and researchers. As users increasingly turn to platforms like Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram for news, health advice, and political engagement, it becomes imperative to scrutinize the trustworthiness of the information disseminated through these channels. Adegoke (2017) focused on the reliability of social media as a source of news in Nigeria. The research highlighted that while social media platforms, especially Twitter and Facebook, offered the potential for real-time information dissemination, the reliability of news shared on these platforms was highly variable. Adegoke's findings underscored the importance of critical thinking and discernment among social media users. Users were encouraged to assess the credibility of sources and information before accepting them as factual. This perspective is crucial because it acknowledges the democratizing aspect of social media while also cautioning against the spread of misinformation.

In the same vein, Onyekachi (2019) delved into the reliability of health information shared on social media platforms in Nigeria. The study specifically looked at the accuracy of health-related content, including medical advice and remedies, disseminated through platforms like WhatsApp and Instagram. The findings emphasized the challenges posed by misinformation in the realm of health. It highlighted the potential risks associated with relying solely on social media for health-related decisions. Onyekachi's perspective underscores the importance of verifying health information from reputable sources and seeking professional medical advice when necessary, thus safeguarding public health.

Adewale & Oladipo (2020) focused on the reliability of social media as a tool for political communication in Nigeria. Their research explored how political actors and parties utilized platforms like Twitter and Instagram during election campaigns. The findings indicated that while social media offered a powerful means of engaging with voters and disseminating political information, the reliability of this information was often questionable. This perspective highlights the dual nature of social media during election periods, as it can serve as a valuable means of political engagement but can also facilitate the spread of false or misleading information. Adewale and Oladipo's research underscored the need for fact-checking mechanisms to ensure the integrity of political discourse.

Hernandez (2018) explored the influence of social media on political campaigns, with a particular focus on the dissemination of misinformation and its impact on public opinion. Her study revealed that social media platforms, while enabling political candidates to connect with a vast audience and share their messages more directly, also facilitated the rapid spread of unverified information, rumors, and false claims during election periods. Hernandez's findings underscored the dual nature of social media in political discourse. On one hand, these platforms empower citizens to engage in political discussions and access a wide range of information. On the other hand, the unrestricted nature of social media allows for the viral spread of misleading or unverified content, potentially influencing voters' perceptions and decisions.

One of the key takeaways from Hernandez's research is the importance of digital media literacy. She emphasized that citizens need the skills to critically assess the information they encounter on social media, fact-check claims, and discern credible sources from unreliable ones. Additionally, she advocated for greater transparency and accountability from social media platforms in addressing the issue of misinformation during election campaigns, highlighting the need for measures to curb the dissemination of false or misleading information.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is tied to the Political Mobilisation Theory. Historically, political mobilisation theory can be traced to Olson (1968), Jenkins (1983) and Zald & McCarthy (1980). The theory addresses how political leaders and groups employ various techniques to mobilise voters for support during campaigns and elections in a specific political system. The political mobilisation theory encapsulates several optimistic perspectives on the power of media and other methods to influence citizens' political engagement. According to the theory, the media and door-to-door political mobilisation techniques have the capacity to enlighten, organise and involve individuals who are currently marginalised from the existing political system, allowing them to gradually get into public matters.

The political mobilisation theory, according to Lusoli & Ward (2004), sees radio, television, door-to-door campaigns and social media as having the power to inform, mobilise and engage citizens. Some scholars have identified a counterargument that casts doubt on the theory. This is referred to as the reinforcement theory by Norris (2007). Politics on social networking sites, according to this line of reasoning, would fail to politically activate and engage citizens. Essentially, this argument is based on two main observations: first, access to the technological resources needed to connect to broadcast media and the Internet for online media is unequally distributed over the world, and even within independent countries. Second, it has been hypothesised that only citizens who are already motivated, interested, and engaged in offline politics would gravitate toward online politics. All these factors have an impact on political mobilisation through social media and the internet. That is, because not all individuals have access to the media, the theory is unlikely to explain all of Nigeria's political mobilisation factors. Political mobilisation theory is significant in this inquiry because it helps us understand how political forces (politicians, political parties, and political candidates use the media to mobilise public support for their parties' programmes and policies. Therefore, this argument is used to support Social Media users' perception of the influence of Facebook in Mobilisation of people for Peter Obi's One Million Man March Campaign.

### Research Method

In this research study, a survey research design was employed to investigate social media users' perceptions of Facebook's influence on Peter Obi's One Million Man March campaign in Edo State, Nigeria. The target population consisted of residents in Ovia North East local government area in Edo State totaling 217,687, according to the 2022 National Population Commission's projection. Following Taro Yamane's formula, a sample size of 100 individuals was determined. A structured questionnaire with 5 closed-ended questions was used for data collection, ensuring quantifiable data for analysis.

To assess the reliability of the research instrument, a Test-Retest-Reliability method was employed, showing a high level of correlation between responses. Data collection involved face-to-face administration of questionnaire to ensure comprehensive and reliable data retrieval. The collected data were analyzed using cumulative frequency calculations and tabular presentation techniques, providing organized and accessible information for both technical and non-technical audiences.

### Data Presentation

**Table 1: Respondents response on whether they participated in the one million man march Campaign on facebook**

Question	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Did you personally participate in Peter Obi's one million man March campaign on Facebook?	Yes	100	100
	No	00	00
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

In table 1, 100% of the respondents participated in Peter Obi's one million man march campaign on Facebook. This is so because the researchers employed the purposive technique of sampling to select the respondents.

**Table 2: Ways respondents have participated in the campaign**

Question	Response	Frequency	Percentage
If yes, in what ways have you participated? (Select all that apply)	Sharing posts	34	34
	Commenting on posts	62	62
	Attending campaign events	-	-
	Donating financially	4	4
	Others	-	-
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2 shows the ways respondents have participated in the campaign, 34% participated by sharing posts, 62% by commenting on posts, and 4% participated by donating. This implies that in one way or the other, the respondents participated in the campaign but those who participated by commenting on post topped the list.

**Table 3: Attitudes of social media users towards Peter Obi’s one million man March campaign on Facebook**

Question	Response	Frequency	Percentage
What was your attitude towards the one million march campaign on facebook?	Very positive	36	36
	Positive	34	34
	Neutral	17	17
	Negative	9	9
	Very negative	4	4
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 3 revealed the attitude of respondents to the Campaign. As shown in the table, 36% responded as very positive, 34% responded as positive, 17% are neutral, 9% and 4% responded as negative and very negative respectively. This shows that more of the respondents had positive attitude towards the campaign.

**Table 4: Respondents response on whether the campaign is effective in achieving its goal**

Question	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Do you believe the campaign is effective in achieving its goal?	Yes, very effective	50	50
	Yes, somewhat effective	24	24
	No, not effective	17	17
	Not sure	9	9
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4 shows the responses of people on the effectiveness of the campaign in achieving its goal. It is clear that 50% believes the campaign was effective, 24% believes it was somewhat effective, 17% says it was not effective and 9% are not sure. The data from the table therefore, shows that more persons think the campaign was very effective.

**Table 5: Respondents answer on the trustworthiness of the information shared about one million man March campaign on Facebook**

Question	Response	Frequency	Percentage
How trustworthy do you find the information shared about Peter Obi’s one million man March campaign on Facebook?	Very trustworthy	44	44
	Trustworthy	28	28
	Neutral	15	15
	Untrustworthy	9	9
	Very untrustworthy	5	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 5 shows respondents' responses on the trustworthiness of the information shared about the campaign on Facebook. 44% and 28% agreed that it is very trustworthy and trustworthy respectively. 15% is neutral. While 9.3% and 5.2% say it is untrustworthy

and very untrustworthy respectively. The result implies that the trustworthiness of the message made more people participate and support the campaign.

### **Discussion of Findings**

Addressing the first research question which examined the extent of social media users' participation in Peter Obi's One Million Man March campaign on Facebook, the study uncovered a significant level of active engagement. This means that the majority of the social media users participated in the campaign. This could be because the social media users perceived their participation to be impactful or perhaps. After all, they saw others participating as well. This finding aligns with well-established theories of political mobilization, particularly those proposed by Olson (1968), Jenkins (1983), and Zald & McCarthy (1980). These theorists suggest that people are more inclined to participate in collective actions when they perceive their involvement as impactful, and when they observe others taking part. In the context of social media, this translates into higher participation rates, as the visible engagement of others and the ease of sharing content encourage active involvement. These results are consistent with the research conducted by Ojih, Adeleke & Bebenimibo (2020), which delved into the role of social media in political mobilization within Nigeria.

This finding underscores the potency of social media platforms, particularly Facebook, as effective tools for rallying support and mobilizing individuals for political causes. It highlights the importance of creating an environment where individuals perceive their contributions as meaningful and where they can readily witness the engagement of their peers. Moreover, these results reflect the changing landscape of political participation in the digital age, where social media catalyzes fostering collective action and engagement in political campaigns. It underscores the need for political actors to harness the interactive and participatory nature of these platforms to build a robust and engaged support base.

The second research question regarding social media users' attitudes toward Peter Obi's One Million Man March campaign on Facebook, the study revealed overwhelmingly positive sentiments among respondents. A substantial portion of the participants not only actively engaged with the campaign but also expressed agreement with its messages and objectives while perceiving it as effective. These favorable attitudes are closely linked to the persuasive influence of social media in shaping public opinions and molding political beliefs. These findings resonate with previous research on the impact of media, including social media, in shaping political knowledge and encouraging political participation. This suggests that these media platforms play a significant role in fostering positive attitudes towards political campaigns (Olaniru, Olatunji, Ayandele & Popoola, 2020; Erubami, 2020).

These results underscore the importance of effective communication and message framing in political campaigns conducted through social media. They indicate that crafting messages that resonate with the values and aspirations of the target audience can lead to increased engagement and support. Moreover, the findings emphasize the influential role of social media platforms in shaping political perceptions and fostering active involvement in political processes. It underscores the need for political candidates and campaigns to leverage these platforms to not only disseminate information but also to build a positive image and garner public support.

The third research question sought to find out how social media users perceived the trustworthiness and credibility of the information shared about Peter Obi's One Million Man March campaign on Facebook. The findings revealed that the majority of respondents held a positive perception of this information, considering it trustworthy and credible. Importantly, this positive perception significantly influenced their support for the campaign.

This alignment between trustworthiness and support reaffirms Agabgo & Nte's (2021) study on citizens' access to online political information. Their research underscored how the trustworthiness of information accessible through digital channels plays a pivotal role in shaping individuals' willingness to engage in political actions. In essence, the study's findings emphasize the critical importance of maintaining the trust and credibility of information disseminated through social media platforms, as these factors have a direct impact on political mobilization and support.

These conclusions highlight the need for political campaigns to prioritize the accuracy and reliability of their messaging on social media, reinforcing the role of credible information in shaping public perception and engagement.

### **Conclusion**

The constructive elements inherent in social media engagement, namely active participation, persuasive communication, and the reliability of information, collectively wield a considerable impact on forming public perceptions and fostering support for political campaigns. The notable level of involvement witnessed in Peter Obi's One Million Man March underscores the influence of social media in mobilizing individuals for political causes. The persuasive influence of these platforms extends beyond mere opinion-shaping, contributing to the formation of political beliefs. Social media platforms, particularly Facebook, function as digital arenas wherein campaigns strategically articulate and disseminate their narratives, cultivating positive sentiments among users. Furthermore, the trustworthiness and credibility attributed to the information shared on these platforms play a pivotal role in consolidating public support. Establishing transparency and reliability in disseminated information becomes imperative, given that users' perceptions of trust significantly influence their endorsement of political initiatives. Recognizing and adeptly leveraging these interconnected dynamics is essential for the efficacy of future political endeavours in navigating the intricate landscape of social media. It requires a strategic alignment of communication efforts with the inherent mechanisms of online engagement, emphasizing authenticity, compelling messaging, and sustained public trust as indispensable components of a successful social media-centric political campaign.

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